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# English Immersion of Middle and High School Korean Students: Linguistic and cultural Experience of Relocation to the Southwest United States

Yanghee Kim

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**ENGLISH IMMERSION OF MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL KOREAN  
STUDENTS: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCE OF  
RELOCATION TO THE SOUTHWEST UNITED STATES**

**BY**

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Busan, Korea, 1995  
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Charlotte, 1997

**DISSERTATION**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy  
Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**August, 2009**

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation I dedicate to many special people in my life:

To my father who illuminated the importance of education, but who passed away after suffering from painful cancer, and was very much looking forward to my completion of this study.

To my mother who always gave me a lot of care and support, and taught me that higher education brings value to life.

To my sister and brothers who always encouraged me to accomplish my goals and listened to my stories while I was writing my dissertation.

And to all second language learners who are dealing with disappointment, frustration, vulnerability, and fear in the process of learning English in an unfamiliar world.

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Additional acknowledgement goes to the participants of my study, including the students (Jung, Tim, and Yang), their parents and teachers, and principals in the schools

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**ABSTRACT**

With the onset of globalization, the Korean government has emphasized English education as a key issue for Korea to succeed in the global economy. The Korean public education system has faced dramatic shifts in English education; for example, English introduction at an early age. Koreans feel considerable social pressure to acquire English proficiency. This pressure has encouraged parents to send their children to English speaking countries in order for them to learn English.

This study examines three Korean students who came to the U.S. with the purpose of studying English. The research questions were: how do Korean students experience English inside and outside the classroom; what are the difficulties that Korean students experience during this process in the United States; and what linguistic and

cultural experiences do Korean students experience as a result of being exposed to English language and American culture.

To answer these research questions, I used several types of data collection: classroom observations; interviews; student journals; analyses of students' writing samples and other personal documents; and my own reflective journal writings as a researcher. These data collection methods contributed to this study's findings. The data analysis was an ongoing process, which was performed as the data was collected. Constant comparison and thematic analysis methods were used to make sense of the data and to answer the research questions. As a result, several themes emerged across the three cases: emotional experiences; complexity of L2 learning and development; and social and cultural experiences in the classroom.

When these Korean students relocated to the US, the role and influence of environment played a crucial role in their emotional and mental development and also in meaning making. The environment influenced how they perceived and internalized experience of social interactions. This study showed the complexity of L2 learning; namely, many factors played key roles in contributing to their language development. This study also displayed that the participants faced difficulties with different cultural values, but gradually they constructed a system of meaning in their L2 culture.

Finally, this study provided insightful educational implications for US schools, educators, the Korean government and society, and Korean community. Additionally, it demonstrated implications for the classroom environment for the Korean students, and general implications for teacher education programs in the US.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background and Purpose of the Study**

During the academic year, 2004 and 2005, I conducted a pilot study, in which I observed several sixth grade Korean English language learners at the Sunflower Middle School in the southwestern region of the United States. The purpose of my pilot study was to get a glimpse of how the students experienced English in their classrooms, and to learn about the American public school system. I also examined English education in Korea, and how English learning impacted these Korean youths in Korea. I identified some factors that have driven Koreans to learn English, and the problems and social issues that have arisen for Koreans due to their English education. For this pilot study, I collected data by interviewing three Korean families who moved to the southwestern United States for their children's education, reviewing the literature related to English education in Korea, and sending email surveys to teachers of English in Korea.

I was motivated to conduct this study due to findings from my earlier research, as well as my own personal experience of learning English. I wanted to examine how Korean students in the United States experienced the learning of English, both inside and outside the classroom, the difficulties they experienced dealing with a different culture and language, what they gained from their experiences, and the challenges they faced when they relocated to the United States. The current study followed up the pilot study by doing an in-depth case study analysis of three Korean students in middle and high school in the southwestern US. In this study, I looked deeply at Korean students' linguistic and

cultural issues as they worked to acquire English proficiency in a new and unfamiliar country.

Traditionally, the teaching of English in schools in Korea has been conducted almost exclusively in the Korean language, with most teachers using the grammar-translation method in the classroom. According to Griffiths and Parr (2001), the grammar-translation method:

...relies heavily on teaching grammar and practicing translation as its main teaching and learning activities. The major focus of this method tended to be on reading and writing with relatively little attention on listening and speaking. Vocabulary was typically taught in lists, and a high priority given to accuracy, and the ability to construct correct sentences. (p. 247)

As a result, English instruction in Korea has been criticized by the Korean government as well as by Korean scholars, teachers, and parents. Many blame Korean students' lack of English proficiency, even after the students have studied English for many years, on the instructional methodologies that are used in the teaching of English.

At the time of Korea's globalization campaign in the early 1990s, the Korean Ministry of Education stated that the primary purpose of English education was to help students develop English language skills, which would enable them to communicate effectively with English-speaking foreigners, and therefore encourage international business dealings. Since that time, gaining knowledge of English has been a major concern in all areas of Korean government, business, and education. Accordingly, Korean students have been expected to master the complexities of the English language and to develop English communication skills in order to be able to participate in the emerging

Korean global economy and society. Being highly competent in English is an important advantage for those who want to enter and graduate from Korean universities, obtain better jobs, advance in companies or joint ventures, and study abroad.

Based on my earlier research, I found that since the early 1990s, there have been two significant shifts in the way that English instruction is conducted in Korea: a) the Korean government lowered the age of compulsory English instruction from thirteen to nine; and b) the Sixth National Curriculum in 1995 adopted a communicative language teaching approach, instead of utilizing the previous grammar-translation approach. Because of these changes, early childhood education in English has been emphasized, and the pressure to develop English proficiency at an early age has caused Korean families to move abroad to English-speaking countries so that their children can learn English. These new global Korean families were given the name *goose families* (MSNBC News, 9/29/2003).

The term *goose family* is taken from the birds that are famously devoted to raising their young. There are several categories of *goose families*, including ones in which the children live abroad with only their mothers, with their relatives, with their older siblings, or alone in the United States or other English-speaking countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The term *Father goose* refers to Korean husbands and fathers who remain in Korea to earn money to support their families who are being educated in an English-speaking country. Very often, however, the entire family, including the father, moves to an English-speaking country. These *goose families* usually plan to live in the United States for a short time and then return to Korea. However, some



families decide to stay in the United States. Other families immigrate to the United States through relatives who have already been living in the United States.

This new global Korean family, and immigrant Korean families, have common reasons for coming to the United States, including: a) the Korean government's political pressure on all Koreans to prepare for the global economy by learning English; b) the parents' avoidance of the Korean competitive educational system, which focuses on preparation for the national college entrance exam; c) the parents' high emphasis on their children's education; and d) the parents' desire to gain what they believe to be a "better education" and a "better life."

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that I will use to guide the collection and analysis of my data are the following:

#### General question:

What are the linguistic and cultural experiences of Korean students when they move to the United States and study in public schools in the United States to develop their English proficiency?

#### Sub questions:

1. How do Korean students experience English inside and outside the classroom?
2. What are the difficulties that Korean students experience in this process in the United States?
3. Does Vygotsky's theory help us understand experiences of Korean students?

It is important to address participants' experiences with English inside and outside the classroom because the participants' experiences are different depending on the

subject matter, their teachers' pedagogical decisions, and their social interactions with peers inside the classroom. In other words, the role and influence of classroom environment may play an important role in students' emotional, cognitive, and psychological development. Outside the classroom, their experiences with English vary, in terms of what languages they speak, with whom they communicate, whether they have contact with English language speakers, and what kinds of English learning strategies they use.

### **Significance of the Study**

Education has historically tended to reproduce the relations of power in the broader society since dominant groups determine the priorities of both society and its schools (Cummins, 2000). Therefore, groups of students who are not members of mainstream society are often invisible and inaudible in mainstream society and schools. Among minority students, Korean students are comparatively more invisible and not a top priority for researchers, especially in an area like the southwestern US, because of their small population in comparison to the populations of Spanish-speaking and Native American students. Thus, my study aim to contribute to an understanding of Korean students, what brought them to the United States and to the southwest, the expectations their parents had for their children's education, and how Korean parents supported their children.

The Korean students in this study were immersed in English in their schools because these schools did not provide any bilingual programs for them due to the small Korean population in this region. Additionally, the students were further immersed because they did not have many Korean peers to interact with in school. Thus, in this

study, I show how exposure to the English language and American culture influenced these Korean students' linguistic and cultural experiences, and the consequences that these students experienced in terms of their Korean language as a result of their developing English proficiency. The findings of this study may motivate educators to create more culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate curricula for these students in public schools.

Because this study focuses on English language learning and cultural and social experiences in Korean students inside and outside the classroom, the results of this study may suggest how a second language is learned and developed both inside and outside classroom settings. This study may suggest the factors that can help these students to develop English proficiency in more efficient ways, and the kinds of classroom activities and tasks that are helpful to them in developing their target language. If teachers understand how the dynamics of classroom communication influences second language students' perceptions of, and participation in, classroom activities (Johnson, 1995), teachers may be better able to monitor and adjust the patterns of communication in their classrooms in order to create an environment for Korean students that is conducive to both classroom learning and second language acquisition (SLA). This study may help teachers promote classroom language development for Korean students, and, more generally, for minority students. It may also help teachers to promote intrinsic motivation in Korean students to use language actively in order to generate their own learning.

Finally, this study may contribute to teacher education programs for pre-service teachers. This research may provide information to teachers who have no experience with Korean students, and serve as a resource that they can utilize in their teaching practices.

This study may give pre-service teachers an opportunity to learn about the funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) that Korean students bring to the classroom. Such knowledge not only may serve to support the creating of better curricula and instruction for Korean students, but may also better prepare teachers for dealing with multilingual and multicultural students in general. In addition, by using Vygotsky's theory, in particular the *social situation of development, perezhivanie*, and his system of meaning, this study may help explain the complexity of the learning experiences and processes of the three Korean students. By helping teachers understanding these concepts, they may be able to provide authentic activities that promote their student engagement and awareness of their learning processes.

### **Researcher's Positionality**

I was born and raised in Korea and attended public schools in Korea. I studied English in secondary school and college, and eventually became an English teacher at a university in Korea. Currently, I am a doctoral candidate majoring in teaching English as a second language. I consider learning and teaching English to be a big part of my life, both personally and professionally. I am always curious about how people acquire or learn English as a second language, and the challenges they experience as they develop a second language. In addition, I am a second language learner myself, in that English is not my native language and I am taking doctoral-level courses in English in the United States. In my required coursework, I have experienced many difficulties and challenges due to the fact that I have had to deal with a different language and culture in the classroom. The process of learning a language and culture other than that into which I

was born, has at times been emotionally painful and cognitively difficult. I have experienced tremendous frustration, disappointment, and anger.

Since beginning my doctoral studies, I occasionally wrote journal entries about my experiences learning English. In rereading my journal entries, I found similarities between my own experiences in the United States and those of the Korean students who participated in this study. The following example is an excerpt from my journal:

Learning English has been a long and emotional journey for me! It has been painful and challenging, and has caused me many tears, much frustration and disappointment, and feelings of vulnerability. Sometimes, I have wondered why I am learning English and why I am suffering so much for this. To learn English with such a pain is a stupid idea, I have thought. What am I getting from it? How much pain will I feel because of this 'stupid' English? Why do I put up with this kind of pain, and why do I have to struggle so much with mastering English? What is this really for? Learning another language is a struggle with myself, and a struggle to form another identity. However, it is not that easy. It is a very difficult job to do. Sometimes my speaking of English seems so elementary, and when it seems like that, I don't feel that I speak according to my true age. Learning English is a never ending story. It can end up being a beautiful story, or it can end up being a sad story. It sometimes makes me feel very small. Other times, it makes me feel fulfilled. It all depends on my proficiency and skills in English.

(10/12/2006)

My experiences in learning English have inspired me to study and research young Korean students in United States schools. I am a researcher who wants to discover,

understand, and gain insight into English instruction to Korean students by observing these students' experiences learning English in the classroom. I believe that my personal experiences as a second language learner will offer me the opportunity to gain additional insight into my student's experiences.

As a researcher, I needed to understand and become intimately familiar with the students' experiences of learning English from their perspectives. I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and I had to physically go to observe and talk with the participants in their own setting, at their sites and institutions in the field, in order to observe their behaviors in a natural setting. I, as a researcher, had to build toward theory from my observations and intuitive understandings gained in the field. I included data in the form of my participants' own words, direct citations from documents, and excerpts from audiotapes to support the findings of the study. I protected the rights of the participants and kept their privacy and confidentiality by using pseudonyms for the participants, by changing the names of the schools they attended and by generalizing the name of the region where they lived.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Overview of the Literature Review

The literature that I reviewed for this study about Korean students' second language learning experiences comes from multiple disciplines.

First, to understand the impact of global English on Koreans' lives, and specifically on the Korean education system, I review literature on globalization and the Korean educational system.

Second, I review literature on the theory of learning and development based on the work of Vygotsky. Vygotsky uses several concepts to demonstrate the interdependence of individual and social processes in learning and development. The three main concepts I used in this study are: system of meaning, *social situation of development*, and *perezhivanie*. These concepts help explore how the interrelated developments between internal and external processes change children's mental functioning and their perception and experience of their social environment and changes in their relationship to the environment.

Third, I review literature regarding individual differences and variations in second language acquisition (SLA): individual factors (such as age, motivation, and personality); social factors (including acculturation, social interaction, language learning situation); and linguistic factors (such as the students' maturity of language proficiency in L1 and L2). These are all possible contributors to individual differences in SLA.

Fourth, I review literature that discusses social and cultural differences that language learners experience in mainstream classrooms: losing their first language, being

stereotyped by teachers and students, and difficulty learning because of cultural differences. In order to capture the variation in the experiences of second language learning, an interdisciplinary approach to the literature review was necessary.

### **Globalization and the Korean Educational System**

This section reviews the literature on the worldwide impact of global English and its local impact on Koreans' lives and specifically on the Korean education system.

#### *Globalization and English*

The term "globalization" refers to those developments that are increasing levels of global interdependence, affecting nearly all aspects of our lives (Osler & Vincent, 2002). Critical narratives of globalization have a tendency to focus largely on economic developments and on the increasing power of transnational companies at the expense of nation states. Globalization not only relates to the level of world trade and the 'virtual economy' or electronic flow of capital, but also to labor and production, information, ecology, legal and administrative systems, culture, and civil society (Osler & Vincent, 2002). Moreover, there is the closest of links between language dominance and economic, technological and cultural power, as the history of the English language clearly shows (Crystal, 2003).

The current status of English as the language of the global economy and society is primarily the result of two factors: the expansion of British colonial power at the end of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century (Crystal, 1997; 2003). According to Crystal (2003), English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language in over one hundred countries, including China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil. More



than a billion people throughout the world are speaking English in some capacity. Approximately 750 million people are either first or second-language speakers of English, and an additional 250 million are actively learning to speak English as a foreign language. Given that the world's population passed the six billion mark in late 1999, Crystal (2003) states that approximately one fourth of the world's population is now capable of communicating in English at a functional level.

### *English as Intercultural Communication*

Kachru (1982; 1992) describes the current sociolinguistic profile of English as three concentric circles; the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle refers to the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English, where English is the primary language. It includes the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The Outer Circle refers to countries where English was spread through colonization, and where the English language has become part of that country's major institutions, playing an important "second language" role in a multicultural setting. It includes Singapore, Ghana, India, Kenya, and over fifty other territories. These regions have passed through extended periods of colonization by Inner Circle powers. The Expanding Circle refers to the countries which recognize the importance of English as an international language. In this circle, English is taught as a foreign language. Korea belongs to this circle, as do Japan, Greece, and Poland. These nations have never given English any special administrative status.

With the development of intercultural communication and the growth in international contacts, English has penetrated deeply into the culture of countries all over the world. Generally, English is vital to technological and political development and

gaining access to knowledge. It is the main language of global discussions of education and international relations (Crystal, 1997; 2003). A 1981 study (cited in Spring, 1998) found that 85% of scientific papers in biology and physics worldwide were written in English. In medicine, 73% were written in English, and 69% and 67% in mathematics and chemistry respectively. In 1995, more than 90% of scientific papers in computer science and linguistics were written in English. English also dominates the Internet. About 80 percent of the world's electronically stored information is currently in English (Crystal, 1997; 2003). This finding is significant to my study because it is associated with the enormous increase of English learning in Korea.

### *English Education in Korea*

Presently, the Korean government proclaims education to be the key to success in the global economy (Spring, 1998). Since 1993, when the government of Kim Youngsam (the president of Korea from 1993 to 1998) emphasized the policy of "globalization," there was a remarkable increase in English education for children. Since the 1997 financial crisis in Korea, the Korean government has worked to develop well-trained "human capital" (Spring, 1998). In the competitive global economy, the Korean government also stresses "moral and nationalistic education to create a work ethic and economic nationalism" (Spring, 1998, p. 6). Spring (1998) shows that education is a social investment that prepares human resources (students) to contribute to economic growth. As a result, Koreans feel considerable social pressure to acquire English proficiency. Pennycook (1994) notes that English in Korea acts as a crucial gatekeeper to social and economic progress and has become the language of power and prestige.

Because of the global significance of English, the Korean government emphasizes Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that stresses communicative competence and fluency (Kwon, 2000). CLT requires:

The involvement of learners in the dynamic and interactive process of communication. A communicative classroom allows learners to experience language as well as to analyze it. Second language acquisition research has documented the importance of communication experience (practice) in the development of communicative competence. (Savignon, 2001, p. 237)

However, given Koreans' limited opportunities to develop English language proficiency in Korean contexts, they often move to English-speaking countries to do so.

Since the Ministry of Education adopted CLT, teachers have been frustrated by a system that strongly encourages teachers to use only English to teach English classes (Nunan, 2003). Unfortunately, many teachers do not have the necessary proficiency to carry out English instruction in English because these teachers are accustomed to teaching grammar-translation methods (Pyo, 1997). As McKay (2003) indicates, the issue is whether or not English classes in Korea that rely on their mother tongue can develop authentic communicative situations in which real messages are exchanged. Some argue that "CLT, while the most productive method, is not feasible in many countries because the local culture of learning tends to promote mechanical learning and a lack of individualism and creative thinking" (McKay, 2003, p. 15). Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) recommend a view of an appropriate pedagogy in keeping with the motto "global thinking, local teaching." This means that learning occurs within local contexts, and that English educators need to consider how English is embedded in these contexts.

### *Early English Education and the National College Examination System*

English has been a mandatory subject from middle school to college in Korea for more than fifty years (Kim & Kennedy, 2004). However, in the history of English teaching in Korea, the biggest shift in English education occurred when the age for compulsory English was lowered from thirteen to nine, and English was introduced to students in the third grade, in 1997. This age shift was based on the assumption on the part of the government and the Ministry of Education, that younger is better when it comes to learning a foreign language (Pyo, 1997). This policy shift demonstrated the importance of English learning.

In addition, the importance of English learning has also been emphasized in the College Entrance Exam. Korea experienced the Japanese reign of colonization from 1910 to 1945. During this period, Koreans were influenced by the Japanese in areas such as education, politics, and economics. In education, the Korean government adopted a national examination, which Japan had implemented in the 1960s (Spring, 1998). English is stressed more than other subject in the Korean educational system. In the National College Exams, scores on the English portions of the tests play a key role in the overall results of the exam. Students' future job positions and lifestyles are dependent on their passing this exam (Kim & Kennedy, 2004).

Even after graduation from college, job applicants are required by their prospective employers to take English exams and to give their scores to the same employers. The applicants usually take either the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), which are administered by the US. According to Kim & Kenney (2004, cited in Lee & Park, 2003),

the TOEIC Newsletter (2003) announced that there were 1,131,696 TOEIC test-takers in South Korea in 2002. These data show the importance of English proficiency for employment.

*In-Service English Teaching Training Programs/EPIK Program*

In 1997, with the introduction of English in elementary schools, the Ministry of Education designed and implemented 120-hour in-service training programs to prepare teachers for English instruction (Kwon, 2000). This program consists of 84 hours devoted to developing teachers' communicative ability, 34 hours devoted to English language teaching pedagogy, and two hours devoted to other matters. For those who complete the basic program, another 120-hour advanced program has been implemented in all cities and provinces. Also, the Ministry of Education has provided teachers with opportunities for overseas training. The purpose of this training is to produce linguistically and pedagogically competent teachers. According to Park (1999), in 1996, nearly 25,000 elementary school teachers received the 120-hour in-service training (18,000 in the basic program and 6,600 in the advanced program) and 700 teachers received overseas training.

The other significant change in English education has been that native English-speaking teachers have been recruited through the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program (ETA) and the Ministry of Education's English Program in Korea (EPIK) (Kwon, 2000). The EPIK (similar to the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program) was started in 1995 to improve the English-speaking ability of Korean students, to develop cultural exchanges, and to reform English teaching methodology (with a focus on communicative competence) in preparation for the globalization of Korea. English instructors in the EPIK program were mainly used to teach English in the secondary

schools. The teachers were recruited from all over the English-speaking world, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Recruiting English-speaking teachers was considered less expensive than sending all the Korean students to English-speaking countries (Park & Chi, 1999).

#### *Korean Immigration to the U.S.*

According to Daniels & Kitano, (2001), the way to describe Korean immigration to the United States is in terms of waves, although only the current flow is large enough to warrant such a description. The first significant influx was to Hawaii (1903-1905), although Korean political exiles were living in the United States as early as 1885; the second migration came after the Korean War (1950-1953); and the current migration, which is still in progress, was the result of the 1965 Immigration Act in the United States. This law opened the door to Asian immigrants and caused a chain migration pattern that increased the size of the Korean American population fivefold, from 70,000 to 355,000 between 1970 and 1980 (Kang, 1990, cited in United States Department of Commerce, 1981). Each group of newcomers differed in several ways, such as their demographic characteristics, the conditions surrounding their migration, and their experiences and adaptation in America.

More recently, the Korean government's emphasis on globalization, as well as the 1997 economic collapse, brought about Korean immigration to the United States. This type of immigration is called "International Monetary Fund (IMF) Immigration" and "Education Immigration." In other words, Koreans move to the U.S. to look for 'better economic lives,' to develop English skills, and to gain 'better education.' According to my pilot study, the participants perceived that they received a better education through

the U.S. system. In addition, they believed that learning English through the U.S. education system helped them attain better economic lives. Based on the 2003 data of the Human Resource Department of the Ministry of Education in Korea, it is estimated that about 20,000 elementary to high school students moved to the United States in 2003. However, the Human Resource Department reports that because of diverse family formations in the United States, it is impossible to provide more accurate data about new global families. Usually, children's parents have an F1 (international student) visa and their children, as dependents, have F2 visas. Some families have green cards for several reasons, such as employment in the United States. Some parents with F1 visas try to gain green cards by getting jobs in the United States because usually parents (with F1 visas) must return to Korea when they complete their academic degrees.

### **L2 Learning and Development: A Vygotskian Framework**

The theory of learning and development on which this study draws is based on the work of Vygotsky (1987; 1998). Utilizing his theory of learning and development, this study considers how the three Korean students experience their English learning with the environment, in which they are surrounded, and how these students' experiences with the environment influence their emotional, psychological, and cognitive development, and their identity development. This study also shows "the ways in which meaning making and the affective aspects of social interaction affect learning in the ZPD" (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002).

#### *Vygotsky's System of Meaning*

Mahn (2008) states that "Vygotsky's broader theory of psychological development and his analysis of *meaning making* as central to that process provide the

basis for his concept of the zone of proximal development” (p. 115). Vygotsky’s core work was to examine “human as meaning makers.” His analysis of meaning making is most fully elaborated in his work, *Thinking and Speech* (1987), “in which he analyzes the essential role that meaning plays in verbal thinking and inner speech” (Mahn, 2008, p. 116). Instead of treating thinking and speech as independent and isolated elements, Vygotsky (1987) investigates the developmental relationship between thinking and speaking and their unification in verbal thinking (the central focus of his research). Verbal thinking is “created through the unification of thinking and speaking processes” (Mahn, 2009, p. 2). To analyze verbal thinking, Mahn (2009) states that “Vygotsky derives a unit, *znachenie slova*, the analysis of which makes up a substantial part of *Thinking and Speech*. Vygotsky uses *znachenie slova* to describe meaning. In Russian, *znachenie* means “meaning,” and *slova* means “word,” so it is translated into English as “word meaning” (Mahn, 2009). Considerable confusion about Vygotsky’s use of this unit has been introduced by its translation into English as ‘word meaning’” (p. 2). The meaning of *znachenie slova* was elucidated by Vygotsky: “Meaning is not the sum of all of the psychological operations which stand behind the word. Meaning is something more specific—it is the internal structure of the sign operations” (Vygotsky, 1997a, p. 133). Vygotsky views “the development of meaning as a process, a process that is shaped by its systematic relationship with other psychological functions, processes, structures, and systems” (Mahn, in review, p. 3). The unit (*znachenie slova*: ‘*meaning through language*’ or ‘*meaning through the sign operation*’ or ‘*verbal meaning*’) is “the central to verbal thinking” and also “is part of larger systems—the human psyche and human consciousness” (Mahn, 2009, p. 4). Mahn (2009) states that “Vygotsky’s specific focus is



on meaning that results from the unification of thinking and speaking processes” (p. 4).

Vygotsky analyzed the unit to uncover “the character and development of the unification of thinking and speaking processes that create verbal thinking” (p. 5).

Unlike reductionist approach, separating “the communicative function of speech from its intellectual function,” Vygotsky (1987) used “the concept of word meaning to investigate verbal thinking (‘internalization of speech and its mediation of thought’) and thus avoided a major pitfall of reductionist approaches” (Mahn, 1999, p. 345). Vygotsky (1987) states that:

Word meaning is a unity of both processes [thinking and speech] that cannot be further decomposed. That is, we cannot say that word meaning is a phenomenon of either speech or thinking. The word without meaning is not a word but an empty sound. Meaning is necessary, constituting feature of the word itself. This justifies the view from the inside. This justifies the view that word meaning is a phenomenon of speech. In psychological terms, however, word meaning is nothing other than a generalization, that is a concept. In essence, generalization and word meaning are synonyms. Any generalization—any forms of concept—is unquestionably a specific and true act of thought. Thus, word meaning is also a phenomenon of thinking. (p. 244)

Vygotsky further explains that “it may be appropriate to view *znachenie slova* not only as a unity of thinking and speech, but as a unity of generalization and social interaction, a unity of thinking and communication” (p. 49).

According to Mahn (2009), a key to the development of the system is “the structure of generalization [that] develops as the child acquires language and the ability to

generalize. This ability undergoes changes as levels of generalization increase” (p. 22).

Vygotsky (1997a) states:

Each structure of generalization (i.e., syncretic, complexes, precepts, and concepts) corresponds with a specific system of generality and specific types of relationships of generality between general and specific concepts. (p. 225)... Thus, in concept development, the movement from the general to the specific or from the specific to the general is different for each stage in the development of meaning depending on the structure of generalization dominant at that stage. (p. 226)

Vygotsky stresses “the thought processes that are necessary for the development of *verbal thinking*—voluntary attention, participating, comparison, analysis, abstraction, and synthesis” (Mahn, 2009, p. 23). This form of thinking is developed through the unification of language and thinking processes. In this process, “there are qualitative transformations such as between syncretic and complexive thinking and between complexive thinking and conceptual thinking” (p. 24). In classroom learning, learners are exposed to scientific concepts “introduced through school and concepts related to social expectations of adolescents,” which are distinguished from everyday concepts. Vygotsky explains that:

Scientific concepts can arise in the child’s only on the foundation provided by the lower and more elementary forms of generalization which previously existed. The systematic use of concepts transforms the structure of generalization as the system of scientific concepts is transferred structurally to the domain of the everyday

concepts, restructuring every concept and changing its internal nature from above.” (Mahn, in review, p. 28-29)

For his analysis,

Vygotsky focused on the way that a child co-constructs meaning through social interaction, and the role word meaning plays in the development of thinking. A key transformation of this is the move children make from complexive to conceptual thinking in the formation of concepts. (Mahn, 1999, p. 341-342)

In the concept formation, children experience qualitative transformations between complexive thinking and conceptual thinking. As levels of generalization increases, children’s formation of concepts moves from complexive to conceptual thinking. Mahn (2009) states that “Vygotsky describes children’s forms of thinking moving through five different phases of complexive thinking, always in a dialectical relationship with the changing content of thinking” (p. 23). Interaction with adults through the use of pseudoconcept is a key for the transformation from complexive thinking to conceptual thinking. For instance, Vygotsky (1987) states that “the child and adult understand each other with the pronunciation of the word ‘dog’ because they relate the word to the same object, because they have the same concrete content in mind, However, one thinks of the concrete complex ‘dog’ [the pseudoconcept] and the other of the abstract concept ‘dog’” (p. 155). Mahn (2009) agrees that “although the foundation for concepts is laid when children begin to acquire language, they do not use concepts systematically until they reach adolescence” (p. 28). In the modes of thinking, conceptual thinking is the final mode of thinking in the structure of generalization (i.e., word meaning, concept).

Vygotsky (1998) notes that:

A child at different stages of his development does not generalize to the same extent, and consequently, he interprets and imagines the surrounding reality and environment in a different way. Consequently, the development of thinking in children in itself, the development of generalization in children in itself, is also connected with the way the environment influence children. (p. 345)

When learning a second language, English language learners from different countries have had their unique meaning-making experiences and have created unique systems of meaning before they are exposed to classrooms in the US. In this case, the concept formation in the school can be very complex because they learn a new language through their native language. As they acquire a second language, the system of meaning in L1 will be the foundation for the system of meaning they are developing for L2. They “incorporate the new language into their developing system of meaning” (Mahn, 2008, p.120). Thus, it is important for teachers who deal with English language learners to understand that there is a reliance on the L1 system of meaning as they learn a new language. In supporting this process, teachers need to provide authentic activities that promote their student engagement and awareness of their learning processes by allowing them to draw on their L1 system of meaning.

#### *Dialectical Method*

John-Steiner & Mahn (1996) describe vigorous discussions among Vygotskian researchers about the concept of internalization, which describes “the way that concepts are learned and the processes through which they are acquired, appropriated, or internalized. These processes cannot be adequately understood, we believe, without comprehending the dialectical method Vygotsky used to examine them” (p. 195).

Vygotsky contended that a dialectical methodological approach to examine behavior and consciousness is essential to understand human thinking and activity. Vygotsky's dialectical approach contained three main tenets:

a) that phenomena should be examined as part of a developmental process; b) that change does not occur in a linear, evolutionary progression, but through qualitative transformations; and c) that these transformations take place through the unification of contradictory, distinct processes. For example, in analyzing the history of human society, a dialectical approach reveals the contradictory forces at play in the development of distinct systems of social organization by studying the qualitative transformations—the social revolutions—that bring them into existence. (Mahn, 1999, p. 342)

Dialectics also played an important role in developing his major theoretical contributions, including:

a) the role played by language and other forms of semiotic symbols; b) the function of social interaction in the development of the human mind/brain; c) the role of word meaning in complexive and conceptual thinking; d) the relationship between elementary and higher mental functions in the development of psychological processes; and the concept of the zone of proximal development to explain learning and teaching. (Mahn, 1999, p. 342)

Vygotsky (1987) also uses dialectics to analyze verbal thinking because “a key tenet of dialectical logic is that there is nothing constant but change” so “Vygotsky develops a methodological approach that incorporates this notion of change into his research in

verbal thinking” (Mahn, in review, p. 9). Vygotsky investigates the way that thought and speech become inextricably intertwined.

*The Internalization of Speech and Verbal thinking*

Conceived of as “representational activity,” internalization as a “process occurs simultaneously in social practice and in the human brain/mind” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 196). For learners’ appropriation, socially elaborated symbol systems constitute “a critical aspect of learning-driven development” (p. 196). This appropriation of symbol systems guided Vygotsky’s application of the concept of internalization as “the transformation of communicative language into inner speech and further into verbal thinking” (Vygotsky, 1986, as cited in John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 196). Vygotsky (1987) conceived of inner speech as “an internal plane of verbal thinking” (p. 279), and also as “a dynamic, unstable, fluid phenomenon that appears momentarily between the more clearly formed and stable poles of verbal thinking, that is, between word and thought” (p. 279).

Unlike cognitive constructivists, who separate “individual processes of knowledge construction” from “social processes of joint understanding,” sociocultural researchers see them as interconnected and interdependent. Sociocultural research is focused on “the study of the way that the coconstruction of knowledge is internalized, appropriated, transmitted, or transformed in formal and informal settings” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 196). In other words, “humans construct minds in interaction with the external world of nature and with other humans, changing in the process both themselves and nature” (p. 196). Thus, sociocultural approaches view a student, who is learning in the classroom, as an active agent, who “plays an active role and constantly informs the

teacher as their mutual negotiation and collaboration build knowledge” (p. 197). Sociocultural approaches stress that meaning is collaboratively constructed and negotiated in the context of shared activities, but it is not just a transfer of knowledge. John-Steiner & Mahn (1996) state that “internalization is simultaneously an individual and a social process. In working with, through, and beyond what they have appropriated in social participation and then internalized, individual coconstruct new knowledge,” and it “is a fundamental part of the lifelong process of the coconstruction of knowledge and the creation of the new” (p. 197).

### *Social Situation of Development*

Vygotsky (1998) sees human development as social rather than individualistic; namely, that “man is a social creature, that without social interaction he can never develop in himself any of the attributes and characteristics which have developed as a result of the methodical evolution of all humankind” (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 352). Because by his nature a human being is a social creature, he masters “certain forms of activity and consciousness which have been perfected by humanity during the process of historical development” (p. 352). In the course of human development, the role and influence of the environment (situation) in an expanded sense that includes social relationships, serves as an important aspect. Since the historically evolved traits of human personality exist in the environment, “the environment is the source of development of these specifically human traits and attributes” (p. 352).

Vygotsky uses the concept of the *social situation of development* to demonstrate “the interdependence of individual-internal and social-external processes in learning and development” (Mahn, 2003, p. 128). In other words, the *social situation of development*

is described as “the relationship of individuals to the context in which they exist and looks at it as being key to the unity of the social and the personal” (Mahn, in review, p. 21). Vygotsky (1998) expresses this unity as “a completely original, exclusive, single, and unique relation, specific to the given age, between the child and reality, mainly the social reality that surrounds him. We call this relation the social situation of development at the given age” (p. 198). Mahn (2003) notes that “Vygotsky conceives of the social situation of development as a *relation*, not a context” (p. 128). Vygotsky (1998) argues that:

The child is a part of the social situation, and the relation of the child to the environment and the environment to the child occurs through the experience and activity of the child himself; the forces of the environment acquire a controlling significance because the child experiences them. (p. 294)

Mahn (2003) states that:

Because these interrelated developments change children’s mental functioning and their perception and experience of their sociocultural environment, their relationship to the environment changes. Vygotsky called this experience of *meaning* one of the most complex problems of contemporary psychology and psychopathology of the personality. (p. 129)

Vygotsky used “a Russian term—*perezhivanie*—to capture the process through which children make meaning of their social existence. This term refers to the way children perceive, emotionally experience, appropriate, internalize, and understand interactions in their environment” (Mahn, 2003, p. 129). Mahn & John-Steiner (2002) describe



*perezhivanie* as “the affective processes through which interactions in the ZPD are individually perceived, appropriated, and represented by the participants” (p. 49).

To understand the concept of social situation of development, we first need to understand age-related dynamic development, and also understand the three interrelated concepts developed by Vygotsky: system of meaning, ZPD, and *perezhivanie*. The following sections describe the social situation of development at the given age, the three concepts respectively, and then demonstrate how they are interrelated; namely, how social situation of development fits into system of meaning and its relationship to two other concepts of Vygotsky’s ZPD and *perezhivanie*.

#### *Social Situation of Development at a Given Age*

To explain the social situation of development, the dynamics of any age should be studied (Vygotsky, 1998). Vygotsky agrees that child development is determined at a given age for a child by the reality that surrounds the child. He states that:

The social situation of development represents the initial moment for all dynamic changes that occur in development during the given period. It determines wholly and completely the forms and the path along which the child will acquire ever newer personality characteristics, drawing them from the social reality as from the basic source of development, the path along which the social becomes the individual. (p. 198)

The social situation of development specific to each age determines the whole picture of the child’s social existence. Vygotsky (1998) elucidates that “every age presents the child with an environment which has been organized in a special way, so that the environment,

in the purely external sense of the word, keeps changing as the child passes on from one age to another (p. 339). Vygotsky (1998) says that we have to explain how:

neoformations proper to the given age arise and develop from the life of the child in this social situation. These neoformations that characterize the reconstruction of the conscious personality of the child in the first place are not a prerequisite but a result of development of the age level. (p. 198)

Thus, neoformations to the specific to the given age “lead to a reconstruction of the whole structure of the child’s consciousness” and also alter “the whole system of relations to external reality and to himself” (p. 199).

In describing how others at his time developed theories for dividing the child’s development into periods, Vygotsky (1998) argued that until recent years, studies were mainly focused on “symptom complexes.” “That is, the aggregate of external traits that differentiate the various periods, stages, and phases of child development,” but “the real problem consists of studying what lies behind these traits and determines them, that is, studying the process itself of child development in its internal patterns” (p. 189). Theories of child development can be elucidated generally by two basic conceptions: 1) “development is nothing other than realization, modification, and combination of deposits” and 2) “development is a continuous process of self-propulsion characterized primarily by a continuous appearance and formation of the new which did not exist at previous stages” (p. 190). In this sense, Vygotsky (1998) notes that we must consider child development’s dynamics and the dynamics of transitions from one age level to another.

Vygotsky (1998) states that the child experiences two types of developmental periods: stable periods and critical periods (crises). He explains that in firm or stable periods, “development occurs mainly through microscopic changes in the child’s personality” and these periods “make up the greater part of childhood, if judged purely chronologically” (p. 191). In contrast, during critical periods, changes in individual’s internal processes and social relations are so profound that these changes lead to crises for the child. Mahn (2003) writes that “children vary in the onset, duration, and impact of critical periods, but they are all affected in a fundamental way—during this period a new mental formation, a psychological structure of the personality, is formed” (p. 123). Vygotsky (1998) ascribes the three general features to these critical periods. First, there are no definite boundaries between the critical periods and stable periods. “The crisis arises imperceptibly—it is difficult to determine its onset and termination” (p. 191), but there exists a culminating point that distinguishes the critical periods from the stable periods. Second, during the critical periods, the children of school age “seem to drop out of the system of pedagogical influence that until very recently provided a normal course of their training and education” (p. 191). The children in these periods experience “a drop in rate of success, a slacking of interest in school work, and a general decline in capacity for work (p. 191). Vygotsky stresses that critical periods occurs in different children differently, but every child is affected by these periods. Third, during these periods, “progressive development of the child’s personality, the continuous construction of the new, which had been so prominent in all stable ages, is seemingly attenuated or temporarily suspended” (p. 192). Vygotsky (1998) states that the child in these periods

“does not so much acquire as he loses some of what he had acquired earlier” (p. 192). He emphasizes that children’s development even in these periods never stops.

Vygotsky (1998) presents the division of age into periods:

Crisis of the newborn.

Infancy (two months to one year).

Crisis at age one.

Early childhood (one to three years).

Crisis at age three.

Preschool age (three to seven years).

Crisis at age seven.

School age (eight to twelve years).

Crisis at age thirteen.

Age of puberty (Fourteen to eighteen years).

Crisis at age seventeen. (p. 196).

Vygotsky (1998) notes that “critical periods alternate with stable periods and are turning points in development, once again confirming that the development of the child is a dialectical process in which a transition from one stage to another is accomplished not along an evolutionary, but along a revolutionary path” (p. 193). Vygotsky considered development as a “contradictory process characterized by longer periods of gradual growth interspersed with shorter periods of crisis and transition during which qualitative restructuring of mental functioning takes place” (Mahn, 2003, p. 124). Vygotsky (1998) describes how the development of children generally unfolds:

The crisis of the newborn separates the embryonal period of development from infancy. The one-year crisis separates infancy from early childhood. The crisis at age three is a transition from early childhood to preschool age. The crisis at age seven is a link that joins preschool and school ages. Finally, the crisis at age thirteen coincides with the turning point in development at the transition from school age to puberty. (p. 193)

Vygotsky (1998) explains how the aged seven to eight years old differs from the preschool child from adolescents. Because of this, child at the age of seven demonstrates difficulties in terms of his teaching. He states that “the negative content of this age is apparent primarily in the disruption of mental equilibrium and in the instability of the will, mood, etc.” (p. 193). In spite of the fact that the crisis at age seven has negative aspects, there are also positive symptoms during this period: the child becomes more independent and his relation to other children changes, too.

The crisis at age thirteen is described as the negative phase of the age of sexual maturation, and the negative content of this period is the most prominent (Vygotsky, 1998). The age thirteen presents “the decrease in success, decline in capacity for work, lack of harmony in the internal structure of the personality, contraction and dying off of systems of previously established interests, and the negative, protesting character of behavior” (p. 193). While these explanations of the negative significance of crisis at age thirteen, Vygotsky asserts that “behind every negative symptom is hidden a positive content consisting usually in the transition to a new and higher form” (p. 194).

Vygotsky (1998) in using the principle of age-related neoformations as criteria to describe child development relied on the following points.

(1) introducing critical ages into the scheme of division into periods; (2) excluding the period of embryonal development of the child; (3) excluding the period of development that is usually called youth, which includes the years—after age seventeen to eighteen right up to the onset of final maturity; and (4) including the age of sexual maturation among the stable, firm ages and not among the critical ages. (195)

The reason he did not include the critical period at age 17 in the scheme of age periods of childhood was that in a general sense, the age from 18 to 25 years “more likely makes up the initial link in the chain of mature age than the concluding link in the chain of periods of child development” (p. 196).

Vygotsky (1998) explains that:

At each given age period, development occurs in such a way that separate aspects of the child’s personality change and as a result of this, there is a reconstruction of the personality as a whole—in development there is just exactly a reverse dependence: the child’s personality changes as a whole in its internal structure and the movement of each of its parts is determined by the laws of changes of this whole. (p. 196)

As the child changes in the process of development, environmental factors play a certain role during a given age. Thus, “the influence of environment on the psychological development of children, and on the development of their conscious personalities (Vygotsky. 1998, p. 339)” consists of their emotional experiences {perezhivanie}. He notes that “this emotional experience {perezhivanie} arising from any situation or from any aspect of his environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this

environment will have on the child” (p. 339-340). Thus, Vygotsky’s examination presents “the unity of personality and environment [the unification of external and internal forces] to reveal the character, the motion, and the direction of development from critical to stable periods and from stable to critical” (Mahn, 2003, p. 124). In relationship to the *social situation of development*, the changes “in the mental structures and functions reveal the essence of development—the dynamic relationship between the structures of the higher mental processing and the content of those structures—meaning-making” (Mahn, 2003, p. 125-126). This statement demonstrates the interdependence of sociocultural processes and individual physical and mental development.

#### *The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*

Chaiklin (2003) states that “when Vygotsky first introduced the zone of proximal development in *Thinking and Speech*, (p. 43)” the ZPD was introduced as a part of a general analysis of child development, but not as the central concept of his theory of child development. The educational basis for a child’s development is encapsulated by Vygotsky’s term, the zone of proximal development; it is the zone where social forms of mediation develop (Gibbons, 2002; Lantolf, 2000; Mercer, 1993). The ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) refers to the distance or cognitive space between what learners can do unaided and what they can do in collaboration with a more competent other. Internalization of social interactive processes happens in the ZPD—the interactional space within which a learner is enabled to perform a task beyond his or her own current level of competence, through assisted performance (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). However, Chaiklin (2003) indicates that in Vygotsky’s view, the more important aspect is to describe why this happen. That is, “it is not the competence per se of the more knowledgeable person that is

important; rather, it is to understand the meaning of that assistance in relation to a child's learning and development" (p. 43). Even if the ZPD is not a main concept of Vygotsky's theory of child development,

Its role is to provide an important place and moment in the process of child development. To understand this role, one must appreciate the theoretical perspectives within it appeared. That is, we need to understand what Vygotsky meant by development in general, if we are going to understand what he meant by zone of proximal development in particular. (p. 45-46)

According to Chaiklin (2003), "Vygotsky proposed that each period of childhood be characterized abstractly by a psychological structure, a set of integral relations among psychological functions (e.g., perception, voluntary memory, speech, thinking)" (p. 46). In Vygotsky's view, development was seen as "a process that is characterized by a unity of material and mental aspects, a unity of the social and the personal during the child's ascent up the stages of development" (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 190, as cited in Chaiklin, 2003).

As he describes the development of children, from infancy to adolescence, Vygotsky emphasizes that the interdependence of internal and external processes in learning and development. As mentioned earlier, this relationship between child development and its environment is designated as the *social situation of development*. Mahn (2003) states that "changes in children's *social situations of development* result from and cause qualitative transformations in their perception, experience, appropriation, internalization, understanding, and memory of interaction in and with their environment" (p. 128). Mahn adds that "the concept of the *social situation of development* is a key to understanding the way in which individuals construct their systems of meaning" (Mahn,



2009, p. 21). “For each age period (that refers to the period of development), there are a group of psychological functions that are maturing in relation to the central new-formation and that will lead to the restructuring of the existing functions to the formation of a new structure” (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 49). Vygotsky (1999) says that “the transition to a new form of mental functioning is seen in adolescence when children take qualitative steps in the development of the “higher formations that are the foundation of the whole conscious existence of man” (Mahn, 2003, p. 132).

In the current study, the participants in adolescence were forming and reforming academic concepts in a complex and unfamiliar social system, and at the same time, they were becoming aware of themselves as conscious beings. In addition to that, these participants were facing emotional and cognitive challenges as they were learning a new language and a new culture. Because the students’ relationship to the environment changes, their perception and experience of their sociocultural environment also changes. Therefore, teachers need to collaborate with students to understand their lived experiences, knowledge, and emotions while learning English as a second language. Mahn & John-Steiner (2002) state that “a teacher’s awareness of students’ ways of perceiving, processing, and reacting to classroom interactions—their *perezhivaniya*—contributes significantly to the teacher’s ability to engage the students in meaningful, engaging education” (p. 53). This appropriation of social interaction plays an important role in transformative experiences of all types to learners. Mahn & John-Steiner (2002) recommend that “careful listening, intense dialogues and emotional support sustain the cooperative construction of understanding, of scientific discovery and of artistic forms” (p. 51). Likewise, Wells (1999) states that “learning in the ZPD involves all aspects of the

learner—acting, thinking, and feeling” (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002, p. 47). John-Steiner & Mahn (1996) describe how:

The active agents within the zone of proximal development “can include people, adults and children, with various degrees of expertise, but it can also include artifacts, such as books, videos, wall displays, scientific equipment and a computer environment intended to support intentional learning.” (p. 198-199)

Mahn (2008) states that:

The degree to which students gain control over these influencing factors “ 1) physical and emotional—hunger, anxiety, fear, confidence, among many; 2) consequences of living a loving home as opposed to not; 3) recent interactions with peers; and 4) the way that interactions in sociocultural environments are appropriated and internalized], by becoming consciously aware of their thinking processes and using conceptual thinking to guide activity, determines whether the subjective ZPD expands or narrows—a process that can be facilitated by effective pedagogy. (p. 117)

### *Dynamics of Development in ZPD*

At each given age level, the processes of development are connected with the basic neoformation of both central and peripheral lines of development (Vygotsky, 1998).

He argues that:

The processes that are central lines of development at one age become peripheral lines of development at the following age and conversely, peripheral lines of development of one age are brought to the forefront and become central lines at another age since their meaning and relative significance in the total structure of

development changes and their relation to the central neoformation changes. (p. 197)

Therefore, “in the transition from one stage to another, the whole structure of the age is reconstructed” (p. 197). In other words, the structure of age is dynamic and changeable because the structure formed previously makes a transition to a new structure. Vygotsky (1987) explains that “the new structure appears and is formed in the course of the development of the age level. The relation between the wholes and the parts, so essential to the concept of structure, is a dynamic relation that determines the change and development of the whole and its parts” (p. 198).

Vygotsky (1998) states that the problem of age level is essential to psychology, and it is also the key to the problem of practice. The problem of age level is closely related to the “diagnostics of age-related development of the child.” Diagnostics are used to determine the actual level of development attained by the child. He explains that “the actual level of development is determined by that age, that stage or phase within a given age that the child is experiencing at the time” (p. 199). Vygotsky (1998) elucidates this concept:

Determining the actual level of development is the most essential and indispensable task in resolving every practical problem of teaching and educating the child, checking the normal course of his physical and mental development, or establishing disturbances of one kind or another in development that upset the normal course and make the whole process atypical, anomalous, and in some cases pathological. Thus, the determination of the actual level of development is the first and basic task of the diagnostics of development. (p. 200)

In determining the actual level of development, we only determine already matured and completed development; however, “a genuine diagnosis of development must be able to catch not only concluded cycles of development, not only the fruits, but also those processes that are in the period of maturation” (p. 200). “Ascertaining the processes that have not matured at the time, but are in the period of maturation is the second task of the diagnostics of development. This task is accomplished by finding the *zones of proximal development*” (p. 201). The zones are closely connected with the child’s actual level of development. Vygotsky (1998) explains that:

In studying what the child is capable of doing independently, we study yesterday’s development. Studying what the child is capable of doing cooperatively, we ascertain tomorrow’s development. The area of immature, but maturing processes makes up the child’s zone of proximal development. (p. 202)

Vygotsky provides an example with how the zone of proximal development is determined. For example,

It develops that one child [eight years old] solves problems cooperatively that standards relate to, let us say, age twelve. The zone of proximal development moves his mental age forward by four years. The other child moves forward with cooperation only to the standard age level of a nine-year-old. His zone of proximal development is only one year. (p. 203)

Determination of the zone of proximal development can be applied to other aspects of the child’s personality (Vygotsky, 1987). He notes that “a closer source of the development of internal individual properties of the child’s personality is cooperation (this word understood in the broadest sense) with other people” (p. 203). Therefore, “by

applying the principle of cooperation for establishing the zone of proximal development, we make it possible to study directly what determines most precisely the mental maturation that must be realized in the proximal and subsequent periods of his stage of development” (p. 203). In the classroom settings:

Since teaching depends on immature, but maturing processes and the whole area of these processes is encompassed by the zone of proximal development of the child, the optimum time for teaching both the group and each individual child is established at each age by the zone of their proximal development. (p. 204)

Vygotsky emphasizes that diagnosis must be based on “all the manifestations and facts of maturation.” He says;

The synthetic, dynamic picture of these manifestations, the aggregate of which we call personality, enters as a whole into the framework of the study. We cannot, of course, precisely measure the traits of personality. We can only with difficulty determine what we call personality, but from the point of view of diagnostics of development, as Gesell assumes, we must observe how personality is made up and matures. (p. 205)

### *PEREZHIVANIE*

Vygotsky’s (1998) method is analysis into unit in analyzing unification he derives a unit that can be analyzed that maintains the essence of the whole—of the unification. One of the units is the emotional or lived experience; namely, *perezhivanie*.

Vygotsky (1998) states that *perezhivanie* is:

A unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced—an emotional experience

[*perezhivanie*] is always related to something which is found outside the person—and on the other hand, what is represented is how I, myself, am experiencing this, i.e., all the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristics are represented in an emotional experience [*perezhivanie*]. (p. 342)

This shows the interrelations between the environment and child development, and also describes how child individually perceives and appropriates through interactions in the ZPD. Vygotsky (1998) considers the emotional experience “to be a unity of environmental and personal features,” and “emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] is a concept, which allows us to study the role and influence of environment on the psychological development of children in the analysis of the laws of development” (p. 343). Environmental or situational influence “depends not only on the nature of the situation itself, but also on the extent of the child’s understanding and awareness of the situation” (p. 343).

Vygotsky (1998) concludes that environment is seen as dynamic and changeable, and environment (a situation) “influences the child in one way or another and directs his development. But the child, his development, keeps changing and becomes different” (p. 346). In the stage of adolescence, adolescents understand reality and social relations in a profound way, and they:

[Begin] to understand the complexity of “self” through the reflection and introspection resulting from conceptual thinking. This awareness of one’s own internal mental processes through self-perception and reflection contributes to the fundamental change in the adolescent’s perception and internalization of the experience of social interaction. (Mahn, 2003, p. 134)

Mahn (2003) adds that “*perezhivanie* undergoes a qualitative transformation when the adolescent thinks in concepts and perceives and understands social reality in its interconnectedness, as a system of systems” (p. 134). With the influence of the environment and social relations, adolescent’s experiences, perception, internalization, and appropriation of the internal processes themselves shape the personality [human characteristics or individual (internal)] (Mahn, 2003). This personality includes “the primary conditions of the individual case of the personality (instincts, heredity) and secondary conditions of its formation (environment, acquired traits)” and “a set of tertiary conditions (reflection, self-shaping)” (p. 134). The social situation of development of the personality is “dynamic, contextual, and complex entities in a constant state of change” (p. 135).

#### *Interrelationships of Meaning, ZDP, and Perezhivanie*

As quoted above, Mahn (2003) states that “changes in children’s *social situations of development* result from and cause qualitative transformations in their perception, experience, appropriation, internalization, understanding, and memory of interaction in and with the environment” (p. 128). These changes in human development depend on how the environment influences their development and how the individual appropriates, emotionally perceives, and internalizes their learning in interaction with their environment and social relations. This emotional or lived experience (*perezhivanie*) influences and can determine the children’s development. In the course of their development, many potential factors in the current study (including age, motivation, social relations with people around them, materials, learning situation, teachers, and family composition) influence how the students experience learning in their ZPD when

they make meaning; thus, how they experience learning in their ZPD with the environment and its social relations determines their potential development. This is learning leading development.

In the course of human development, language plays a central role in an individual becoming aware of, and creating their system of meaning through, lived or emotional experience. Meaning is collaboratively constructed and reconstructed in the context of shared events and activities. A system of meaning (i.e., generalization, concept) is developed in the process through which concepts are learned, starting with the transformation of external communication into inner speech and that inner speech becoming a plane of verbal thinking. The system of meaning results from the unification of thinking processes and speaking processes in verbal thinking; in other words, meaning is a unity of generalization and social interaction.

In students' ZPD, the environment influences the students in one of many ways and directs their development, and in turn the students change and differ as they develop. Through this emotional experience with the influence of the environment including social relationships, the students' (in this case, adolescents) experiences, perception, internalization, and appropriation of the internal processes themselves shape the personality (students' characteristics)—an important part of their identity formation.

For the English language learners who are reconstructing a new system of meaning in L2 using the foundation of their system of meaning in their L1, teachers can play a crucial role in helping these students build the new concepts using their existing knowledge and their new knowledge. Through collaborative learning in the classroom, teachers need to understand students' lived experiences, knowledge, and feelings (Mahn



& John-Steiner, 2002). Mahn & John-Steiner (2002) suggest emotional scaffolding that “includes the gift of confidence, the sharing of risks in the presentation of new ideas, constructive criticism and the creating of a safety zone” (p. 52). Thus, their positive learning experiences with the environment and its social relations contribute to the students’ potential development.

### *Pedagogical Principles of Sociocultural View of Learning*

From Vygotsky’s sociocultural view of learning, teaching is related to real-life use, and understanding of language is developed in the context of actual language use (Gibbons, 2002). According to Gibbons (2002), language teaching does not mean “a breaking up of language into its component parts of speech, or a fragmentation of the timetable into spelling, dictation, composition, and so on, or a separation of the micro-skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking” (p. 60). Language teaching means that “students are encouraged to reflect on how language is used for a range of purposes and with a range of audiences, and that teachers focus explicitly on those aspects of language that enable students to do this” (p. 60). Teachers can explicitly focus on aspects of language by providing a “cultural and situational context for a focus on those aspects of the second language most relevant to curriculum learning” (p. 119). The subject matter of the curriculum provides a variety of contexts. Gibbons (2002) states:

The curriculum can be seen as providing authentic contexts for the development of subject-specific genres and registers...An integrated program takes a functional approach to language and places its teaching focus on language as the medium of learning, rather than on language as something separate from content. (p. 119)

Language teaching within a curriculum supports language and curriculum learning in a reciprocal way. There seems to be a continuous recycling of concepts, grammar, or vocabulary associated with particular curriculum knowledge. For example, prior knowledge with a topic facilitates language learning and comprehension. Gibbons (2002) says that “language-based tasks in a subject area can effectively recycle particular curriculum concepts and knowledge in the process of focusing on relevant text types, registers, grammar, and vocabulary” (p. 120).

The sociocultural view of learning addresses teaching language in ways that recognize its wholeness and sees it as a system for meaning making. Gibbons (2002) suggests three principles that are useful for teachers to bear in mind:

1. Move from whole to part.
2. Move from meaning to form.
3. Move from familiar to unfamiliar (p. 133)

Cummins (2000, as cited in Gibbons, 2002) suggests some key pedagogical principles for promoting second language learners’ linguistic and cognitive development, and the growth of critical literacy skills.

1. A focus on meaning. This requires input, or the language that children listen to or read, to be comprehensible. It also includes the development of critical literacy.
2. A focus on language. This includes the development of children’s awareness of language forms and use, and the ability to critically analyze these.

3. A focus on use. This involves using language to transform what has been learned, through generating new knowledge, creating literature and art, and acting on social realities. (p. 128-129)

Gibbons (2002) states integration of each of these with the socio-cultural view of learning and acknowledges that student learning is inseparable from the interactions between teachers and learners.

### *Scaffolding*

According to Gibbons (2003), using Vygotskian terms, learning occurs through this assisted performance and in the context of joint activity. The mediation is central because it provides a means for studying social process involved in situated language learning and use (Gibbons, 2003; Kramsch, 1993; Moll, 1994; Toohey, 2000). Gibbons (2003) reflects Vygotsky's notion that learning originates in social mediation provided by interaction. Such research in second language acquisition (SLA) questions the metaphors of input and output (e.g., Swain, 2000; van Lier, 2000). Sociocultural theory views language learners not as processors of input or producers of output, but as "speakers/hearers involved in developmental processes which are realized in interaction" (Ohta, 2000, p. 51). According to Ohta (2000),

L2 acquisition, in this scheme, is not considered to be wholly resident in the mind of the language learner, such that it can only be inferentially accessed by the researcher, but the learner-and-environment is seen in a holistic perspective. In this approach, previously sharp edges defining who is 'speaker' and who is 'hearer' become blurred; speakers/hearers collaboratively produce utterance which they jointly own. (p. 51)

In sociocultural theory, language is acquired through and is instrumental in the activity of meaning-making in the creation of the system of meaning.

For the co-construction of knowledge, what teachers choose to do in classrooms, and the kind of support they provide, is of crucial importance in the educational success of their second language learners. The concept of scaffolding (which relates to the concept of the ZPD) is “an effective conceptual metaphor for the quality of teacher intervention in learning,” and scaffolding “represents the kind and quality of cognitive support which an adult can provide for a child’s learning” (Mercer, 1993, p. 96). Scaffolding learning for a child's mastery of a given task stresses the role of the adult as a teacher within the ZPD (Diaz, Neal & Amaya-Williams, 1990). According to Maybin, Mercer, & Steierer (1992),

[Scaffolding] is not just any assistance which helps a learner accomplish a task.—  
It is help which is intended to bring the learner closer to a state of competence which will enable them eventually to complete such a task on their own. (p. 188)

Several key functions of the support provided by the adult or teacher include recruitment of the child’s interest, reduction in degrees of freedom, maintaining goal orientation, highlighting critical task features, controlling frustration, and demonstrating idealized solution paths (Stone, 1993). Gibbons (2002; 2003) suggests that in terms of English language learners, teachers, rather than simplifying a task, should reflect on the nature of the scaffolding that is being provided for learners to carry out that task. To reflect on the nature of scaffolding in learning, teachers must create opportunities for second language learners to have more varied and dialogic interactional patterns to occur in the classroom that can help their language to be stretched. It means that the degree of

learners' language development depends largely on how classroom discourse is constructed.

The way a teacher scaffolds language so that learners can appropriate it is crucial for students' language development. The teacher's role and responsibility is to create opportunities for varied and dialogic interactional patterns to scaffold students' language. Teachers need to make everything they say clear and comprehensible to their students, and to clarify students' new learning, while new language and concepts should be repeated and reviewed in several ways. Teachers need to "tell children what they are to do, ask someone to retell what [they] said to the rest of the class, or ask individual [students] to tell [them] each step in turn" (Gibbons, 2002, p. 21). Gibbons also recommends that teachers write up each step on the board as they say it. Teachers need to keep students on task. Gibbons provides a good example of how teachers scaffold for their students and how they make sure the instructions are comprehensible. Table 1 shows scaffolding instructions (Gibbons, 2002, p. 22).

**Table 1. *Scaffolding Instructions Utilized by Teachers.***

Teacher's words	Commentary
You have to place a magnet, put a magnet, into the cradle, and place another magnet on top of the cradled magnet	<i>Teacher refers to the written instructions, introduces less well-known word place alongside more familiar word put.</i>
So you've got one magnet in here	<i>Pointing</i>
Then you have to put another magnet on top, right?	<i>Holding the second magnet, indicating where it must be placed but not actually placing it</i>
then you have to alt-ern-ate the magnets.	<i>Alternate is said slowly and with emphasis</i>
It says "alternating the poles"...changing the poles.	<i>Models the more formal word (alternate) but uses this along with a familiar "everyday"</i>

*word (change); also holds the second magnet and indicates how the magnet should be turned*

So if you put it facing like this...  
You've got it one way like this,

*demonstrating*

Then you change the poles around

*Indicating the movement by turning the second magnet in the air but not placing it*

Change it to the other side, alternate the poles  
So you're trying it each way

*Switches between more and less formal terms*

*Summarizing what the children should do.*

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In this excellent example, teachers build “bridges into this written text so that the learners [are] given access to new and more formal language” (p. 22) and they amplify, not simplify, the language.

McGroarty (1988, as cited in Gibbons, 2002) suggests group work that offers advantages to second language learners and the way a teacher scaffolds language, so that learners can appropriate it in three ways:

1. Learners hear more language, a greater variety of language, and have more language directed toward them: group-work situations increase the input to the learner.
2. Learners interact more with other speakers, and therefore their output is also increased. They tend to take more turns, and in the absence of the teacher, have more responsibility for clarifying their own meanings. In other words, it is the learners themselves who are doing the language learning work.

3. What learners hear and what they learn is contextualized: language is heard and used in an appropriate context and used meaningfully for a particular purpose. (p. 17)

To make group work effective, teachers should provide clear and explicit instructions and ensure that all students are involved. Group work reflects on the nature of scaffolding for second language learners to carry out a task.

### **Factors of Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)**

This section investigates the factors that may be responsible for individual differences or variations in SLA: individual factors (age, personality, and motivation); social factors (a model of language learning in social context, the acculturation model, and questions/challenges on the acculturation model); and linguistic factors (the individual learners' maturity in L1 and L2: Cummins' interdependence hypothesis and Clarke's short-circuit hypothesis).

Mainstream SLA research has been largely focused on the role of the L1, acquisition orders, developmental sequences, negotiated input, the role of a biologically-specified Universal Grammar (UG), and sequence learning (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). According to Larsen-Freeman (2001), from the UG perspective, "the only 'contribution' of the learner is an innate predisposition for language acquisition, at least with regard to the acquisition of core grammar" (p. 12). From the interactionist perspective, "the learner's 'contribution' is a willingness to utilize second language input, obtained usually through negotiating meaning with a more proficient speaker of the language" (p. 12). Unlike first language acquisition, attainment or success in learning a second language is considerably more variable (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2001).

Usually in SLA, the factors that may affect these differences are nonlanguage factors, such as age, aptitude, motivation, attitude, and sociolinguistic influences. These factors have been described as individual differences and are not necessarily idiosyncratic; however, they may reflect social and societal backgrounds (Gass & Selinker, 1994; 2001). According to Gass & Selinker (2001), in second language learning, the question of the role of nonlanguage factors has had less of an impact on SLA than has research on linguistics, psychology, and psycholinguistics; however, it is necessary to consider the general goals of those fields which have dominated SLA. In this section, literature is reviewed from the perspective of individual factors (such as age, personality, and motivation), social factors (including acculturation, social interaction, language learning situation), and linguistic factors (such as the students' maturity of language proficiency in L1 and L2) that might be responsible for individual differences in SLA.

### *Individual Factors*

#### *Age: Critical Period Hypothesis*

As the critical period hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967) influenced Korean English education, the 'younger is better' phenomenon has been used and overused; however, an explanation of this phenomenon continues to elude experts. For several decades, differences in ages of acquisition and their implications continue to arouse much interest among researchers of second language acquisition and applied linguistics (DeKeyser & Larson-Hall, 2005). Lenneberg (1967) is most strongly associated with the issue of age in language learning, and first used the term "critical period" in the context of language acquisition. Lenneberg's definition of critical period is automatic acquisition from mere exposure" that "seems to disappear after this age" (p. 176). According to DeKeyser &



Larson-Hall (2005), the term critical period hypothesis (CPH) is defined as the idea that “language acquisition from mere exposure (i.e., implicit learning), the only mechanism available to the young child, is severely limited in older adolescents and adults” (p. 89). This hypothesis applies to both first and second language learning (DeKeyser & Larson-Hall, 2005).

In spite of a common belief that children are more successful L2 learners than adults, the evidence for this is surprisingly equivocal (Saville-Troike, 2006). While many scholars accept a critical period for L1 acquisition, controversy arises when the critical period claim is extended to L2 learning (Birdsong, 1992; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000; and McLaughlin, 1984, 1985). In addition, Gass & Selinker (2001) have raised the question of what it means to be a better learner. In spite of this, some children are better at pronunciation. It is claimed that an authentic accent cannot be acquired if the second language is learned after a particular age (usually, the early teens) (Cook, 2001). Several recent studies have challenged the CPH (Birdsong, 1992; 2005). Some researchers have argued that although older or adult learners do not achieve a native-like accent in a second language, it is not necessarily true that adult learners cannot achieve native-like proficiency in phonology (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Krashen, Long, and Scarcella’s (1979) generalization is that older children are faster than younger learners in terms of the acquisition of morphosyntax.

Johnson and Newport (1989) examined learners’ proficiency based on different ages of arrival, usually in the US (age of arrival ranged from 3 to 39). They found that learner’s performance on a test intended to measure L2 syntactic knowledge was linearly related to the age of arrival only up to puberty. By and large, postpubescent learners performed poorly, but there was no correlation with age of arrival. A further study by

Slavoff & Johnson (1995) examined nonnative speakers of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese (who arrived in the US between the ages of 7 and 12) learning English. They were tested on specific grammatical structures after various lengths of stay (ranging from 6 months to 3 years). Slavoff & Johnson (1995) found that length of stay as opposed to age of arrival was an important variable in predicting knowledge of English syntax; however, the children they examined were below the age where CPH is generally thought to take effect. According to Birdsong (2005), the study of age effects in SLA covers a broad range of linguistic features and experimental methodologies, but age of arrival effects are not “monolithic.”

Saville-Troike (2006) demonstrates some of the advantages for both younger and older learners. Older learners are advantaged by greater learning capacity, which includes a better memory for vocabulary and greater analytic ability because they are able to understand and apply explicit grammatical rules. They also benefit from greater knowledge of L1, higher levels of pragmatic skills, and real-world knowledge, which enables older learners to perform tasks of much greater complexity. Newport (1990) suggests that younger learners develop more native-like grammatical intuitions, which means that they are less able to understand and apply explicit grammatical rules, and that they are in a non-analytic processing mode. Younger learners are probably more successful in informal and naturalistic L2 learning contexts (implicit learning), while older learners are probably more successful in formal instructional settings (explicit learning).

### *Personality*

According to Dornyei (2005), in examining “personality,” different scholars use

the term differently to cover different breadths of human nature. Every language contains an array of adjectives to describe personality traits, including aggressive, kind, lazy, and sociable. In SLA studies, personality traits are thought to facilitate or inhibit second language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Various theories claim that certain personality factors are potential predictors of success in second language learning. The commonly discussed personality factors are extroversion versus introversion, risk taking, self-esteem, empathy, and anxiety (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2001).

Recent research has given attention to extroversion. Dewaele and Furnham (2000) found a significant positive correlation between extroversion and the fluency of French-English bilinguals, especially in interpersonally stressful situations. However, other research (Ehrman and Oxford, 1995) discovered that extroversion is not an especially good predictor of language learning success. According to Saville-Troike (2006), introverts generally do better in school and extroverts engage in more talking and social activity in a second language; however, there is clear support for the advantage of either trait, even if some SLA researchers have hypothesized that extroverts would be more successful language learners. Thus, in different ways, both extroversion and introversion might lead to success in second language learning. Cook (2001) suggests that the introverts might be expected to prefer academic teaching emphasizing individual learning and language knowledge, while the extroverts might prefer audiolingual or communicative teaching that emphasizes group participation and social know-how.

According to Gass & Selinker (2001), “it has been suggested that a tendency to take risks is associated with success in second language learning” (p. 361). Risk taking has been defined as “a situation where an individual has to make a decision involving

choice between alternatives of different desirability; the outcome of the choice is uncertain; there is a possibility of failure” (Beebe, 1983, p. 39). Many of the strategies related to successful language learners involve a willingness to take risks, but learners’ willingness to take risks may depend on the situation, not just on their general type (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Ely (1986) investigated a correlation between risk taking tendencies and classroom participation; however, the relationship with actual success in language learning was relatively weak. Hence, personality affects language learning that it helps with specific tasks, but does not necessarily affect longer-term success in language learning (Gass & Selinker, 2001).

Although a great deal of research has been conducted on personality traits, most has centered on a learner’s reactions to anxiety (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Research studies on foreign language anxiety have been for the most part quantitative: primarily correlational research such as studies on the relationship between foreign language proficiency and learner variables, examining anxiety among other variables and the relationship between anxiety and learner variables (Price, 1991). Qualitative research has been done as an alternative approach to investigate these relationships, and to provide a way to view phenomena from the perspective of the subject (Price, 1991).

Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) claim that “a single best correlate of achievement is language anxiety” (p. 83). Hence, anxiety not only causes difficulty in oral performance, but also in second language reading and writing (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). Saville-Troike (2006) states that a lack of anxiety might play an important part in self-confidence, meaning that higher anxiety tends to go with lower levels of success in L2

learning. Lower anxiety might encourage language learners to take more risks or to try more adventuresome behaviors.

Price (1991) did an interview study to examine the question of foreign language anxiety from the perspective of the anxious language learner. The study found that all of the participants responded that the greatest source of anxiety was having to speak the target language in front of their peers. They all had fears of being laughed at by others, of making a fool of themselves in public. Additionally, a great source of their stress was their frustration at not being able to communicate effectively. The study also investigated the causes of anxiety: language courses were more demanding than other courses; speakers believed that their language skills were weaker than those of the other students; and they had stressful classroom experiences. However, the question remains, “Does anxiety impair second language performance as Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) state, or does poor performance lead to anxiety as a consequence?” (Ganshow and Sparks, 1996, p. 42).

### *Motivation*

Another factor associated with individual learners’ achievement in the target language is motivation (Kondo-Brown, 2001), and motivation continues to receive a great deal of respect among SLA researchers (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). According to Dornyei (2005), “without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement” (p. 65).

In general, although motivation appears to be one of the strongest predictors of success in second language learning, the exact nature of motivation is not so clear, and

motivation itself does not have a precise definition (Gass & Selinker, 2001). In this study, motivation is conceived as the desire to attain a goal; the perception that learning L2 is relevant to fulfilling that goal or meeting that need; the value of potential outcomes and rewards; and the belief in the likely success or failure of learning L2 (Dornyei, 2005).

The most widely recognized types of motivation are integrative and instrumental (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), “instrumental motivation” refers to “instrumental/occupational reasons” for learning a language, and involves the perception of a purely practical value in L2 learning. On the other hand, “integrative motivation” refers to interest in foreign languages and attitudes toward the L2 community. According to Crookes & Schmidt (1991), integrative motivation refers to “positive attitudes toward the target language group and the potential for integrating into that group, or at the very least an interest in meeting and interacting with members of the target language group” (p. 471-472). In general, previous studies demonstrated that integratively motivated individuals are more successful L2 learners (Kondo-Brown, 2001). According to Cook (2001), high motivation is one of the factors that might be responsible for successful learning; in reverse, successful learning causes high motivation. Other than these factors, Dornyei (1994, 2001, 2005) argues that, in terms of determining the motivation of second language learners, we need to take into account social group factors, personal factors (such as the need for achievement and self-confidence), and situational factors (such as the interest and relevance of course specific materials). Cook (2001) also notes that the choice of teaching materials and the information content of a lesson play an important role in the motivation of students. A recent study by Noels,

Clement, and Pelletier (1999) demonstrates that students' perceptions of their teachers' communicative style are related to intrinsic motivation.

### *Social Factors*

It is impossible to separate social factors in language learning from individual factors (such as age, personality, social skills and styles, and motivation), since individual language learners interact with target language speakers in social settings. Success in learning a second language may be dependent on an individual learner's personality, motivation, and social skills. In other words, it is not easy for language learners to develop their language proficiency and skills without effort and dedication. Optimal learning situations, however, include those that provide opportunities for language learners to interact with target language learners, and that involve target language speakers who are willing to help them learn the second language.

### *A Model of Language Learning in Social Context*

According to Fillmore (1991), "the variation we find across learners in acquiring a second language simply cannot be accounted for by differences in learners alone. Other sources of variation can be found in the settings in which languages are learned as well as in the speakers who are providing access to the target language and assistance in learning it" (p. 51). Fillmore outlines the language-learning components for second language learning. The three components are:

- (1) *learners* who realize that they need to learn the target language and are motivated to do so;
- (2) *speakers of the target language* who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it;
- and (3) *a social setting* which brings and targets speakers into

frequent enough contact to make language learning possible. (p. 52)

All of these components play key roles in helping language learners optimally develop their second language. Fillmore (1991) notes that differences and variations in learning a second language cannot be explained or predicted without considering the intricate interaction among the many factors that are involved. When all three components are ideal, language learning is assured. If any of these components is dysfunctional, language learning will be difficult, or even impossible.

### *The Acculturation Model*

Schumann's (1978) acculturation model has been highly influential in the literature on SLA theory (Ellis, 1997). Schumann (1978) argues that "two groups of variables—social factors and affective factors—cluster into a single variable which is the major causal variable in SLA" (p. 29). He calls "this variable *acculturation*." Schumann (1978) said:

When we examine social variables involved in acculturation and thus SLA, we are concerned with variables which involve the relationship between two social groups who are in a contact situation, but who speak different languages. One group is considered the second-language learning group and the other the target language. Certain social factors can either promote or inhibit contact between the two groups and thus affect the degree to which the second language learning group which in turn affects the degree to which that group will acquire the target language. (p. 29-30)

Social factors involve social dominance, integration strategies (of assimilation, preservation, adaptation), enclosure, cohesiveness and size of the second language group,



congruence between the two cultures, attitudes of the two groups toward each other, and intended length of residence in the target language area. Affective factors involve language shock, culture shock, motivation, and ego-permeability (referring to the extent to which inhibition levels can be lowered).

By acculturation, Schumann (1978) means the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group. Schumann (1978) examined the social and psychological factors that constitute acculturation. The social and psychological factors are a causal variable of SLA: if learners acculturate, they will learn, and if they do not acculturate, they will not learn. Schumann (1986) states, “SLA is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which the learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language” (p. 384). In addition, he argues that language learning is not a matter of method, but of acculturation. If acculturation does not take place, instruction in the target language will be of limited benefit. Schumann (1978) argues that certain social factors can either promote or inhibit the relationship between two linguistically distinct social groups that are in a contact situation. Certain social factors, in turn, affect the degree to which the second language group will acquire the target language.

Schumann (1978) states that social factors can either promote or inhibit contact between two linguistically different groups. The first social factor, social dominance patterns, refers to the fact that if the second language group is politically, culturally, technically, or economically superior (dominant) to the target group, then it will tend not to learn the target language. Conversely, if the second language group is inferior or subordinate to the target language group, then there will also be social distance between

the two groups and the second language group will resist learning the target language. He insists that if the two groups are roughly equal in terms of political, cultural, technical, and economic status, then the contact between the two groups is more likely to be extensive and the target language acquisition will be enhanced.

The second social factor involves what Schumann (1978) calls the integration strategies of assimilation, preservation, and adaptation. Schumann (1978) argues that if the second language group gives up its own lifestyle and values and adopts those of the target language group, their strategy maximizes contact between the two groups and enhances the acquisition of the target language. If the second language group chooses to preserve its own lifestyle and values by rejecting those of the target language group, social distance between the two groups is created and the second language group is unlikely to acquire the target language. If the second language group chooses adaptation as an integration strategy, then it adapts to the target language groups' life styles and values, but maintains those of its own. However, this strategy yields various degrees of contact with the target language group and, thus, varying degrees of acquisition of the target language.

The third social factor that affects second language learning is enclosure. This refers to the degree to which the two linguistically distinct groups share the same churches, schools, clubs, recreational facilities, professions and trades. Schumann (1978) argues that if the two groups share these social constructs, then enclosure is said to be low, and contact between the two groups and acquisition of the target language will be enhanced, and vice versa. The remaining social factors (cohesiveness and size of the second language group, congruence between the two cultures, attitudes of the two groups

toward each other, and intended length of residence in the target language area) can also affect second language learning.

Cohesiveness and size are also social factors that affect second language learning. If the second language learning group is cohesive, they tend to remain separate from the target language group; but if the second language learning group is large, “the intragroup contact will be more frequent than intergroup contact. Both these situations will reduce the opportunities for acquisition of the target language” (p. 31). Congruence between the two different cultures also affects the degree of contact between the two groups.

Schumann (1978) states that “if the two cultures are similar then social contact is more likely to occur and second language learning will be facilitated” (p. 31). Attitude is another crucial social factor in second language learning. If the two different groups have positive attitudes toward each other, second language learning will be more likely to occur than if they see each other negatively. The final social factor is the second language group’s intended length of residence in the target language area. Schumann (1978) says:

If the second language group intends to remain for a long time in the target language area, it is likely to develop more extensive contacts with the target language group. Therefore, an intended lengthy residence in the target language area would tend to promote second language learning. (p. 31)

According to Norton (2000), the strength of Schumann’s model is that it emphasizes the sociocultural context of language learning without ignoring the role of individuals in the language learning process. It also highlights the importance of regular social contact between the two linguistically distinct groups if successful language learning is to take place.

### *Questions/Challenges on Schumann's Acculturation Model*

Norton (2000) raises questions about the theoretical assumptions of Schumann's model. First, Norton (2000) questions Schumann's assumption that if a second language group is inferior or subordinate to the target language group, the former group will tend to resist learning the second language. Norton (2000) indicates, "the acculturation model does not theorize inferiority and superiority with reference to inequitable relations of power, in which some immigrant groups are socially structured as inferior to the dominant group" (p. 455). Several researchers suggest that the dominant language group, rather than immigrant language learners, tends to resist interaction with the other group (Cummins, 2000; Norton, 1995; and Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988). In Norton's study (2000), the participant's family did not resist learning English even though the family felt marginalized in Canadian society.

Second, Norton (2000) questions Schumann's other assumption that positive attitudes between the two groups will enhance SLA. Although this assumption is true in general, the acculturation model does not take into account that the second language group is far more vulnerable to the attitudes of the dominant group than is true in reverse. The second language group needs to make contact with the target language community to improve language learning; however, the second language group has a great deal more invested in this relationship than does the target language group.

Third, Norton (2000) questions the assumption that if members of the second language group give up their lifestyle and values and adopt those of the target language group, they will maximize their contact with the target language group and enhance SLA

(that is, assimilation as the integration strategy in the acculturation model). Norton (2000) argues that:

[This] position takes for granted that the target language group is willing to accommodate attempts by the second language group will reciprocate the positive attitudes of the second language group. More specifically, however, it does not consider the possibility that subtractive bilingualism in children can take place if members of the second language group give up their lifestyle and values in an attempt to assimilate. (p. 456)

In her study, notwithstanding the predictions of the acculturation model, the participant family's rejection of their lifestyle and values did not maximize contact with the target language and enhance SLA.

#### *Linguistic Factors*

Linguistic factors are a consideration in studying second language learning. Linguistic factors mainly refer to the individual learners' maturity in L1 and L2. It is necessary to investigate the connection between L1 and L2 to see how second language acquisition occurs.

#### *Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis*

Vygotsky (1962) addresses the issue of linguistic factors in L1 and L2, stating that the connections between first and second language interdependence:

Success in learning a foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language. The child can transfer to the new language the system of meanings he already possesses in his own. The reverse is also true—a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language.

The child learns to see his native language as one particular system among many, to view phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations. (p. 110)

Cummins addresses the issue of linguistic factors in L1 and L2 through the interdependence hypothesis that he proposed more than 25 years ago. That states as (1981a):

To the extent that instruction in L<sub>x</sub> is effective in promoting proficiency in L<sub>x</sub>, transfer of this proficiency to L<sub>y</sub> will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L<sub>y</sub> (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L<sub>y</sub>. (p. 29)

Cummins' term *common underlying proficiency (CUP)* has been used to refer to cognitive/academic proficiency:

[S]kills in different languages inhabit the same part of the brain, reinforcing each other at the base while differing at the surface. In this 'dual iceberg' model of the bilingual mind, features that are most cognitively demanding and most detached from contextual aids, such as literacy, are interdependent across languages. (Crawford, 1999, p. 128)

Many empirical research studies on the interdependence hypothesis have been done, and Fitzgerald (1995) concluded that considerable evidence emerged to support Cummins' interdependence hypothesis. With regard to the studies on the relationships between L1 and L2 academic proficiency, Gonzalez (1986; 1989) showed a considerably stronger relationship between English and Spanish reading skills than between English reading and English oral communicative skills in a study involving Spanish-speaking immigrant students in the United States. The study found that the Mexican-schooled

group performed significantly better on both Spanish and English reading tasks than the group schooled entirely in the United States. The United States-schooled group outperformed the Mexican-schooled group on an English oral language measure (the Bilingual Syntax Measure II) and on ratings of English communicative proficiency. Gonzalez concluded that the academic knowledge and foundation developed by the Mexican-schooled students transferred to their acquisition of English academic skills and gave these students an advantage over their United States-schooled peers.

Verhoeven and Aarts (1998) examined the relationship between school literacy and functional literacy in both L1 and L2 of 188 Turkish-speaking students in their first year of Dutch secondary school. They found that the interdependency of literacy skills in the L1 and L2 and also the possibilities for transfer of L1 skills to the L2 were valid not only with respect to school literacy, but also with respect to functional literacy skills. Many studies have shown evidence for interdependence from bilingual education. These studies (Ramirez, 1992; Verhoeven, 1991a; and Williams, 1996) have examined the results of all evaluations of bilingual and second language immersion programs consistent with predictions derived from the independence hypothesis insofar as instruction through a minority language appears to result in no adverse consequences for students' academic development in the majority language.

Many research studies on the interdependence hypothesis demonstrate that developing literacy in the native language and culture gives children opportunities to learn and construct notions about the purposes, functions, and processes involved in reading, writing, and thinking, and later help them explore English literacy (Perez, 1998). The native or home language is the tool through which children develop a sense of self-

identity and cultural identity (Ferdman, 1991), acquire cultural knowledge and values, and develop cognitive skills for learning (Heath, 1983; Wong Fillmore, 1991, cited in Perez, 1998).

### *Clarke's Short-Circuit Hypothesis*

The conviction that L2 oral proficiency is a vital prerequisite to efficient L2 reading is widely accepted (Koda, 2005). Clarke's short-circuit hypothesis states that "limited control over the language 'short-circuits' a good reader's system, causing him/her to revert to poor reading strategies when confronted with a difficult or confusing task in the second language" (Clarke, 1988, p. 120). That is, low L2 oral proficiency restricts a reader's ability to understand and interact with an L2 text (Cummins, 2000). Clarke refers to this as a linguistic ceiling, while Carrel (1988, 1991) notes that a threshold level of L2 language proficiency must be attained before L1 reading strategies and background knowledge can transfer to L2 reading performance.

Recent empirical studies demonstrate that L2 linguistic knowledge explains 30% to 40% of L2 reading variance (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995; Bossers, 1991; and Carrell, 1991). In other words, L2 knowledge usually emerges as a stronger predictor of L2 reading than L1 reading proficiency does, and limited L2 linguistic knowledge inhibits L2 learners from using their previously acquired L1 skills. However, according to Koda (2005), "reading and L2 proficiency are both complex constructs, but the research on their interrelationship has been restricted to so narrow a range of capacity components that there is serious danger of overgeneralization" (p. 23-24). A Koda note, for example, that L2 proficiency is often operationalized as knowledge of vocabulary and/or grammar; on the other hand, reading is constructed as an ability to understand major text ideas.



Bernhardt & Kamil (1995), Bossers (1991), and Carrell (1991) question whether low L2 reading performance is due to a language problem or a reading problem. According to Cummins (2000), this question fails to define the construct of “language proficiency.” Thus, we return to the familiar issue of how we conceptualize the nature of language proficiency.

### **Cultural Differences in the Classroom**

This section discusses the cultural differences that language learners experience in mainstream classrooms. In the process of Americanization, many immigrant students struggle with the loss of their native language and cultural belief systems, and with being pressured to find and take their place in the racial hierarchy of the United States (Olsen, 1997).

In spite of the fact that there are racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse students in American classrooms, languages other than English are not valued, and diverse cultural traditions are not observed. According to Olsen (1997), we are engaged in a new Americanization project in our public schools, even if almost one hundred years have passed since the last great wave of immigration. He also states that Americanization refers to immigrants leaving behind their own national, cultural, and linguistic identities, and abandoning their hope that others will see and accept them in their full humanness.

#### *Language Attitude and Socialization*

According to Shin (2005), typically in any bilingual situation there is an unequal distribution of power represented by the difference in languages. Given that one language is most valued and powerful in a specific society, children learn that one language may be valued more than any other, and they may decide to become more proficient in that

language. English-only language policy in the United States is emphasized by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, which is the Bush administration's education agenda. This act is a new name for the renewed Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Regarding ELLs, the fundamental goal of this act is to reduce annually the academic achievement gap between "disadvantaged" English language learners and their English proficient peers, as measured on English standardized tests, called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), until the gap is entirely closed in twelve years (Meyer, 2003).

These political and societal pressures that value only English might discourage children from using their primary language and cause language shifts in family conversation. This might cause conflicts between parents and children due to their lack of a common language. According to Fillmore (2000), immigrant children are faced with learning English as a second language and dealing with school success. "Hanging onto their first language" is an equally great problem as they learn English. Additionally, hanging on to their sense of worth, their cultural identity, and their family connections is a tremendous problem for immigrant children as they become assimilated into their schools and society. Cummins (1996) states that assimilation into society refers to these individuals' educational development and achievement as well as their psychological, emotional, and individual well-being.

#### *Asian-American Identity: The "Model Minority" Stereotype*

The terms *Asian*, *Asian American*, and, more inclusively, *Asian Pacific American* are used as collective references to the populations of Asians and Pacific Islanders living in the United States. More specifically, the United States government includes in its definition of Asian peoples from: East Asia (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese), Southeast

Asia (e.g., Vietnamese, Laotian, Burmese), the Pacific Islands (e.g., Samoan, Guamanian, Fijian), South Asia (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Nepali), West Asia (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, Turkish), and the Middle East (e.g., Iraqi, Jordanian, Palestinian) (Tatum, 1999).

Asian Americans are still regarded as “strangers from a different shore” (Takaki, 1989) and their voices are excluded from mainstream discourse on race (Lee, 1996). On the one hand, Hacker (1992) suggests that due to the outstanding academic achievement of some Asian Americans, Asians may be considered to be white. For this reason, Asians are excluded from the discussion of race. In spite of the increasing racial diversity in the United States, institutions often focus on African Americans and Latinos. Asians are not seen as people who add to racial diversity; thus, they are largely absent from the discourse of diversity (Lee, 1996). The most insidious reason for excluding Asian voices from the discourse of race is the stereotype that Asians do not have any problems (i.e., they are model minorities) (Lee, 1996). Asian Americans are described as hardworking entrepreneurs who are doing well economically, and are successful students who excel in math and science. According to Sleeter (1993), “the media frequently connected African Americans and Latinos with social problems that many Americans regarded as the result of moral depravity: drug, teen pregnancy, and unemployment” (p. 160). Asian Americans are stereotyped as model minorities, and other racial minorities are stereotyped in overtly negative ways. The model minority stereotype is seen by Anglos as a hegemonic device. The dominance of whites in the racial hierarchy is maintained by diverting attention away from racial inequality and by setting standards for how minorities should behave (Lee, 1996).

### *Cultural Differences in Communication*

According to Rogoff (2003), sociocultural theory represents a general agreement that:

Individual development constitutes and is constituted by social and cultural-historical activities and practices. In the emerging sociocultural perspectives, culture is not an entity that influences individuals. Instead, people contribute to the creation of cultural processes and cultural processes contribute to the creation of people. Thus, individual and cultural processes are mutually constituting rather than defined separately from each other. (p. 51)

In other words, culture is not static. Thus, cultural tools are both inherited and transformed by successive generations. People form culture by working together, using and adapting material and symbolic tools provided by predecessors and, in the process, creating new ones (Rogoff, 2003). Therefore, there is always a danger in generalizing certain cultural patterns in the United States, where there are ethnically and racially diverse students in the classroom (Yum, 1988). Collective beliefs are implicitly transmitted to people in cultural contexts where beliefs are commonly shared. Moreover, there are differences in beliefs from one community to another (Kim & Markus, 2005).

Due to the differences in cultures, there can be differences in the classroom in terms of learning style, classroom behavior, styles of discourse, and cultural patterns of talking. Philips (1993) did a comparison study between Warm Springs Indian students and Anglo students with regard to their communication behaviors in the classroom and found that there were differences in the ways in which the Indian and Anglo students participated:

First, Indian students generally participate less as speakers. Second, they do not select themselves as next speakers as much; they do not behave in ways that indicate to the teacher that they wish to speak. Third, Indian students do not as often respond when they are explicitly asked to speak by the teacher. Fourth, the Indian students do not as often use interruption and speaking when another has been addressed as devices for getting the floor. Finally, talk is more evenly distributed among Indian students so that a greater frequency of turns at talk is not correlated with better performance on written assignments as it is in the Anglo classrooms. (p. 114)

These findings were associated with the idea that in most ordinary daily encounters, Warm Spring people did not talk as loud as Anglos did, and they spoke at a slightly slower pace. Additionally, they did not use change or variation in voice loudness to attract attention in the ways that Anglos did. Their cultural meanings and social representation in communication behavior were embodied in common social practices. However, the cultural distinctiveness of the Indian children was little recognized by the teachers and administrators in the school. These differences could be related to the learning problems of the Indian students (Phillips, 1993).

Delpit (1995) indicates that in a multicultural context, teachers should be aware of differences in discourse style and language use. According to Delpit (1995) and Michaels and other researchers (1986) identified differences in children's narratives at "sharing time." It was found that white children tended to tell "topic-centered" narratives—stories focused on one event—and black youngsters (especially girls) tended to tell "episodic" narratives—stories that include shifting scenes and are typically longer.

Delpit (1995) points out that differences in narrative styles can produce differences in interpretation of students' language competence.

Differences in cultural patterns in talking between Western cultural contexts and East Asian cultural contexts are evident in formal education (Kim & Markus, 2005). Many Western cultural contexts are grounded in the Socratic tradition. Thus, generating one's own ideas is highly valued (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). Discussion and verbal activities are widely accepted (Kim and Markus, 2005), and "training for discussion is thought to be beneficial for developing students' social skills, logical thinking, confidence, and citizenship" (Backlund, 1990, as cited in Kim and Markus, 2005, p. 189). Considering cultural orientation, the dominant paradigm of communication is an individualistic one. Therefore, each speaker is considered to be a separate individual engaging in diverse communicative activities to optimize his/her own self-interest (usually by means of some form of persuasion) (Kim & Markus, 2005).

In contrast, in terms of the philosophical and cultural history of East Asia, Confucianism has endured as the basic social and political value system for over one thousand years. Korea is one of the countries that was profoundly impacted by Confucianism (Yum, 1988). Much of Confucianism relies on five codes of ethical principles (Johnson, 2000; Yum, 1987):

- (1) loyalty between king and subject (binding mutual obligation),
- (2) closeness between father and son (obligating the son to the father above all else),
- (3) distinction in duty between husband and wife,
- (4) obedience to orders between elders and youngsters, and
- (5) mutual faith between friends.

In East Asian cultural contexts, during learning, students' verbal participation is often not important. Good students are supposed to listen and absorb essential knowledge (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). Students' verbal participation is frowned upon by both teachers and other students, because it can be perceived as a disruption of the flow of teaching. Culturally, a good student is one who shows good listening (Kim & Markus, 2005). Because there are differences in teaching and learning styles in East Asian cultural contexts, East Asian students in an American education system are generally thought to be somewhat "problematic," in spite of their successful school achievement and performance (Lubman, 1998).

### *Cultural Differences and Writing*

Cultural factors have an important influence on how second language writers write, their responses to classroom contexts, and their writing performance, because their culture plays a distinct role in shaping their cultural understandings, or schema knowledge (Hyland, 2003). As Lantolf (1999) states, culture is generally understood as a historically transmitted and systematic network of meanings. This allows us to understand, develop, and communicate our knowledge and beliefs about the world, meaning that language and learning are inextricably bound with culture (Kramsch, 1993). Thus, differences in expectations, strategies, and beliefs between cultures may conflict in terms of second language writers' responses and performance in the classroom. Hyland (2003) indicates that "this kind of hidden 'cultural curriculum' can be found in the culturally divergent attitudes to knowledge that can seriously interfere in our assessment of L2 students' writing" (p. 38). The following comparison of culturally based attitudes to knowledge is the way that writing classrooms reflect conceptions of identity,

borrowing from (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987; and Markus and Kitayama, 1991, as cited in Hyland, 2003).

**Table 2. Comparison of Culturally Based Attitudes to Knowledge.**

Western Contexts	Asian Contexts
<p>Ballard and Clanchy (1991):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce an analytical, questioning, and evaluative stance to knowledge</li> <li>• Encourage students to criticize and recombine existing sources to dispute traditional wisdom and form their own points of view</li> <li>• Students are asked to analyze problems, reflect on arguments, and rework their ideas through recursive redrafting</li> </ul> <p>Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characterize mature writing as “knowledge transforming,” meaning that writers actively seek to elaborate and refine available knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>Ballard and Clanchy (1991):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favor conserving and reproducing existing knowledge, establishing reverence for what is known through strategies such as memorization and imitation</li> <li>• These strategies demonstrate respect for knowledge</li> </ul> <p>Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Knowledge telling” is emphasized, meaning that represents immature writing, where the writer’s goal is simply to say what he or she can remember based on the assignment, the topic, and the genre</li> </ul>



Table 2 Continued

Western Contexts	Asian Contexts
<p>Markus and Kitayama (1991):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Good Writing” in the western classroom is generally seen to involve the writer’s individual creativity and critical thinking</li> <li>• Teachers expect writers to voice their judgments, display their knowledge, and give their opinions</li> <li>• Text must display their author’s individuality, and concepts such as voice and textual ownership are familiar in mainstream writing pedagogy</li> <li>• Excellence in the western writing classroom requires the writer’s unique signature and such borrowings are seen as mindless regurgitation or as plagiarism</li> </ul>	<p>Markus and Kitayama (1991):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is done less to express oneself than to pass on the knowledge one has received</li> <li>• The absence of a personal voice is largely irrelevant as the student does not presume to improve on acknowledged truths but to communicate what is socially shared</li> <li>• The uncited inclusion of others’ work allows Asian writers to display their knowledge, honor important thinkers and show respect for the learning of their readers</li> </ul>

Hyland (2003) points out that different cultural perspectives in regards to “knowledge, text, and the self” are mainly considered in learning and writing; however, we (western educators) tend to take our own views for granted as universal and can easily fail to recognize “different cultural specificity.”

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview**

In this chapter, I present about the case study methodology, the reasons for choosing to use a case study, and the characteristics of case studies. This chapter also explains my relationships with the participants, the complexity of my roles as a researcher, and the imitations of the study. In addition, this chapter describes how participants' were selected, the research context, details about the study participants, how data was collected to answer the questions set forth, the methodological challenges, and the validity and reliability of the findings. At the end of this chapter, I present the data analysis and show how I drew out the findings of this study.

#### **Case Study Methodology**

In this study, I used qualitative case study methodology. A case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The purpose of qualitative case studies, as Becker states (1968), is “to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study and to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process” (p. 233). The case study methodology was appropriate on this project because it gave meaning and insight to the participants' second language learning experiences and their difficulties in the United States. It constructed their circumstances with systematic observations, descriptions, and a collection of stories and materials. This method helped make sense of the participant's linguistic and cultural experiences that occurred as a

result of being exposed to English and American culture. This means that qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of or interpret the meanings people bring to them.

Merriam (1998) states that the characteristics of qualitative case studies can be described as particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. “Particularistic means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon; ...descriptive means the end product of a case study is a rich and thick description of the phenomenon under study; ...and heuristic means that case studies illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study.” (p. 29-30). The basic assumptions of the case study methodology are: to include vivid information (such as quotations and interviews); to describe the complexities of a situation; and “to bring about the discovery of new meaning and confirm what is known” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29-30). My assumption in using the case study methodology was that the uniqueness of each case in my study would reveal the participants’ differences and similarities in their process of learning English in a new country and explain the reasons for the challenges that they faced during this process. Although I examined specific cases, I illuminated general problems in the findings of my study. It means that even though this study was not focused on generalization, problems in the findings will be representative of the types of problems second language learners face in general while in the process of learning a second language.

I chose case studies as the methodological design for my research study because case study helps to deliver the unique story of a particular case through the uses of ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973). Geertz discusses that thick description of human behavior explains not only the behavior, but also its context so that the human behavior within the

context is meaningful to an outsider. The meaning of human behavior changes as the context changes. In this study, thick description explained the descriptive interpretation and comprehensive analysis of the three participants' second language learning experiences in a particular context. The context was a school where English language and American culture was dominant.

Thick description was developed by observing the participants' multiple behaviors in their classes, by recording their discourses with others, by describing their language learning and the difficulties they faced in the classroom, and by documenting events, quotes, writing samples, and personal information. It was also elicited by me raising questions, assumptions, hunches, and by analyzing my primary findings. Additionally, it was developed by interviewing the participants, teachers, and mothers about the questions that I initially set forth as well as about the questions that I raised during my observations. By providing thick descriptions, readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence whether findings can be transferred.

I worked to discover and understand the students' English learning experiences in the United States, and using case study as a methodological design seemed to be the best way to do this because the case study methodology gave me access to the unique stories of each participant's cultural and linguistic issues as a result of being exposed to English and American culture. That is, as Merriam (1998) states, case study "might be selected for its uniqueness, for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, knowledge we would not otherwise have access to" (p. 33). Case study was utilized to explain the reasons for the problems of second language learning in the classroom, the background of

the reasons for coming to the US, what happened when the participants were exposed to a learning environment where native speakers of English were dominant, and why they behaved in certain ways while in the process of learning a second language in the classroom. Merriam also describes a distinct advantage of case studies, in that “case studies get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires)” (p. 32). Merriam further notes that “case study is a particularly suitable design if you [a researcher] are interested in process” (p. 33). I was interested in researching the process of second language learning in the classroom through the lens of the participants’ learning experiences, and the case study methodology helped monitor and describe their process in the classroom situation where the participants worked. Additionally, the case study methodology helped readers understand the phenomenon under study and discover the issues the participants faced. The use of a case study methodology was important for this study because it allowed for better understanding of the participants’ English language experiences both inside and outside the classroom, and to better describe these experiences.

### **Limitations of Case Study**

In spite of the fact that case study offers insights and illuminated meanings that expand its reader’s experiences, this methodology had limitations. As the researcher, my biases might influence my study and study findings because I was the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing my data. As Guba and Lincoln (1981) state, “case studies can oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs” (p. 377). To reduce my bias, I tried to be “sensitive to the

context and all the variables within it, including the physical setting, people, the overt and covert agendas, and nonverbal behavior” (Merriam, 1998, p. 21). I asked the participants and their teachers questions to make sure that my assumption and observation were correct. While I made every attempt to mitigate my bias by trying to clarify my assumptions about the boys and their teachers, it was impossible to completely remove all bias, and so it was important to remember that this research was subjective from my perspective.

Case study has further limitations associated with the issues of reliability, validity, and generalizability. As Hamel (1993) states:

The case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness...and its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the empirical materials that give rise to this study. This lack of rigor is linked to the problem of bias...introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher. (p. 23)

In spite of the fact that this study described the uniqueness of each case, revealing the participants’ differences and similarities in their process of learning English in a new country, three cases is simply not enough to be able to generalize the findings of this study to all English language learners. Since this study was focused only on Korean students, it is not necessarily representative of other ethnic groups of English language learners. In light of the fact that there were individual differences among the same ethnic group of students, other ethnic groups of students might have different English learning experiences because they bring different background knowledge including language background, schooling experiences, educational value, and family situation.

I used purposeful sampling and selected Korean students who came to the United States with the purpose of learning English in schools, who were born in Korea, recently arrived in the US, and had only lived here for a few years. Based on this criterion, I happened to select all boys, which creates additional limitations in terms of gender. I also need to point out that the social context in which the Korean students in this study were located was in a place where there is a small population of Korean students. Therefore, their experiences of language learning and social interactions with native speakers and Korean students in school might be different from a place where there is a larger population of Korean students. The degree of difficulty they faced and the impacts on their first language and culture might be different from Korean students in other parts of the US.

### **Researcher's Roles and Bias**

I faced complexity in my role for this study. I was an insider as a Korean, an insider as a second language learner, an outsider as a woman, and an outsider in the participants' school. My roles were complex.

I was an insider as a Korean living in the United States so I had some understanding of the participants' cultural difficulties and the issues they faced in the classroom. During my interviews with the boys, I could at least partially identify with their cultural experiences, and because of this, I could help them in their communication of these issues with me. However, the fact that I am Korean made it difficult to avoid certain assumptions when I collected and analyzed the data, including my assumption that other Korean students will experience the same difficulties and challenges that I experienced in the classroom. Moreover, by studying members of my own ethnic group, I

found it hard to avoid the generic cultural framework that Koreans use in generalizing communication styles, manners, and relationships. By this I mean, that within the same ethnicity, there are differences among individuals in terms of their values, and their ways of thinking and behaving, but Korean society, like all societies, has stereotypes and biases it applies to ethnic groups. And, because I am a member of the Korean culture, and therefore contain some of its stereotypes and biases, I found that I must consider individual differences while acknowledging cultural stereotypes.

Still, being the same ethnicity as the participants was not all negative, as it did allow me some insights as well. For example, as a Korean, I was aware of some of the social pressure they, as Korean young men, felt. Korean society places a lot of pressure and responsibility on men to be successful in learning English and being successful at education because men in Korea are expected to excel in social mobility through education, more than women. I also realized that I was biased in terms of my generation, meaning that different generations experience society and culture differently. The participants in this study were of a different generation than I was, and so I had to be aware of these differences as well. As a researcher, I brought my experiences and perceptions to my conversations with my focal students. I tried to become aware of the biases that I developed from my own English learning experiences, and from my experiences living in Korean culture.

As a second language learner, I shared similarities with the participants in terms of English experiences in the classroom and some of the difficulties they faced including culture shock and inner conflict. I felt sympathy for them. I was able to understand the situation where they were placed. As a woman who was older than these boys, I wanted



to care about their security, to share their difficulties, and to help and engage in their learning. Yet, as a female who was studying male subjects, I was unable to identify with their concerns and issues that they carried from a male perspective. I was also limited in my ability to identify important information related to my study because of the communication style and thought process differences that exist between the genders. These differences could have influenced the shaping of the qualitative data which could lead to different outcomes of the study. As an outsider in the boys' school, I did not want to interrupt their engagement and participation in learning so I observed by watching their actions and behaviors and describing what I observed, while trying to create as little interruption as possible.

### **Researcher's Relationship with the Participants**

My relationship and familiarity with the boys changed overtime. At the beginning, the participants usually bowed to me because bowing is part of greeting someone who is older than you with respect in Korean culture. They were also very shy by not making eye contact with me. During the interviews, they did not actively engage in our conversations. Overtime, I established rapport with the boys by seeing them regularly in the classroom, having multiple conversations with them about their stories, and by visiting their homes. Through these activities, I built a relationship with them and developed trust with the boys. Over the course of the study, we became familiar with each other and had more in depth conversations. For example, at the beginning of the study, they only answered the questions I asked; however, as time progressed, they began to start sharing their experiences and problems that went beyond my questions. During the interviews, they became more talkative and were more comfortable talking with me,

even when sharing the personal issues they faced in both school and at home, such as parents' divorce, family issues, and parents' illness.

I had a special relationship with Jung because I was his teacher in the Korean language school. Local Korean churches had originally opened the Korean language school 12 years ago, but it had closed a few years later. The Korean community reopened the language school in 2003, separate from the churches. The school's primary goal was to teach Korean language and culture to young Koreans living here, but it was opened to anyone who wanted to attend. The classes were held twice a week, on Fridays and Saturdays. Eight classes were offered, each at a different age or language proficiency level, and each class had at least 10 students. Because of my close relationship with Jung, as a researcher, I tried to stay away from this personal relationship when I collected data from him. In an effort to minimize any bias due to my relationship with Jung, I spent more time observing his classes, had more conversations with his mother and paid more visits to his home than I did with the other participants. When Jung was my student in the Korean language school, one concern I had about him was that he was not motivated to learn Korean, and so I thought he might be at risk to lose his first language. I was also concerned that because his motivation to learn Korean was low, his low fluency in Korean might negatively influence his ability to learn English. Due to this, I made the assumption that he might be an unsuccessful second language learner. In discussing Jung's motivation with his teachers, we all agreed that he was not motivated to learn either Korean or English. Where his teachers and I differed was that I felt that Jung could still be a successful second language learner if he received academic support from his teachers and parents. In contrast, his teachers believed that Jung had to try harder to learn

English, and that failure was due to his lack of motivation and effort, not from a lack of support from the teachers. However, Jung's mother wanted him to learn English as soon as possible, believing that learning Korean interfered with his ability to learn English. She also believed that her son was fluent in English.

Even after the study, I had occasional contact with Jung and his family because of my strong connection with them. With Tim and Yang, our post study contact was limited to exchanging a few emails, and our communication tapered off shortly after my research ended. When I exited the study, I felt a lot of responsibility that I could have done more to help these young men when they faced difficulties in the classroom. I felt I had the responsibility to maintain a relationship with them, which would have allowed me to give them advice from my own experiences and to listen to their difficulties.

### **Participant Selection**

I used purposeful sampling to select my participants (Patton, 1990). I came to know Jung when I was a teacher in the Korean language school in the city where he lived. I met the other participants by being introduced to their parents, who would often visit the Korean language school. With the help of the Korean community in this region, I selected three youth who met the criteria I established for my purposeful sampling as participants in my study. As focal students for my study, I selected students who came to the United States with the purpose of learning English in schools in the United States, who were born in Korea, recently arrived in the United States, and only lived for a few years in the United States. At the beginning of this study, I had two Korean boys and one Korean girl as focal students; however, the Korean girl's mother decided not to participate in this study because her mother did not want to share her daughter's learning difficulties to the

public and did not want to be bothered by my observations. Therefore, I had to find another participant, who happened to be a Korean boy. In order to find another participant who met the study's criteria, I had to talk to the principal in Northern high school, who introduced me to one of the Korean students (Yang) there. With the addition of this participant, I ended up with three boys. There were no criteria for specific school settings for this study; however, the schools that were eventually chosen for this study had the highest concentration of Korean students in the city, but this was not by design.

My choice of the focal students was also based on practical considerations, such as the students' and their families' interest in, and willingness to consent to, participating in the study.

### **Research Context**

The schools where my focal students attended were my research sites. These sites were one middle and one high school, both located in the northern quadrant of a mid-sized US city, which had the largest concentration of Koreans for this city. Anglo teachers and students made up the largest part of the population in these schools, and according to the parents I interviewed, many Korean parents wanted to send their children to these schools because they believed these schools had better curricula than schools in other areas of the city. To gain access to their schools for my classroom observations, I asked for, and received, the consent of the principals and teachers who were involved. Data was collected in two schools: Sunflower Middle School and Northern High School (pseudonyms), both of which were high-performing schools as determined by Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the district.

#### *Sunflower Middle School*

The Department of Public Education listed Sunflower Middle School as one of the few middle schools in the city that met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the fundamental goal of *No Child Left Behind 2001*. According to this Act, the academic achievement gap between “disadvantaged” English language learners and their English proficient peers, as measured on English standardized tests, is to be reduced annually until the gap is entirely terminated within twelve years. Sunflower Middle School had a variety of programs to address students’ educational needs, such as programs for math intervention, reading and writing development, and an after-school program called “Choices.” The program “Choices” was a tutoring class for students who needed help with their homework, or when they were behind in a class. This program was optional. Those students whose native language was not English were placed in language arts/literature classes with teachers who hold an ESL endorsement. According to student ethnicity percentages from the years 2003 to 2004, 74.7% of the students in this school were Anglo; 14.8% were Hispanic; 5% were Asian; 2.1% were African American; 1.9% were Native American; and 1.5% were other ethnicities. Among 5% of Asian, 1.5% of the students were Korean students. Compared to the schools in other districts of this city, this school had more Anglo students, less Hispanic, and more Asian students. Anglo students were the dominant group of students. Zero percentage of the students received free lunch. This indicates that the students’ parents’ economic status was high. Compared to this school, more than 50% of the students in other schools received free lunch. In addition, the teachers in this school said that they did not have to spend much time on discipline, and that it was easier for them to teach because the level of student academic achievement was higher than in any other school.

This school's buildings were modern and were constructed of brick, as compared to schools in other neighborhoods which were built in an Adobe style. The school's buildings were constructed in 1974 and looked clean and neat. In front of the school's entrance, there were big parking lots. Around the parking lots, there were a few big trees and grass fields, which looked unusual in the high desert. Overall it seemed that the school district took care of the school and the campus. Many students would sit on the grass and chat and eat lunch together. Sometimes, a class would gather outside the classroom to do an activity. Entrances to the building were accessible for people with disabilities.

Seven portable classrooms were attached to the main building. There was no fence or wall around the school. The west side of the school faced a main road, and residential areas surrounded the other sides of the school. The houses around the school were large and nice, usually two-story houses with a big front and back yard. There were not many people walking around the school grounds, and it seemed that there were not many social interactions among the people in the neighborhood. On the east side of the school, the houses looked different from each other, while the houses to the north and south of the school all looked similar to each other.

During lunch time in the cafeteria, there was at least one teacher who would watch out for the students' safety and security. During my interviews with them, some of the participants described this school as a "good school and (that) Korean parents wanted to send their children to this school."

*Northern High School*

According to the website of Northern High School, the school curriculum met students' college-preparatory and pre-vocational needs. Each of the nine academic departments in this school offered special classes allowing students to pursue a broad-based education and to explore careers. Students excelled academically at this school, and test scores were high. As a National Service Learning Award School, Northern High School students and staff devoted hundreds of hours of service to organizations throughout the community. Northern High School provided an ESL program as an alternative language program. This program helped the students with limited English language proficiency. The teacher in this program supported these students' writing and reading development. According to student ethnicity percentages from the years 2003 to 2004, 75.4% of the students were Anglo; 14.1% were Hispanic; 5% were Asian; 2.1% were African American; 1.5% was Native American; and 2% were other ethnicities. About 1.5 % of the students, from among 5% of Asian students, were Koreans. Anglo students were the dominant group of students, but compared to other schools in this city, there were more Asian students and less Hispanic students. According to Yang, there existed racial discrimination. According to Yang, Anglo students would refer to Hispanic students as 'garbage' and 'lazy'. During the interviews and informal conversations, many of the teachers said that Asian students worked hard and took responsibility for their own education, which is a stereotype about Asian students.

The school was located in the northern part of the city. The school was situated in a large open area: there were no fences or walls around the school. The size of school land was large enough to accommodate many students. A distance from the school entrance, there was a football field. This field was separated from the main buildings.

Sometimes, football players would be there running and practicing. Surrounding the football field, there were parking lots, which could accommodate about 150 cars.

The main building in this school was a three-story building and was built out of dark red concrete and brick. The buildings looked like three different buildings that were attached together. There were entrances to the building that were accessible to students with disabilities. Most people were welcomed to enter the school, but they needed to first sign-in and get permission from security. The entrances to the building were clearly marked so visitors could easily find the office, which was located to the left of the main entrance. Across from the administration office, there was a snack bar where students could buy snacks, beverages, pizza, and hotdogs. Adjacent to the snack bar was where the library was located. The students could easily access the library, and they could check out books they needed for class or that they simply wanted to read. Before the main classrooms, there was a cafeteria. During lunchtime, the cafeteria was filled with students eating lunch. The tables and chairs were arranged in rows, but some of the tables were round. The cafeteria did not have strict regulations or rules, and so the students in the cafeteria would talk to each other, laughing, and teasing each other while eating. There were no faculty members on cafeteria duty. Due to the school's large population, lunchtime was divided into two different periods, which half the students coming for the first period and the other half coming for the second period. This kept the cafeteria from becoming too crowded. Zero percentage of students received a free lunch, indicating that the community around the school was wealthy. The teachers had a separate place to eat, which was away from the students' cafeteria.



The hallways in the school were lined on both sides with lockers for the students to keep their books and other personal belongings. The students decorated the outside of their lockers, such as posting pictures of friends or movie stars. The school's facilities were well taken care: the heating and cooling systems worked very well. The temperature was comfortable in the summer and winter. Computers, overhead projectors, and audiovisual equipment were available in the classrooms. When they needed a Power Point projector, the students could check one out from the equipment center in the school. The basement of three-story main building was used as a stadium, which was quite big, and included areas for basketball, volleyball, wrestling, etc. The building had good sound proofing to prevent sound from traveling up from the basement. This prevented any distraction from sports activities when students were in class.

Compared to other communities, the neighborhood surrounding this school was newly developed in the 2000s, and so there were many new houses. A lot of the houses were very similar. This area was known as being a wealthy community. According to the participants, the students' parents were in a high social class, and their classmates drove nice and luxurious cars. Anglo teachers were dominant so it was hard for me to see other ethnic groups of teachers. According to the teachers whom I interviewed, the parents in this school put a high value on education, and were active in their children's education. The teachers said they did not spend a lot of time on disciplining the students in the classroom.

### **History of Korean Community in a city of Southwest US**

Koreans moved to the U.S. to look for better lives and to develop English skills and to gain better education. The 2000 Census records that the following states have the

highest population of Koreans: California, New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Illinois, Washington, Texas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Hawaii. The states that have the least populations of Koreans are: Wyoming, Montana, Maine, North Dakota, New Mexico, New Hampshire, and Vermont. According to Kang (1990), Korean immigrants tend to concentrate in some states where large metropolitan areas could provide relatively favorable economic opportunities for newcomers.

According to the 2000 Census Population and Housing in the United States, 1,791 Koreans live in the city in which this study was conducted. Most of the Koreans who settled in this city came to the US when the immigration law of 1965 opened the door to Asian immigrants, and they moved from state to state for economic opportunities. Recently, many Koreans have moved to this city for their children's education. The areas around the schools I studied had the highest Korean population, and the reason that Koreans had settled in these areas was because the schools were well known as being outstanding.

### **Study Participants**

The participants included one Korean student in middle school and two Korean students in high school, ranging from grade 7 to grade 12. They were Korean-born and had been in the United States for fewer than five years. In terms of study permission, I received approval from the review board at the University of New Mexico and approval from the Public Schools. Each of the participants and their parents consented and assented to participate in the study. Additionally I received permission from the schools the participants attended, and I visited the school sites and spoke with the principals there. The principals in both schools were very kind, which made me feel welcomed. They said

that my research would be an important resource to learn about second language learners and their experiences in the school. They talked to my participants' teachers and allowed me to get permission to observe the class from the teachers. The principals introduced me to the classes where I wanted to observe. With the teachers' permission, I was able to observe the participants' classes. Information about the participants' teachers is described in Chapter 4. Table 3 shows each of the participants' information.

**Table 3. *The Participants' Information.***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade level</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Year arrived</b>	<b>Previous Education in Korea</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Jung	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	S Middle School	August, 2001	1 year	Male
Tim	10 <sup>th</sup> grade	N High School	February, 2003	7 years	Male
Yang	12 <sup>th</sup> grade	N High School	September, 2003	10 years	Male

Tim lived with the family of one of his aunts. His parents lived in Korea. His two aunts had married a Thai-American and an American, respectively. Jung lived with his Korean-born parents and a younger brother. Yang lived with his Korean-born mother, Korean American stepfather, and sister. The language used at home was varied for the students, and their previous education in Korea was different. Table 4 presents the composition of the students' families and their language use at home:

**Table 4. *The Composition of the Participants' Families and Language Use at Home.***

<b>Participants</b>	<b>The Composition of their Families</b>	<b>Language Use at Home</b>
Jung	Korean-born parents (with F1 Visa*) Younger brother (first grader)	Korean with his parents English with his brother
Tim	Aunt 1 (Korean-born with U.S. citizenship) Uncle 1 (Thai-born with U.S. citizenship) Cousin 1 (American-born)  Aunt 2 (Korean-born with U.S. citizenship) Uncle 2 (American) Cousin 2 (American)	English with their uncles and cousins Korean with their aunts (Language use at home was typically in English language.)
Yang	Korean-born mother (with green card) Korean-born stepfather (with U.S. citizenship) Older sister (Korean-born/ university student)	Korean with his family members

(\*F1 refers to an international student who attends an educational institution in the U.S. Recently, this family tried to gain an H1 visa, which would allow them to work in the U.S.)

As shown in Table 3 and 4, there were more differences than similarities among the participants, with regard to the participants' demographics and family composition. The primary similarity was that they had all come to the US for the purpose of learning English. In contrast, each of the participants' grade level, education level, previous education in Korea, family composition, and language use at home were different. For example, Tim and Yang had more previous education in Korea than Jung. Compared to Jung and Yang, Tim had more opportunity to speak English at home because he lived with an American uncle and cousins. These differences among the cases influenced the

findings of this study, because each of these aspects contributed to differences in the participants' English learning experiences in the classroom. Taken together, the cases offer readers a broader, richer understanding than had the boys shared more in common.

### **Data Collection**

I collected data in order to examine the questions set forth in the study. My research questions were as follows:

#### General question:

What linguistic and cultural experiences arise when Korean children move to the United States and study in public schools in the United States to develop their English proficiency?

#### Sub questions:

1. How do Korean students experience English inside the classroom?
2. What are the challenges and difficulties that Korean students experience in this process in the United States?
3. Does Vygotsky's theory help us understand experiences of Korean students?

I used several methods for data collection: classroom observations; interviews with parents, teachers, and students; student journals (a communication method that recognizes and evaluates students' opinions, experiences, and beliefs through writing); analyses of students' writing samples and other personal documents; and my own field journal writings as a researcher. "Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 151) because the process of data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic. I simultaneously collected and analyzed the data, writing in my journal, and taking comparative notes on the participants' experiences in

the classroom. I collected data inside the schools over a 10 month period between August 2005 and May 2006. In regards to observations outside the classroom, I visited each of participants' homes, observed what language they used, how they interacted with each other, and what kind of home activities they engaged in. In terms of the frequency of the home visits, I visited Tim and Yang twice, and Jung four times. For additional information about their activities outside the classroom, I utilized interviews and recorded daily schedules. I observed Yang's wrestling practice twice. I visited Tim's aunt's beauty salon and had an informal conversation with her about Tim.

Methodological design used for my study was based on studies by Fu (1995) and Valdes (2001). Both studies were case studies. Fu (1995) examined the learning experiences of four Laotian students at a mainstream secondary school and described and interpreted the students' learning situations and revealed their perspectives, along with those of their teachers. Valdes (2001) studied the lives and experiences of four Mexican children in an American middle school. This study examined both the policy and the instructional dilemmas that surround the English language education of immigrant children in this country. Valdes used samples and analysis of the children's oral and written language as well as an examination of their classrooms, school, and community. She addressed the difficulties surrounding the teaching and learning of English for second language learners. Fu also used similar methods for data collection, such as classroom observations, interviews, and analysis of writing samples and classroom materials and resources. Both studies were similar to my study in that they described immigrant students' learning difficulties and experiences in ESL classes and illustrated teachers' pedagogy that did not address the needs of second language learners. These studies

differed from mine in that Fu studied four siblings of a refugee family and Valdes examined the experiences of only middle school students and studied mixed genders.

### *Classroom Observations*

The primary data collection method that I used for this study was classroom observation. Observation is a research tool when it “(1) serves a formulated research purpose, (2) is planned deliberately, (3) is recorded systematically, and (4) is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability” (Kidder, 1981b, p. 264).

Field notes included my commentary, feelings, assumptions, questions, reactions, hunches, and initial interpretations, and descriptions of activities, behaviors, and language use. I conducted the observations in the Language Arts and Social Studies classes in the middle school. I brought note pads with me, and all of my field notes were hand-written. I wrote my field notes during the observations. After my observations, I had multiple informal conversations with the participants and teachers that informed the direction of my questions, thoughts, and assumptions that occurred during the observations. I then wrote the key points from these conversations on my note pads immediately afterwards before I forgot the important points. These shaped my journal writing and also helped to aid in creating a thick description for this study. The data was thick because it combined what I saw with what the different individuals told me. After handwriting the field notes, I typed them into my computer in order to keep all the data organized and to make sure that I had not forgotten any important information from the observations. I kept my field note pads in my bag or in my car because I did not want to lose them. I wanted to be able to read and enter them into my computer whenever the opportunity was available. Each observation lasted two hours in the Language Arts class, and one hour in the Social

Studies class. In the high school, I conducted most observations in the English and Communication Skills classes. Additionally, I observed some Government, Chemistry, Science, Math, World History, ROTC, Geometry, and Spanish classes to get a broader understanding of my participants' experiences in United States schools. Each classroom observation lasted for about an hour, or one full class period. When I observed the classes, I usually sat in the back of the room or to the side of the participants because I did not want to disrupt them. Over time, I became less and less hesitant about asking the teachers questions. They helped me by providing class materials, students' personal information, and writing samples. They would sometimes inform me ahead of time about what they would be covering in class. After I observed a couple of classes, Jung's teachers asked me to work with Jung as a tutor during the class. After working with Jung, I would rush to my car to write my experiences and thoughts into my note pads. As soon as I went home, I typed my notes up on the computer. This was how informal conversations and interactions with the teachers and participants entered into my analysis.

The frequency of my class observations varied from case to case. Table 5 shows the frequency of my classroom observations by participant, from August 2005 to May 2006:

**Table 5. *Frequency of Classroom Observations.***

	LA	E	CS	G	EC	SS	S	ROTC	SC	H	M	GM	WH	CH	Total
Jung	9				8	1			1	1	1				21
Tim		11					1	1				3		2	18
Yang		11	5	3	1								2		22



(LA: Language Arts, E: English, CS: Communicative Skills, G: Government, EC: Economics, SS: Social Studies, S: Science, H: Health, M: Math, GM: Geometry, WH: World History, CH: Chemistry)

With regard to the number of hours of classroom observation, I observed 30 hours for Jung; 18 hours for Tim; and 22 hours for Yang, approximately. (Jung's Language Arts class was composed of two periods.)

The students were assigned classroom seats by their teachers. Due to the different seating arrangements in different classrooms, the students interacted with various target language speakers. However, the number of times when they spoke English varied, depending on where they sat, the students that surrounded them, and the types of class activities in which they were engaged. The conversation samples that I used mostly were the ones from whole class discussions, conversations from group or pair activities, and casual conversations in the classroom. I recorded class conversations with a digital recorder, or when I felt that the recorder might bother the class, I took notes of the conversations on a note pad. Note taking was helpful when I transcribed. I transcribed the recordings as soon as I returned home. I did not use any method of transcription. I displayed the transcription linearly by marking it with numbers. When I transcribed the verbal conversations between me and the participants, I added my interpretations of the conversation by writing notes under the text when necessary. The interpretation of the transcription was used to aid in understanding the meaning of what was said, and to make connections across cases. The verbal information was transcribed as exactly as possible. I placed nonverbal information in parenthesis before the verbal information. Whenever nonverbal information occurred during the transcription, I inserted the information using parenthesis. For example, when the conversations paused, I marked the pauses. The

transcription of recorded conversations was based on my convenience. Table 6 shows the participants' class schedules, from August 2005 to May 2006.

**Table 6. *Class Schedules of Participants.***

<b>Jung</b>		<b>Tim</b>		<b>Yang*</b>
Period 0		Period 0 (6:40-7:32)	ENRI CHMT	
Period 1 (8:30-9:20)	Social Studies	Period 1 (7:40-8:34)	ROTC	Pre-Calculus
Period 2 (9:25-10:10)	Music	Period 2 (8:42-9:36)	ROTC	Government
Period 3 & 4 (10:16-11:50)	Language Arts	Period 3 (9:44-10:38)	Geometry Honors	Piano
Lunch (11:50-12:36)	Lunch	Period 4 (10:52-11:46)	Spanish	English 12 Regular
Period 5 (12:36-1:20)	Health	Lunch (11:46-12:21)	Lunch	Lunch
Period 6 (1:25-2:10)	Math	Period 5 (12:29-1:23)	English 10 Honors	World History
Period 7 (2:15-3:05)	Science	Period 6 (1:31-2:25)	Chemistry	Communication Skills

(\*Yang took a Government class in fall 2005 and an Economics class in spring 2006. He also took a Pre-Calculus in fall 2005 and an ESL class to assist other ESL students.)

### *Researcher's Journal Writing*

I wrote in my research journal about my assumptions and the questions that arose for me during my classroom observations. Ethnographers often maintain a fieldwork journal, which Merriam (1998) defines as “an introspective record of the anthropologist’s

experience in the field. It includes his or her ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, and reactions to the experience and can include thoughts about the research methodology itself” (p. 110). I wrote memos to myself capturing my reflections, hunches, ideas, and things that I wished to pursue, such as interpretations and themes that were derived from my first set of data. I also wrote about initial findings and interpretations of the data. I described participants’ similarities and differences in terms of their language experiences within classroom environment, social interactions with teachers and peers, and challenges in their processes of learning a second language. I constantly compared the data within individual cases and among the different cases. I wrote interview questions based on questions that arose while making my observations and after hearing the teachers’ comments about my cases. Informal conversations with the teachers before and after the classes also led to interview questions. My journal writing served as an on-going log of methodological, theoretical, and observational notes.

#### *Analysis of Writing Samples and Personal Documents*

I collected participants’ writing and reading samples, and class handouts (including tests, worksheets, and syllabi), as well as their personal documents and records from school. I analyzed the participants’ writing samples and personal documents. I drew out the differences in how they experienced English writing in the classrooms. The analysis of their writing samples helped me understand how the boys experienced written English and the challenges that they experienced in writing English. The handouts and worksheets that I collected provided insights into what the participants learned as well as the content of their courses. The worksheets provided information about how well the students understood the content they had learned. Other personal school documents and

records pertained to conversations and notes between teachers and parents in PTA meetings, and described suggestions from the teachers that encouraged the participants to do well in school. The personal school documents and records were helpful to see what issues the students had and how well they had adjusted to the school. The documents of tests and quizzes showed how much understood the content they learned in the classroom, and how well they performed in the school. Table 7 presents the number of students' writing and other samples:

**Table 7. *Collection of the Students' Writing Samples and Other Samples.***

	<b>Writing Samples</b>	<b>Other Samples</b>	<b>Total</b>
Jung	Descriptive writing (1) Creative writing (3) Reflective writing (2) Personal narrative (3) Comic strip (1)	Student grade record (1) Parent/teacher conference record (1) Homework notices (5) Worksheets (22) Handouts (10) Tests (3) Maps (7) Cross puzzle (1) Proofreading checklist (1)	61
Tim	Expository essay (4 with rough drafts) Text analysis (9) Comparative writing (1)	Syllabus (2) Book lists for reading (1) Handouts (9) Vocabulary tests (8)	34
Yang	Response paper (1) Personal narrative (1) Essay (1 with rough drafts) Email responses (2) Journal writing (15)	Syllabus (2) Handouts (19) Worksheets (6) Tests (9) Vocabulary quiz (2)	58

## *Interviewing*

I interviewed the focal students, their mothers and one aunt, and some of the students' teachers. I interviewed each of the focal students twice, with each interview lasting one and one half hours. I conducted the first interview at the end of the fall semester of 2005, and the second interview at the end of the spring semester of 2006.

In the first interview, I used the technique of Seidman's model of phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 1991), asking the participants about their past experiences in education and learning English in Korea, their present experiences learning English, the difficulties and challenges that they experienced while learning English as a second language, and their future plans to survive in this new country. (Interview questions are in Appendix.)

The second interview with the focal students was focused on questions based on my field notes, journal writings, and teachers' comments on students during the spring semester of 2006. I was seeking to gain a better understanding of how the focal students were changing from the first interview with regard to their attitudes, behaviors, and thinking, while they were immersed in American culture and the English language. Additionally, I wanted to understand experiences in a different language and culture on an everyday basis. I also had many informal conversations with each participant after each of my classroom observations.

I interviewed the three mothers and one aunt of the participants in their homes, at beauty salon, or restaurants. The reason that I interviewed only women in the boy's lives was because no men were available to interview. For example, Jung's father was in Korea for extended periods of time for his business, Yang's stepfather usually came

home late; and Tim's father was living in Korea. For this study, the women in these boy's lives were more available than the men, and so they are the ones who were interviewed. The interviews lasted two hours. I interviewed them, focusing on their reasons for coming to the United States, the focal students' experiences in school and learning English from their mother's perspectives, and the students' linguistic and cultural issues (See literature review) that they found salient or noticeable. During the interviews, the participants spoke of their experiences by comparing themselves with native speakers of English in the classroom, in terms of different cultural backgrounds and language. They saw themselves as being different from the native speakers of English. Additionally, I focused on how the students experienced their languages (both Korean and English) at home, what they did at home, and whether they faced conflict at home in their behaviors and attitudes. The interviews provided another's perspective about how the focal students experienced language and culture outside the schools.

I did formal interviews with the students' teachers, and had many informal conversations with the teachers before and after my classroom observations. I interviewed each focal student's English and Language Arts teachers. I also interviewed Jung's Social Studies teacher, Tim's Geometry teacher, and Yang's Communicative Skills teacher. The interviews and conversations helped me understand how well the students were doing in the classroom, and how they interacted with their peers from their teachers' perspectives. Additionally, these interviews and conversations allowed me to understand how the focal students' teachers saw these students as second language learners in the classroom, and the worries and challenges they experienced with the focal students. All of the interviews with the focal students, the mothers, and the teachers were

recorded and later transcribed. I conducted the interviews with the focal students and their mothers in Korean. I first transcribed the interviews in Korean and then translated the transcriptions into English. (See interview questions with the focal students, teachers, and mothers in the Appendix.) The following table is a summary of data collection.

**Table 8. Summary of Data Collection**

Classroom Observations				Interviews	Home Visits
Jung	Date	Time	Focal Activity	10/20/05	09/10/05
				Interview with	12/02/05
				Jung's mother	03/10/06
	10/13/04	11:45-1:20	Reading		05/21/06
	10/20/04	11:45-1:20	Nouns	11/29/04 First	
	08/24/05	10:16-11:50	Vocabulary/game	Interview with	
	08/26/05	8:30-9:20	Latin America	Jung	
	08/29/05	10:16-11:50	Creative writing		
	09/07/05	8:30-9:20	South America	11/13/05 Second	
	09/13/05	10:16-11:52	Reading poem	Interview with	
	09/23/05	8:30-9:20	Middle America	Jung	
	10/04/05	8:30-9:20	New Mexico		
	10/14/05	10:16-11:52	Verbs	02/06/06	
	11/01/05	8:30-9:20	New Mexico	Interview with	
	12/01/05	10:16-11:52	Current News	Jung's Social	
	02/06/06	8:30-9:20	Crossword puzzle	Studies' teacher	
	02/06/06	10:16-11:52	Prepositions		
	03/06/06	8:30-9:20	Worksheets	03/09/06	
	13/06/06	10:16-11:52	Creative writing	Interview with	
	03/06/06	12:36-1:20	Nutrition	Jung's Language	
	03/07/06	1:25-2:10	Math	Arts' teacher	
	03/07/06	2:15-3:05	Volcano		
	03/09/06	8:30-9:20	Working on Map		
	04/18/06	10:16-11:52	Hamlet		
	05/08/06	10:16-11:52	Hamlet		

Tim	08/17/05	12:29-1:23	Vocabulary	11/21/05 First	01/06/06
	08/18/05	12:29-1:23	Inferences	Interview with	05/20/06
	08/25/05	12:29-1:23	Reading essay	Tim	
	09/06/05	9:46-10:42	Equations		
	09/19/05	9:46-10:42	Congruent figures	05/08/06 Second	
	09/21/05	12:29-1:23	Vocabulary	Interview with	
	10/11/05	12:29-1:23	Archetype	Tim	
	11/07/05	12:29-1:23	Story creation		
	11/18/05	12:29-1:23	Book talk	2/24/06 Interview	
	01/30/06	12:29-1:23	Jane Eyre	with Tim's	
	03/20/06	9:46-10:42	Worksheet	English teacher	
	03/20/06	10:52-11:46	Watching movie		
	04/04/06	8:40-9:30	Resume	03/17/06	
	04/05/06	12:29-1:23	Vocabulary/writing	Interview with	
	04/18/06	12:29-1:23	Pair work	Tim's aunt	
	04/20/06	1:32-2:25	Chemical reactions		
	05/01/06	1:32-2:25	Practice problems		
	5/2/2006	12:29-1:23	Reading discussion		
Yang	08/16/05	10:52-11:46	Poem	11/07/05 First	01/21/06
	08/22/05	10:52-11:46	Discussion Iliad	Interview with	05/27/06
	09/06/05	8:42-9:36	War of Words	Yang	
	09/19/05	8:42-9:36	Economic life		
	09/26/05	10:52-11:46	Hero	4/22/06 Second	
	10/18/05	8:42-9:36	Voting	Interview with	
	11/03/05	1:31-2:25	Sports story	Yang	
	11/21/05	12:29-1:23	Map of Asia		
	11/21/05	1:30-2:25	Cross Comics	10/05/06	
	01/30/06	10:52-11:46	Essay	Interview with	
	02/16/06	8:42-9:36	Economic activity	Yang's mother	
	02/16/06	10:52-11:46	Reading MAUS		
	02/16/06	12:29-1:23	Map of Europe	04/21/06	
	02/16/06	1:31-2:25	Perceptions	Interview with	
	02/17/06	7:40-8:34	ESL class	Yang's English	
	02/17/06	10:52-11:46	Watching movie	teacher	
	02/21/06	10:52-11:46	Reading strategy		
	03/09/05	10:52-11:46	Animal farm	05/04/06	
	04/17/06	10:52-11:46	Discussion	Interview with	
	04/20/06	1:30-2:25	Resume	Yang's	
04/21/06	10:52-11:46	Vocabulary test	Government		
05/09/06	1:30-2:25	Current issues	teacher and		
			World History		
			teacher		



## **Methodological Challenges**

Methodologically, I was faced with several challenges in observing the classrooms and interviewing the focal students. I felt unsure about what I was observing and wondered if the data collected would guide further data collection, and if the data were related to, and relevant to, my study because I had never done a project of this type or size. Thus, at the beginning of my study, I did not have a good understanding of how my data collection would guide me to answer my research questions. I had a hard time interviewing the focal students because they responded with short answers. In addition, I questioned my own interview strategies and skills and wondered what questions would be best to ask them to suit the purposes of my study.

Another challenge that I faced while collecting data was that I initially struggled with gathering Jung's writing samples because he was shy about sharing his English grammar mistakes. Fortunately, with Jung's consent, I later gathered some samples of his writing with the help of his teachers.

The participants were often busy doing homework and schoolwork, which made it difficult for me in collecting the students' journal writings about their experiences and challenges in the classroom, their interactions with their peers, what they did at home, and how they experienced the English language at home. I asked them to explain the descriptions and forms of their journal writing that I created and introduced this to them as an indirect way of collecting data to better understand their experiences outside the classroom. I hoped to use this as an alternative method of collecting data because it was hard for me to visit their homes often. Unfortunately, they did not cooperate with my request to write in their journal. Thus, I gave up on gathering their journal writings. As an

alternative way of collecting data about their experiences outside school, I created a daily schedule chart where they could describe their daily experiences in a simple way.

Although I decided not to investigate their English experiences outside the classroom, I used some data from the interviews associated with their English experiences outside the school in my data analysis.

### **Trustworthiness**

To strengthen the internal validity and reliability of my study, I triangulated my data by using multiple sources of data and multiple methods to confirm my emerging findings. The notion of triangulation relies on a “holistic understanding of the situation to construct a plausible explanation about the phenomena being studied” (Mathison, 1998; cited in Merriam, p. 204). I did member checking, taking my data and tentative interpretations of that data back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results were plausible. However, I faced difficulty in accounting for the fact that what people said they did was not always what they did. To increase the validity of the findings, I did repeated observations at the research sites.

**Table 9. *The Validity of the Findings.***

<b>Data Type</b>	<b># of activities</b>	<b>Validity</b>
Class Observations (Field notes)	18 to 22 of each student	After each observation, I met with students to discuss their perceptions and check my interpretations.
Interviews (students, teachers, and parents)	2 of students, and 1 of teachers and parents	After each interview, I transcribed the interview and let the participants read the transcripts. I made sure that my interpretations were correct by asking the students to read and respond to them.

Researcher's Journal	On-going log	I read my journal each time I did an interview and wrote memos whenever I had some assumptions and questions from classroom observations and home visits. I asked about these assumptions and questions when I interviewed them.
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To increase external validity and reliability, I used quotes from the participants and described in detail how I collected my data, derived categories, and made decisions throughout the inquiry. As described earlier, I wrote rich and thick descriptions, “providing enough description so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211).

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was an ongoing process throughout the data collection (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994), as I interviewed participants, did field observations, and kept my reflective journal. While collecting my data, I read and reread the data to find deeper meaning. As I processed the data, I used constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), comparing new phenomenon in a category with all other items in the same category to see if new dimensions or relationships emerged. The confirmed categories became the findings of my study, and “when categories and their properties are reduced and refined and then linked together by tentative hypotheses, the analysis is moving toward the development of theory to explain the data’s meaning” (Merriam, 1998, p. 192). In other words, I extended the analysis to developing categories or themes. A theory begins with categories, and consists of properties and hypotheses. “The hypotheses are the suggested

links between categories and properties” so that the data gradually evolves into a core of an emerging theory (Merriam, 1998, p. 190)

To make sense of my data and to answer my research questions, I used thematic analysis, searching for patterns in my data. Thematic analysis is “the main route for researchers to take when they are looking for patterns to arise as a result of their active inspections of the welter of confusions that often characterizes ‘raw data’” (Shank, 2002, p. 129-130). When these patterns become organized, and when they characterize different segments of data, then they are called themes.

### *Individual Case Analysis*

To identify themes within my raw data, I coded all the data from my classroom observations, field notes, and interviews. Coding entailed reading the data and assigning codes, or short descriptions that identified topics from a fine level of detail.

In my first round of coding, the data set of each case (from classroom observations, researcher’s journal writings, interviews with the focal students, and one interview with the mothers and teachers) produced a different number of codes. For example, one of the classroom observations for Jung had 21 codes; one of my journal writings for Jung had seven codes; and an interview with Jung had 52 codes. I wrote all of the codes that I produced for the data set of each case. First, I typed the codes for the data of each case on the computer. For example, the first interview with Tim was marked as ‘Tim IW 1,’ and the first classroom observation with Yang as ‘Yang CO 1.’ Then, I marked the first code from Tim IW 1 as ‘Tim IW 1: 01 Background.’ After I typed all the codes from the data set of each case, I started to pull out codes that were similar across the different sources and form them into groups. The similar codes from the data set of

each case were merged as larger categories, and the data was reduced. Some of the codes for each case were excluded because they did not directly answer my research questions. This first round of coding was the foundation to reorganize or identify the larger categories by grouping similar codes. After that, I revisited my research questions and looked at how the first round of coding related to the research questions. Four larger categories from each case emerged, and I read and reread each of the large categories until I identified the sub-categories within each of the larger categories. After this first round of coding, I read and reread the codes from the first round to group similar codes together. This time, I conducted color coding, using different colors of pens to identify similar codes that might directly answer my research questions. I used four different colors: green, orange, and pink. This color coding helped me identify themes across the cases that observable and concrete data moved to more abstract level of analysis. With regard to frequency of colors, green (emotional experiences) was more salient than the other colors. However, the other colors also contributed to drawing out important themes in this study, such as the themes, which were colored as: complexity of L2 learning and development (orange), and social and cultural experiences (pink).

Through color-coding, I identified different categories. After the second round of coding, I drew a map of my process of coding. In mapping, I put the main categories in the center of a sheet of paper, and then wrote subcategories around each main category. Through the reduced and refined data (the process of coding and mapping), I finally obtained the themes or categories that reflected the purpose of my study and answered my research questions to understand the phenomena of my study. Table 10 is a visual chart of my process of data analysis:

**Table 10. *The Process of Data Analysis.***

<b>First Coding</b>	<b>Second Color Coding</b>	<b>Codes relevant to the research questions</b>	<b>Categories (meaning generation)</b>
1. literate environment (Co 1)	# 1, 2, 3, 4 & 10 from the first coding	Throughout the coding from the raw data (classroom observations, interviews, and journal writings, writing and reading samples), codes in green color are relevant to the research question: how do Korean students experience English inside the classroom?	Category: English experiences inside the class (Under this category, there are sub-categories).
2. vocabulary and parts of speech (Co 1)	(Grouping together): Green color		
3. interaction with his peers (Co 8)			
4. sharing vocabulary definitions (Co 9)			
5. difficulties in English class (IW 1)	# 5, 6, & 7 from the first coding	Codes in orange color are related to the research question: what are the challenges and difficulties in this process in the US?	Category: Tim’s challenges and difficulties in the classroom. (Under this category, there are sub-categories.)
6. challenges in writing (IW 1)	(Grouping together): Orange color		
7. limited time, slower learner than Americans (IW 1)			
8. losing Korean (IW 2)	# 8 & 9 from the first coding	Codes in pink color are relevant to the research question: what consequences do students experience as a result of being exposed to English and American culture?	Category: Immersion in American culture and English and its results (Under this category, there are sub-categories.)
9. American way of thinking and living (IW 2)	(Grouping together): Pink color		
10. reading the book “Jane Eyre” (Co 9)			

(Co 1 represents the first classroom observation and IW 2 represents the second interview.)

In the second round of color coding, the green color was used to identify English learning experiences, the orange color became a larger category called ‘difficulty in

learning' and the pink color was used to mark social and cultural issues. Within these larger categories in the second round of color coding, sub-categories were produced. Above, I explained how the initial thematic categories emerged and gave some examples. As a result of this process of analysis, I drew out several broader categories and sub-categories of each category. After reducing and refining my data, I described each case according to the data that I collected, as well as according to the meaning that I found in the data. As Shank (2002) writes, "[D]ata displays are intended to allow us to move from merely describing our data toward explaining patterns and variables within the data. Data displays allow us to see those patterns and variables, and map out possible relationships" (p. 136). I described each case in detail to find meaning in the data more easily and to predict the phenomenon. I used a great amount of description (with some interpretation and analysis) in order to convey a holistic understanding of each case. I described participants' experiences of English inside, and to some degree outside, the classroom, their challenges and difficulties in the process of learning English, and the consequences of their immersion in American culture and the English language. The presentation of each case was the foundation for "moving from concrete description of observable data to a somewhat more abstract level" of analysis (Merriam, 1998, p. 187). Vygotsky's three central concepts (system of meaning, *perezhivanie*, and *social situation of development*) helped me present concrete descriptions of the three Korean students' learning experiences in US classrooms. I presented the cases individually: the story of Jung (Chapter 4, Part 1), the story of Tim (Chapter 4, Part II), and the story of Yang (Chapter 4, Part III).

### *Cross-Case Analysis*

After presenting the individual cases, I began doing a cross-case analysis. As Yin (1994) writes, 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. 112). Miles and Huberman (1994) write that the researcher does this to see “processes and outcomes that occur across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations” (p. 172). The cross-case analysis led to themes that helped me conceptualize the data from all the cases and resulted in “building a substantive theory offering an integrated framework covering multiple cases” (Merriam, 1998, p. 195). Across cases, the themes drawn explained the meaning of data and moved toward explaining some aspects of educational practice, making inferences, and developing models. In this study, three themes across the cases were examples of these explanations. Each theme offered an integrated framework across the cases and illuminated a substantive theory. For instance, one of the themes in this study was complexity of L2 learning and development. This theme drew a substantive theory that many factors influenced how the students experienced L2 learning in their ZPD. All of these factors (individual, social, linguistic, and contextual factors, and other factors) constituted a learner’s learning (see chapter 5). In doing the cross-case analysis, I read the individual cases over and over to capture the participants’ English learning experiences inside and outside the classroom, their challenges and difficulties in the process of learning English, and their social and cultural experiences in English language learning and American culture. Across the cases, the codes changed, unlike the codes within in each individual case, these codes evolved into broader codes. These



broader codes contributed to draw out the three themes in this study. Through the cross-case analysis, the sub-themes within each theme were also drawn out. For example, within the differences in the participants' English learning experiences in the classroom, I divided their learning experiences into three different sections, learning experiences in reading, writing, and vocabulary. To draw out the themes across cases, I simultaneously coded and thematically analyzed each case, to answer the research questions and to interpret the meaning of the data. For example, one of the themes that emerged was about complexity of L2 learning and development. The sub-themes under this theme included individual factors, social factors, and linguistic factors. Individual factors included age, motivation, and personality (which were also codes). I pulled out data across the cases that were related to individual factors (age, motivation, and personality), which might show the complex L2 learning and development. I processed each theme in the same way. Within each thematic category, I looked at differences and similarities or commonalities among the cases. In terms of similarities across the cases, all of the participants, in general, experienced difficulties in learning English, but in different ways. The Venn Diagrams shown in Theme 2 (Chapter 5) shows the variation among the cases. This variation among the cases showed that many factors influenced the students' L2 learning and development in different ways. The participants' different individual factors (age, personality, and motivation), social factors, and linguistic factors, and other factors, was reflected in the data by the complexity in their learning experiences and development. Table 11 represents the results of my cross-cases analysis, showing that I drew out three main themes, and a few or several sub-themes for each main theme.

**Table 11. *Displays of Cross-Analysis.***

<b>Theme 1: Emotional Experiences</b>	<b>Theme 2: Complexity of L2 Learning and Development</b>	<b>Theme 3: Social and Cultural Differences in the Classroom</b>
Sub-themes: 1. Emotional Experiences in English Class 2. Emotional Experience in Other Subject Classes 3. Final Thoughts	Sub-themes: 1. Individual Factors (Age, Personality, and Motivation) 2. Social Factors 3. Linguistic Factors 4. Final Thoughts	Sub-themes: 1. Language Attitude and Socialization 2. Culture Shock in the classroom 3. Model Minority 4. Final Thoughts

(Under each sub-theme, there are several sub-themes.)

In writing up my cross-cases analysis, I combined and integrated my raw data and my interpretations of these data. I also added a literature review relevant to each theme. In my writing I engaged in a process that Merriam (1998) describes as making one's summary outline, analyses, and arguments clear, as they "become visible to oneself as 'things' out there that are available for scrutiny" (p. 225). The work of Vygotsky's concepts (including system of meaning, *perezhivanie*, and social situation of development) helped me analyze my data because these concepts were closely related to my research questions. Because of the close relationship, it was easier for me to integrate my raw data and interpretation of this data.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**INDIVIDUAL CASES**

**The Story of Jung**

*Background*

Jung's family was one of the families that moved to the United States from Korea to learn English, gain a better education, and pursue a better life. Jung's mother said,

My husband wanted to study English because he is a marathon coach, meaning that he has to take his runners to other countries for competitions, and so he needs to be able to communicate with foreigners. He needs to learn English. We also wanted our children to learn English. We wanted to revitalize our life by living in the U.S. (10/20/2005, translated from Korean)

The social pressure to get a private education and an English education in Korea gave Jung's family a great deal of stress. As Jung's mother said, "I had a lot of pressure because I felt that I have to send my children to private school or have them tutored. We wanted to avoid having a stressful life in Korea. (10/20/2005, translated from Korean)"

Jung is about 5 feet tall and has short hair. He has a chubby face and enjoys wearing comfortable pants, tee shirts, and hooded shirts. Jung's family moved to the United States in January 2001. At that time, Jung was seven years old, and his brother was two years old. Jung had completed first grade in Korea. His family originally moved to Chicago where they rented an apartment. Jung's family did not speak English well enough to rent an apartment, so the Korean community helped them to find a place to live. When the family arrived in Chicago, the school semester had already begun and Jung missed the first half of second grade. Jung started the second half of second grade in one

of the public schools in Chicago that provided English and Korean bilingual instruction. According to Jung's mother, at that time, Jung did not speak English at all, so he struggled with learning English. He went through half of the second grade, all of third grade, and half of the fourth grade in this bilingual program. In October 2002, this family moved to a city in the Southwest US because of his father's job situation. His father is a marathon coach who has a doctoral degree in Sports Administration. He wanted to train his runners in a place with high altitude, like the mountains around New Mexico. Jung attended the remainder of fourth grade and all of fifth grade in elementary schools in the Southwest US. At the time of this study, he was attending Sunflower Middle School, where he was in seventh grade. Jung was designated as an English language learner in this school. At the time of this study, Jung's mother was teaching Korean language and Korean culture classes at the local Korean Language School. His brother was in the first grade and did not speak the Korean language very well because he was only two years old when the family came to the US. Jung attended the Korean language school where his mother taught.

Jung's mother believed that her sons could learn English naturally in the United States, and that they would have many opportunities to interact with American people. However, all of the family members had a hard time learning English and interacting with Americans. According to Jung, "The most difficult thing here is English. English creates more work in school. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)" The family interacted mostly with the Korean community in the city in which they lived. They attended church even though they were not Christians because they wanted to interact with Koreans for social networking. However, by interacting with the Korean community, Jung's family

could not escape the stresses of Korean society because the Korean community in the US also put a lot of value on their children's education and expected their children to be smart and gifted. Jung's mother said, "Korean parents in this city who are well educated spend a lot of money for their children's education. Their children get tutoring such as art, music, math, sports, and gifted education. (10/20/2005, translated from Korean)"

Other sources of pressure and stress that Jung's family faced was the stereotype that many Americans have of Koreans, that they all study hard and do well in school. According to Jung's mother, "I have a lot of pressure (from the Koreans in this city) due to the stereotype that all Koreans study very well, but my son is not doing well in school. (10/20/2005, translated from Korean)" Although the family's purpose for coming to the United States was to learn English and to revitalize their life by avoiding Korean society's extreme pressure in terms of educating their children, the family found themselves faced with many of these same pressures from the local Korean community, which were then compounded by English learning issues, socio-interactional issues, and pervasive stereotypes about Korean (Asian) students in the United States.

With regard to his Korean language proficiency, Jung did not display age-appropriate skills and proficiency in Korean because he only completed the first grade in Korea, so he never had the opportunity to fully develop his Korean literacy skills. He spoke Korean at home with his parents, but not with his brother. Outside of his home, he did not have many opportunities to speak Korean either inside or outside school. When he spoke in Korean, he mumbled, frequently paused before speaking, and frequently mixed English with Korean. He used simple vocabulary words and answered with short,

simple Korean sentences. Based on my observation in the Korean language school, he did not spell well, and his reading comprehension level was very low in the Korean language.

### **English Experiences at School**

In this section, I present Jung's English experience in his Language Arts and Social Studies classes.

#### *Language Arts Classroom*

Jung's language arts teacher (Ms. Walters) was a white female with three years of teaching experience. Twenty-five students were enrolled in this class. She took a few college courses related to second language acquisition and learning. Jung was the only student in the class who was a non-native speaker of English. Language Arts class consisted of two class periods, with each period lasting 50 minutes. There were about 1500 books in the classroom, including novels, other fiction books, and children's books, from which the students could choose some to read every week. The class had many posters and vocabulary words on the walls. Chairs and sofas were placed around the classroom, creating a space where students could read. There were three white boards where the teacher wrote a great deal of information, including the class agenda and schedule, assignments, vocabulary words, learning log information, and announcements. Additionally, the room had a television, two computers, and an overhead projector. Ms. Walters posted the State Standards for reading and writing and the students' work on the walls.

#### *Reading Activities*

Ms. Walters said that the class read different genres of literature, including poetry, novels, and autobiographies. Ms. Walters did not utilize any specific reading

strategies and activities to help her students' reading comprehension. Most of the time, she read books aloud, asked the students to take turns reading aloud, or asked them to read books by themselves. With these kinds of reading activities, reading comprehension was left up to the individual student, meaning that the student was usually responsible for figuring out the reading comprehension questions on their own. The following is an example.

*Reading Poem.* Ms. Walters randomly asked each student to read a sentence of poem called *Oranges* written by Gary Soto. Ms. Walters pointed out each student and asked them read:

Student 1: (reading) The first time I walked/ With a girl, I was twelve, / Cold, and weighted down/ With two oranges in my jacket.

Student 2: December. Frost cracking/ Beneath my steps, my breath/ Before me, then gone, / As I walked toward/ Her house, the one whose/ Porch light burned yellow/ Night and day, in any weather.

Student 3: A dog barked at me, until/ She came out pulling/ At her gloves, face bright/ With rouge. I smiled,

Student 4: Touched her shoulder, and led/ Her down the street, across/ A used car lot and a line/ Of newly planted trees, / Until we were breathing/ Before a drug store.

The poem continued. After reading the poem, Ms. Walters asked the students what they thought about the poem. Some students expressed their feelings. Jung sat quietly. Then the teacher asked the students to work on review questions. Jung struggled with

answering the questions. One of the example questions was why the girl's candy choice presented a problem for the speaker.

Jung seemed to read these questions, and then started looking at the book; however, he did not write any words on his notepad. Instead, I described his behavior in my field notes, "Jung is biting his pencil and looking around. He is not writing anything. He does not seem to understand the questions." Ms. Walters commented about Jung's reading comprehension as follows:

I would say that he does struggle with comprehending anything, including a lot of idiomatic language and anything with dialects; you know maybe southern dialects, something like that. I think poetry is hard for him to understand so whenever it is not a straightforward word, he does struggle with it. (3/10/2006)

Jung commented on his reading experiences, "Reading comprehension was hard because it was hard to find the right answers in the chapters. It was also hard to memorize and summarize what I read (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)." Although he did not have a problem with decoding, he struggled with encoding. Jung said, "I could read it, but sometimes it didn't make sense to me. I couldn't make sense out of the readings. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)" Based on the comments that Ms. Walters and Jung made, I concluded that Jung had reading comprehension problems. There were several reasons for this. The primary reason was that Jung did not have a sufficient understanding of the English language that would allow him to understand the language arts texts. His experience with the reading activity negatively influenced his reading comprehension and resulted in him being quiet and struggling with making meaning of the poem they read in his L2.



*Reading Responses.* I did not have a chance to observe what types of reading activities Ms. Walters used for the book, *The Cay*, by Theodore Taylor. I started observing after the students finished reading the book. I observed a post reading activity in which the students did story-mapping to show the five important parts of the story, and wrote a sentence about each part. The following are the sentences Jung wrote:

1. Phillip gets blind and trapped on an island.
2. He meets timothy and warles together.
3. They built shelter and hunting food.
4. Timothy finds that there is a hurricane. Timothy dies.
5. Phillip tries to survive till someone saves him.

Even though Jung was able to write the five sentences above, it was not clear how much he really understood. Jung said, “Most of the time, I did not understand the readings. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)” While the instruction was taking place, Jung experienced difficulty in reading comprehension, which inhibited his ability to write responses in a meaningful way. There was no such cognitive space for Jung to connect his thinking processes and writing processes, which could eventually lead to meaning-making in L2.

Another after-reading activity was to ask the students to write an account of Phillip’s (the main character) trip, and to write about what he did when he landed on the cay. Jung wrote “I have seen how lucky I was how Timothy helped me survive on the island. I have seen the cay. I have seen the hut and Timothy’s grave I have made.” Ms. Walter’s response to his writing was “Good, but include descriptions of what everything

looked like.” Based on her comments of Jung’s writing, Jung did not describe in detail an account of Phillip’s trip and about what he did when he landed on the cay. It appears that Jung copied these sentences directly from the book without understanding or negotiating the meaning through social interaction. Jung’s strategy for complying with the requirements was to use the language in the text because he was not able to make meaning on his own. This means that Jung might not fully understand the reading and might not know how to describe the story. His learning experiences with reading activities did not help him make meaning. Jung’s awareness of his internal processes as not making meaning could have contributed to the change in his perception and internalization of the experience of social interaction.

### *Writing Activities*

The class dealt with different genres of writing, such as creative writing, personal writing, narrative writing, learning log, and reading responses. According to Ms. Walters, Every day, they have to write in their log about a short question, and then every week we do a longer writing assignment, and every nine weeks, each student has to write on whatever they want, and then read their writing to the class. In this class, we do a lot of writing. (3/10/2006)

The students also received feedback on their writing from Ms. Walters, or their peers by through peer review exercises.

Even though Ms. Walters said they did a lot of writing in her class, she did not give her students instruction about purpose, organization, and language features for specific text types. Mostly, Jung did not have any idea why he was writing or what he was supposed to do. Jung simply wrote whatever Ms. Walters asked him to write. The

most common genres of writing that this class dealt with were creative writing and personal narrative writing.

*Creative writing.* Jung's Language Arts class did creative writing exercises. However, Ms. Walters did not provide any specific instruction for creative writing. For one of the creative writing exercises, Ms. Walters asked her students to write about a penny, but she did not provide any ideas, examples, or explain any of the concepts prior to the students writing. She never made sure Jung understood what the class was doing, or if he knew what he was supposed to do. Jung wrote the assignment without any real understanding.

After writing their stories about a penny by hand at their desks, the class moved to the computer lab to type up their stories. While Jung typed his assignment, he asked a student sitting next to him a couple of questions. His peer read Jung's paper and corrected some of the grammar mistakes. Jung read his paper again and then made some changes based on his peer's corrections. He originally wrote, "Well, a penny for people is spent, stayed in the jar or a wallet, getting old and messy." His peer corrected his writing as follows: "Well, a penny for people is getting spent, staying in the jar or a wallet, getting old and messy." Sometimes, Jung would look to see what the other students in the class were doing and writing. Ms. Walters simply approached him and checked if he wrote anything, but she did not have any moment to read his writing to see if he understood the directions. Lacking this interaction with his teacher, Jung never knew whether his writing was creative and clear in meaning. At the end of the class, Jung printed out his writing:

"The Life of a Penny"

The life of penny would be horrible.

If I was sitting down on a chair watching the penny's life it would be bored because a penny doesn't do anything.

Well, a penny for people is getting spent, staying in a jar or a wallet, getting old and messy.

They also get thrown on the ground, stepped on, getting ignored or picked up.

Finally to come to an end.

Picked up by a penny collector then to be cleaned.

After this project in the computer lab, Ms. Walters asked Jung how he felt about his writing. He answered, "Mine is short." Later, in an interview with me, he talked more about his creative writing about the penny. He was worried because his writing was short, and his peers wrote much more than he had. Through his writing activities, Jung became aware of himself as a writer who wrote shorter essays than his American peers. He felt pressured and frustrated, and said, "I was intimidated and I was a little angry. I did not have any idea what creative writing was. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)" This quote shows that he experienced frustration and pressure because he produced short writing, compared to his peers, and was not familiar with the creative writing process. Jung did not write about a penny successfully as a result of his teacher's lack of specific instruction and systematic guidance through the creative writing process and he experienced emotional pains, such as feeling disappointed, intimidated, and humiliated. Jung did not have the opportunity to build a meaningful understanding of creative writing in L2.

Later, when Jung received his paper back from his teacher, he read her feedback: "Nice job---but next time, be more creative. 65/80" She also gave him feedback on his

grammar, and that he needed to be careful about sentence fragments. Jung's writing production was a part of the result from lacking in specific instruction and guidance about creative writing and grammar. Ms. Walters assumed that Jung knew different genres of writing, and how to correct his own grammatical mistakes. Jung had to figure out what he was supposed to do without any support from his teacher or even from his peers. Jung said, "My teacher usually does not help me. I sometimes do not know what I am supposed to do. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)" This situation isolated Jung as a learner in this classroom. In other words, Jung experienced isolation and confusion by not being supported by his teacher. These negative emotional experiences did not help expand the ZPD in his learning, which was a result of the lack of teachers' awareness of their students' internal processes within the environment.

*Personal narratives.* Jung's Language Arts class wrote personal narratives. Ms. Walters introduced narrative writing as a recounting of a personal experience based on something that really happened or might really have happened. The class wrote a personal narrative, but was given no specific instruction or guidance about how to write personal narratives as the students wrote a creative writing. Instead, Jung worked alone to finalize his story. Jung wrote a three-paragraph story entitled "A Bad Boy." His story follows:

#### "A Bad Boy"

Once upon a time there was a bad boy named Bob. He was a good liar and his parents always believe him. Every time when he come home he says "I have finished my homework" and runs upstairs to his room and played his video games.

He plays a lot of violent games. One day it was a parent conference. After his parents came back, they were mad at him as always. All he gets is grounded for a few days and not playing the video games. After school he got home and ran up to his room, locked his door, turn on his video games and started to play. His parents were coming upstairs and Bob quickly turned off his video games, unlocked his door and sat on the bed reading. His dad opened the door and said “Wow! You are reading!?”

Bob said “yeah” and his dad went downstairs. His mom heard that he was reading and went upstairs. He was so busy playing video games so he did not hear his mom coming upstairs. When his mother came in, she was very mad at him. He got in more trouble and got grounded for two more weeks. His parents took the video games and hid them. Bob stayed in his room unhappy, and he never came out. It comes to the end where Bob never changed, or probably will. Who knows? Maybe he still will be bad.

In his story, Jung identified himself as Bob, a bad boy, who was good at lying to his parents and didn't study hard. Bob pretended to study, and he preferred playing video games to doing homework. “Bob” seemed to understand that he needed to finish his homework at home, but he was not motivated to do his homework because he did not see himself as a good student. According to his teachers, “Bob” missed a lot of homework assignments. This personal narrative showed Jung was aware of what was happening to him and he was aware of his ‘self.’ Jung’s self-identification as a “bad boy” came from an inability to complete the assignments he was asked to do. The unsuccessful learning experiences in classroom settings (environments) where Jung was situated led him to

negatively shape his self-identity and showed the impossibility of changing his identity in a positive way. It shows that his emotional experiences and his self-discovery of identity were closely connected with the social relation in the classroom.

After writing their stories, the students did peer editing. The students evaluated each others' writing based on a proofreading checklist that Ms. Walters distributed. The checklist included mechanics, ideas, organization, word choice, and constructive comments. Jung gave three different students his writing and received feedback from them. Jung also read and gave feedback to three other students. Still, there was no verbal communication or interaction between Jung and the other classmates because they only provided written feedback. The following is a sample of some of the feedback that Jung's peers gave about his writing. They said that in mechanics, Jung "needed to be more careful of subject and verb agreement and run-ons." In ideas and organization, they said that the themes in his writing "needed to be developed better," and that he "needed to stay on topic." In terms of his choices of words, they said that "the adjectives in his writing should be more interesting."

During this activity, in my field notes, I wrote, "The class was quiet. The students read their peers' writing. No communication existed." Jung's peers' feedback, as shown above was vague and unhelpful, so he did not learn how to improve his writing or how to stay on topic. Jung never received any assistance from his teacher to improve his writing. Jung's experience with writing derived from the lack of meaningful communication necessary to connect his thinking processes with writing processes. While writing instruction was happening, there was no time or space for him to develop his ideas or

thoughts and convey them in written language. Jung said, “Writing in English is the most difficult thing to do. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)”

### *Vocabulary Activities*

Jung faced many unfamiliar words; however, he was not able to figure out the meaning of the words or use them in specific contexts. No well-informed vocabulary instruction to support Jung’s vocabulary learning happened in his class. In the next section, I present how Jung experienced vocabulary learning.

*Word Parts.* Ms. Walters wrote vocabulary words on the board every week, which the students had to learn. She emphasized word parts, parts of speech, word definitions, and creating sentences using these words in specific contexts. She said,

Some teachers pick words that students have to know, but I don’t like to do that because there are so many words out there. So I go by word parts and I do suffix and prefix because once they know that this word part exists, they can see another word that shows up in social studies or math class, and they will be able to figure out or even guess the meaning of new vocabulary they encounter. They can recognize it and hopefully it will help him. So they learn the word part and then they can apply it. (3/10/2006)

For instance, Ms. Walters explained the meaning of the root word “path” (something to do with feeling), and then provided examples of words that included the root word part “path,” including “sympathy,” “empathy,” “pathetic,” and “sociopath.” Ms. Walters taught the meaning of word by using the word’s root ‘path.’ After that, she gave the students five minutes to study the words, asking them to look up the words in the



dictionary and to define them. Jung tried to define the vocabulary words given by looking them up in the dictionary and copying the definitions of the words from his dictionary.

After the students worked on the vocabulary individually, the teacher initiated a conversation asking students to share their ideas and opinions, with the purpose of evaluating if they understood the meaning of the vocabulary words. The following was a conversation between the teacher and students. This conversation was not taped, but I took notes while observing. (T: teacher J: Jung S: Student):

T: I will give you five minutes to study these words on the board and then we will talk about them. (The students were working on looking up the words, and Jung was talking with a girl in his group and working on the definitions with her.)

T: Too much talking! OK, one more minute! (The students stopped talking for a while.)

T: Let's talk about these words.

J: Oh, no.

T: What about empathy? You can feel what they feel. What if my friend's pet died last year and my pet died this year. Can you empathize with her?

Ss: (Whole class) Yes.

T: How about pathetic? Who will give me an example?

J: Not me.

S1: Feel sad.

T: Yes. Feel sorry for them. People feel pathetic if they have pity for them. Pity is another word for pathetic. Sociopath. People don't feel what other people feel, they only care about what they want. They can manipulate and hurt people.

S2: Like someone who is crazy?

T: No, they just block what other people feel. They have their own emotion.

Perhaps, Jung wanted to participate in the class conversations; however, he demonstrated that he was not ready to do this by saying “Oh, no” and “Not me.” His actions reinforced this idea, as during this conversation he just sat quietly, listening in the class, and looking at the teacher. It was hard to know if Jung learned the vocabulary the class was discussing or not. Jung said, “There are so many words that I do not understand. I can’t memorize all of them. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)” Jung experienced unsuccessful vocabulary learning in the classroom. The reason for this was that his teacher was not aware of his processes of learning and did not participate in class interactions. This is especially important for ELLs developing their system of meaning in L2, so teachers need to understand how they perceive, process, and react to the classroom learning environment, which can help them meaningfully engage in the learning process.

*Team games for vocabulary learning.* Once a month, Ms. Walters reviewed the grammar and vocabulary the students learned by asking the students to play a team game. In this game, the questions were about the definitions of vocabulary, parts of speech, synonyms, and helping and linking verbs. When a team answered a question correctly, they took the sticker with that question and kept it until the game was over. Examples of questions on the board follow:

What part of speech is benevolent?

Define unleavened and use it in a sentence.

Another word for a wealthy sponsor is a \_\_\_\_\_.

Define Bene\_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_

Jung was asked to read the question, “What part of speech is benevolent?” He mispronounced the word benevolent, and then his classmates corrected his pronunciation.

In regard to this game, I wrote in my field notes,

Jung created a distance between himself and his team by not focusing on the game and by walking around the table. He moved from standing with the other members of his group to walking away from his group repeatedly. I guess he might not be confident of doing this activity because he does not know the vocabulary words.

The vocabulary words they learned were academic, so they were not easily used in everyday conversation. When I asked Jung whether he understood the vocabulary words in the team game, he said that he did not know their meaning, and that he just avoided participating, creating a distance between himself and his team. He learned and experienced an unfamiliar and academic vocabulary, but did so in an unsuccessful way, created a distance between himself and his team. He was aware of his ‘self’ as a person who was unable to mingle with his peers, so he avoided and resisted participating in the activity. Jung’s perceptions, internalizations, and understanding of his interactions in the environment could influence and even determine his potential development in his ZPD. Thus, teachers need to understand and be aware of these lived experiences from the relationship which exists between the students and their environment.

### **Other Subject Classrooms**

The following section describes the environment in Jung’s Social Studies class.

### *Social Studies*

Jung's Social Studies teacher (Ms. Miller) was a white female. She was an English and Spanish speaker with 18 years of teaching experience and had a bilingual endorsement. Twenty-eight students were enrolled in this class, and 80% were Anglos. The students sat in rows, and Jung usually sat in the back of the class. Social Studies class consisted of one period, lasting 50 minutes.

The students were expected to work individually and quietly. Usually the communication styles in this class consisted of the teacher's initiation, the students' responding, and the teacher giving feedback. The Social Studies class covered such topics as: South America (including seasons, and physical and tourist maps); Middle America including physical features (cities, countries, waterways, and other places); and the history of New Mexico. The class watched current news reports every morning for ten minutes. The class did not require much writing. Most of the writing required only a few sentences to answer questions on the worksheets. Mostly, the students were required to read the textbooks in order to answer the questions on the worksheets individually and quietly. Jung said, "There were too many questions so I never finished the worksheets. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)" He felt overwhelmed because of the workload that he had to complete by himself, which was beyond his level of L2 and cognitive abilities. This emotional experience was related to how the environment influenced him, as the environment influences students in many ways and directs their development (Vygotsky, 1998).

### *Reading Activities*

In Jung's Social Studies class, no reading activities or strategies existed. There existed only one pedagogical method; the students were asked to read chapters from the textbook and then work on the worksheets. Here I describe how Jung experienced reading in the classroom.

*Reading book chapters and working on worksheets.* Most of the time, Ms. Miller created questions based on chapters from the textbook. The worksheets required students to define geographical terms, answer content questions, and work with maps. Jung was always busy reading the book chapters as well as the questions on the worksheets and writing his answers. The class usually spent 40 minutes working on worksheets. Jung never completed the worksheets within the class time, left many questions unanswered. I wrote in my field notes, "Jung left a lot of questions unanswered. He sometimes looked around to see what other classmates were doing." Ms. Miller asked him to complete his incomplete worksheets at home, but many times he did not finish them. She graded these as missing homework.

The worksheets asked many questions requiring comprehension of the contents of the book, including the seasons, physical features, tourist attractions, geographical terms, and history of Middle America, South America, and New Mexico. Some questions required short answers, while others questions required descriptive and comparative writing. A few examples of questions on one of the worksheets, and Jung's answers to these questions follow in parentheses:

What were trappers called? (Mountain men)

Why was Taos the headquarters for fur trade? (Because Taos was a village nearest the mountain water beavers lived.)

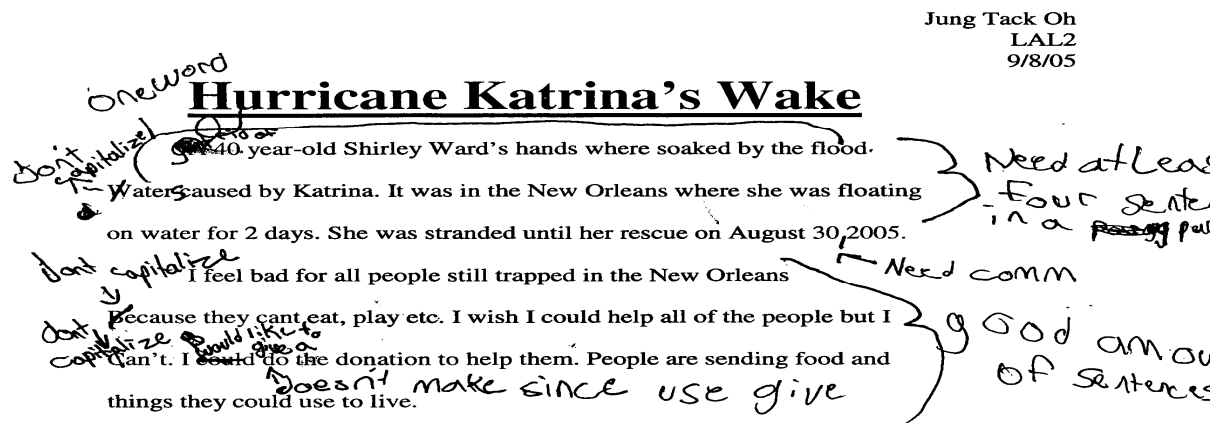
As shown in the examples above, Jung answered the questions with only a few words or at most a few sentences. It was possible that Jung copied these answers from the book without really understanding them. Jung said, “Working on the worksheets is really hard because I do not understand the readings so I am not able to answer the questions. I missed a lot of homework, too (11/13/2005, translated from Korean).” Even if Jung wrote the answers, Ms. Miller did not check whether his answers were correct or not. Although Ms. Miller graded his worksheets, she did not provide the right answers to him. The activity, working on worksheets individually, made Jung marginalized: he sat alone and rarely joined any interactions (Fu, 1995). This behavior prevented social interaction with the students who spoke the target language. The influence of the environment on Jung’s reading instruction served an important role in his learning and development. Jung’s lack of meaningful experiences with reading instruction can cause negative qualitative transformations in his perception and internalization of interaction within his environment. These experiences in his learning process (his emotional experience) can determine the metaphorical space of ZPD that could lead to his potential development

*Writing Activities*

Writing was not the main focus in this class. Most of the time, the students answered the questions on the worksheets with a few sentences or some words. The following describes the activity of watching current news in Jung’s Social Studies class.

*Watching channel one.* According to Ms. Miller, the purpose of watching the daily news was for “students to be aware of what is going on outside the school.” The school curriculum incorporated social, national, and international issues, current events and issues outside the school. Jung listened to the stories and saw what was happening

outside the school. However, I wrote in my field notes, “Occasionally, Jung put his head down and played with his fingers. Sometimes, he did not watch the news and would look at the ceiling.” I sometimes wondered if he understood the stories on the news; however, at no time did his teacher check his understanding of the news stories. Once, Jung was asked to write a summary of the news stories and to write his personal thoughts after reading a news article about the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Figure 1 is a sample of his writing typed on the computer:



**Figure 1.** Jung's writing sample.

Ms. Miller gave him feedback on his writing as shown in the scanned excerpt above. She pointed out his grammatical mistakes such as capitalization, word choice, and sentence structure. Her sloppy handwriting and misspellings (such as ‘since’ rather than ‘sense,’ and ‘comm’ rather than ‘comma’) made it difficult for Jung to understand her comments, and hence to improve his writing. Meaningless feedback from his teacher made Jung experience difficulties with developing his writing. When English language learners like Jung construct their new systems of meaning through their L1, they need

special care, support, and space in order to integrate their thought processes into the writing processes.

### *Vocabulary Activities*

Here, I present how Jung experienced vocabulary learning in his Social Studies class.

*Geographical terms.* On worksheets and in book chapters, Jung encountered many geographical terms that he had to memorize, define, and place on a map. Examples of these terms were “plateau,” “peninsula,” “cape,” “basin,” “delta,” “plains,” “river mouth,” “coastline,” and “gap.” He had to match these terms with definitions on the worksheet, including “one of the largest land areas in the world,” “the direction toward where the river begins,” and “soil deposited at the mouth of a river.” Examples of place names in Middle and South America included: “Guiana Highlands,” “Pampas,” “Caribbean Sea,” “Lake Titicaca,” “Isla de Chiloe,” “Strait of Magellan,” and “Cape Horn.” Jung had to place these names correctly on the map to complete his class assignment.

Jung was intimidated by the large number of unfamiliar words in his academic texts and in the academic talk in his social studies class. He said, “It was hard for me to memorize all of the terms. In the map of South America, the vocabulary words are Spanish. It was hard to memorize complex and unfamiliar spellings, such as with geographical terms. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)” He was not able to conceptualize the meanings of such unfamiliar vocabulary, which made him experience negative emotions. This emotional experience in his learning with the environment did not help him expand his learning zone to connect his social processes in the classroom



with his personal thinking processes. Ms. Miller commented, “Whenever a lot of vocabulary words are thrown out, Jung doesn’t study much and I guess for him it is too much learning load. He is cognitively overloaded. (4/20/2006)” In learning vocabulary, Jung’s awareness of his internal processes derived from not conceptualizing unfamiliar terms, and made him experience cognitive overload because there was no space or time for Jung to understand the concept of such word meanings. This is a good example of how the environment (including teachers’ instruction and relations with people around him) influences students’ emotional and psychological development.

*Vocabulary and context.* The following account of one of Jung’s experiences explains how vocabulary learning through the context is important. Jung struggled with understanding the meaning of words in a specific context. For example, in his social studies class, he worked on a worksheet, “Modern Countries in the Land of the Maya.” He observed his peers and asked his teacher a few times about the meaning of the word “outline” in the directions, “Outline Belize and El Salvador on the map in blue.” After the class, I asked Jung what he asked Ms. Miller. He said that he knew that one meaning of the word “outline,” that is, “to give the main features or various aspects of; summarize,” but that he did not know the other meaning of this word, that is, “to mark the outer contours or boundaries of an object or figure.” Thus, he had a hard time when starting to work on the worksheet. Ms. Miller did not quite understand what Jung was struggling with, even though Jung asked her this question several times. Because he did not understand this word, he did not complete his worksheet within the time given in the classroom. Ms. Miller might have assumed that all students in the classroom knew that

the word “outline” has different meanings in different contexts. She was not aware of how Jung perceived and processed his learning.

### **Experiences with English outside the Classroom**

Jung had informal, casual conversations with his peers and teachers during breaks and lunchtime. He said, “During the break, we talk about classes, homework, teachers, and books we read. Once in a while, we talk about TV programs. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)” During lunchtime, he usually went to the school cafeteria and ate with groups of his peers. They sat together and talked to one another and played poker.

At home, Jung read books in English for fun, such as novels, picture books, and children’s books. The book *Harry Potter (Joanne Rowling)* was a book he was reading. Additionally, he experienced English through the media. For example, he watched television. His favorite genre of television program was cartoons. He sometimes played video games with his brother or Korean friends. When they played video games, they communicated with one another in English. Jung also went to a Korean language school on Fridays and to church on Sunday mornings. He interacted with Korean students in both places, and they spoke in English. He usually listened to stories in English on tape with his brother before going to bed. For one of his homework assignments, he had to search the Internet to find information about how to write children’s book targeting 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade children. He chose to write about sharks. He said, “I have a project about shark. I searched for the information about shark on the Internet. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)” He did on-line chatting with a friend in Chicago once a week. Once when I visited his home, his friend in Chicago called him, and they had a conversation in English.

## **Jung's Difficulties in the Classroom**

Jung experienced English language in his different classes. However, he faced difficulties in learning and developing his English. In the previous section, I described his difficulties when he learned reading, writing, and vocabulary. This section describes other difficulties he experienced in the classroom.

### *Relationships between Jung's Behaviors and Class Activities*

Through data analysis using constant comparison (Glaser and Straus, 1967), I discovered relationships between Jung's behaviors and class activities. At times during classroom observations, I noticed that when he was engaged in individual work, such as working on worksheets or reading the textbook, he became very distracted, which he demonstrated through his body movements. I described his behaviors in my field notes, as follows:

He tapped his fingers on the table, and then he went back to reading again. Jung put his head down on the table once again and he did not focus on reading the book while most of the students were reading the book and working on the worksheet at the same time. Jung lifted up his head and looked at the other students. He didn't read the book at all.

In an interview with me, Jung indicated that the dynamics of his body movements and distraction were related to not understanding the readings in his textbook and not being able to answer the questions on the worksheets. Jung said, "I didn't understand the questions for the reading comprehension. It was hard because I had to think again after I read it. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)" His learning experiences in the classroom were represented by the dynamics of his body movements and distraction. During an

interview with Ms. Walters, she described Jung's general attention issue in the class. She said,

I don't know, but at the beginning he was in the back for a while until I realized that he does not pay attention and then I tried to put him in the front and I kept him there. He has been in the front seat for a while and it helped. Therefore, he is up here now in the front, and his attention wandered and he was sometimes unplugged. He does not know what is going on sometimes. He sometimes does not know what is going on at all. (3/10/2006)

Ms. Walters diagnosed Jung's general attention issue; however, her diagnosis was superficial and inaccurate. Without correct information about why he did not pay attention to the class, she characterized him as a distracted learner. Before this, she had to find out what made him not to pay attention. She must have considered that there could be always multiple reasons that made the language learners not focus on learning. To understand his attention issues, teachers need to create and implement pedagogical tools for students to share their emotional and cognitive interactions as well as to facilitate the transformation of experiences from intrapersonal to interpersonal.

During classroom interactions between Ms. Walters and the students in Jung's class, most students were very active in participating in discussions. On the other hand, Jung was very quiet. I wrote in my field notes, "Jung is listening to other students' responses, but doesn't volunteer to answer the teachers' questions. He is very quiet." Jung explained his behavior in an interview with me, "Their discussions were so fast that it was not easy for me to participate in their conversations. I was also shy because I don't want to make mistakes in front of the class. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)" Ms.

Walters sometimes spoke quickly to the students and asked questions quickly, and the flow of the teacher's and students' responses were fast. In my field notes, I wrote, "The teacher bombarded the students with a lot of questions. Her talking was fast. The pace between the questions was short, too." In addition, the fact that Jung had to read the questions fast and then spontaneously he had to answer them did not support him in actively engaging in classroom activities. He was occasionally confused and lost track of what the class was doing because the pace of the class was so fast, and he did not understand what the teacher was saying. Jung said, "Sometimes I lost what the teacher said. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)" In this case, Jung was intimidated by the fast flow of conversation and unstructured discussion. Jung's learning load was too high for him to participate in class activity. According to Meyer (2000), learning load can be increased "when English learners are barraged by English words in academic texts or talk, the sheer number of unfamiliar words can be intimidating" (p. 232). Jung's experiences with the rapid flow of conversation during instruction made him confused, distracted, and intimidated. These affective factors can be seen in how Jung perceived, internalized, and understood his interactions in and with the environment. The development of his thinking is also connected with the way the environment influences him.

#### *Language and "Learning Load"*

In Jung's social studies class, Jung worked on worksheets alone. Usually, he had to complete two to three pages, but sometimes he had to complete five to six pages filled with many questions. His workload in the classroom kept Jung busy and caused him not to complete his worksheets. Jung said, "Because of English, I had to study hard and had to learn everything fast in school. There were a lot of things to study and learn. It was a

lot! Learning English created more work. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)” Jung not only dealt with many vocabulary words that he did not know or had never heard, but he also had to read the questions, understand them, and then answer them. Jung said, “I had to answer a lot of questions on the handouts. There were so many questions. It was hard for me. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)” Jung’s heavy learning load kept him from completing his work in the classroom and turning in his homework. Ms. Miller said, “Jung is behind in his homework. (4/20/2006)” Based on his teachers’ grade and homework records, Jung missed seven homework assignments in his social studies class. At a PTA meeting, Ms. Walters suggested to his parents, “He has to communicate with his teachers when he has questions and has to use his planner to keep track of his assignments. (3/10/2006)”

The rapid flow of classroom activities, and time limits, prevented Jung from completing his work in the classroom and caused him to fail tests and quizzes. Ms. Miller said, “He failed on the test. He got 50% which is a serious problem. (3/10/2006)” This shows that the influence of the environment in which the activity occurred played a crucial role in Jung’s learning, as he experienced failure while doing an activity within the classroom environment. His failures on tests and his incomplete schoolwork and homework created emotional trauma, which was demonstrated when he cried in parent-teacher meetings. Ms. Miller said, “He didn’t understand what the homework was and what he was supposed to submit. He never shares his problems, and he always says he is doing ok. During the PT meeting, he was so upset about something that he cried. (4/20/2006)” From Jung’s perspective, he was embarrassed to share his problem. Jung felt like he was the only student who had any difficulty, and that all his peers knew what

they were supposed to do and what the homework was. It appears that Jung didn't want to share his problems because he did not want to show his differences from his American classmates. His lived experience with classroom learning, in which he failed the tests, brought out his emotional stress. This unsuccessful learning experience influenced him to shape his personal character: he perceived himself as an unsuccessful student. In other words, his personal character arose as a result of the interdependence of internal and social processes with the environment and its social relations. Thus, it was important for his teachers to understand where his academic failures and associated emotional trauma stemmed from, and they should have carefully taken care of his individual needs. Rather than their saying, "he was so upset about something that he cried. (4/20/2006)," they should have examined the reason that led to him cry.

### *Jung's Personality*

According to my classroom observations and interviews with Ms. Walters, Jung's difficulties included organization, such as not keeping his files and the materials in his binder organized so he could find and use them easily. She said,

In his binders, as you can see, it is kind of everywhere. He does have some organization and he has some sections, but he does not always take time to put things in the correct sections and he does not always attach things that do not fall out like this. I know he has an organization issue. There should be so much work in here, but they are not here. He is missing a lot of work. (3/10/2006)

By not organizing his materials and files and by not writing down his assignment in his planner, he easily forgot his homework assignments. It seemed that he was a disorganized person. No one helped him organize.

According to Jung's mother, Jung did not have good study habits, and was very slow and not motivated to complete things. She said, "He is very slow, and he lacks patience. He easily gives up things. He always says he does not have homework or he already finished his homework. He doesn't study hard. (10/20/2005)" However, his mother also said that although she encouraged him to study, she did not force him to study. Both Ms. Walters and Ms. Miller also discussed his personality. Ms. Walters said,

I think he has some laziness. Whenever he encounters new words, he doesn't look it up and rarely does he ask, "What does that mean?" And I think he skips over something if he does not understand, and a lot of times that impacts his comprehension. (3/10/2006)

Ms. Miller said, "Well...I am not really sure about Jung because there's times when I think he has the language maybe in issue, but I think most of the time he is lazy. (4/20/2006)" In one classroom observation, I saw that Jung only made three simple sentences in 30 minutes when he worked on his reading responses. Based on my observations, and on what the teachers observed, I could understand why Jung appeared to be a lazy learner to his teachers; however, I believe they were misinterpreting his behavior. Both Jung's teachers simply identified him as a lazy learner, but they did not examine his actions deeper to try and understand why he acted lazy. They never thought that his difficulty and frustration in learning English could be the reason he behaved that way. His laziness in the classroom activities was created by his difficulties with learning English. His teacher's misinterpretation of his behavior was driven from her lack of consciousness of Jung's reactions to the classroom learning activities. Once again, this demonstrates how the influence of the environment affects students' perception,



internalization, and appropriation of their experience of social interaction. Through their experiences in and with the environment, they continuously construct their new internal structure.

Both Ms. Walters and Ms. Miller believed that Jung would be much more fluent, and his language would be more advanced if he was more motivated and he took more time in his work. Ms. Miller said, “He has gotten into the routine of not really applying himself. I think if he worked harder and he applied himself and he did his work, I think he could be more successful than he is. (4/20/2006)” The teachers’ comments inferred that Jung had a responsibility to learn English, but they did not share in that responsibility, nor did they feel they were responsible to play a role in helping him to learn English. In his teacher’s perspective, in order to be a successful learner, Jung had to study and work hard by himself. They did not see their teaching practices, which asked him to work by himself and to be quiet when completing his own work, as being problematic. They gave him very little opportunity to have contact with English speakers and offered him little individualized support. The teacher’s actions and attitudes were clearly part of the problem for Jung not becoming a successful learner. Jung was a victim of teachers not knowing about English language learners. Clearly here, his personal characteristics were shaped by the environment (his classroom) through his emotional experiences with others. However, his development keeps changing, depending on how he perceives and understands social interactions with a different environment and activity. In other words, the environment influences and directs students’ development, and the students develop differently depending on the environment. Thus, they are interdependent, showing a unity of internal and social processes in learning and development. It was necessary that Jung’s

teachers needed to create a safe zone in which Jung could have shared his learning experience (such as fear, anxiety, frustration, and intimidation), by providing him with emotional scaffolding that Jung could use to build his confidence as a learner.

### **Social and Cultural Experiences**

In this section, I describe Jung's social and cultural experiences in his process of learning English.

#### *Learning English in a different culture and society*

With the dominance and power of English, Jung's family believed that they would gain benefits and advantages in developing English as a second language. Jung's mother said, "English is the main and basic language. The world is becoming as one nation. If they learn English, they can get a job anywhere. (10/20/2005, translated from Korean)" Jung as well, believed that he had to learn English because he lived in an English-speaking country. Jung said, "Because everybody here speaks English, I have to learn English. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)" His mother believed that to survive in this world, all family members had to learn English, which they saw as a powerful and important language, so learning English became a top priority. Jung's mother said, "I think one of the languages should be sacrificed, and Korean should be sacrificed because English is more powerful, and my son needs fluent English to get a job anywhere. (10/20/2005, translated from Korean)" It shows how English language influenced Koreans' personal lives. As a result, Koreans feel considerable social pressure to acquire English proficiency (see Pennycook, 1994). Jung said, "I can be a bilingual speaker. I can talk with American friends and Korean friends if I speak both languages. (1/29/2005, translated from Korean)" Surrounded by the environment in which the English language

was dominant, Jung was aware of learning English as important and imminent. Also, he realized that being bilingual can help him talk with diverse people and expand his intellectual and economic opportunities. Thus, his meaning of ‘self’ developed substantially from his previous stages of development.

However, immersion in American culture, American values, and English language both inside and outside the school impacted Jung’s native language and his personal characteristics. He spoke English more often than Korean both in school and at home. Jung said, “I speak in English with my brother and Korean friends. Parents ask us to speak in Korean, but naturally English comes out in the first place. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)” The environment in which he was situated did not allow him to speak Korean, but English. Social interactions in such situations contributed to his fundamental change in terms of his perception on language use. Immersion into the English language inside and outside school caused Jung to begin not maintain his home language. Jung said, “I speak English a lot. I think that’s why I am losing Korean. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)” Jung was aware of the reason why he was losing his L1. His loss of his Korean language was clearly revealed when he was interviewed in Korean. He was able to express himself in Korean with me and at home with his parents, and he mixed codes between the two languages (I don’t have written evidence for this, but I have observed his speech in the Korean language school). He was unable to understand sophisticated and difficult Korean words in both basic and academic languages. Through the influence of the sociocultural environment where he was supposed to speak English, his identity was also changing. Jung was losing cultural capital and his identity in Korea—Jung’s language ability was not as good as the students

in Korea and he was left behind in terms of culture and language. He was constructing a new identity, different from the one that used to be. His identity was between two different cultures and languages. Either way, he was not perfect. This is because the interrelated developments between internal and social processes changed Jung's mental functioning and his perception and experience of his sociocultural environment; thus, his relationship to the environment changed (i.e., his *perezhivanie*).

In this study, there were two reasons why Jung began not to maintain his home language was, first, because of his parents' perception that learning English was a top priority, and that English language was a more powerful language than Korean. His mother believed that speaking Korean hindered English language development, and that Jung could learn Korean at a later time. She wanted her son to maximize his exposure to English. She said,

I didn't like a bilingual program in Chicago because I wanted him to learn English as soon as possible. Other parents did not like it either. I wanted him to interact with American friends in the mainstream class as soon as possible and to learn English as fast as he can. (10/20/2005, translated from Korean)

Jung's mother's perception is connected with the belief of supporters of English-only policy (e.g., NCLB). Since there was no opportunity given for Jung to keep learning Korean language and culture through bilingual program in his school that could have helped the two languages reinforce each other (see Cummins, 2002), Jung's weak primary language could have kept him from thinking more deeply in English and from using higher levels of English, especially in academic text or talk which was never highly developed because Jung only completed the first grade in Korea. Not maintaining Jung's

primary language was part of the perception that learning English is a top priority contributed to Jung's language loss and his identity. He is not the person he used to be any more. This demonstrates how his language attitude was changed by social expectations.

### *Language in the classroom*

Jung said, "Making sentences were hard. I mean writing was difficult," and "I didn't know what creative is; therefore, I didn't understand how I wrote a creative writing. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)" As I mentioned earlier, Jung's difficulties in writing and his lack of understanding of what creative writing entailed stemmed from his experiences with the environment during classroom activities; namely, Ms. Walters was not aware of Jung's way of perceiving, processing, and reacting to the classroom interactions (his *perezhivanie*). In spite of this, when I asked Ms. Walters about his creative writing, she said,

He doesn't show a lot of creativity. I find that, for example, this one they were supposed to write a story about a penny, as if it were alive, what kind of life it would have. He did not write a story, he wrote about this is what I think the life of a penny is like. It's hard for me to get him to make things up. I don't know why that is true, but I knew that right off the bat. This was the very first story that we wrote. Here is another one; we were supposed to pretend a noun and a pronoun were having a fight over which one was the best part of speech. We had studied nouns and pronouns and I wanted to see them personify each one, and then talk about what they were and why one was better than the other. He did not write a creative story again, He wrote, "I think a noun would be a better part of speech

because it is a person place or thing and an idea.” So he did not write a story again.

(3/10/2006)

Ms. Walters concluded that Jung didn't show a lot of creativity, based only on his creative writing samples, and identified him as not being a creative thinker. Ms. Walters' assumptions about Jung's creativity could be dangerous to his identity and language development because he could not adopt himself as a creative thinker. Jung came to understand that he is not a creative thinker as a result of the influences of his class activities and teachers.

Jung was identified as an unsophisticated thinker by Ms. Walters because Jung's writing was not sophisticated. According to Ms. Walters, he struggled with topic sentence, used simple story lines and plot, and used simple sentences in his writing. For one example, he was supposed to write, “I would like to give a donation to help them.” However, he wrote instead, “I could do the donation to help them.” Ms. Walters said,

It is not his grade level vocabulary, so not only are his sentences pretty simple, his vocabulary and word choices are pretty simple, his story line and plot tend to be very simple, and when it comes to writers' response, I think his writer's responses are easier for him because it goes back to him being better at straightforward, look at something and write about it, make something all by himself, you know, I think that he is more concrete again, and I think he is not really creative kind of kid and it is easier for him to see a picture or read poem or read article and then write about it. He still doesn't write I don't see him as sophisticated thinking.

(3/10/2006)

Ms. Walters determined Jung's identity in a very simple way; that is, Jung was defined as a concrete, not a creative and sophisticated, thinker based on her evaluation on Jung's language use in writing. She considered that Jung's low language ability in English was equal to his low thinking and cognitive ability. Jung seemed to be blamed for his lower level of language skills. In sum, Jung's identity was not created by himself, but shaped by his environment. His 'self' was defined by the environment, and he adopted it. Thus, the meaning of his 'self' (compared to the one in Korea) changed as a result of exposure to a different environment.

### *Jung's Acculturation*

While immersed in American culture and the English language, Jung was experiencing an identity conflict. On the one hand, he had a strong Korean identity. He said, "I am a Korean because my parents are Koreans. I will never be an American. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)" Jung knew that he had to maintain or learn his Korean because he was Korean, and it would be a shame and embarrassment for him if he could not communicate with his relatives and friends in Korea. It was obvious that he had a strong Korean identity. He said, "I don't know what the pledge of allegiance is about. It is weird to me. I am me. I am a Korean. I always think I am a Korean. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)" Jung still wanted to belong to the Korean cultural community and identified himself as a Korean. He had a sense of being a member of Korean community. His Korean cultural identity may be a significant part of his identity.

However, he felt different from his American peers in the classroom, and he hoped to be like the American students in the school. By relocating to another country, Jung's identity can be constantly mediated by his experiences in his new environment,

across multiple sites in home, school, and community. Jung said, “Their English is much better than mine. I want to be like them. (11/13/2005, translated from Korean)” Ms. Walters also commented of his identity awareness, “He is conscious that he is different from other English-speaking students. Sometimes he thinks he is dumb and stupid. He thinks his intelligence is low, but I think he is struggling because of the language. (3/10/2006)” His experience and internalization of the internal processes through his reflection and introspection developed his perceived personal characteristics as dumb and stupid. This shows the connection between language learning and identity, referring that his language ability represented his personal characteristics; his low level of proficiency in English lowered his self-esteem. Awareness of who he is was part of the process of construction and negotiation of the meaning of his ‘self.’ Language serves as important element in the individual becoming aware of and making meaning from lived experience with the environment.

As a result of his exposure to American culture, Jung changed his behavior and attitude somewhat, and tried to accept American culture. He was adopting American students’ attitudes and behaviors in the classroom. According to his mother, he wanted to chew gum in the classroom because his peers did, and his teacher allowed them to. He tried to talk back to his parents, which is a behavior that is not normally allowed in Korean culture. His mother believed that he learned laziness from his peers who did not take education very seriously. It is hard to determine, but it seems that he was somewhat adapting to the target language groups’ life styles and values (See Schumann, 1978). This does not mean that he gave up his own life styles and values because he put value on Korean life styles at home in some ways. Jung was constructing new systems of meaning



in terms of attitudes and behaviors in the classroom and his relationship with his mother; namely, his system of meaning was changed. For example, through the influence of the environment and its social relations, his relationship with his mother, as evidenced by talking back to her, has changed, and his attitude in the classroom, as evidenced by accepting the idea of chewing gum, has also changed.

## **The Story of Tim**

### *Background*

Tim and his brother Kang came to the United States because their parents wanted them to receive an education in this country. Additionally, their parents knew that the stress of preparing for the college entrance exam in Korea would have made their lives difficult, as they would have had to go to school early in the morning and remain there until late in the evening. And even if they studied very hard, there was no guarantee that they would be accepted into a college. Gaining admission into a prestigious university, as well as getting a job after graduation, is competitive and difficult in Korea. According to Tim's mother:

The school in Korea only emphasizes studying, and they don't allow them to do other things or activities such as sports, club activities, music, and arts. We want them to study in the US where gives them more opportunity to be independent and better people and to be able for them to do a lot of things. (4/20/2006, translated from Korean)

For this reason, Tim took an ROTC class and joined a tennis club, activities outside of schoolwork, which gave him the opportunity to interact with American students.

Tim and his brother moved to the United States in February of 2003 without their parents. Because they needed to keep their jobs in order to pay for their children to go abroad, Tim's parents had to stay in Korea. Before coming to the United States, Tim completed his first year of middle school in Korea. This was the second time that he came to the United States, coming the first time for two years when his father worked for

a Korean car company stationed in this country. At that time, Tim was four years old. At the time of this study, he was 16 years old, and attended Northern High School in a small city in the Southwest US. He is thin and tall, has short hair and a small face, and enjoys wearing sportswear. He was in tenth grade when I started observing his classes. Tim changed his Korean name to an American name because his classmates mispronounced his Korean name, and he wanted it to be easy for them to remember his name. Tim said that his name, Tim, came from the Bible.

It was fairly easy for Tim to come to the United States to get an education because his two aunts (his mother's sisters) lived here. One of his aunts was a nurse, and the other was a hair designer. The aunt who was a nurse married a Thai-American, and the other aunt married an American. Both aunts have U.S. citizenship, and so they were permitted to be legal guardians for the two boys. Tim and his brother lived with the aunt who was a nurse. Their aunt had a son of her own. Every Sunday, the entire family, including the other aunt's family, went to church and had dinner together. Most of time, the family members spoke English, since English was the language that all of them shared. Tim, however, spoke Korean with his brother and aunts.

Tim came from a well-educated family. He was well disciplined in his home environment and was very self-motivated. His aunt did not allow him to watch television before he completed his homework assignments. His aunt said:

His parents were well-educated [Both his parents have bachelor's degree. His father works at one of the biggest companies in Korea. His mother tutors students in English at home]. They really put a lot of value on their children's education. As you see, Tim is a good student and motivated student. He is also well

disciplined child. He always does his homework before watching TV or something. I also do not allow him to watch TV before completing school work. (11/15/2005, translated from Korean)

His English teacher (Ms. Rice) said he was always “on top of things;” for example, he did his homework and reading assignments and never fell behind. In addition, he had good study habits and could sit and read school books for three or four hours at a time. He explained that “My good habits in reading Korean books helped me have good habits in reading English books. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)” In class, he was very focused on what he was doing and had a high level of concentration. In my field notes, I described “Tim seems focused on his work. He reads a book and then writes something in his notes. His hand moves fast when he writes.” Throughout my year of observing Tim, I realized that he had good concentration skills. However, Ms. Rice said that he did not always follow the stereotype of the model minority. For example, the stereotype of Asians is that they are never silly and do not make jokes. Instead, Tim was sometimes silly and would joke around with his classmates and friends.

Tim began learning English in school in Korea and from his mother. His mother taught him English vocabulary, grammar, and conversation at home in Korea. Tim said “when I first came to the United States, my English proficiency was good enough for me to understand generally what was going on in my classes, even if I did not understand fully.” Tim reported an episode when he took a health class in middle school, saying:

The vocabulary was hard for me to understand. When the teacher asked us to do something, I purposely did not listen and I just drew pictures or scribbled on the paper. Therefore, the teacher was angry at me and she sent a notice to my aunt.

My aunt was angry at me. That was horrible. I wanted to study, but I could not because I did not understand what they were talking about. I was not motivated to learn because I did not understand. However, nobody understood and nobody cared what I was thinking about. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)

He resisted his teacher because he had a hard time dealing with the vocabulary. A few years after Tim moved to the United States, he became very confident as a student. Ms. Rice's observed that he was socially well adjusted, and he spoke loudly when he asked questions to his peers and teachers. As Ms. Rice said,

Tim is hard working. Very hard working. He is remarkable in that he is an English language learner and yet he still has some of the strongest grade in the class. He has a good sense of humor, he is comfortable, and he jokes around and chats with his friends. He can be very funny. He has an ability to make jokes to his friends and me in English. Still, he is very respectable, and he does not cross the line. He raises his hand if he has questions, and he often joins in class discussions. He works hard. I am impressed by him. He is socially well adjusted for being an immigrant student. He seems to have a group of students that he gets along well with. (2/24/2006)

His ROTC teacher (Mr. Trump) described the differences between Tim and his brother Kang, as follows: "They are day and night. They are so different." He saw some of the differences between them as Tim was a social and outgoing person, and Kang was very quiet and unsocial. Tim told me how he changed from being a frustrated student at the beginning to being a competent student:

The family situation made me speak English. Regardless of my will, I had to speak English. I spent a lot of time with native speakers of English in both school and home. If my English has improved and I have gained confidence in English, I think it is because I practiced with native speakers of English. I was totally immersed in English. Also, I think my teachers were very important when I learned English. Some teachers were weird. I mean some teachers were not good at dealing with students' questions. As you know, you don't want to ask teachers questions if they are become upset whenever you ask them questions. There were some teachers who did not teach well, meaning they did not explain very well and just they gave us homework. Fortunately, this semester (Fall, 2005) I have good teachers who delivered good teaching. They were very nice and kind to students' questions. They were very patient and they tried to help me whenever I had trouble understanding assignments and class activities. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)

Tim told the importance of the role of interaction with the target language speakers when he learned English as a second language. Tim also emphasized the importance of teachers' role in the classroom: the teachers who delivered quality instruction gave clear explanations, and who cared about their students.

It is hard to say what Tim's Korean language ability and proficiency were since it was not assessed in this study. In terms of his Korean language skills and proficiency level, I noticed during the interview in Korean that Tim retained strong Korean language ability and spoke the Korean language well. His understanding level in Korean during my

interviews with him was strong enough that he could communicate well with me. His strong Korean language ability was due to his age and his schooling in Korea.

### **English Experiences at School**

In this section, I present Tim's English experiences in his English classroom.

#### *English 10 Honors Classroom*

Ms. Rice had three years of teaching experience. In the interview, she called herself a novice teacher, and still felt that classroom procedures and management were new to her. There were thirty students enrolled in this class. Most of the students were Anglos, and Tim was the only second language learner in this class. In the English 10 Honors classroom, there were two bookshelves that sat along the back wall next to the entrance door, and were full of novels and dictionaries. The teacher posted or hung students' art and writing samples on the walls. Two white boards were covered with information, including announcements and information about assignments. The class had a television and an overhead projector. The teacher's desk was at the front of the classroom, and sat below a white board that ran the length of the wall. The student's desks were arranged in two blocks of 15, with the desks arranged so the students in each block faced each other.

#### *Reading Activities*

Tim experienced reading many different genres of literature in this class. Examples of texts that he read included: *A Separate Peace* (John Knowles, 2003: Classics), *The Optimist's Daughter* (Suzanne Marrs, 2002: Novel), *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Alex Haley, 1989: Contemporary American Literature), *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Bronte, 1847: 18<sup>th</sup> Century English Literature), *Eldest* (Christopher Paolini,

2005: Fantasy Fiction), *Lord of the Flies* (William Golding, 1984: American Novel), and more. The following sections provide descriptions of how Tim experienced reading in his English class.

*Reading and discussions.* Part of class activities included class discussions after readings. The students read *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Bronte, 1847) before class, and Ms. Rice started the class by talking with the students as follows:

Take out your book. You have to keep in mind her moral development and how she develops as a character, and what directions she has to go for her life. Also, think about the historical context and morality. Ok, here is what you do. You have to compare and contrast between Rochester and John. (She wrote on the board four aspects for comparison and contrast: physical appearance, personality, relationship to Jane, and their desired relationship to Jane.) You have to put quotes or passages from the book to support your ideas and give me some evidence.

Ms. Rice verbally provided clear guidance about what the students were supposed to do. She wrote information on the board to help her students understand the class activities. In my interview with Ms. Rice, she said,

I can't just talk about it, I also need to write on the board and I need to have other ways for students to write things down and for the students who are at lower levels, you know, being more expressive and finding ways to help the ones who don't understand what is being communicated. (2/24/2006)

After receiving Ms. Rice's explanation and guidance, Tim started reading the book, found the clues, and wrote his ideas down in his notebook. This activity gave Tim an



opportunity to go back to the text to reread parts of it with a different or more critical perspective. It allowed Tim to focus his attention on what the characters were doing, how they were described, and the vocabulary that was used.

Twenty minutes later, Ms. Rice pulled down an overhead screen and wrote “Rochester vs. John” on the overhead. She then solicited the students’ ideas and thoughts, and wrote them on the overhead. Tim took a risk by raising his hand and offered, “John wanted Jane to be a missionary wife, but he did not want a loving relationship.” Once again, Ms. Rice wrote her students’ spoken words into written texts. In this way, Tim could hear other students’ language and read their language on the overhead. Through listening, reading, and speaking, Tim experienced English in multiple ways that helped him develop full competence in his L2 and this served to increase his comprehension. Tim’s experience with various types of reading activities helped him increase his reading comprehension. Communication between the teacher and students constituted a significant portion of the social activity in the classroom, and served to negotiate meaning and to share knowledge. The degree of Tim’s language development depended largely on how he perceived his own learning process within the context of the classroom environment. Through the reading activity, he comfortably perceived his learning as involving active participation in the activity at hand. This positive learning experience can give him the potential to effectively develop his English language skills.

*After-reading activity: text quotes analysis.* In Tim’s English class, every time the students finished reading a book, Ms. Rice had them do a text quote analyses. Before this activity, she usually provided a variety of reading activities as described above. I did not observe Ms. Rice teaching her students about the text quotes analysis. When I asked Tim

about it, he said that Ms. Rice gave them specific guidelines and distributed handouts about it. Most of the time, she provided explanations and demonstrations for the activities in both spoken and written language. After reading *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Bronte, 1847), Tim did a text quote analysis. He picked three quotes from this book. One of the quotes was from page 13: “Wicked and cruel boy!” I said. “You are like a murderer—you are like a slave driver—you are like the Roman emperors.” Tim wrote in response to this quote:

Jane Eyre says this after getting hit by the book John Reed throws at her. Jane Eyre knows that saying this will get her in trouble. But she had reached her limits and couldn’t be abused any more. She could endure the miseries in her heart no more. But this caused her to be locked up in a “red room.” If she had listened to her head rather than her heart, she wouldn’t have been locked up.

Tim said “I liked to analyze the quotes in the book because I could interpret the texts and could make sure my understanding was correct. I could also summarize the story with my language.” His experiences with multiple forms of learning experiences (such as reading the book, analyzing the quotes, comparing the characters in the book, and sharing students’ ideas, thoughts) helped to ensure his understanding of the text and also to connect his thinking processes with his written processes that was a part of his process of meaning making in L2. Tim said,

I liked to listen to my peers and teachers when they talked about a book. I really concentrated on their discussion because I could double check my understanding by listening to their discussions. It helped me better than reading it by myself. I

liked a lot of the activities for reading comprehension. (1/30/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim implied that discourse with his teacher and peers and multiple ways of learning for text interpretation and reading comprehension were influential in meaning-making. His learning experience with the environment (multiple discourses and various ways of presenting materials) helped Tim clarify and assess his internal processes because meaning was refined and ideas were repeated or rephrased. This demonstrates the interdependence of social and personal processes for his meaning-making in L2. That is, for Tim, discourse with his teacher and peers were part of his English learning experience and process of meaning making and of co-construction of knowledge and understanding.

#### *Writing Activities*

In Tim's English class, writing was central to the curriculum. Tim had an opportunity to learn about American styles of writing from his teacher by working on organization, thesis statements, supporting evidence, and the relationship between introductions and conclusions. Ms. Rice said,

One big item we are working on is developing the thesis statement. The goal is for the students to have an idea about literature and for them to be able to formulate an argument, which for a lot of students is very challenging. We work a lot on that at the beginning of the year, and we work on organization a great deal of the time, things like, what does the outline of your paper look like? And, what is the relationship between the introduction and conclusion? And then within that, a big thing we are working on is evidence. (2/24/2006)

Her comments tell that thesis statements, showing evidence, formulating an argument, and showing the relationship between introduction and conclusion are crucial components for American writing. Explicit learning about American styles of writing, different from essays written in oriental languages (see Kaplan, 1966), gave Tim an opportunity to construct his L2 system of meaning in terms of American English rhetorical conventions.

*Reading responses.* As an after-reading activity, Ms. Rice assigned the students to respond to the book *Lord of the Flies* (William Golding, 1984), giving them three questions to choose from:

- 1) Explore Simon's death and discuss the "Beast within us."
- 2) Samuel Hynes says, "The novel tells us a good deal about evil, but about salvation it is silent." Discuss.
- 3) Compare and contrast the two forms of government presented within the text. Discuss.

Tim chose the third question and wrote about it. His writing was as follows, with the parentheses indicating Ms. Rice's feedback:

*Power of Democracy shown in the "Lord of the Flies"*

In my reading of the Lord of the Flies, an idea came upon me. It was about the two government system the story shows, dictatorship and democracy. I thought about how and what kind of people supports these government (governments). I believe that this thought came upon me because I am from a country which is seperated (separated) into these government systems. I think that

democracy, which Ralph represents, holds no power if people are immature and uneducated. This statement is shown by the actions of the kids in the island.

Most of the biguns are immatured (immature) and uneducated. “Piggy! Are you the only one left?,” “Samneric, they are collecting woods.” (155) This passage shows that all the biguns went to Jack, except Sam, Eric, and Piggy. Jack, who represents dictatorship, always wants to play and hunt. He doesn’t want to do anything about building signal fire. Since all the biguns follow (follows) Jack, it shows that they do not realize the importance of being rescued. All the biguns who followed Jack felt no sense of guilt about Simon’s death. They don’t know how bad it is to take someone’s life. This is shown in page 161 (teacher’s comment: page # goes after quote), “I expect the beast to disguise itself.” Jack thinks that what they killed was disguised beast. The biguns choose (chooses) the path that is fun, and not important. Usually people who are immatured (immature) like to do whatever they want wheather (whether) it is important or not. This is shown in page 50 (teacher’s comment: page # after quote), “They are hopeless. The older ones aren’t much better.” This is the complaint of Ralph about biguns not helping to build the shelters ...

Some littluns stayed with Ralph, but were no help. In page 155, when Piggy says “There’s some littluns,” and Ralph replies “They don’t count. No biguns?” This shows that Ralph knows that littluns can be no help. The littluns did not participate in retrieving Piggy’s spec (specs). They also did not give any suggestions on how they will retrieve Piggy’s spec (specs). I think this shows that they simply don’t care. From page 170 to 173, it shows the assembly about

retrieving Piggy's spec (specs). And when Jack and his hunters attacks (attack) Ralph's tribe for Piggy's glasses, they don't bother hunting littluns. I think this shows that even Jack realizes that they will be no help to Ralph.

For these reasons, I believe that the Lord of the Flies shows us that democracy holds no power if people are immature and uneducated. Others may disagree about it. They might say biguns went to Jack to have meat and get protected. This, I believe, is how people who support dictatorship thinks (think). When dictatorship was established in my country, there were many people who were treated badly and were poor and uneducated, because it was established right after the reign of Japan ceased. The dictatorship claimed that everyone will be treated equally and no one will be poor or rich. This claim is just like Jack's that everyone will have meat equally treated and will be protected <being rich or not>. So most of the poor and uneducated people went to join dictatorship. My country's history shows some similarities and supports my statement that democracy holds no power if people are immature and uneducated.

The reading responses she did provide encouraged students to talk about the readings and played a role in contributing to students' cognitive and intellectual development (see Landay, 2004). In other words, we use the resources provided by prior writers when we write in response to prior writing. This involves Bakhtin's (1981) notion of intertextuality. Ms. Rice's comments on his paper stated that his thesis was strong, but that he needed to work on integrating his ideas more coherently into his essay. During an interview with me, Ms. Rice provided more comments on Tim's writing, stating,

I think that with a little bit more maturity, he could bring to his writing more sophistication and make it more interesting, but I still think he is unusual and I don't think he is typical. I think it has something to do with confidence. One thing I remember noticing about a piece of writing he did, was he was able to integrate some of his thoughts on his home country's dictatorship. He was able to integrate his own thoughts into the literature, which I think is very high-level thinking. And so again, I was very impressed. I think many native-born American students have a hard time gracefully integrating their personal experience into their analytical writing. I think it is very challenging for him, but he did quite well. (2/24/2006)

By writing analytically about what he had read, Tim was able to integrate his personal knowledge about the two Korean governmental systems. Tim incorporated his previous knowledge about the two Korean governmental systems into his writing processes and then created a new meaning of reading through his writing processes.

#### *Vocabulary Activities*

Ms. Rice put a good deal of emphasis on teaching vocabulary. She pulled the vocabulary words from the class readings and gave her students 20 vocabulary words, with the definitions, once a week. She structured the learning so that the students learned the vocabulary words through a combination of individual, pair, or whole class activities. Tim's vocabulary learning was integrated with other language skills by doing a number of different activities. These activities gave Tim opportunities to interact with his classmates and to speak in front of the class. Now I will explore some of the different activities that Tim was engaged in while learning vocabulary in his English class.

*Vocabulary learning in whole class.* In Tim’s English class, learning vocabulary was a routine class activity. Every Monday, Ms. Rice gave the students 20 vocabulary words (with definitions and parts of speech), using an overhead. Tim copied the vocabulary words, their definitions, and their parts of speech. In this way, Tim had time to figure out what vocabulary words he should focus on learning, and to skim through the meaning of the words while copying them. Each day, Ms. Rice verbally explained the meaning of five of these vocabulary words, using her own terminology. Her explanations gave Tim an opportunity to hear language used differently than the definitions given on the overhead. After her explanations, the students worked individually on making sentences with the five vocabulary words of the day. They used dictionaries to help them. When they were finished, they shared their work with the class. The following are the examples of one day’s vocabulary words:

Adverse—unfavorable (adj)

Advocate—to support, to recommend publicly (v)

Amicable—friendly (adj)

Asset—something of value (n)

Bigot—prejudiced, intolerant person (n)

Tim participated by sharing his use of the word “advocate.” He read, “Not many people advocate my publication.” After that, Ms. Rice said, “It is good, but you missed the preposition ‘for’ after the verb ‘advocate’.” He added the preposition “for” after the word “advocate.” This is an example of Tim’s English language learning being scaffolded by his teacher’s feedback. This type of exercise and feedback loop greatly improved Tim’s learning, meaning that next time he is likely use the word ‘advocate’ in an appropriate



way. This kind of activity he experienced here entailed developing processes of vocabulary learning that comprises Tim's zone of proximal development.

Another incident that shows Tim's vocabulary learning is shown in the following transcript of Tim sharing his vocabulary definitions:

T: Could you guys read the sentence for "acute"?

S1: (Reading the sentence)

T: Oh good! How about number 2? Who is going to read it?

S2: (Student raised hand and read the sentence)

T: Good! How about number 3 "cogent"? Tim, are you going to read number 3?

Tim: Yes. "My boss wanted me to make the advertisement as cogent as possible so we could have more customers."

T: Good!

Most of the time, Tim completed the vocabulary writing exercise and participated in this activity, or was called on for participation. During the activity, he was confident and active in his learning. This positive learning experience may have been the result of his positive perception and understanding of the interaction with his environment.

*Creating a story using vocabulary words.* Every Friday, the students took a vocabulary test. For this test, Tim had to study the twenty words, as described above. Using these words, he had to create stories. This required that he needed to integrate many language skills, including understanding the meaning of vocabulary words, understanding their parts of speech, making sentences from the vocabulary words, and then creating stories using these words. One of the creative stories that Tim wrote using

the twenty vocabulary words follows (the underlined words are the given vocabulary words):

Decade have (teacher's feedback: A decade has) passed since the death of my wife. Ten years ago, a drunk driver crashed into my wife and caused her mortality. This catastrophic event caused me to be introspective. I thought of my own feelings and wondered how I was going to live on. After few days (teacher's feedback: After a few days), I went to a court to sue the drunk driver. The Judge, after noticing what had happened, gave a mandate to the drunk driver, which was to give me compensatory money of one million dollars. I thought that money would not make up for the loss of my wife...

This kind of activity gave Tim an opportunity to reinforce the meaning and proper usage of the vocabulary words he learned in class. It also required Tim to work through a few different stages: memorizing the meanings of the vocabulary words, considering contextual clues, and organizing ideas into coherent stories. Tim said that this activity helped him enhance his vocabulary and gave him an opportunity to practice how the vocabulary words were used grammatically in sentences. He experienced the processes of internalization to conceptualize the meanings of vocabulary words in L2. In other words, the experiences with diverse activities helped him develop his L2 system of meaning.

*Pair work.* Ms. Rice required the students to write creative stories with another student in the class. To complete this activity, the paired students had to discuss how they were going to present their stories. Tim and Daniel worked together to write a story using 20 vocabulary words. Some examples are anthropologists, artifact, bizarre, entreaty, imperative, inanimate, originate, prohibition, tradition, and vulnerable. For Tim, working

with other classmates was a good opportunity to increase his language input and output. Both Tim and his partner, as active participants, collaborated with each other to make stories through external dialogues and interaction. This kind of communication played an important role in the activity of making meaning. The following is part of the conversation between Tim and Daniel as they wrote their story:

Tim: Do you want to talk about ancient Asian artifact?

D: Sounds good, but I am not familiar with it.

Tim: Ok, what do you want?

D: Maybe we can talk about an anthropologist.

Tim: Sounds good. So how are we going to start?

D: We need to make a name of anthropologist. Umm, how about Kenny?

Tim: Ok, we can start like Kenny is one of the best anthropologists in the world or something.

D: Sounds good. (He started writing.) Ok, how about this? “Kenny the anthropologist was one of the best in the land.”

(The conversation between Tim and Daniel continued.)

Tim: Bigot is like; oh you are still working on ‘artifact’? (Daniel is writing and

Tim is looking at his writing.)

D: Hold on! Cross out the words that we have already used.

Tim: All right.

D: How many words left?

Tim: Still a lot. Hey, sorry, but I can’t read your handwriting.

D: Ok, let me finish this passage. (He kept writing.)

Tim: (Looking at his writing) In the next paragraph, we might say that Kenny was searching for something valuable and then he found valuable statue, which is never seen in the land.

D: Ok, sounds good. Let me paraphrase your sentences. (He kept writing.) “It seemed ordinary and valuable to earthly forces, but he was soon to find it was not easily found by anything.” How about this?

Tim: (Holding Daniel’s paper and reading it) All right. I think it is good.

The conversation between Tim and Daniel continued for about 20 minutes until Ms. Rice stopped them. In their work together, Tim actively participated in creating the story and engaged in conversation with his partner. Tim explained the definition of vocabulary words to Daniel and contributed to making the story. Daniel usually listened to him carefully and sometimes paraphrased Tim’s sentences. Tim provided sentences in the conversation above in fluent ways. However, paraphrased sentences by Daniel gave him an opportunity to experience the way that a native English speaker put his sentences together. In other words, he experienced syntax and coherence different from his own. The pair activity Tim experienced demonstrates the interdependence of internal and external processes in his learning and development. Through continued relationships with the target language speaker as above, Tim was able to appropriate models in language use. This kind of social relation on the psychological development and on the development of his conscious personality can lead to the overall development of his emotional experience.

After almost twenty minutes of working together, Tim and Daniel created the following story:

### Vocabulary Quiz #24 (Tim and Daniel)

Kenny the anthropologist was one of the best in the land. The excellent studier (student) of human culture was originated in a small town in Iowa. Everyone of his family had begun their life in Iowa, and they were all anthropologists. With this overwhelming tradition bearing down on him, Kenny had no love, but upholds the long practice and became an anthropologist. This is a good thing because he was the best in his field at finding inanimate artifacts. These lifeless handmade artifacts are sometimes bizarre and weird, but mostly just clay pots.

It seemed ordinary and vulnerable to earthly forces, but he was soon to find it was not easily found by anything. He ran to the library, and made an entreaty to gain access to the books after hours. While looking for archeological books, he found a place where prohibition from the librarian kept all others out. When he entered the forbidden section, he found a book with a picture of the statue he has just found. Kenny felt it was necessary and imperative to read the book so he would know what he had found...

Tim said that he was interested in this pair activity:

It was kind of fun and interesting because I worked with a good and smart student like Daniel. Otherwise, I would not enjoy this kind of activity because I couldn't write a story quickly within a short period of time. It was good for me when my partner wrote it quickly, and I could provide ideas and vocabulary definitions, and then Daniel caught my ideas and wrote the stories quickly. I felt comfortable working with him because he is one of the best students in my class and he is one

of my best friends. If I was paired with less smart students academically, I might not have finished the job in the time allowed. (4/18/2006, translated from Korean)

Through the pair activity, his internalization and understanding of social interaction in the ZPD were positive. The influence of environment played a positive role in his psychological development; namely, his emotional experience enhanced his interpersonal relationships. Tim also found a comfortable zone for social interaction with a more competent “other”, so this situation led him to expand his ZPD in learning. This means that cooperation with other people for establishing the ZPD can determine the future cognitive maturation during his stages of development.

### **Other Subject Classrooms**

In this section, I present Tim’s English language learning experiences in other subject classrooms such as ROTC, Geometry, and Chemistry classes.

#### *ROTC Class*

Sixteen students enrolled in this class, which included students from grades 9 through 12. Reading, writing, and vocabulary learning were not the main part of the curriculum. This class did not require as many class activities and homework assignments as his other classes. This class was good for Tim because it allowed him to socialize with his friends. Tim said, “I have a lot of time to talk to my friends. Usually we just talk and hang around because we don’t do much in this class” (5/8/2006, translated from Korean). Although this class was not academically oriented, it gave Tim an opportunity to learn cooperation and socialization through group work and military practices.

On April 4, 2006, one of the students in the class distributed handouts (information about how to create a resume) to the students. Mr. Trump, the teacher, used

a PowerPoint presentation, entitled “Resume: A Summary of Someone’s Educational and Work Experience, for the Information of Possible Future Employers,” to explain to the students how to create their resumes and the kinds of personal information that should be included in them. After Mr. Trump explained the activity, he asked the students to divide into groups. The students moved around and formed groups, with each group being composed of four or five students. While the students worked on their resumes, Mr. Trump talked to me about Tim. He said, “Tim is very social and funny and athletic. (4/4/2006)” Then he recounted the following episode showing Tim being social and funny:

We had competitions a month ago, and three Korean students were ranked first, second and third places. I told Tim that you three Koreans were great, and Tim responded that “No, there are only two Koreans. The teacher said, “No, three,” and then Tim said, “Lee (one of the three Korean students) is too fat to be a Korean.” (4/4/2006)

From Tim’s perspective, it seemed that Korean students were supposed to be thin. As Mr. Trump said, he made jokes around his peers before the class and laughed. He was very confident speaking with his peers and teachers. Tim’s teacher saw him as a funny and confident learner. Thus, the influence of his environment informed his perceptions of that environment. In other words, Tim’s internal and individual properties of personality can be formed by the interdependence of individual and social processes in learning and development.

Tim and the students in his group worked together to create their resumes. They discussed their objectives, education, and skills. When Mr. Trump approached Tim’s

group, one of the students in his group asked Mr. Trump a question, as follows (T: teacher / S: student/ Tim):

S1: What are the objectives?

T: (Trying to open the slide) Ok, this is a good question. The objectives are to define the purpose of a resume and to state your goal in terms of what you can do for the employer, not what you want an employer to do for you.

Tim: What is state abbreviation?

S2: Like NM.

Tim: (Asking the teacher) are we doing the skills too?

T: Yes.

Tim: What are the skills?

T: For example, computer skills and the abilities you can do basically.

Tim: O.K.

S2: Bilingual can be a skill.

Tim: Oh, yeah. Bilingual! I am a bilingual. I can speak two languages.

S2: Cooking can be.

Tim: What? Maybe.

S3: Is it a good idea to put Martial Arts as skills?

T: That's a good idea.

Tim: How about sports?

T: Yes, that's good for skills.

(After a while)

Tim: I have no skills.



S4: Can you cook and can you clean?

S3: How about baking?

Tim: What? How about track skills?

S4: Yeah, people can walk and run.

While Tim was working on his resume, he had conversations with the peers in his group. He was not afraid of asking his teacher questions. He was very social and talkative. He was engaged in conversation with his peers throughout the class period. Somehow Tim's emotional experience with this class and its social relations positively influenced his English learning process. His experience, perception, and internalization of the internal processes themselves contributed to shaping his personality: confident learner.

#### *Geometry 10 Honors Class*

Thirty-one students were enrolled in Tim's geometry class. Five of the students were Asian-Americans, which was more than the number of Asian-American students in any of the other classes I observed. The class teacher, Ms. Brown, described Tim as one of the top students in this class. In fact, he had little trouble learning math because he acquired a strong foundation and understanding of math concepts in Korean. She said that Tim was very proactive and took a lot of responsibility for his education. He always made sure he understood what his homework was and what he needed to do for class. Ms. Brown also gave me the impression that Asian students in her class, including Tim, generally took a lot of responsibility for their education. She said:

American students expected teachers to teach them a lot and help them understand. They put more weight on it being the teacher's responsibility if they do not understand. But Asian students (no matter where they were born) are very

proactive, and they think teachers have a responsibility to teach them, and at the same time they also take a lot of responsibility for their education. They take responsible for figuring out the math concepts if they do not understand, and so they study hard at home. Math is easy for them because most other countries except America are teaching higher levels of math. Math doesn't require much language knowledge, it is a universal language. (9/6/2005)

Ms. Brown's comments on Asian students generally showed that Asian Americans are stereotyped as model minorities who are hardworking students and excel in math and science. This kind of stereotype can be very dangerous because not all Asian students are good at math and science, or are successful academically and because it expects Asian students to fit into the standards American society sets. Tim expressed his feelings about the model minorities stereotype with comments like, "I would have felt pressure if I had not been good at math."

Additionally, Ms. Brown's belief that math is a universal language could have negatively impacted the students from other countries who were familiar with other ways of solving math problems. Tim said that he experienced approaches to solving math problems which were different from approaches used in Korea. Tim said,

I realized that some approaches are very different, but I don't follow the American way. The reason is that the way I have learned is much easier to understand and makes sense to me. I ignore when my teacher uses an approach different from the way I have learned. Sometimes the way they approach it does not make sense at all. I would have had a hard time understanding some concepts

if I have tried to understand it their way. I like the Korean ways. (5/18/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim's comments revealed that there can be differences in the classroom in terms of learning styles and approaches. This implies that different approaches in learning should be applied in the classroom with the goal of meeting individual students' needs.

*Practice exercises.* In this class, Ms. Brown usually used an overhead projector to show and demonstrate math concepts. This visual aid was essential in helping the students better understand. Most of the time, she drew math figures and wrote procedures in detail for solving math problems on the overhead as she lectured. Sometimes, the students asked her questions to make sure that they understood. She did not check whether other students understood her explanations.

Usually, Ms. Brown explained a specific concept, and gave examples and practice problems. After her explanations, she had the students work on the practice exercises in the book or on handouts. When the students worked individually, most of them talked to peers around them and worked together to solve the problems. No structured pair or group work existed. Tim usually worked hard and alone. A few students around him sometimes asked him questions. On September, 6, 2005, I wrote in my observation notes:

He finished his individual work and closed his book. He put his stuff in his bag. He cleared off his table. Other students are still working and talking. He put his head down on the desk. I wonder why. Is he tired? Is he bored? Doesn't he understand?

After this class, I asked Tim why he was not as active in this class as in his other classes. He responded,

I am good at math and I have good sense of numbers. I already learned in Korea many of the things they were doing in class. The level of math in the U.S. is much lower than the level in Korea. I was surprised by the fact that my classmates were using a calculator. I mean, I do not need it because I can calculate in my head. As you know, we do not use a calculator in Korea. Also, it doesn't require much language like English class does. (9/6/2005, translated from Korean)

Tim found this class boring because he understood the math concepts in the class so he did not have to listen carefully. For this reason, he said that it was a “waste of his time” to take this class, but the advantage in taking it was that he could spend more time doing his homework for his English Honors class. Since he already had a solid understanding of mathematical concepts from his L1, it was easier for him to negotiate such concepts in his L2. This shows that already established concepts in L1 can help support students' construction of knowledge in the L2. Tim said, “I think it is going to be easier for students to understand the concepts in English when you have an understanding of the mathematical and scientific concepts in Korean. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)”

### *Chemistry Class*

Based on two classroom observations, it is hard to describe the pedagogy of Tim's chemistry class. When I observed this class, Mr. Johnson, the teacher, was lecturing and asking questions. The class was structured around the teacher lecturing to the whole class. Most of the time, the students were asked to work individually on practice problems from worksheets.

*Practice problems.* On April 20, 2006, I arrived at the chemistry classroom before the students arrived. Mr. Johnson posted test grades on the entry door, and students

checked their grades as they entered the class. Two students received an A, four students got a B, and the rest received a C, D, or F. Tim received an A (98 points on classroom lab, 92 on the test, and 95 on the assignments). He was a top student in this class.

As soon as Tim entered the classroom, he started talking with his peers around him, talking loudly, using hand gestures, and laughing. After the bell rang around at 1:30, Mr. Johnson distributed handouts, entitled “The Three Categories of Chemical Reactions” to the students. Then he wrote on an overhead “Precipitation Reactions, Acid-Base Reactions, and Oxidation Reactions.” The use of visual aids is always helpful for second language learners to support their understanding. Mr. Johnson explained these concepts and then had the students look at a chart, entitled “Periodic Table of the Elements” on the wall. After Mr. Johnson explained the definitions of the three categories of chemical reactions, the students worked on practice problems on the worksheet. Mr. Johnson solved three of the practice problems with the students, and then asked them to complete the rest of practice problems on their own. The students worked individually on their worksheets, and Mr. Johnson walked around the class and helped them when necessary.

As Tim worked by himself, he would sometimes talk to his peers around him. One of his peers, who sat some distance away from him, asked him a question. Tim said to his peer, “You know what? You should look at the chart over there.” When Mr. Johnson approached, Tim asked him some questions that I could not hear, and Mr. Johnson answered. After Mr. Johnson left him, a few of the students around Tim started talking to him about TV shows, and he got distracted for a while. However, he returned

to his work. He was focused, concentrated well, and raised his hand when he had questions.

Around 2:17, one of Tim's peers approached Tim and took his worksheet without his permission. Tim said, "I didn't finish it yet." His peer copied his worksheet and then returned it to him. Without any reaction, Tim returned to concentrating on his work to complete it. His peers knew that he was good at chemistry. It seemed that they needed help from Tim. Based on my descriptions above, Tim's classmates considered him a student who had a good grasp of chemistry. Tim himself also knew how his peers thought about him. This situation made him find a comfortable zone that helped him shape his personal characteristics as a motivated and confident student. Further, this implies that the environment is the source of development of human traits.

*Solving problems.* On May 1, 2006, during chemistry class, Mr. Johnson wrote on the overhead "p. 679 #42-46, p. 680 #58-60. 42. A)  $\text{Na} + \text{C}_{12} = ?$  B)  $\text{Fe} + 2 + \text{Cu} = ?$ " Then Mr. Johnson solved these problems with the students by explaining and writing the procedures for solving the problems. When Mr. Johnson wrote the answer to number 42, "b):  $+2.713\text{V} + 1.35828\text{V} = +4.07128$ ," Tim asked, "How far do we have to round up?" Mr. Johnson answered, "Leave it like that." After this demonstration, Mr. Johnson asked the students to work on the rest of the practice questions individually and then to submit them before they left the classroom. As usual, Tim was very focused and concentrated on his work. At 2:08, Tim stood up and put his hand on his peer's head, smelled it, and said, "Smells bad. It's a joke." He approached Mr. Johnson and had a conversation with him:

Tim: I have a quick question to you.

T: What is that?

Tim: (Showing his paper) I would like to make sure my answers are right.

T: (Looking at his paper and explaining something)

Tim: Wait! Wait! (He went to his desk and grabbed his textbook.)

S1: (She approached the teacher and tried to ask a question.) I thought you were done, Tim.

Tim: No, not yet. Sorry.

T: (Explaining his questions) (Mr. Johnson patted Tim's back.) Work hard!

During my two classroom observations of Tim in his chemistry class, he was hard working and focused. He was not afraid to ask Mr. Johnson questions. Even if there were limited opportunities for Tim to interact with native English speakers and to use academic language, he was motivated to learn and made sure that he was on the right track. This shows that he took a lot of responsibility for his education. He knew what was helpful for his second language development. His motivation and accountability for his education were possible elements that helped his successful learning. It is very likely that his successful learning experiences aided in bringing additional success. However, questions remain concerning the source of the motivation and responsibility for his education. Observing his behaviors and attitudes in the classrooms, I assume that his positive perception and understanding of his interactions within the environment influenced his learning and personality. The interrelated developments between individual and social processes could change Tim's cognitive functioning and his experience in the sociocultural context. The following comments from Tim provide a good example of how he perceived and understood his teacher and his chemistry class. He said,

I like to talk to my Chemistry teacher because he is funny and makes me comfortable to talk to him. I am one of the best students in this class. Even if I ask some questions to the teacher with my broken English, nobody makes fun of my English because it is not English class which has a lot of good students who are fluent in speaking and writing. It doesn't require high level of English when I ask a question, and I also know what I am asking the teacher. It requires very specific language within boundaries of chemistry. However, English class requires broad language with no limit. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim's comments infer that with teachers who made him feel comfortable, he felt encouraged to speak in the classroom. He did not feel embarrassed because even his broken English was welcomed and accepted. He felt more confident and competent in chemistry than English itself, so that he felt that his level of English proficiency was of secondary importance. This demonstrates that his perception and understanding of social interaction in chemistry class was different from those of his English class. These different emotional experiences can lead to his potential development in different ways. Therefore, his affective filters in chemistry class were lower than the ones in English class so that comfort zone to talk and interact with the teacher and classmates is needed for English language learners.

### **Experiences with English outside the Classroom**

Before Tim's classes started and during his break time, Tim always talked to his teachers or peers. I wrote in my observation notes,

As soon as he got in the classroom, he started talking to the teacher. He asked her why she changed the seats, and talked about the class activities they will do today.



He also talked to a few friends around him. He also talked to one guy who is sitting diagonally from him. He stood up and approached a girl and talked with her for a while. (10/11/2005)

During break time, Tim always talked with his best friends, Daniel and Cody (English speakers), in the hallway as they walked to their next class. They all talked with one another. He also always had lunch with them. Cody described Tim as being very talkative and social. Cody said, “He never stops talking. It is amazing.” Even after school, Tim spent a lot of time with his friends, doing homework, watching movies, and visiting his friends’ houses. Tim said,

I think the most important and influential factor that, I think, helps me experience English and helps me improve my English, is for me to talk to my friends and classmates in the classroom and outside the classroom...When I speak in English, my friends correct my mistakes. They do not understand why I don’t make words plural when necessary in sentences. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim was socially interactive with his American friends even outside of the classroom. He created social settings where he could have contact and interaction with his American peers who provided the help he needed for learning English. This demonstrates that his personality was social, and that he was motivated to interact with the target language speakers. An individual learner’s personality, motivation, and social skills may be dependent upon how he or she perceives and internalizes the social interactions in the ZPD. A student’s personality, motivation, and social skills can be changed again, depending on the experiences of the student himself/or herself. This demonstrates that individual development is closely related to the role and influence of the environment.

## **Tim's Difficulties in the Classroom**

Tim experienced the English language in his different classes, and during these experiences he faced difficulties in learning and developing his English. This section describes these difficulties.

### *English Honors Class*

Although Tim was a remarkable English language learner, he felt a lot of peer pressure in his English class. The reason for this was that he felt his peers in this class were superior to him in reading, writing, and speaking English. Tim said,

American students immediately put their ideas on the paper without much thinking and they are fast writers and readers. I cannot do that like them. I have to think a lot before I write my ideas on paper. For example, my American friends just write sentences using the vocabulary words, but I have to study them and make sentences and memorize the sentences to take the tests. I cannot compete with them in English language. Even though I have weakness in speaking, reading, and writing, in fact, these skills do not always influence my grades. My teacher thinks I am doing well because I got an A and not many students get an A in honors class. If you follow class requirements, you can get an A. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim was conscious that he was different from his American peers in language proficiency. His awareness with regard to the differences in language ability made him feel pressure in the classroom. Even if he earned an A in his English Honors class, he considered it his hardest class, and he did not seem to be satisfied with his performance. He was insecure in this class because of his language ability, compared to his peers. Through the

emotional experience with the situation and its social relation, Tim began to understand his 'self' as a conscious being through reflection and introspection.

Since Tim was slower than American students in reading and writing, the time given in this class to complete in-class activities was never enough for him. In addition, standardized tests, such as the SAT and the ACT, especially in the English section of these tests, were timed. Tim said his reading speed was slower than that of his peers even if his reading comprehension skills were good. He felt this was unfair. This lack of time to complete the task, compared to their peers, can increase the English learners' anxiety and pressure. It shows how the situation in which Tim was surrounded influenced his emotions, such as feeling pressure and anxiety. Ms. Rice recounted an episode about Tim's reaction to one of her assignments. She said,

He makes jokes about the readings I assign. Often times, with some of the challenging books they read, they all read together and I will assign anywhere between 15 and 20 pages a night, and for long weekends I assign more than that. He would make a joke like "oh, my God! That is my whole weekend. That's five hours for me." I think it does take him longer, but I also think some students are not doing all the reading or they are skimming. I think he is really trying to read all of it and understand all of it and it is reflected in his grade, which is better.  
(2/24/2006)

It took longer time for Tim to complete the assigned reading; however, he persisted by trying to finish reading assignments and by trying to understand challenging books. His hard work in the classroom led him to earn a good grade. His persistence in completing his homework might be related to his age; he was mature enough to understand what he

was supposed to do so he pushed himself to complete his work in the classroom even if he faced emotional pains with the environment. Thus, although most students experience emotions with the environment, the extent to which they perceive their environment positively or negatively may vary according to age.

Another difficulty Tim faced in his English Honors class was that he was not able to express his ideas and thoughts fully and fluently when speaking and writing. On April 18, 2006, the class talked about the idea of “an authority.” Tim said in class, “The word ‘authority’ reminds me of Hitler.” Then, he was unable to explain further his thoughts about why Hitler reminded him of an authority. During an interview with Tim, he said,

I didn’t have enough vocabulary to explain the reason. I had some ideas in my head, but I could not express them. I did not know how to start explaining and how to say it in English. I needed some time to think and process until I speak, I think. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim needed time to process his thinking before he spoke aloud. It means that he had not yet fully reached the “unified meaning system” between the two languages (see John-Steiner, 1985). He was still in the process of constructing his meaning system in L2 through his L1. According to Ms. Rice, even though Tim was a remarkable student, he had a hard time expressing his ideas in class. She said,

Just from the way that he speaks in the class I have noticed that the Tim who walks in the class and jokes around with his friends is very bold and confident. But then Tim who expresses his ideas in the class finds this challenging. I think he speaks with a softer voice and he is kind of waiting for affirmation (positive

reinforcement) that what he said is correct. I think that when he expresses his ideas, he is a little more tentative, which makes sense. (2/24/2006)

The difficulty he faced in this class was that it required diverse language skills such as reading, writing, and analyzing the texts, as well as organizing his ideas and thoughts and it required a broader range of language that he needed to learn in order to be expressive. Before Tim spoke his ideas, he took time to process what he wanted to say. I think he was tentative when he expressed his ideas because in that way he was risking less. He took risks within a zone of comfort, and took less risk if he was outside his comfort zone. Thus, his comfort zone was dependent upon how he perceived and understood social relations in his ZPD.

#### *American Friends*

When Tim first came to the United States, he had a difficult time because he did not speak English very well. He said “When I came to the US, at the beginning, I did not speak English very well. I understood what was going on in the class, but not 100%.” Because he did not speak English fluently, he did not have the opportunity to make American friends in the classroom. He thought going to school was no fun and boring. Tim said,

There are two reasons to go to school. First, I go to school to learn and study, and second, I go to school to see my friends. No motivation to go to school, and I didn't like to go to school because I didn't have any friends. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)

He was aware that he was not able to make friends because language played an important role in social mediation. Tim also explained the reason why he had a hard time adjusting to school in the United States. Tim said:

Although I did not speak English well enough to make friends, the American school system also prevented me from making friends. The American school system in high school required students to move from one class to another, and so they never stayed in the same classroom. This gave me less opportunity to get to know my classmates. In contrast, in Korea, students remain together with the same class for at least a year. I believed that the Korean system gives more opportunities for me to make friends and to have deeper friendships. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)

For Tim, friendship was a very important reason to go to school. He connected the idea that he did not speak English fluently with not having the opportunity to make American friends. He believed that the more fluent his English was, the more chances he would have to make friends.

Tim also faced issues with his peers' manner and behaviors in school. He thought that his peers did not have any manners, respect, or etiquette. Tim said,

If they were in Korean classroom, they would have been punished all the time. They were very rude to the teachers and they did not have any respect or manners. They talked back to the teachers. Some students were extremely rude. They behaved in a way that was not acceptable in Korea. In addition, there was no distinction between genders. They kissed with each other in the hallway. They were weird. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)

Tim interpreted and judged his peers' behaviors according to his own cultural values and standards. The different behaviors and manners in human relationships challenged him to understand and accept, while adjusting to a new environment. In other words, the behavior and rules that are accepted by one cultural group are not necessarily acceptable to another cultural group. This can lead to cultural conflicts within an individual who is stuck between two different cultures.

Additionally, Tim experienced internal conflicts about his American friends. He said,

Sometimes American friends show off, but I knew it was kind of exaggerating. I also experienced some American friends who were very stubborn and they wanted to do whatever they wanted to do, so sometimes I wanted to hit them, but I knew I can't do that in the U.S. (laughing) because I am not in Korea. I sometimes really wanted to hit them whenever they exaggerated or they made fun of me or my English. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

In a Korean context, it is considered acceptable to be physically assertive to your friends and peers. This includes actions like slapping on the back, hitting on the shoulder, etc. When viewed from an American context, this would be viewed as aggressive and violent. In contrast, in a Korean context, it is considered playful and friendly. Tim knew that he had to accept American rules; however, he had a difficult time because he had to accept American ways that he did not really agree with. He was trying to acculturate in a way that would allow him to become part of the mainstream culture without giving up his past meaningful traditions and values (see Igoa, 1995). Tim said,

As you know, in Korea we don't really report even if we had a fight or an argument with friends, but here they do. The issues and problems between friends in Korea are our problem and our business, but here they tell the teachers or counselors if they had a fight or had some problem, which I don't understand. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

This was another example of cultural conflicts he faced in American school. He realized that the expectations about how he was supposed to behave or solve problems between his friends were different. This was a way for Tim to understand the relationship between the individual and the larger social world and to negotiate meanings between two cultures. Before Tim understood the rules at his school, he was suspended from school because of an incident in his Physical Education class. Tim said, "One of my classmates made fun of me in P.E. class. He was holding a ball, and I tried to kick the ball, but I accidentally kicked him. He fell down. After that, we went to a health center. I was suspended.

(5/8/2006, translated from Korean)" In Korea, such an incident would not have warranted any action from the school. In the Korean context, this type of incident would have been between Tim and the other student, and would have been left to them to resolve. It was hard for Tim to understand the idea that something that was permitted in Korea was not permitted in the United States.

### **Social and Cultural Experiences**

In this section, I describe Tim's social and cultural experiences in his process of learning English.



*Learning English in a different culture and society*

Tim believed that learning English gave him an advantage since English is spoken and used all over the world. He felt that if he could speak English, he would have access to any of these countries, and be able to talk with residents in those countries. He said, “Speaking two languages will provide me with more advantages in the job market. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)” When relocated to a different environment, Tim was aware that speaking two languages could be an advantage for his professional career.

In spite of the fact that learning English might give Tim an opportunity to have access to many countries and to have advantages in the job market, immersion into English language and American culture impacted Tim’s native language and his identity. Tim said,

I have never thought that learning English would create any disadvantages when I was in Korea because I thought my English was better than any other Korean students. However, in the U.S., I feel that I have disadvantages because I am not a fluent speaker of English and I have to start with learning basic things in English. However, American students already know English and they are much more fluent than I am. I can’t compete with them. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

By moving from one country to another, Tim underwent significant changes in his life. In terms of English language proficiency, he was more fluent than any other Korean students in Korea; however, he was much less fluent in English than other American students. This was the way he understood his relationship to different contexts and how that relationship was constructed across time and space. This kind of his experience was the realization of a sense of who he is.

In addition, immersing himself in the English language in school and even outside school caused him to begin to forget sophisticated vocabulary words in Korean, and to no longer be able to speak it naturally. Tim said,

I am confused with two languages. I spoke English all day long before the interview with you, and so it is hard for me to switch the language from English to Korean. I am just used to speaking English all day long in school; therefore, English naturally comes first. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim thought that his English was getting stronger than his Korean, and, thus, that his Korean language no longer supported him in learning English like it used to. The environment where English was dominant did not allow him to maintain his native language. Only the Korean number system helped him understand math concepts easily. He also said that he started forgetting how to spell in Korean. However, he did not think that he would lose his Korean language too easily because he had used it for 13 years in Korea and he still spoke Korean when he talked to his brother and aunts at home. He believed that it would be easy to lose his Korean if he did not have anybody with whom he could practice speaking Korean. In spite of this, immersion into English language in an American school caused Tim to lose cultural capital and his Korean identity. In other words, compared to his peers in Korea, Tim was left behind in terms of culture and language. As mentioned earlier, compared to the students in the US, Tim's language proficiency was lower, and he had much less cultural capital. His identity was caught between two cultures and two languages. He was not perfect in either context.

### *Tim in the Classroom*

Tim was seen as a good and successful student in his classroom, as he had been a good and successful student in Korea. He was good at math and science and he studied very hard. He was confident in himself and confident in speaking with his classmates. Because he was a good student, his classmates wanted help from him that gave Tim an opportunity to talk with them. For this reason, he had many opportunities to engage in conversations and made many friends. His interactions and communication with his classmates gave him the opportunity to use English with native speakers, which in turn helped him to be confident speaking in front of them. Since he was academically successful and good at math and science, he met the definition of the “model minority.” By meeting these standards for what the American society expects from minorities, he felt less pressure from his classmates and teachers. Because Tim was already a good student, he experienced low anxiety and pressure, which allowed him to be more successful than he might otherwise have been.

### *Tim's Acculturation*

Although Tim had a difficult time making American friends when he first started attending American school, and he experienced conflicts in accepting American ways of behavior, manners, and friendship, he made many American friends as his English improved. He was social, and he joined activity clubs (such as ROTC and a tennis club) that offered him opportunities to interact with American friends. He believed that interacting or socializing with his American friends on a daily basis was one of the best ways for him to develop and improve his English language. Interactions with American students and acculturation as a result of contact with them gave Tim an opportunity to

build his social and cultural knowledge in the United States. This contributed to him building a new system of meaning in terms of American culture.

However, by interacting with his American friends, he was getting more accustomed to his American friends' behaviors and attitudes. Tim said, "I know I am a Korean, but I live in America and I think I have to live like an American here (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)." One of the examples is when, as mentioned earlier, he faced the differences between two countries with regard to the relationship among friends. Through the influence of environment and its social relation, Tim was constructing a new system of meaning through his attitudes and behaviors toward American friends. This was a part of his realization and modification to form his new self, which did not exist at previous stages of his development. Even the meaning of his 'self' evolved from his previous 'self.'

Tim's adaptation to American ways brought about a conflict between his parents, who live in Korea, and him. He related to me the following episode. He said that he frequently stayed over at his friends' houses, an activity that is common and acceptable in the United States, but which is not common in Korea. His parents in Korea were very upset about his behavior, and they asked him not to do this activity any more. Tim said,

I was upset because my parents [on the phone with him] did not allow me to stay over my friend's house anymore and I had to be home by 9. I didn't understand them. In fact, my brother and my aunt understood it because they have lived in the U.S. and they know the culture here. But I had to listen to my parents even if I didn't agree with them. (5/8/2006, translated from Korean)

Tim accepted the idea of staying over at friends' houses in the United States, even if his parents did not agree with this idea. He accepted the Korean idea of listening to his parents. However, the growing cultural distance between Tim and his parents can lead to misunderstanding and tension, and eventually they can lose intimacy and closeness (see Fillmore, 2000). When Tim adopted American ways, at the same time he was losing Korean ways. When two different cultural values conflicted, Tim's identity also conflicted. Changes in Tim's social situation of development caused fundamental changes in his experience, internalization, and understanding of interaction within the environment.

Although Tim listened to his parents on the phone, he liked the American way and became accustomed to it. At the end of spring 2006, he was looking for a summer job. Later, he interviewed for a job at a pizza restaurant, which would be unusual for someone of his age in Korea. Most Korean students in his age usually spend their time outside of school attending private institutes or study for college instead of working. Tim said, "I feel really sorry for Korean students who have to study all the time. I really like here because I don't have to study 14 different subjects and it is easy to get good grades here (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)." Ms. Rice said, "Tim was acculturating to living in the United States and was comfortable with interacting with his peers, making jokes with them. He was adapting and adjusting to his new environment well (2/24/2006)."

Although Tim felt more comfortable with American culture, he never forgot he was a Korean. Tim said,

I say the pledge in front of the American flag every day in school, but I just do it because it is kind of respectful and proper etiquette because I am getting an

education in this country and I appreciate this opportunity. If I say the pledge in front of the Korean flag, I will take it more seriously and I will do it with my heart. I am a Korean and I will never be an American. My skin color is different, and my English is not as good as Americans. (11/21/2005, translated from Korean)

Tim identified himself as a Korean—he belonged to the Korean culture and ethnicity. He implied that skin color and fluency in language are influential in order to belong to a member of a specific ethnic group. The skin color he was born with played a part in defining his ethnic identity. Due to these factors, he felt like he belonged to the Korean community because he still shares a common language and has a similar skin color. This means that language proficiency is intrinsically connected with ethnic identity, and that language is significant to the individual, as an instrument for naming the self and the world (Liebkind, 1999). Tim had a sense of Korean cultural and ethnic identity; however, his personal characteristics were continuously changing since human development is accomplished by the interdependence of internal and social processes with the environment and its social relation. As human beings develop, the environment also changes as does their perception of it.

## **The Story of Yang**

### *Background*

Yang was born in 1986 in Korea. He has short hair and is tall and good-looking. He is muscular and of medium build. He enjoys wearing jeans and t-shirts. He completed his first year of high school in Korea. When he began school in the United States, he was in tenth grade. He decided to repeat the tenth grade because of his low level of English proficiency. When I started observing his classes, he was in twelfth grade and 19 years old. For two years, he attended an ESL class for an hour each day, and at the same time, took regular, mainstream classes. He once commented to me that when he first came to the United States, he experienced difficulties in school, saying, "I didn't speak English at all when I first came here. You know I have to study, but I did not have good study habits, either. When I didn't speak English at all, I cried a lot (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)." He hoped to begin his studies at the University of New Mexico in the fall of 2006, and indeed, he is currently attending this university.

Yang came with his sister to the United States in September, 2003. His father and grandmother still live in Korea. Yang's parents were divorced in 1997. His mother then came to the United States and married a Korean-American man. Yang and his sister had the chance to come to the United States through their mother who has a green card. Yang's parents wanted him to come to the United States because they were worried about his future. They worried that because he was not a good student academically in Korea, he might not have the opportunity to attend college. Both Yang's mother and Yang believed that he would have a better chance to create a new life in the United States. Yang said,

I was not interested in studying very much in Korea. I was not motivated to study and I did not have a good attitude toward education. I wanted to start a new life and wanted to study from the start. That's why I decided to come to the U.S. I thought about my future. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Yang told me some reasons why he was not motivated to study in Korea, saying:

We had some family problems. My parents got divorced, and my sister didn't get along with my father. My father and I were very close, like friends. That's why I did not listen to him, even if he encouraged me to study. I think I have been through puberty in that I resisted listening to my father and even my teachers. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Yang learned English in school in Korea. However, he said, "I just remembered 'Hi', 'How are you doing,' 'Fine,' and 'Thank you,' That's it. I did not know 'How are you doing' has a meaning (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)." Yang told me he believed that it was fortunate that he did not have a good knowledge of English, saying,

I did not have much English, so I absorbed everything that I heard without being able to judge the correctness of what I am saying or what other students are saying. Because of this, I just hear the language or vocabulary that I have never learned and just memorize them. There was no hindrance when I input the English knowledge. But, a lot of students who studied hard and had good knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary in their countries have a hard time when they hear and speak English because they have some conflict between the knowledge of English they had already in previous school and the knowledge they are learning now. A lot of my friends agree with me. I guess that's why children input



English quicker than adults because there is no hindrance. They absorb knowledge like a sponge without hesitation. They can accept anything. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Yang's English teacher (Ms. Oxford) described Yang as a nice, polite, and quiet student. Ms. Oxford was impressed by the fact that Yang tried to stay focused, did his coursework, and kept up with the class. He also took the risk to come to a different country and to learn a different culture and language. Yang was a respectful person who bowed whenever he met me. Bowing is a way of greeting elders in Korea and signifies respect. It is part of Korean culture and a value that Yang still kept.

Yang was social outside the classroom, and for him, friendship was very important. He tried to make many friends at school, and he succeeded in this. Yang said,

It is no fun without friends. Here, I think friends are very important because it is easy for me to fit in school life in the US. It is good to have friends when I need some help. They are important when I learn English. I didn't have friends for a year. Now I have my best friends who you saw after my wrestling practice. I spend a lot of my time with them. My English proficiency has been improved since I met them. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Although Yang spoke more English than Korean outside his home, he spoke Korean at home with his mother, stepfather, and sister. Based on an interview with him in Korea, I found that his Korean language proficiency and skills were strong, and high enough for him to be able to communicate with me about language and cultural issues.

## **English Experiences at School**

In this section, I present Yang's English learning experiences in his regular English class.

### *English 12 Regular Classroom*

Ms. Oxford was a white female with 17 years of teaching experience. Thirty-three students were enrolled in this class, most of whom were Anglos. Yang was the only English language learner (ELL) in this class. In the English 12 Regular classroom, there were two blackboards and a whiteboard. These were always full of information, announcements, and vocabulary words, and allowed the students to see what was going on in the classroom, what their homework was, and when tests were going to be given. Ms. Oxford arranged a number of novels and essays on a bookshelf, and the students all had their own dictionaries. Ms. Oxford posted the local newspaper on the door. Every week, the students chose an article from the newspaper to read, and after reading it, responded to it in their journal. The classroom also had posters and maps on the walls, and a television.

### *Reading Activities*

Yang experienced reading different genres of literature in his English class. The readings in the class syllabus included: *The Iliad and the Odyssey* (Homerus, 1834), *Oedipus Rex* (E.A. Sophocles, 1967), *Beowulf* (Julius Zupitza, 1882), *Into Thin Air* (James T. Child, 1957), *MAUS* (Art Spiegelman, 1995), *Animal Farm* (George Orwell, 2004), and *the Canterbury Tales* (Geoffrey Chaucer, 1851). Additionally, students were required to select novels of their own to read at home as part of the reading program. A

few of the books they read were difficult for Yang as well as for the native speakers of English in the class because these books were written in Old English.

*Reading poems and discussions.* On August 16, 2005, the class read two poems, *Anger* by Wendy Flora, and *Fear* by Raymond Carver. The students read these poems, interpreted the meanings and messages of the poems, and discussed how they felt about the poets' messages and the structure of the poems. Ms. Oxford initiated conversation during class discussions. These discussions consisted of Ms. Oxford asking questions, to which the students responded. Then Ms. Oxford gave the students feedback. After this, Ms. Oxford usually asked another question, and then the conversation pattern was repeated. During these class discussions, Yang usually listened to his teacher and classmates carefully. However, he did not have the chance to practice speaking.

Although Yang was silent during the discussion, Ms. Oxford called on him, and he finally had a chance to speak in class. The following is a part of the conversation in which Yang participated (T: teacher S: students Y: Yang):

T: What kind of feeling is expressed in the poem?

S1: They are happy.

T: Are their feeling loud? If so, how?

S2: Exclamation mark.

T: Look at the way the words are laid out on the paper.

T: (She asked Yang.) What do you think about this poem?

Y: (Smiling...he didn't answer.)

T: Why did she put a question mark at the end of poem?

Y: (Thinking for a while) because you don't know the answer.

Although Yang had this opportunity participate in class conversation, his participation was limited. After reading and discussing the poem, Ms. Oxford showed the students how to write a poem by giving them some examples of rhymes. Yang copied the examples from the board onto his paper. According to Yang, Ms. Oxford was very different from teachers in Korea who usually interpreted poems and explained what the poems were about. Ms. Oxford gave her students the opportunity to think and interpret the poems themselves. She also asked them how they felt about the poems. For Yang, this was a different learning experience. Teachers in American classrooms encouraged students to express their opinions and ideas, and to reflect on their thoughts in the learning process. This was a different cultural pattern of speaking in school, which Yang experienced in this American classroom. For Yang, this involved a process of constructing a new system of meaning through cultural patterns of speaking in American classrooms.

*Class discussions about the definition of hero.* After reading an epic story and writing about their personal heroes, Ms. Oxford's students discussed the definition of a hero. This activity was a good exercise for the students because they were asked to make connections between the epic story and their personal ideas. Ms. Oxford distributed a handout, entitled "Characteristics of the Epic Hero," and then said to the students,

You wrote about your mom and dad as heroes. You wrote about police officers. Some of you wrote about cartoon characters as heroes. Cartoon characters live in an imaginary world. They aren't real heroes. Don't you have a hero in your life? Why did you choose cartoon characters?

Based on their choices of their personal heroes, the students started discussing and debating the reasons for choosing those particular heroes. They chose heroes such as cartoon characters, celebrities such as Lance Armstrong and Oprah Winfrey, and soldiers in Iraq. In their debates about the definition of a hero, Ms. Oxford and some of the students, as well as students and other students, agreed and disagreed with one another. In contrast, however, as I wrote in my field notes, “Yang was sitting very quietly and never got involved in their conversation; however, he was turning his head toward the students who were talking. He was very carefully listening to others’ opinions.” At the end of their debate, Ms. Oxford asked Yang what his definition of a hero was. Their discussion follows:

T: Yang. Who is a hero in your country? The opinions that your peers have are different from the opinions that you guys have.

Y: Yes, very different.

T: What is a hero?

Y: Fight well...A person who helps people. (laughing)

T: Ok, different cultures have different values on that.

In this conversation, Yang experienced attention and pressure from his peers because he had to speak his ideas in front of the whole class. After the class debated the definition of a hero, Ms. Oxford asked the students to read a list of the characteristics of the epic hero that she printed on the handout that she distributed to the class. According to the handout, “an epic hero is significant and glorified, on a quest, ethical, and a strong and responsible leader who also performs brave deeds.” The class then compared and discussed their definitions of a hero and of an epic hero.

After this class, I emailed Yang in Korean to ask him what his definition of a hero was. He described his definition of a hero as follows: “The person who is generous to people and who fights for the right. The hero should be brave and fight against evils. They should be very kind and good people (9/27/2005, translated from Korean).” As such, his definition of a hero was similar to the characteristics of the epic hero. Yang said his classmates’ ideas and opinions about cartoon characters as heroes were “very new, fresh, and interesting” and ones that “Korean students have never imagined (9/27/2005, translated from Korean).” In the different environment and culture, Yang was building a new system of meaning about the definitions of “hero” in L2, based on his prior knowledge about conceptions of “hero” in his native language. He was glad to hear the different perspectives that American students had. The class discussion provided him with a way to experience his target language and to have an opportunity to hear others’ different ideas and perspectives. Classroom discussions with American teachers and peers played a crucial role in social mediation, and the form of his thinking also developed through language mediation.

*Reading and writing projects.* I did not have a chance to observe what reading activities and strategies Ms. Oxford utilized when the class read the book *The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Geoffrey Chaucer, 1851). Ms. Oxford distributed a handout in class about *The Prologue* and assigned the students to read pages 103 to 125 of *The Prologue*. As usual, the class was structured, and Ms. Oxford spent most of the time speaking to the class as a whole.

According to the class handout, *The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* introduces 29 pilgrims who, along with the narrator, are on their way to the shrine of St. Thomas

Becket in Canterbury. The month is April, and the place is the Tabard Inn just outside London, where the pilgrims are staying overnight. The writer describes “the pilgrims, revealing their personalities through direct and indirect characterization, sharp images, and figurative comparisons. Chaucer’s descriptions of dress and appearance are particularly revealing of psychological traits.” The handout also included an assignment that stated that the students were to choose one of the 29 pilgrims, then to read and interpret the lines in *The Prologue* pertaining to this pilgrim. The students were required to produce a visual representation (with color) of their pilgrim, give a physical description of the pilgrim, describe the pilgrim’s job, describe the pilgrim’s attitudes towards others, list the pilgrim’s good and bad qualities, and tell why or why not the this pilgrim would be a productive member of society in the Middle Ages.

Yang chose the Miller as his pilgrim and started reading lines 561 to 584 of *The Prologue*, which described the Miller. However, he did not know the meaning of the word “miller.” So Yang looked up the word “miller” in the dictionary. Meanwhile, Ms. Oxford walked around the class. When she came to Yang, she asked him if he knew the meaning of the word “miller.” When Yang answered “No,” Ms. Oxford explained to him what the word “miller” means. Then Yang began to read his lines. This means that for English-language learners, the key vocabulary from the texts should be introduced before the activity itself. Otherwise, these learners can easily become confused with the expectations of the class activity.

One day, Ms. Oxford gave her students the assignment of writing an essay about *The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*. Her directions to the students were “to give concrete evidence and facts to support your thesis statement, analyze what the facts

meant, and show your thinking process regarding these facts. Overall, analysis, perception, judgment, and interpretation of facts are important.” According to Yang, this kind of writing assignment in English required a lot of work and took him a lot of time to complete at home. He also faced cultural differences in writing, in that, as he said, he was not used to this type of writing in Korea. In contrast, Asian learning contexts emphasize reproducing existing knowledge and establishing reverence for what is known through strategies such as memorization and imitation. These differences caused Yang to experience inner tension and conflict in his English classroom. As Hyland (2003) points out, western educators tend to take their own views for granted as universal and can easily fail to recognize different cultural specificity. This point demonstrates that Yang experienced tension in constructing a new system of meaning in L2 through his cognitive and written processes in L1.

*Performance.* On another occasion, the class read the book *MAUS: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman. Once again, Ms. Oxford did not provide any specific reading activities to build Yang's background knowledge of this book or to help his reading comprehension. However, for a group project, Ms. Oxford asked the students to develop presentations about the book. Each group used a different style of presentation. Yang's group performed each character in front of the class. The students in Yang's group read their characters' lines. Part of their presentation follows (S: Student Y: Yang):

S1: I have a good friend, Apole, who's willing to hide my son until the situation gets better.

S1: I think he would take your baby too.

S2: You may be right! Let me speak with my family.



S1: But, I am telling you, it was something terrible going on in our house when I even mentioned it.

Y: What? Have you gone crazy?

S2: How can you even think of giving Richieu up to complete strangers?

Y: (He read it with emotion) I will never give up my baby. NEVER!

After this presentation, Yang said:

My group discussed how we should make our presentation, and which character each person would perform. We practiced the lines together before the class. I liked this group project because I had the opportunity to work with American students outside the classroom and to build relationships with my peers as friends.

(5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang positively perceived and internalized such social interaction with his peers and used the group project as a means of building friendships outside the class that eventually gave him an opportunity to expand his ZPD in learning.

*Reading newspaper articles.* Ms. Oxford brought two newspaper articles to class to use to teach the students reading strategies. Two articles were excerpted from the local newspaper. The first article, entitled “Lobos Suspend Prochaska After Arrest,” was published on February 20, 2006. Ms. Oxford asked the students to read the article and discuss it. Then she used the article to teach them reading strategies. One of the reading strategies was to raise questions in reading and to write these questions in the margins of the articles. Ms. Oxford provided examples of how to raise questions while reading. After that, she distributed another newspaper article, entitled “Posey Supporters Rally for Mercy.” The story was about a 16-year old boy, who was convicted that month of first-

degree murder in the death of his 13-year-old stepsister, second-degree murder in the death of his stepmother, and voluntary manslaughter in the death of his father. His murder of his three family members derived from his father's abuse.

Ms. Oxford asked the students to read this article and practice the reading strategies that they just learned. Yang started reading the article and wrote questions in the margins of the article. After class, I asked him what kinds of questions he raised while reading the article. Examples of questions he raised included, "What voluntary murder is," "Why voluntary murder for dad and second-degree murder for stepmother?," and "How much he knows about the abuse?" Thus, he experienced the English language in reading newspaper articles and was aware of what was going on locally. He was also aware of his internal processes by reading the news article and raising thoughtful questions. Through this activity, Yang gained experience in using different genres of vocabulary related to crime such as first-degree and second-degree murder, and voluntary manslaughter. This kind of activity helped him negotiate the meanings of new vocabulary words in L2 through his native language.

### *Writing Activities*

According to the syllabus, in composition, the students were required to learn to develop clear, concise essays, and other types of writing, including poetry, short stories, memoirs, letters, book reviews, literary criticism, speeches, research articles, and resumes.

Yang said,

As you know, we don't write much in Korean classrooms. We just have writing competitions, but teachers never taught us how to write, of course, it depends on Korean teachers. Here in the United States, they put a lot of emphasis on writing.

Nevertheless, the problem is I just started school in tenth grade here so that I never learned what American writing is. I just write anything on the paper to complete the assignment. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang never learned the type of American writing that emphasizes the construction of a thesis statement. As a result, he had a hard time organizing his ideas according to this type of American writing, as Ms. Oxford commented on his writing that he needed to stay focused on one idea or on the main idea stated in his original thesis statement. The work done by Kaplan (1966, as cited in Connor, 1996) on the organization of paragraphs in ESL student essays suggests that Anglo-European expository essays follow a linear development. In contrast, essays written in Oriental languages use an indirect approach and come to the point only at the end. Due to these different patterns of organization in writing and thinking, Yang struggled when he was expected to write in an American way. This suggests that his teacher needed to be aware of how Yang perceived and reacted to the class activity. Teacher's awareness of the students' reactions to the activities can help them construct a new meaning system in L2 that they have not yet developed. Since Yang's teacher was not conscious of his learning process and reactions during the instruction, Yang felt culturally disoriented.

*Reading responses.* Ms. Oxford's class went to the library and checked out the book *Animal Farm* (George Orwell, 2004). The students began quietly reading this book until the class was over. When I asked Yang if the class had done any reading exercises for the book, he said, "We just read the book individually and then watched the movie. We wrote many reading responses in our journal notes (2/21/2006, translated from Korean)." Yang also drew many pictures in order to visualize his understanding of the

book. An example of his journal writing follows: “Irony—an important component of satirical writing, to illustrate the gap between what the animals are fighting for and what they believe they are fighting for.” When I reviewed Yang’s journal notes, Ms. Oxford did not provide him with any meaningful feedback on his reading responses. There was no communication between Yang and his teacher about his writing, either in writing or orally. Yang said, “Sometimes she gave me feedback on my writing, but it was not very helpful (5/1/2006).” Yang’s negative experience with writing came from the lack of meaningful communication necessary to connect his thinking processes with written processes. In the writing activity, there was no time or space for Yang to develop his ideas or thoughts and convey them in written language. This emotional experience with the class situation did not facilitate the development of his writing proficiency in L2.

Additionally, Yang described to me how Ms. Oxford gave him feedback on his grammar:

Other teachers usually ask me to correct a few grammatical mistakes so they don’t hurt my feelings. But my English teacher points out every mistake. She would ask me to correct nouns, adjectives, and verbs. It means that I have to fix everything. I feel that all my writings are wrong and feel disappointed about my writings. I don’t know what to do. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Yang felt disappointed about his teacher’s feedback because Ms. Oxford pointed out all the mistakes he made. This kind of feedback lowered Yang’s self-esteem. His experience from his teacher’s feedback caused negative qualitative transformations in his perception and internalization of the experience of social interaction.

A good example of an activity that helped Yang improve his writing proficiency and created an opportunity for him to communicate with his peers is as follows. One time when I was observing his class, Ms. Oxford asked an American girl to take Yang outside the classroom and to read his paper with him and proofread it. In my field notes, I wrote, “I don’t know what to do. Is it good idea to go outside with them and see what they are doing or stay in the class? I do not want him to feel uncomfortable because of me. I decided to stay in the classroom.” After the class, I asked Yang about working with his peer. He said:

This is second time my teacher asked me to work with an American peer for my paper. We usually read my paper together and they point out grammatical mistakes and awkward sentences and then correct them. It helps me because I can see what errors I made, and it is kind of good practice for my future writing.  
(10/25/2005, translated from Korean)

Working with his target language peers helped Yang’s writing and provided an opportunity for him to be in contact with English speakers. This shows that Yang’s attitudes about and beliefs of the situations were different, depending on how he perceived and understood the social interaction during his experiences and activities.

*Reflection papers.* The class read the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel. The students read it by themselves and then wrote a reflection paper. They went to the computer lab to type their reflection papers. The purpose of this writing assignment was for students to participate in Oprah’s National High School Essay Contest. The topic was “Why is Elie Wiesel’s book *Night* relevant today?” A sample paragraph of Yang’s writing follows:

*Night* is a dramatic book that tells the horror and evil of the concentration camps that many were imprisoned in during World War II. Elie Wiesel's book *Night* is relevant today; this book is such an extraordinary part of our lives today because it displays the horrors of our past and how we can learn from that today. It shows the corrupted minds of the human race.

After this passage, Yang presented his paper, using transitions such as "firstly," "secondly," and "lastly," and then stated his conclusions at the end of paper. On this paper, Yang earned 75 points out of 100. Ms. Oxford's comments follow: "How is faith relevant today? You need to make the connection. Yang, did you write this?" In an interview, Ms. Oxford gave me more feedback on Yang's reflection on *Night*, saying,

I almost felt like he copied reflection writing out of maybe... out of quotes, notes, or someone else helped him with it. The language he used was not his, such as existentialistic and individualistic. I have observed his language, and his language on the paper doesn't fit to his level of English proficiency. (3/5/2006)

Yang said this writing project was one of the hardest projects in this class. It took him a lot of time to finish reading the book, to write down his reflections about it, and to finalize his paper. The primary reason for Yang's difficulty was due to a lack of connection between his thinking processes and reading and written processes. Without the processes of internalization through various activities, Yang was not able to comprehend his reading process, much less incorporate his ideas into written language. This point emphasizes the importance of recognizing on the part of his teacher Yang's internal processes during instruction.

Because of his difficult experiences with written responses, one of his American friends helped him finish his paper by giving him vocabulary words that were more sophisticated and by helping him change the line of his argument. Yang believed that through his friend's help, he learned how American students present their papers and create sentence structure. In addition, Yang said,

I learned more sophisticated and advanced words with which I was not familiar. Even if I have a high level of language proficiency in Korean, I do not have sophisticated vocabulary in English because my level of English proficiency is not high enough. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

With respect to social interactions with his peers, Yang created a zone in which he could build the meanings of vocabulary in L2 through his native language. That is, his peer (a more competent other) served as a mediator in his maturing processes in L2.

#### *Vocabulary Activities*

Learning vocabulary was not emphasized, and there was no specific or explicit vocabulary teaching in Ms. Oxford's English class. Once a month, Ms. Oxford provided vocabulary word lists on the board. She asked her students to study them at home, and then she tested their vocabulary learning. Some of the assigned vocabulary words that Yang was required to learn included: anti-Semitism, bade, pious, laborious, vivacious, apathy, acute, parasite, cryptic, imperceptible, ghetto, pillage, voracious, billet, expound, pestilence, indefatigable, tractable, and canvass. Yang said, "These vocabulary words are really hard for me to understand and to memorize. They are difficult words (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)." Yang believed that he did not have to memorize all of the vocabulary words in the class. He said, "It is too much to memorize all of the words that I

don't know. I try to understand the context. Understanding the whole context is much better than just trying to memorize all the vocabulary that I don't know (5/1/2006, translated from Korean).” He felt overwhelmed because of the unfamiliar and academic vocabulary he learned. His own reading strategy was not to memorize all of the vocabulary provided in the classroom, but instead to try to understand them in their context. Thus, perhaps due to his age, Yang had a metacognitive awareness about his learning and knew what helped his language learning. Even if both Jung and Yang experienced difficulty in dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary, they understood the situation in different ways. I assume that at the given age, their perception, internalization, and understanding of social interaction with the situation are widely diverse.

### **Other Subject Classrooms**

In this section, I present Yang's English language experiences in other subject classrooms, including Government, Communication Skills, Economics, World History, and ESL classes. The purpose of this section is to give a glimpse of Yang's English learning experiences in other subject classrooms.

#### *Government Class*

Thirty students were enrolled in this class in the fall of 2005. Communication in this class was very structured. Mr. Holms lectured and asked questions, spending most of the class time talking to the class as a whole. He did not spend any time talking one-on-one with Yang.

Based on my three observations of this class, I noted that the class learned about American government systems and American history. According to the class syllabus, Mr. Holms, expected the students to be able to distinguish between one-party, two-party, and



multi-party systems and to explain the role of third parties in American politics, and to describe how the American party system has developed.

In this class, Yang read a textbook, newspaper articles, and handouts that included questions. He had to deal with many teacher-created questions based on the reading materials. He was required to understand the class readings and to answer questions on handouts and on the board. Examples of these questions follow:

What is voter turnout?

Which political party was opposed to women voting and why?

What impact have third parties had in national politics?

How has the constitution split government power, and why?

The writing activities that Yang experienced in this class required short answers to questions on handouts or on the board. If Yang understood the content of the reading materials, he was able to answer the questions. However, there were no specific reading activities in which he could conceptualize the new knowledge about the American governmental systems. According to Yang, “I never talked to my government teacher, and Mr. Holms never asked me if I was doing all right in the class.” In a learning situation, he felt isolated by not being actively supported by his teacher. His emotional experience was represented and created by the situation in which his learning experience and activity was taking place. This then means that the influence of environment serves an important role in human development.

An example of one of Yang’s answers to a question is as follows. Yang wrote, “The constitution sets up the government. It is split into three branches. The first is the Legislative. The second is the Executive. The third is the Judiciary...” Even though Yang

responded to this question with these answers, it was not clear how much he really understood. It was possible that he just copied these sentences from the books without a good understanding of what he was writing. Mr. Holms' feedback on his answers was very simple, stating, "30/40." He did not explain why Yang earned 30 out of 40 points or provide any suggestions for improvement. Again, his struggles with constructing a new system of meaning in L2 were largely the result of the classroom situation.

Other than working on questions on the handouts, the students in Mr. Holms' class watched a video, entitled "Cyber Ballots and Voting Online." After the students watched the video, Mr. Holms gave them the following discussion question: "Can you think of other ways to attract people to vote?" Mr. Holms initiated the class discussion, and then random students answered his question. During their discussion, Yang sat quietly. I noticed that Mr. Holms talked quickly and sometimes murmured. Yang looked around to try to figure out what was going on in the class. After the class, Yang said, "He usually talks so fast so it is hard for me to understand what he is talking about (10/18/2005, translated from Korean)." The teacher never checked to see if Yang understood what he was saying, meaning that the teacher was not aware of Yang's expectations of the classroom activity. The learning situation engendered by the teacher resulted in Yang's perceived isolation.

#### *Communication Skills Class*

I observed Yang's Communication Skills class five times. In this class, Yang looked more comfortable than he did in his other classes. He talked with his classmates before and after this class. The teacher, Mr. Heald, assigned some activities for writing and speaking. Yang looked back on his experiences in this class, saying,

In the first place, I hated this class because it requires a lot of speeches and presentations. However, now I am glad to take this class because I practiced my speaking in front of my classmates and I built up my confidence in speaking. I got good grades, and I feel very comfortable. I might have regretted if I would not have taken this class. I like this class best. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

This demonstrates that practicing speeches and presentations in front of the class was an aspect of language learning and of building confidence in speaking. Yang found a comfortable zone and perceived and internalized his experience in a positive way in this class, which eventually led to more effective learning. His positive understanding of the value of social interaction with the situation in this class helped Yang reduce his anxiety and gave him a mental or intellectual break.

*Personal newspaper.* On November 3, 2005, the class worked on creating, designing, and writing personal newspapers. The teacher provided guidelines for the project, which was entitled, “The Newspaper Is about You.” The personal newspaper included stories, advertisements, and articles about the students and/or their families. The students worked on writing sports stories based on a sample article extracted from a chapter in the textbook about how to write the sports stories, which Mr. Heald distributed.

Yang read the article, entitled “Writing Sports Stories,” which gave him guidance on how to write a sports story. Then he started writing his own story about a sports event. While writing, he occasionally spoke to a classmate who was from Mexico and taking an ESL class. The teacher did paperwork, while most of the students worked on writing their sports stories. At one point, Yang stood up and approached his teacher, which I had never seen Yang do in any of his other classes. He showed his writing to his

teacher, who read it and began to write on Yang's paper. He gave Yang feedback on his original writing. The following is Yang's original writing about the sports event:

It was in November, 2004. The L J.V. Soccer team arrived to semifinal to against Pearl high school. They had so many shoots each other but either team couldn't make the goal. Therefore, they had to plan penalty game. Yang who is the number 12 in H high school. He kicked at second. He made a goal but all of L high school players misses the goals, but so fortunately Pearl's players made only one goal as L high school. So that they had to plan penalty game again. At 11<sup>th</sup> time L's kicker made a goal. After that L's dream comes true. L's goal keeper, Kevin, defense that goal so L soccer team won the semifinal game. Some of them were cried, and most of them shout as a happiness.

In his writing, Yang wrote about his personal experience and described fairly well what happened in a soccer game. Although a reader could understand the meaning of Yang's writing, Yang nevertheless wrote some incomplete sentences and made many grammatical errors. Yang said, "Writing about my personal interests and experiences is better and easier than writing my reading responses in my English class." In this class, his writing experience was meaningful because he talked about his personal interests in his writing and felt comfortable with the situation. This is a good example that students' emotional experiences in learning are closely connected with how students perceive and understand the social interaction with the environment. Also, the development of students' thinking is related to the way the environment affects them.

### *Economics Class*

I observed this class once. Like most of Yang's classes, Mr. Cambridge spoke most of the time to the class as a whole. He lectured by explaining and demonstrating economic concepts.

On February 16, 2006, Yang sat in an assigned seat in the front row of the class. He copied the following passage that Mr. Cambridge wrote on the board: "Although demand for boots had been falling, shoe factories concentrated on producing heavy woolen boots. During the first year, the government imposed 10, 000 extra pairs on retailers, filling warehouses and store..." After the students copied the passage, the teacher initiated a discussion, asking students, "What is the problem with this passage? Who is making the decision? And who is happy?" The students answered the teacher's questions randomly and without raising their hands. Yang sat quietly, looking at the passage as he copied it. I wondered if he understood the passage or not. I wrote in my field notes, "I am curious about if Yang understand the passage or not. He sits quietly and copies it."

Mr. Cambridge next drew a graph showing the relationship between price and quantity. He explained the relationship between supply and demand, using a graph and giving students an example of a market situation for special events such as Valentine's Day, Christmas, and Halloween. The students then watched a video entitled "The Changing Market," which was about economic education and circulation of economic activity. The movie showed three high school students selling perfumes and discussing how to sell them and make a profit from their business. The movie educated the students about the concepts of supply and demand, and price and quantity in business.

During an interview, Yang told me,

I really enjoyed the movie because the stories gave me a good understanding of economic concept. The movie gave me concrete example of the abstract ideas of the relationship between price and quantity and between supply and demand. I have never imagined that I would learn economic concepts through a movie. It is unusual in Korea. It is fun to watch. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

This demonstrated that Yang built his background knowledge about economic concepts through watching the movie. Video served as an active agent in the development of his ZPD. He experienced a new way of learning economic concepts through the film and even positively accepted a new learning system.

After the movie, Mr. Cambridge distributed handouts to the students for them to review in preparation for a test the next day. He then asked the students to work either in pairs or in groups. Yang looked around and ended up working alone because, he said, none of his friends were sitting near him. Most of his friends were sitting at the back of the class. For Yang, the availability of good friends played an important role in helping him engage in conversation. He looked for target language peers who made him feel comfortable talking. This was a key component in his language learning. However, this learning opportunity was ignored and not utilized. This presents that even in the same class, Yang's emotional experience with the situation became different because it was all dependent upon how he perceived and internalized the experience of social interaction. In addition to that, the environment keeps changing as students develop.

### *World History Class*

I observed Yang's World History class twice. Ms. Freeman, the teacher, posted newspaper clippings on the wall, entitled "Cambodians Healing Scars," "Believing Rwanda's Nightmare," and "Who the World's Worst 10 Dictators Are." According to the tables of contents in the textbooks, the course covered topics such as "Kingdoms and Empires in the Middle East," "Ancient Greece," "India's Great Civilization," "East and South Asia," "The French Revolution," and "Latin America." Yang told me that even though the course required two textbooks, the students spent most of their time working on worksheets and maps. This class was similar to the Social Studies class that Jung attended. Only one type of instruction existed: working individually on worksheets and maps. No talk was allowed in class. If the students raised their hands to ask questions, Ms. Freeman approached and helped them.

The worksheets required the students to do things such as "locate the following (for example, Mt. Olympus, Vatican City, or Finland) on the map of Europe." Yang usually found the locations by referring to the atlas. In addition to working on the maps, Yang worked on answering the questions on the worksheets, which required simple, short sentences. An example of one of these questions was: "1) Write causes of the following effect: Southeast Asia has never been united politically or culturally." Yang answered this question as follows: "a. Seas and straits separate the islands; b. Five great rivers flow from the north and cut valley to the sea; and c. Between the valleys rise hills and mountains making travel and communication difficult." He found the answers by reading the textbooks and then submitted his work to the teacher.

During an interview with Yang, he told me,

I think this class is one of the easiest classes because the requirements are less than other classes. If I read the book and understand it, I can write the answers. I do not have to think much because the answers are in the books. I can also paraphrase the answers. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang considered this an easier class compared to others because it was not a cognitively demanding course. Yang also said that the students usually took a test each week or every other week. Examples of questions on the tests and Yang's answers included the following: "1) This country is under military rule since 1988," which he answered as "Burma;" "2) The largest Muslim population can be found in what SA Asian country?," which he answered as "Indonesia," and "3) Describe the effects of the Vietnam War on neighboring Cambodia (include covert operations by U.S.)," which he answered as "Working closely with the government of Vietnam to prepare for safety." Yang simply answered the questions and occasionally did not answer them with full sentences. His teacher never checked to see if he understood the readings. Sometimes Yang earned good grades (100%), and other times he earned poor grades (64%). He said that his grades on the tests depended on his effort and understanding of the content of the books.

### *ESL Class*

Yang was a student in an ESL class for two years before I observed him. In the spring of 2006, Yang registered for an ESL class in order to assist other ESL students who just arrived in the United States. However, based on my observations of him in this class, he worked on his own homework, prepared for his Economics tests or socialized with other students in the class. The ESL teacher usually walked around the class and helped the students with their writing. Meanwhile, Yang talked with the Japanese girl and



Mexican boy about his weekend plans. He also talked with the two Koreans in Korean about school life, classes, and GPAs. An example of his conversation with the Japanese girl follows (Y: Yang and J: a Japanese girl):

Y: Are you interested in watching movie today?

J: If you want to. What time?

Y: Today

J: I have no money.

Y: We should rent a movie.

J: Well...

Y: We should go to Cinema 8.

J: Why?

Y: It is cheap. It is just one dollar.

J: Ok. Talk later.

This class gave Yang good opportunities to have cognitive breaks and to build relationships with other English language learners who were Japanese, Mexican, and Korean. In addition, he had extra time to prepare for his tests in this class. This class did not give him much pressure or cause him tension. He did not need to think about how different he was from his American classmates because all of the students in this class were learning English just as he was. This class was a place for Yang to develop a positive self identity.

### **Experiences with English outside the Classroom**

Yang usually had lunch with his German friends with whom he used to play soccer on the Northern High School soccer team. They ate lunch in the cafeteria or in the

hallway and talked with one another while eating. They made fun of one another. Most of the time, Yang walked with his American friends between classes, and they talked with one another while they walked. Occasionally, he talked with his friends before going to classes, sometimes about their weekend plans. Unlike in his classes, he shared many conversations with his friends and was very social outside his classes.

After school, Yang experienced the English language by interacting with his American friends. Yang believed that interacting with his American friends played a crucial role in helping him improve his English and fit into a new society. He explained the importance of making American friends by describing a Chinese friend, who had been in the United States for six years, but who did not speak or understand spoken English very well. Yang explained,

My Chinese friend's low level of English was due to the fact that he did not have any American friends and did not join any sports clubs that might give him the opportunity to make American friends. He understood the importance of social interactions with the target language peers who could provide the help he needed to learn English. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Even if Yang's friends played an important role in language learning, not all of them were helpful. Yang said to me,

I don't think all of the American students are good at writing. Last week, one of my American friends helped me with my writing, but I got 70. I told him, "I will kill you and stay away from me." (Laughing) Even when they helped me, I sometimes got low grades. Based on my experiences, it is important to meet smart friends who are very good at English language and motivated to teach me. I have

one friend who was in our study group. He explained grammar and sentence structure very well. He helped a lot. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

This demonstrates that his learning experience with more competent English speakers can be different if the meaning of that assistance in relation to his learning is different. One example of how Yang interacted with his peers outside the classroom follows. Yang studied for the ACT college entrance test, which covers English, science, and math, and also participated in a study group with three American friends. They met as a study group every other day at one of his friend's house. His friends helped him with his grammar. Yang said, "I had to take an ACT so they helped me with English grammar on this test. The questions were multiple choices. They explained grammatical rules. It was very helpful (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)." This was an opportunity for Yang to be helped by target language speakers who were more competent in English, meaning that his learning was the result of the interdependence of personal processes and social processes. This internalization of internal-social processes happens in the ZPD.

For Yang, his friends played an important role in his social affiliations and activities outside school. He spent a lot of time with his friends after school. Together, they went to the gym, played soccer, and attended a wrestling club. They went to movies, and had dinner together. Most of the time, Yang was immersed in the English language by interacting with his American friends outside school. Outside the classroom, Yang was motivated to learn a second language. Somehow, he positively perceived and understood the social interactions outside the classroom that allowed him to build rapport with his friends and expand his learning zone.

## Yang's Difficulties in the Classroom

Although Yang experienced the English language in his class activities and interactions and through diverse language resources in the classroom, he faced difficulties in these activities and interactions.

### *Quietness*

Yang was very quiet in the classroom. He never initiated conversations or raised his hand to ask questions. He listened very carefully in class and occasionally looked around the classroom to see what was going on. He worried about being called on by his teachers and was not confident in speaking aloud. Yang said to me,

I am just shy to say something in the classroom because I don't want to make mistakes. I worry about what if I say something stupid and something that doesn't answer the questions or is not related to the conversations. I don't want to take risks. I don't want to lose face. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang was quiet because he did not want to make mistakes in front of others. He was experiencing language anxiety in the classroom. In fact, Yang was also quiet because he did not want to lose face. According to Bruner (1996, as cited in Kim and Markus, 2005), "the ways in which people talk are socially shaped and shared and entail the incorporation of cultural-specific models" (p. 182). Thus, in regard to East Asian communication processes, face-saving and face-negotiating are explicitly recognized in some situations because of their central importance in maintaining harmonious relations and honoring the hierarchy (Kim and Markus, 2005).

Additionally, Yang had a hard time keeping up with the pace of conversation and dealing with topic changes in discussions. He was quiet because of this. He felt more

confident when he knew the topic that was to be discussed in class because he could then prepare for the given topic at home. He felt intimidated when he was asked to participate in a rapid flow of unstructured discussion (Meyer, 2000). Depending on what kind of activity he was doing and the interactional context, he either displayed himself as confident or as quiet and reserved. His emotional experiences were changed and influenced by the environment where he perceived and understood the experience of social interaction.

Nevertheless, the most influential factor in Yang's being quiet in class was that he felt a lot of "peer pressure," especially in his English class. According to Yang, by peer pressure, he meant that his classmates were very expressive and talkative, and dominated the class discussions. Their ideas and opinions in discussions were different from ones that other Korean students and he would ever have considered. Yang said,

I feel very overwhelmed by their expressiveness. I feel very stupid and I feel that I don't know anything. I want to prove that I am not stupid by saying something in discussion. Sometimes, the words are on the tip of my mouth, but I can't let it out.  
(5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang's English teacher (Ms. Oxford) thought that Yang was quiet because chattier and outspoken American students overpowered him. She said,

I don't know exactly, but they overpower him. I think he is not used to that so much in the classroom and I do ask him to speak out and he tries. I know he still struggles with speaking and expressing himself in front of the class. (3/5/2006)

Because Yang felt peer pressure in the classroom, he struggled with speaking and expressing himself. He also struggled with internal pressure and anxiety. He discovered

that his 'self' differed from others in the class in terms of language proficiency and expressiveness, and this awareness or consciousness overwhelmed him. His 'self' was constructed by the social environment where he was learning English.

Another important factor, as Ms. Oxford said, was that Yang was not used to expressing himself in a Korean classroom. This meant that expressiveness in the classroom was not part of his cultural patterns in talking (see Kim and Markus, 2005).

Ms. Oxford described Yang's English process, saying,

I don't know for sure, but I think maybe he has to think about the language and that takes longer to process, and I have noticed when he is in group activity, he seems to be a little bit nervous and it is hard for him to get the words out. I think he knows what he wants to say, but it is hard for him to process to find the right words. (3/5/2006)

I talked to Yang about his English teacher's comment and asked him what he thought about it. Yang said,

I enjoy discussion with my classmates, but it is not easy to engage in the discussion because they already say what I want to say. I have to think again to come up with other ideas. It just takes time before I can say something. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang needed more time to process the language because he had to think about what he wanted to say, find the right words in English, and organize his ideas in an orderly way before speaking. This means that constructing a new system of meaning in L2 was no easy task. Constructing a new meaning system in L2 goes with emotional pains, such as anxiety, fear, and frustration.

In addition, the seating arrangements in Yang's classes and whether or not Yang's friends were sitting near him influenced his social interactions in the classroom.

Depending on where he sat, he experienced different types of interactions with his classmates. The more friends he had around him, the more frequently he talked. Yang said,

I don't have many friends in my government and economics classes so that it makes me uncomfortable to talk in front of the class. I didn't talk at all in economic class because my teacher put me in a front seat, and most of the classmates around me were not my friends so that I didn't want to ask questions even if I had questions. I didn't even join them even if the teacher asked us to discuss something with the people around us. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

He sensitively reacted to the situation where he was surrounded: more learning can be accomplished within a more comfortable zone. Such a comfort zone emerges from students positively internalizing the social interaction within the environment.

Moreover, Yang believed that speaking out in class meant showing off. This was a cultural perception and belief that he had learned in Korea. This cultural perception helped prevent him from speaking out in front of the class. His belief that speaking out in class meant showing off was related to cultural practices in talking. Yang was not used to expressing himself in a Korean class. This demonstrates that during classroom exercises, he experienced both internal and external conflicts because of different cultural values and aspects.

*Fast Talk and Limited Time in the Classroom*

Fast talk and communication in the classroom were related to Yang's difficulty in understanding. Having only limited time in class activities forced Yang to struggle with completing his work in the classroom. In my field notes, I described his teacher's speech: "He talks quickly with some of the students in the classroom, and talks continuously without pauses." During class discussions, Yang usually sat quietly, listening, copying things from the board, and putting his head down on the table.

Because of my assumption that Yang might have a hard time with fast talk in the classroom, I asked him what he thought about his government class. He responded, "It is really hard for me to understand most of the conversations between the teacher and classmates because they talk so fast especially in government class. I don't understand what they are talking about (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)." Although Yang did not understand what the others in the class were talking about, he never showed whether he understood or not. Mr. Heald never checked to see if Yang understood or not. Yang was an invisible student in his Government class. The environment in which the teacher spoke quickly, which did not allow Yang to understand the class or take care of his needs, made him invisible in the classroom. Through his repeated experiences with the classroom environment, he is also continuously reconstructed his new internal structure.

In most of his classes, Yang struggled to finish reading handouts and articles within the short periods of time that his teachers gave the students to read these to be able to discuss them in class. Yang said, "I tried to finish reading, but never fully finished and understood the handouts and articles in the classroom. When I looked around the class, my classmates already finished reading them and were ready for discussion, but not me



(11/7/2005, translated from Korean).” He also faced difficulties in his English class during in-class writing activities. He said that the reason why he faced difficulties was:

It takes a lot of time to think about what I am going to write in English, but even worse, I have to finish and submit in-class writing within 20 minutes. It is impossible to do that, but I am getting used to it. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

It means that his teachers needed to be aware of his perceiving, processing, and reacting to classroom activities and interactions (his *perezhivanie*). Teachers’ awareness of students’ *perezhivanie* can allow them to engage in meaningful and engaging education. A lack of time caused his anxiety and pressure and prevented him from learning.

#### *Writing and High Level of Language in English Class*

The greatest difficulty that Yang faced in developing his English in the classroom was his writing. His English class required more writing than any of his other classes. Yang knew what he wanted to write about. However, he worried about his grammar, sentence structure, and choice of vocabulary words. In addition, he was concerned about how to organize his writing. As a result, his writing did not go smoothly.

Yang’s English teacher (Ms. Oxford) told me that Yang wrote beautiful poetry, and that he had strong abilities in conceptualizing ideas and grasping abstract concepts. She said he was at his grade level in this area. She added that it was when Yang put his ideas on paper and attempted to structure his sentences as they needed to be structured in an essay, which he ran into trouble. She said,

In terms of actually getting the language in the correct order and starting ending the sentences when he should, he’s maybe somewhere between fourth and fifth

grade. It is much deeper when he thinks. I mean his mental cognition is much deeper and is already up there, but his actual sentence structure isn't there yet.

(3/5/2006)

Ms. Oxford assessed Yang's writing by separating his level of cognition and his language abilities. It seemed that Yang's cognitive abilities had been developed in Korean. However, his language in L2 had not yet reached his grade level. Interestingly, due to his lower language performance in English, his teacher identified him as a fourth or fifth grader. Since for second language learners there were gaps between the L1 and L2 in terms of acquisition of abstract concepts, teachers need to provide students with sufficient time and space to construct a new meaning system in L2 through their L1.

#### *Lack of Background Knowledge and Support*

According to Yang, having background knowledge in content areas was important to his ability to comprehend readings and class discussions. He faced difficulties in his Government class due to the fact that he did not have much background knowledge in American political systems and history, or in events related to American politics and voting systems. He said, "I do not have much knowledge about Korean government systems and history. So, it is really hard for me to understand American political systems. I am trying to learn, but it is not that easy (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)." In addition, the vocabulary words in Yang's Government class were difficult for him to fully comprehend because he could not even understand these same vocabulary words in Korean when he looked them up in the dictionary. Yang said,

I would look up in the dictionary to find the meanings of vocabulary, but I can't understand them in English when I don't understand them in Korean. I feel very

embarrassed so I give up on knowing the vocabulary in English when I don't understand them in Korean. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Perhaps if Yang had understood the meanings of these vocabulary words in Korean (namely, if he drew his L1 system of meaning), he might have comprehended them in English. Knowledge of a topic in Korean might have helped him understand it in English (See Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis, 2000). Because Yang did not have much vocabulary related to government systems in Korean, his English learning was not supported or facilitated by his native language.

Yang also faced challenges in his Geometry class in 2004 because he did not have a good understanding of math concepts in Korean. He struggled with math questions in English. In other words, both his lack understanding of math concepts in Korean and his level of English proficiency prevented him from doing well in math. Yang said,

I was not a good student in Korea. I didn't have good knowledge of math in Korean. I didn't understand math questions in English, either. First, I failed the class so that I wanted to go back to Korea, but my sister helped me with my math homework and explained math concepts in Korean. Thanks to her, I passed my math class. I wouldn't be here if she didn't help me. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Yang might have had a better understanding of American history and the American political system, if he had had prior knowledge of some more advanced and sophisticated vocabulary words in Korean. In addition, he might have performed better math in English if he had had a good understanding and background knowledge of math in Korean, and if he had had a good knowledge of, and better skills in, English. This demonstrates that a

certain level of maturity in both L1 and L2 is necessary for success in L2 learning (see Clarke, 1988).

### *Challenges in Dealing with American Views and Perspectives*

Based on my classroom observations, I noted that the American students in Yang's classrooms were very expressive, raising their hands and asking questions of their teachers. They were responsive to their teachers, even if they were less active in some classes and more active in others. In addition, the relationships between teachers and students were informal and casual, which is rarely seen in Korean classrooms.

My above-noted impressions led me to ask Yang how he perceived his American classmates. Yang described American students as being more talkative and expressive than Korean students, who usually did not raise their hands in class. However, American teachers were busy calling on students to ask them to speak, unlike Korean teachers. Yang said, "I could not adjust to this situation when I first came to the U.S. I was overwhelmed by interactions between the teachers and students. They were not afraid of speaking out at all (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)." This was part of the culture shock he faced in the classroom. Yang was not used to a situation such as those that exist in American classrooms. While facing this cultural shock, he was learning a new social expectation of class engagement.

Additionally, Yang believed that these different teaching styles were related to students' learning styles. He believed that a teacher's teaching could influence his or her students' learning. Yang said,

I think American ways of thinking are very different from ours. I think the ways teachers have learned in their schooling in the U.S. can influence the ways they

teach. The teachers in Korea used to learn that the knowledge should be transferred and they apply this idea to their teaching. The teachers who grew up here gained education here so the ways they learned in their schooling influence the ways of their teaching. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang's English teacher, who had visited Japan and observed classes there, said that in Japanese classrooms, which are similar to Korean classrooms, the students bowed to the teacher first before class started, and the students never spoke. She said,

It is probably kind of a culture shock to Yang, and it must be difficult for him to adjust to an environment where it is so easy for American kids to speak out because that's their culture. I guess speaking out in class is a lot more acceptable here than where he comes from. (3/5/2005)

This suggests that there is always a danger in generalizing certain cultural patterns in the United States where there are ethnically and racially diverse students in the classroom (Yum, 1988).

With regard to the relationship between teachers and students, Yang perceived this relationship to be that of friends. He thought that there were no boundaries between teachers and students, saying, "I was very surprised by the fact that one student hit teacher's head and ran away. I saw one student play with his teacher with a fake knife. It was a culture shock. How can they do that to teachers? (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)" Yang also felt very uncomfortable using the word "you" with his teachers because Koreans use an honorific language to address elders, teachers, and parents. Yang said, "I thought I shouldn't use the word "you" to the teachers because I felt very rude and uncomfortable and I felt like I was talking with my friends whenever I used

“you” with the teachers (5/1/2006, translated from Korean).” This meant that when the word “you” is translated into Korean, it is not part of the honorific language used with elders in Korea.

Yang experienced his American friends and peers talking about issues of drugs, stereotypes, and discrimination. According to Yang, one of his teachers asked the students how many of them had not done drugs or marijuana. He said he was shocked by the fact that only a couple of students raised their hands. Yang said, “I have visited one of my friends’ houses, and one of them took out a bag and asked me to do drugs. I turned him down. I guess it is common in the U.S. It is hard to accept it (5/1/2006, translated from Korean).” Additionally, Yang experienced ethnic stereotypes and discrimination in his school where Anglo students dominated, many of whom treated the Mexican students poorly. Yang said,

Whites do not like Mexicans. They think Mexican students do not study hard and are lazy and they are ignored in the school. When Mexican students pass by in the hall or in the street, my friends point to them and say ‘Mexicans are passing by.’ I think it is not right. I don’t like it. I don’t think they are bad students or bad people. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

While Yang was attending school in the United States, he experienced different cultural perspectives in terms of American students’ behaviors and interactions in the classroom, relationships between teachers and students, and societal issues in the United States.

## Social and Cultural Experiences

In the next section, I describe Yang's social and cultural experiences in his process of learning English.

### *Learning English in a different culture and society*

Yang believed that learning English and interacting with American people inside and outside school gave him the opportunity to understand that there were different people, cultures, and languages in the world. He had the opportunity to learn about Americans' ideas, knowledge, and thoughts. These opportunities to share with people from different cultures and languages added richness to his life and gave him the chance to understand differences among, and to extend his knowledge of, cultures and languages. Yang said,

I realized that there are different cultures, people, and languages in the world and this makes me open my mind. I feel lucky to have a chance to talk to people who have different knowledge, ideas, and perspectives. Learning English and talking to Americans make my life richer and more interesting. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)

Yang was internalizing more than one culture, which he believed was an advantage. However, while in this process, he had to negotiate his conflicts with different cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations. Even if biculturalism had advantages, as Yang stated, the process of negotiating dual or multiple cultural identities was complex. These dynamic relations between two cultural value and belief systems helped determine Yang's change and development and facilitated his development of 'self.'

In addition, if Yang had remained in Korea, he might not have the chance to attend a Korean college due to the fact that he was not a good student academically in Korea. Thus, he felt appreciative of that fact that he was getting his education in the United States, where he would have the opportunity to attend college and to create a different life for himself. Yang said,

I feel really appreciative because I have an opportunity to create a different life and a better life here in the US. I was admitted to UNM, which would not happen in Korea. I feel so lucky since a lot of Korean students are not able to come to the US even if they want to come. But I have a chance to make my life better here. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Another advantage Yang pointed out was that speaking English fluently was more advantageous than having many special certificates in terms of helping him find a job whether in Korea or in the United States. He said, “Learning English is a plus, and without it, it is impossible to get a job. Speaking two languages is better than speaking only one language. It is an advantage in both Korea and the U.S. (11/7/2005, translated from Korean)” He said he continually had to try to develop his English proficiency and skills, in order to enter into an institution of higher education and to compete with American students in the United States. Learning English in the United States gave Yang a good chance of attending college. Even if learning English in the US caused him considerable problems, he considered learning English as offering a better life.

Yang described his early experiences learning English in the United States, saying that when he first came to the United States, his English was “zero.” He did not make any good friends for a year. He did not understand what was happening in his



classes so he often cried and wanted to return to Korea. However, by the end of 2004, he had made some friends in his classes and on his soccer and wrestling teams. Yang said that the percentage of time he spoke English was much higher than the percentage of time he spoke Korean. He recounted, “Recently, I spend a lot of time with my friends until midnight every day. I speak Korean with my parents for two hours a day (5/1/2006, translated from Korean).” Thus, immersion in English and American culture impacted his native language and his identity. This means that the influence of environment in which a different culture and language were dominant played an important role in the formation of Yang’s new ‘self.’

For Yang, speaking English more often than speaking Korean caused him to begin to lose sophisticated vocabulary words in Korean. Yang’s mother said that Yang sometimes murmured when he spoke Korean and occasionally needed a lot of time to recall Korean vocabulary words. During an interview with me in Korean, Yang told me that he was still comfortable using the Korean language, but he was beginning to forget many Korean words and spellings. He was confused about Korean grammar. Yang said he used to read the Bible in Korean and discuss it with his family. However, he struggled with understanding the high level of vocabulary words in the Bible and had a hard time expressing his ideas and opinions about the readings during his family’s Bible studies on Sundays. Another example of how Yang was losing his Korean was that he had difficulty in speaking with his Korean friends. Yang said,

When I talk to my Korean friends in emails, I had to say to my Korean friends in Korean “Yesterday you were ok,” but I changed it into English grammar “You were ok, yesterday.” I use English grammar when I use sentences in Korean. It is

very interesting to me. When I email my Korean friends, they say they don't understand my writing. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Yang sometimes visited Korean websites. However, he did not understand the new Korean words and slang that Korean high school students were using. Yang said, "I feel like an alien (laughing). I feel stupid and dumb. I don't understand what they are saying. I feel ashamed of myself. I feel really distant from my Korean friends in Korea (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)." Perhaps losing his Korean and not understanding the slang and new vocabulary words being used by high school students in Korea made Yang feel like there was a social distance and disconnection between him and his friends in Korea. In this sense, he was losing his cultural capital in Korea. He was slowly being left behind in terms of the Korean language and culture. Thus, it is possible that he did not feel like he belonged to, or was affiliated with, Korean society (including families and homeland cultures). This implies that Yang's experience with a different environment influenced his emotional, cultural, social, and psychological development and helped him shape his new personal characteristics more broadly.

There was no place in school where Yang's home language was used and supported so that he could not develop full literacy and become bi-literate. As a consequence, Yang was faced with the fact that his Korean did not support his process of learning English as much as it had used to do. However, after almost three years of living in the United States, he said, "I don't think in Korean first like I used to do any more, but I think I just think in English when I speak and write in English, without thinking in Korean (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)." He thought his English was stronger than his Korean.

### *Yang in the Classroom*

Yang did not see himself as a good student when he was in Korea—he did not study hard and was not good at math or science. In the American classroom, Yang was seen as a quiet student. Yang saw himself as being insecure in the classroom because he did not take risks by raising his hand to ask questions.

In Yang's English class, his teacher identified him as being at a fourth- or fifth-grade level due to his lower language performance in English. In most of his classes, he was alone, invisible, and marginalized. Most of the time, his individual characteristics in the classroom were constructed by the situation in which he was completing classroom activities with his peers and teacher.

### *Yang's Acculturation*

Yang believed that to be able to live in the United States, it was most important for him to learn English, speak it fluently, and learn about American culture. He said, "I know keeping my primary language is important, but since I decided to live in this country, I have to learn English perfectly." To learn English and to fit into American society, Yang made American friends, learned about their views and perspectives, and observed the friends with whom they socialized and how they behaved and thought. In addition, he learned about American students' independence and ways of friendship. He said,

They try to be independent financially, and their parents allow them to do that. Most of the students here start working when they are 15 years old, which is impossible in Korea because they have to only study at this age to prepare for college entrance exams and to have a successful life. But it is easy to change my

attitude because I observed and learned from my friends here. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Through his interactions with English language speakers, Yang was acculturating to some mainstream cultural values and not necessarily discarding his own cultural values. He was embracing different cultural values and social practices in a different social context. With this social interaction, he was constructing a new system of meaning based on different cultural values and social practices, one that carried deep struggles and contradictions.

Yang accepted the idea that American parents accepted their children's independence at an early age, which is not common in Korean society. His mother also educated him to be independent in the United States. Accordingly, Yang was planning to work to pay for his rent and living costs when he went to college. He wanted to be financially independent from his parents and wanted to create his own life.

Yang indicated that ways of having fun with friends in the United States were different from those in Korea. He was getting used to the culture of having fun with his American friends. Yang said,

I like to spend time with American friends more than Korean students here. As you know, Korean students like to play pool, go to a singing room, or go to a coffee shop, but Americans like to play sports, go to see movies, and chat and discuss serious topics. There's nothing much I can do with Korean friends here. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

As Yang grew more accustomed to the culture of having fun with his American friends and the idea of his American friends' independence, he felt more comfortable

with the relationship between teachers and students, which was very casual and informal and, as he described it, had no boundaries. In spite of the fact that he felt overpowered by his American classmates' expressiveness in the classroom, he felt that American ways of thinking and teaching, and learning styles, were better than the ones in Korea.

Additionally, he thought that Americans' ways of expressing themselves in the classroom were "natural and free." By this, he wanted to be like his American classmates, and he was envious that they were confident of speaking out and unafraid of speaking their ideas and opinions in front of the class. His envy of his American classmates demonstrated his realization of who he was in American society. He was not as fluent as his peers in language. This was how he understood the relations between himself and a larger social world. While building a new system of meaning in terms of social practices, such as the ways of thinking, teaching, and learning, he was forming a new internal structure as well.

While living in the United States, Yang realized that he lived in two different worlds: the American school and his Korean home. He switched between the two cultures and languages every day. He experienced conflicts between the two worlds. Yang experienced conflict with his mother. His mother expected him to be a good student, as Korean mothers usually do. She wanted him to be a doctor or an architect, which would give him social and financial stability. This is a Korean way of thinking. She also expected him to be independent financially and socially, which is an American way of thinking. Yang, however, wanted to study business at the University of New Mexico. He wanted to create his own life without his mother's involvement. Yang said, "She wants me to do things that she wants. That's why we had some arguments (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)." The arguments or conflicts between his mother and him were due to

Yang's struggles and negotiations in embracing the two worlds. Additionally, their arguments were for him a part of his process of constructing his own independent identity. This shows Yang's struggles and conflicts may have been necessary in order for him to acquire separate personalities mapped on separate domains of cultural values and social practices.

Due to his mother's and his conflicts, Yang wanted to return to Korea after his graduation from high school. However, he ended up not going back to Korea because he realized that his future and dreams were in the United States, not in Korea. Therefore, he negotiated with his mother that he would study architecture at the university, instead of business, until he was independent financially. His mother made the decision to pay for his tuition for one year and asked Yang to pay for his apartment rent and living costs.

Yang said,

I kept thinking about what I am going to do in Korea, but I couldn't find any answers about what my future looks like in Korea. I could not visualize my future there, and I realized that my future or my dream is in the U.S. Unfortunately, I realized that it is impossible for me to go to college in Korea and it is really competitive and hard to receive a college admission. I have to serve in the military for two years in Korea. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

Because Yang decided that his future was in the United States, he believed that he had to accept American culture and to learn English. Even if it was painful and difficult for him to learn a different language and culture, he was willing to put up with this pain, because America gave him another opportunity to have a better and richer life. Therefore,

he wanted to focus on learning English and American culture, until he was fluent in speaking English.

Yang faced difficulties and challenges in dealing with a different culture and language; however, he never forgot he was a Korean in this country. Yang said,

I don't want to be called as an American. I am a Korean. I want to be a member of this society, but I will be a Korean even if I get a citizenship here. I can't change my ethnicity because I am already a Korean, and also I don't want to change.

(5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

He wanted to keep his identity as a Korean and his Korean views and perspectives. At the same time, he wanted to learn American ways of living to survive in this country. He finally determined who he wanted to be in the United States: he wanted to be a person who was totally bilingual and had totally bicultural perspectives. Yang said,

Once I decided to live in the U.S. and I still wanted to be a Korean, I like to be a total bilingual person who speaks both languages fluently and knows both cultures pretty well and mingles with both cultures. I think that is the best way that I want to be in the U.S. That's fair. (5/1/2006, translated from Korean)

While in the process of learning a different culture and language, Yang faced conflicts between his primary language and culture and his secondary language and culture. To be fair, he wanted to maintain his origins. At the same time, however, he wanted to create another identity in a different country in order to survive. He believed that being a bilingual person was an ideal way to do both. Surrounded by a different culture and language, Yang was reconstructing his conscious personality and creating his new formation, which did not exist at previous stages. Part of his development involved

realizations and modifications in and with the environment where he was situated. In years to come, his development will be a continuous process relying on the interdependence of internal and social processes in learning and development. .



## CHAPTER 5

### CROSS CASES

#### Theme 1: Emotional Experiences

Using Vygotsky's theoretical framework, this section demonstrates how the three Korean students experienced English learning within their classroom environments, and how these students' experiences influenced their emotional and cognitive development, as well as their personal characteristics. In this section, I describe the Korean students' emotional experiences in English classes through their reading, writing, and vocabulary activities, and then their emotional experiences in other subject classrooms.

#### Emotional Experiences in English Classes

##### *Reading Activities*

In the following section, I describe each of the participants' English learning experiences with their reading activities.

*Jung's cases.* When Ms. Walters taught a poem called *Oranges* written by Gary Soto, she randomly pointed out each student and asked them to read. After taking turns reading, she asked her students what they thought about the poem. Some students expressed their feelings, but Jung sat quietly. Then she asked the students to work on review questions about the poem. Jung struggled with answering the questions; he looked around the room, bit his pencil and did not write anything on his notepad. In the interview with me, Jung said, "I couldn't make sense out of the reading." There were several reasons for Jung's reading comprehension problems. The primary reason was that Jung did not understand English well enough to grasp the text. During the reading activity, Jung did not experience the poem in a meaningful way because his system of meaning in

L2 was not sufficiently developed. As a result of this, he could not make sense of the reading, which led to his poor reading comprehension and made him remain quiet during the class activity. Within the classroom environment where the reading activity was taking place, he felt failure by not making meaning of the poem in the L2. His teacher did not observe his learning struggles and respond to his perception and understanding of the expectations in the classroom environment. Also, his inability to make meaning of the poem in the L2 came as a result of the lack of interdependence of Jung's personal processes and social processes in his learning. Teachers need to care about students' *perezhivanie*, which "describes the affective processes through which interactions in the ZPD are individually perceived, appropriated, and represented by the participants" (Mahn and John-Steiner, 2002, p. 49). In other words, students' emotional experiences can be scaffolded by creating safety zones to share the risks in presenting new ideas.

*Tim's cases.* Tim's English class read *Jane Eyre*, and as they moved through the book, they discussed the readings in class. Ms. Rice provided a particular reading activity that required her students to compare and contrast characteristics of Rochester and John, including physical appearance, personality, relationship to Jane, and their desired relationship with Jane. She verbally provided clear guidance about what the students were supposed to do. She also wrote information on the board to help them understand the class activities. Her verbal and written information helped Tim understand the task clearly. This activity allowed Tim to go back to the text and reread parts of it with a different perspective. The time given (20 minutes) was enough for Tim to go back to the text, find the clues, and write ideas in his notebook.

After Ms. Rice's students' individual work, she gathered their ideas and thoughts about the comparison and contrast of Rochester and John and wrote them on the overhead, converting her students' spoken words into written texts and allowing Tim to hear other students' language and to read it on the overhead. Tim also participated in class communication by raising his hand, saying, "John wanted Jane to be a missionary wife, but he did not want a loving relationship." Through listening, reading, writing and speaking, Tim experienced the language he was targeting and increased his comprehension. This learning activity involved an internalization of "individual processes of knowledge construction" and "social processes of joint understanding", both of which occurred simultaneously. Communication was an integral part of social activity in this classroom and served to negotiate meaning and to share knowledge. The form of thinking is also developed by language mediation. This kind of communication through social interaction helped him to construct a new meaning in the L2. Tim also perceived his learning experience in a positive way by taking risks in the participation in his learning. This positive learning experience with the classroom situation (his positive *perezhivanie*) can give him potential to develop his English language proficiency. Also, Tim's positive learning experience was the result of the interdependence of his internal processes and social processes through multiple activities, which helped him clarify his meaning making in L2.

*Yang's cases.* In Yang's English class, during-reading activities included reading books and discussions. Examples of these activities that I observed were poems and epic stories, class discussions about readings, and defining vocabulary relevant to the story, like the word 'hero'. During the class discussion about the definition of hero, Yang sat

quietly and listened to the conversation. At the end of their debate, Ms. Oxford asked Yang what his definition of a hero was; however, he did not say much about it. After this class, I emailed Yang in Korean to ask him what his definition of a hero was. He described his definition of a hero as follows: “The person who is generous to people and who fights for the right. The hero should be brave and fight against evils. They should be very kind and good people.” As such, his definition of a hero was similar to the characteristics of the epic hero on the handouts. Yang said his classmates’ ideas and opinions about cartoon characters as heroes were “very new, fresh, and interesting” and ones that “Korean students have never imagined.” As the classroom activity took place within a different social environment, Yang could reconstruct his new system of meaning about the definitions of hero in the L2 that he had never imagined through his prior knowledge about the hero in his native language—his L1 system of meaning. His new meaning in L2 was created by the interdependence of his internal processes and social processes in learning. In terms of concept formation, Yang experienced qualitative transformations in thinking. These interrelated developments can change Yang’s mental functioning and his perception and experience of his sociocultural environment so his relationship to the environment can change. Vygotsky refers to this concept as an experience of meaning (i.e. *perezhivanie*).

### *Writing Activities*

Next I demonstrate how the three Korean students experienced writing activities in their English classes.

*Jung’s cases.* Jung’s class did creative writing exercises. For one of the creative writing exercises, Ms. Walters asked her students to write about a penny, but she did not

provide any ideas, examples, or explain any of the concepts prior to the students writing. He said, “I was intimidated and I was a little angry. I had no idea what creative writing was.” After this project in the computer lab, Ms. Walters asked Jung how he felt about his writing. He answered, “Mine is short.” He was worried because his writing was short, and his peers wrote much more than he had. Through this writing activity, Jung discovered his ‘self’ different from his peers. The quotes above show that he experienced frustration and pressure because of his awareness of differences among peers and because of unfamiliar creative writing exercises. Thus, in the situation where the writing activity was taking place, Jung experienced intimidation, frustration, and pressure. These emotions came from how he perceived and internalized the social interaction in the classroom environment. When English language learners like Jung try to construct new meanings in L2, they certainly experience emotions and these experiences (i.e. *perezhivanie*) can negatively influence internal structure. It implies that Jung’s thinking development is inextricably connected with the way the environment influences him.

Another writing exercise Jung experienced was writing personal narratives. The class was given no specific instruction or guidance about how to write personal narratives as the students wrote a creative writing. Instead, Jung worked alone to finalize his story. Jung said, “My teacher usually does not help me. I sometimes do not know what I am supposed to do.” This situation isolated Jung as a learner in this classroom. In his story, Jung identified himself as Bob, a bad boy, who was good at lying to his parents and didn’t study hard. Bob pretended to study, and he preferred playing video games to doing homework. Jung’s personal narrative showed that he was aware of what was happening to him and he was aware of his ‘self.’ His unsuccessful learning experience in classroom

situations led him to shape his personal character as a ‘bad boy.’ His emotional experiences and personal characteristics in the classroom environment were all closely related to how Jung perceived and understood his sociocultural environment. In his story, he presented the impossibility of changing his identity in a positive way, by writing, “It comes to the end where Bob never changed, or probably will. Who knows? Maybe he still will be bad.” It can be assumed that because of his age (13 years old), he might have had negative symptoms, such as the decrease in success, decline in capacity for work, and lack of harmony in the internal structure of his personality (Vygotsky, 1998). Even if he experienced his critical period of development, the symptoms described can be changed depending on the situation where he internalizes social interactions. The ways in which meaning-making and the affective aspects of social interaction influence learning in the ZPD determine the course of further development. However, for English-language learners, the processes of internalization can be much more complex.

*Tim’s cases.* Ms. Rice, Tim’s English teacher, asked the students to write a response paper to William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1984), giving them a choice of three questions to answer from. Tim chose to write about comparing and contrasting the two forms of government presented within the text. Tim wrote, “In my reading of *Lord of the Flies*, ...I believe that this thought came upon me because I am from a country which is separated into these government systems. I think that democracy, which Ralph represents, holds no power if people are immature and uneducated. This statement is shown by the actions of the kids in the island...” Ms. Rice provided comments on his writing, stating, “...One thing I remember noticing about a piece of writing he did, was he was able to integrate some of his thoughts on his home country’s dictatorship. He was

able to integrate his own thoughts into the literature, which I think is very high-level thinking...” Tim, who already had sufficient background information in his L1, was able to integrate this personal knowledge about the two Korean governmental systems into his writing processes. This allowed him to develop his thoughts and incorporate them into his writing, thereby recreating a new meaning in L2. His changes in cognitive structure and functions can reveal the essence of his development as coming from the dynamic relationship between the structures of his mental processing and the content of those structures (meaning-making) (Vygotsky, 1998).

*Yang's cases.* Yang had a difficult time in English writing. Yang recounted, “...I never learned what American writing is. I just wrote anything on the paper to complete the assignment.” In terms of feedback on his writings, he had different emotional experiences. Yang described Ms. Oxford's feedback on his writing, saying, “...But my English teacher points out every mistake. She would ask me to correct nouns, adjectives, and verbs. It means that I have to fix everything. I feel that all my writings are wrong and feel disappointed about my writings. I don't know what to do.” This kind of learning experience (his *perezhivanie*) lowered Yang's self-esteem and made him feel disappointed. His emotional experiences in classroom environments came from how he internalized the experience of social interaction and also from his teacher's lack of awareness of how he processed, perceived, and reacted to classroom activities. Many environmental factors in the classroom can influence how students experience learning and react to it in their ZPD. The development of thinking in students in themselves is connected with the ways in which the classroom environment influences them. In a classroom setting, students' emotional scaffolding in their ZPD should be nurtured.

Yang's class read the book *Night*, and the students read it by themselves and then wrote a reflection paper. Ms. Oxford commented on his reflection paper, saying, "I almost felt like he copied reflection writing out of maybe... out of quotes, notes, or someone else helped him with it... his language on the paper doesn't fit to his level of English proficiency." However, Yang experienced difficulty with this project because he was asked to understand the texts in the L2 and convey his own thoughts into his written processes, showing the complexity of the processes of internalization in his L2. To make meaning through his thinking processes and writing processes, social mediation through multiple activities in his classroom setting was needed. Unfortunately, this kind of meaningful social mediation was ignored, which resulted in Yang's inability to make meaning in L2. This shows how a student's environment can negatively influence his or her emotional and cognitive development.

With regard to the reflection paper, Yang said that because of his difficulty with written responses in L2, one of his American friends helped him finish his paper by giving him vocabulary words that were more sophisticated and by helping him change the line of his argument. His reaction to his friend's help was that he learned more sophisticated and advanced words with which he was unfamiliar, and he learned how American students presented their papers and created sentence structure through his friend's help. This demonstrates that his teacher was not aware of his process and reaction to the classroom activity. However, Yang created a learning zone in which he could build new words in the L2 through social interaction with his peer (a more competent other), who served as a mediator in his maturing processes in L2. The zones are, in fact, connected with his actual level of development.



### *Vocabulary Activities*

In the next section, I consider how the participants experienced their vocabulary activities in English classes.

*Jung's cases.* The class played a team game. In this game, the questions were about the definitions of vocabulary, parts of speech, synonyms, and helping and linking verbs. The vocabulary words they learned were academic, so they were not easily used in everyday conversation. When I asked Jung whether he understood the vocabulary words in the team game, he said that he did not know their meaning, and that he just avoided participating, creating a distance between himself and his team (i.e. *social situation of development*). Such an unfamiliar and academic vocabulary he learned and experienced in an unsuccessful way made him create a distance between himself and his team. He was overwhelmed cognitively and emotionally. He discovered himself as a person who was unable to mingle with his peers; therefore, he resisted participating in the activity. His negative perception, internalization, and understanding of the role of social interaction with the classroom environment could negatively influence his potential development in his ZPD. As development occurs, there is a reconstruction of the personal characteristics as whole. As Wells (1999) states, “learning in ZPD involves all aspects of the learner—acting, thinking, and feeling” (p. 331), so teachers need to establish a learning environment in which learners gain diverse and meaningful models of interacting with texts in order to overcome their anxieties.

*Tim's cases.* Tim experienced vocabulary words in a greater variety of ways, including copying the vocabulary words and their definitions, skimming through the meanings of the words while writing them down, and hearing Ms. Rice's spoken

definitions of the words, which were different from the definitions given on the overhead. After Ms. Rice explained to the class, the students worked individually on making sentences using the five vocabulary words, and then shared their sentences with the class. Tim participated by sharing his definitions of the word “advocate.” He read, “Not many people advocate my publication.” After that, Ms. Rice said, “It is good, but you missed the preposition ‘for’ after the verb ‘advocate’.” He added the preposition “for” after the word “advocate.” This was an example of Tim’s English language learning being scaffolded by his teacher’s assistance. This type of assistance greatly improved Tim’s likelihood of using ‘advocate’ in an appropriate way. Tim’s internalization of grammatical concepts happened in the ZPD. Through appropriation in social interaction, Tim could co-construct new knowledge, as the zone between himself and his teacher is closely connected with his actual development.

In Tim’s English class, Ms. Rice regularly required the students to work in pairs to write creative stories using the 20 vocabulary words of the week. To complete this activity, the paired students had to discuss how they were going to present their stories. Tim and Daniel worked together to write a story. Both Tim and his partner, as active participants, collaborated with each other to make stories through external dialogues and interaction. In their conversation, Daniel usually listened to him carefully and sometimes paraphrased Tim’s sentences. Seeing and listening to his sentences paraphrased by Daniel gave Tim an opportunity to experience the way that a native English speaker constructs the same sentences. In other words, he experienced syntax and coherence different from his own. Through such repeated speaking practices with the target language speakers, language learners are able to appropriate models in language use. This activity helped

Tim creating meaning that is collaboratively constructed and negotiated in the context of shared activity. Through social participation, his new knowledge was internalized, appropriated, and transformed. This pair activity demonstrated that his learning was accomplished by the interdependence of internal and social processes. His reaction to this activity was that “It was kind of fun and interesting because I worked with a good and smart student like Daniel...I felt comfortable working with him because he is one of the best students in my class and he is one of my best friends...” Through the pair activity, his perception and internalization of experience with social interaction in his ZPD was positive. Tim found a comfortable learning zone within the environment, allowing for an expansion of his ZPD. His cognitive structures and functions were also connected with the way the environment influences him.

*Yang's cases.* Learning vocabulary in Yang's English class was not emphasized. Vocabulary Yang was required to learn included: anti-Semitism, bade, pious, laborious, vivacious, apathy, acute, parasite, cryptic, imperceptible, ghetto, pillage, voracious, billet, expound, pestilence, indefatigable, tractable, and canvass. Yang said, “These vocabulary words are really hard for me to understand and to memorize. They are difficult words.” Yang believed that he did not have to memorize all of the vocabulary words in the class. He said, “It is too much to memorize all of the words that I don't know. I try to understand the context. Understanding the whole context is much better than just trying to memorize all the vocabulary that I don't know.” His vocabulary learning experience made him feel overwhelmed because of the unfamiliar and academic words. His reading strategy was not to memorize all of the vocabulary provided in the classroom, but instead to try to understand them in their context. Thus, perhaps due to his age, Yang had a

metacognitive awareness about his learning and knew what helped his language learning. In other words, Yang had an ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate his performance and his learning. This is a good example showing that both Jung and Yang experienced difficulties in dealing with academic words but that they understood and perceived the situation in different ways. Vygotsky (1998) elucidates that “every age presents the child with an environment which has been organized in a special way, so that the environment...keeps changing as the child passes on from one age to another” (p. 339). This demonstrates that at a given age, their perception and internalization of experience with the classroom environment can be diverse, even if they face similar situations. Since different age groups proceed along different stages with regard to language ability and abstract and conceptual thinking in L1 and L2, teachers need to consider how to help each individual student learn a second language within their stages, and understand each student’s conceptualizations in content areas in order to help them recreate their system of meanings in L2 (Vygotsky, 1987; Mahn, 2009).

### **Emotional Experiences in Other Subject Classrooms**

In this section, I demonstrate how the three Korean students experienced their English learning in other subject classrooms.

#### *Jung’s learning experiences*

Here I consider Jung’s learning experiences in his Social Studies class.

*Social Studies class.* In Jung’s Social Studies class, there existed only one pedagogical method; the students were asked to read chapters from the textbook and then work on the worksheets. The students were expected to work individually and quietly. This kind of classroom environment created Jung’s emotional experiences. Jung said,

“There were too many questions so I never finished the worksheets.” He felt very overwhelmed because of the workload that he had to deal with by himself. Completing the worksheets required good reading comprehension. However, Jung recounted, “Working on the worksheets is really hard because I do not understand the readings so I am not able to answer the questions. I missed a lot of homework, too.” Many unfamiliar vocabulary words were thrown out; however, Jung never had a chance to conceptualize the meanings of those words in L2. Jung was intimidated by the large number of unfamiliar words in his academic texts and in the academic talk. His teacher’s meaningless feedback made Jung experience difficulty with developing his writing. In this class, Jung was emotionally and cognitively overloaded. Also, the activity, working on the worksheets individually, made Jung marginalized: he sat alone and rarely joined any interactions.

The descriptions above showed how Jung experienced his Social Studies class. The influence of classroom environment served an important role in his emotional and cognitive development. In addition, Jung’s personal character as a marginalized student in the classroom was constructed by the classroom activity, which simply allowed him work alone. There was no space or time for Jung to conceptualize the new ideas and concepts in L2 by the interdependence of internal and social processes in learning through the meaningful activities. His experience showed that the classroom environment can influence him in one of many ways and direct his emotional and mental development.

#### *Tim’s learning experiences*

I describe Tim’s emotional experiences in other subject classrooms in this section.

*Geometry class.* Tim found his Geometry class “boring” and “it did not require

much language as English class does.” He was described as one of the top students in this class and seen as a model minority and hard working. Even if Asian students are stereotyped as model minorities who excel in math and science, Tim did not feel pressured because he already had a good understanding of math concepts in L1, by saying that “I would have felt pressure if I had not been good at math.” His previous concepts and knowledge in L1 was an advantage. Since he already had good math concepts in L1, it was easier for him to deal with the math concepts in L2. Vygotsky (1987) notes that “success in learning a foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language. The child can transfer to the new language the system of meanings he already possesses in his own” (p. 110). In other words, English language learners reconstruct a new system of meaning in L2 through their L1. Thus, they require special support and time and space to recreate their own system of meanings between their L1 and L2.

*Chemistry class.* In his Chemistry class, Tim understood the experience with the classroom environment in a comfortable way. He was represented as a good student in the classroom environment, which can be seen in the following remarks:

I like to talk to my Chemistry teacher because he is funny and makes me comfortable to talk to him...Even if I ask some questions to the teacher with my broken English, nobody makes fun of English because it is not English class which has a lot of good students who are fluent in speaking and writing...

His comments showed that his perception of experience of social interactions were different between the two classes. These different emotional experiences can lead to his development in different ways. Because Tim’s perception and internalization of social

experiences between the two classes were different, he could form his new structure of his 'self' differently as well. At the given age, his new formations of his 'self' can be continuously changed depending on how he interprets, perceives, and understands the social experiences with the environment.

### *Yang's learning experiences*

The following section explains how Yang experienced his learning in other subject classrooms.

*Government class.* Yang's learning experiences in other subject classrooms were diverse. In his Government class, the classroom environment made him feel overwhelmed and, as a result, he remained quiet. He also felt alone by not feeling supported by his teacher, saying, "I never talked to my government teacher, and Mr. Holms never asked me if I was doing all right in the class." The fact that he had few friends in the class also made him uncomfortable, saying, "I don't have many friends in my Government and Economics classes so that it makes me uncomfortable to talk in front of the class." He sensitively reacted to the situation in which he was surrounded, as his emotional experience was influenced by the classroom environment with other people.

Yang was intimidated by the fast talk and communication in the classroom, which was related to his difficulty in understanding and making meaning in L2. Yang responded, "It is really hard for me to understand...because they talk so fast especially in Government class. I don't understand what they are talking about." This classroom environment where the teacher talked fast did not allow Yang to understand his expectations in the class. Further, because the instructor failed to address Yang's needs, his behavior became one characterized by perceived invisibility. In addition, he

experienced difficulty because not enough time was given to complete in-class activities. Yang recounted, “I tried to finish reading, but never fully finished...When I looked around the class, my classmates already finished reading them and were ready for discussion, but not me.” This lack of activity time caused him anxiety and pressure, prevented him from learning and making meaning in L2, and made for his discovery of his ‘self’ as being different from his peers. In the classroom environment where Yang was learning English, many factors influenced his *perezhivanie*. The influence of environment played a crucial role in shaping his personal characteristics, such as feeling like an invisible student, which also brought out emotions of intimidation and anxiety. The influence of environment serves an important role in human development, which Vygotsky calls “the social situation of development.”

*Communication Skills class.* In the Communication Skills class, Yang’s emotional experiences changed throughout the semester, saying, “In the first place, I hated this class because it requires a lot of speeches and presentations. However ...I build up my confidence in speaking...I feel very comfortable.” These comments showed that changes in his social development also caused qualitative transformations in his perception, experience, internalization, and understanding of interaction in and with the environment. His positive understanding of experience with the classroom environment helped him gain his confidence in speaking and find a comfortable zone to share his personal interests (i.e., writing a sports story) with his teacher. Yang said, “Writing about my personal interests and experiences is better and easier than writing my reading responses in my English class.” His positive reaction to the classroom activity can positively influence his actual level of development in the ZPD.



*Economics class.* In Yang's Economics class, his emotional experiences were different, depending on the situations he faced. Mr. Cambridge explained the relationship between supply and demand, using a graph and giving students an example of a market situation for special events. Then, the students watched a video, which was about economic education and circulation of economic activity. The movie educated the students about the concepts of supply and demand, and price and quantity in business. Yang's reaction to the activity was that:

I really enjoyed the movie because the stories gave me a good understanding of economic concept. The movie gave me concrete example of the abstract ideas of the relationship between price and quantity and between supply and demand. I have never imagined that I would learn economic concepts through a movie. It is unusual in Korea. It is fun to watch.

Watching a video played a role in helping him transfer abstract concepts into concrete concepts in the L2. In this specific activity, the video intended to support intentional learning, which played an active role within his ZPD. This kind of activity is necessary for such students to activate their background of knowledge and content, and to serve as a springboard to reinforce their reading comprehension. His processes of internalization were facilitated by this effective pedagogy. Also, the form of his thinking was developed by the mediation, which was watching a video, in this case. This learning experience is closely related to his actual level of development.

In the same class, after the movie, the students were asked to work either in pairs or in groups to review in preparation for a test the next day. Yang looked around and ended up working alone because, he said, none of his friends were sitting near him. This

situation made him feel uncomfortable. For Yang, the availability of good friends played an important role in helping him engage in conversation. Two different examples in the same class showed the dynamics of his interpretation of experience with the classroom environment. Since his perception and internalization of experience with the environment continuously change, the environment also keeps changing. The social situation of development demonstrates the interdependence of his processes and social processes in learning, whereby the social becomes the individual.

*World History class.* This class was similar to Jung's Social Studies class. Only one type of instruction existed: working individually on worksheets and maps. No talk was allowed in class. In Jung's Social Studies class, Jung felt overwhelmed by the sheer number of unfamiliar academic words and never finished his required work in the classroom. In contrast, Yang said, "I think this class is one of the easiest classes because the requirements are less than other classes. If I read the book and understand it, I can write the answers. I do not have to think much because the answers are in the books. I can also paraphrase the answers." He always completed his work. Somehow, because of their age differences, their understanding and internalization of social interaction with the similar environment were different. It can also be assumed that their levels of conceptual thinking were different because Yang had more background knowledge in his L1 than did Jung. Thus, multiple environmental factors can influence how students experience in their ZPD.

### **Final Thoughts**

This study demonstrated how the three Korean students' emotional experiences with the classroom environment and its social relations influenced their emotional,

cognitive, and psychological development as well as their personal characteristics as conscious beings. In other words, the role and influence of environment played a crucial role in human development, and the environment was the source of development of human traits.

In terms of meaning making in L2 through L1, this study showed the complexity of the processes of internalization. In this process, students' background and content knowledge in L1 played an important role in reconstructing new concepts and knowledge in L2. In addition to that, effective pedagogy (such as Tim's pair work in vocabulary activity and Yang's watching a video in Economics class) facilitated the students' processes of internalization. The form of thinking was also developed by language mediation. This implies that for English-language learners who are reconstructing a new system of meaning in L2, meaningful social mediation through multiple and effective activities is needed. Thus, teachers always need to be aware of how their students perceive, process, and react to the classroom activities. Teachers need to cultivate an understanding of their students' *perezhivanie*. In most cases, the teachers in this study were unaware of their students' *perezhivanie*. There was no space or time (especially for Yang and Jung) to conceptualize the new ideas and concepts in L2 by the interdependence of internal and social processes in learning and development (Vygotsky, 1987).

When the three Korean students were reconstructing their new systems of meaning in L2, they experienced emotions, such as feeling frustrated, intimidated, pressured, angry, and overwhelmed. These emotional experiences were all dependent upon their *perezhivanie*—how they perceived, internalized, and understood their

experience with the classroom environment and its social relations. Also, the development of their thinking was closely connected with the way the environment influenced them. This means that the interrelated developments of internal and social processes changed the students' mental functioning and their perception and experience of their sociocultural environment, so their relationship to the environment changed as well. In this study, Tim more positively perceived and internalized the experience of social interaction than the two participants. Tim's positive emotional experience was connected with the way the environment influenced him. His positive process and reaction to the classroom activity positively influenced his learning. The ways in which meaning-making and the affective aspects of social interaction affect learning in the ZPD determine the students' actual level of development.

The classroom environment also contributed to the students' personal characters in the classroom, such as feeling invisible, marginalized, quiet, confident, or successful as students. These characters were created and represented by the classroom environment where the students internalized and understood their experiences of social interactions. However, these characters can be changed depending on how the environment affects them. As they develop, the environment also changes; namely, as development occurs, there is a reconstruction of the personality as a whole (Vygotsky, 1998).

This study presented that, at a given age, the participants could have internalized their experience of social interaction in different ways, even if they faced similar situations. Vygotsky (1998) writes that every age presents the child with an environment in a special way so that the environment keeps changing as the child passes on from one age level to the next. In this study, older learners (Tim and Yang) had a metacognitive

awareness about their learning and knew what helped their language learning in ways that Jung did not. Tim and Yang had an ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their performance, and as a result more positively perceived the learning situation.

The descriptions above showed that the classroom environment influenced the three Korean students in several different ways and directed their emotional and mental development. Multiple environmental factors influenced how the students experienced learning in their ZPDs. Since this process includes the learners' acting, thinking, and feeling, teachers need to establish a learning environment in which their students gain diverse and meaningful models of textual interaction in order to overcome anxieties and ensure that they develop positive internal structures through their experiences.

## **Theme 2: Complexity of L2 Learning and Development**

According to theories concerning the nature of the social context of learning, language learners differ in their process of learning a second language according to their individual characteristics as well as to various other social factors. This section demonstrates the complexity of learning and development in L2. Multiple factors influenced how the three Korean students experienced their classroom interactions. Such social, affective, and individual factors played an important role in contributing to the individual's process of learning a second language within the social environment. Other than these factors, learners' language maturity in L1 and L2, general literacy skills, and previous schooling are all also responsible for language learning and development. Additionally, the role and influence of environment played a crucial role in the students' L2 learning and development.

### **Individual Factors: Age, Personality, and Motivation**

The participants in this study came to the United States at different ages, and their motivations for learning English were as different as their personalities. In the following sections, I discuss how these factors—age, personality, and motivation—influenced their language development and learning. I also include the fact that the students' personalities and motivations were influenced by the environment in which they perceived and internalized their experiences of social interaction.

#### *Age*

Jung came to the United States when he was eight years old, Tim when he was 14, and Yang when he was 17. Questions have been raised about whether, and how, age affects L2 acquisition. Although it is a common belief that children are more successful L2 learners than adults, the available evidence for age-related success in SLA is

inconsistent (Larsen-Freeman, 2001; Saville-Troike, 2006).

Of the three participants in the present study, only Jung came to the United States before puberty. All three struggled with learning English in the classroom for various reasons. Based on Tim's grades, his teachers' comments, and his successful adjustment into the American educational system, he was the most successful English language learner, not Jung, who was the youngest participant. When starting school in the United States, Tim had a hard time learning English, and resisted learning it in the classroom by purposely not listening to his teacher out of frustration about not understanding what was going on in the class. Yet remarkably, he became so proficient in English that he had some of the strongest grades in his class. He accomplished this, in part, by making social contexts in which he could interact with his American peers. Remarkably, he not only made the transformation from Korean culture and language to American culture and language, but he did it with great success, earning straight A's from fall 2005 to spring 2006. Thus, the present study does not support the theory that younger learners are always better in second language learning (Lenneberg, 1967). It also showed that age is not the only factor in L2 learning and development, and that other factors can affect L2 learning.

Some studies have shown that "older learners acquire new structures and forms more rapidly and easily because they have better-developed learning strategies and cognitive abilities" (Fillmore, 1991). One possible explanation for this is that the older learners (Tim and Yang) had more metacognitive awareness about L2 learning due to their age. In general, researchers agree that metacognition refers to the "knowledge about cognitive states and abilities that can be shared among individuals while at the same time

expanding the construct to include affective and motivational characteristics of thinking” (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2002, p. 249, as cited in Paris and Winograd, 1990). In this study, metacognitive awareness means self-knowledge and regulatory skills that promote the creation of learning environments that are conducive to the construction and use of metacognition (Carrell, 1989). Tim and Yang understood what helped their second language learning, so they both displayed an ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their performance and learning. Even if the three students faced difficult situations in the classroom environment, their perception and internalization of their experiences of social interaction were different. These different emotional experiences at a given age differentially contributed to their L2 learning and development. Older learners (Tim and Yang) understood the complexity of ‘self’ through reflection and introspection. For example, both Tim and Yang knew what helps for their language learning so they created a social situation in which they could have social interaction with his peers. These kinds of older learner’s internal processes helped their L2 learning and development in more effective ways. Additionally, these older learners spent more time in school, and built more social and world knowledge regarding school systems while they were in Korea, which might have helped them adjust to a new school system.

Many questions about the effect of age in SLA remain to be investigated. In addition, in studies where children are found more successful than adolescents and adults in L2 learning, investigators should define what “success” means in SLA and to what degree language skills and proficiency should be assessed. Students’ social and communicative needs, which are correspondingly more complex with age, can interfere with the process of language learning (Fillmore, 1992). In addition, the learners’



metacognitive awareness about L2 learning, as well as their previous schooling, can influence the process of language learning. Jung (the youngest learner) was never given an opportunity to adequately develop learning strategies in L1 since he came to the US after completing only the first grade in Korea, at which point he was suddenly switched to learn only L2. He was submersed in English, and has never experienced successful L2 learning. Jung was too young to be able to know how to learn. In addition, he had not yet fully developed his social skills, so he was unable to make friends in his new social environment. In contrast, Tim and Yang (the older learners) already developed self-knowledge and regulatory skills that promoted learning environments. They both transferred learning strategies they had developed in L1 to help them learn L2. They also developed communicative and social skills which helped them have deep friendships with Americans, which in turn helped them acculturate. The creation of peer social networks was an influential factor in successful language learning and acculturation.

### *Personality*

Various theories claim that certain personality factors are important predictors of success in second language learning (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss how the personality traits of the participants in this study could have influenced their learning experiences in L2. There are a few possibilities: that the participant's personality traits affected their L2 learning success; that positive or negative L2 learning experiences influenced changes in their personality; and that the two factors influenced each other. Personality is a complex concept and cannot be simply defined. Therefore, in this analysis, personality is used to mean the personal characteristics or traits that come from an individual's behaviors and attitudes. Some of the participants in this study

identified their own personality characteristics. Their teachers also reported the personality characteristics they witnessed in the participants' behaviors and attitudes. Thus, in this study, the participants' personalities were personally and socially co-constructed. Their personalities were constructed by the interdependence of internal and social processes in learning and development, which Vygotsky conceives of as the social situation of development. Thus, the environment serves as the source of human development. Moreover, the data in this study show how each participant's personality influenced his learning behaviors and attitudes.

Jung's personality traits can be described based on feedback from his mother, his teachers and from my observations. Jung was viewed as being slow and lacking patience. He did not apply himself, and easily gave up on things. He was seen as lazy by his teachers. He identified himself as shy, afraid of making mistakes, and unwilling to take risks. These descriptions are indicative of Jung's personality in the classroom. However, it is hard to describe his personality based on this information because his personality was constructed by language learning experiences in the classroom environment. There are a few possible explanations for the indication of his personality. It is possible that he gave up learning and did not apply himself (that his teachers commented) because he thought that he was too far behind the other students in the class to catch up, or that he was aware that he was different from his American peers, and that he felt these differences were viewed as being negative. Whatever the influences, his lack of motivation in the classroom was seen by his teachers as laziness. The parts of Jung's personality that were socially constructed could have contributed to his L2 language learning and development. In Jung's case, it is most likely that his experiences with language learning created his

personality trait of “laziness.” This “laziness” was constructed by social influences because he was frustrated and deeply depressed by his difficulty with English, by his awareness of his differences from other fluent English speakers, and by the foreignness of his environment. Being situated in a language and culture where he felt overwhelmed by learning English and American culture, he could have constructed his “lazy” personality. His personality traits were closely connected with his perception, internalization, and understanding of experience of social interactions with the classroom environment. However, neither his teachers nor his parents took the time to examine his actions to try and gain a deeper understanding of why he was “lazy.”

Tim was described by his teachers as having a good sense of humor, and he often joked around and chatted with his friends. He was funny, bold and confident, and was very social and athletic. Tim often took the risk of volunteering to share his ideas by raising his hand in the classroom, and by joining discussions. His friend, Cody, said, “He never stops talking. It is amazing.” Tim was described as a risk-taker, self-confident, social (extroverted), humorous, and talkative. Because he was confident and a risk-taker, his lower anxiety levels might have facilitated his language learning. Because he was social, he created more opportunities for interacting with his American peers, and he thereby increased his frequency of English language use. This could have been an important component in his L2 learning. But the question of where his confidence comes from arises. Did his successful and positive language learning experience lead to his confidence, or did his personality cause him to be a confident learner? It appears that Tim’s learning experience in his classroom environment was positive, and that this positive perception and understanding contributed his becoming a confident learner and

risk-taker. The environment in which he internalized his experience of social interaction helped Tim construct his personality as a whole, which led to his positive learning experiences in L2.

Yang's English teacher described him as a quiet and shy student. In class, Yang worried about being called on by his teachers. He was not confident about speaking out, and he was afraid of making mistakes in front of the class. He was not willing to take risks, and did not raise his hand in the class even if he had questions. Outside of the classroom, Yang was very social and made many American, Korean, and international friends. It seemed that Yang was social by nature, and so he created social settings where he could interact with his American peers; however, in the classroom his language anxiety caused him to become quiet and reluctant to speak. Yang recounted, "I feel very overwhelmed by their expressiveness. I feel very stupid and I feel that I don't know anything." Yang's anxiety came from a social context (the classroom) where American students were dominant. He felt pressured, inferior, and overwhelmed by the English fluency of American students. As well, Yang struggled with his internal pressure and anxiety. He was conscious of his difference from the others in language proficiency and expressiveness, and that awareness or consciousness overpowered him. Yang's internal anxiety, combined with the pressure exerted by the classroom, had negative impacts on his language learning and performance. His "quietness" in the classroom was constructed by social influences.

Perhaps certain personality factors are related to, but not necessarily strict predictors of, success in second language learning. English language learners' personalities can play out differently because the language anxiety and frustration that

result from social relations influence their personalities. However, the teachers in this study described the students' personalities based on their characteristics in the classroom without careful investigation of the reasons for their behavior and attitudes. Jung's and Yang's anxiety came from a social context where American students were dominant—peer pressure made them feel overwhelmed. Thus, it seems that their expressed personality traits were composed by the social context (the classroom) in which they were placed, and were influenced by their learning situation and environment where the English language dominated. Students' personality traits were also influenced by their second-language learning experiences. In this study, I found that Tim, who was a more talkative, social (extroverted) risk-taker, also had a higher frequency of English language use than the other participants, who were all quiet and shy. Thus, the personality traits, which were positively formed by the social influences, led to Tim's successful language learning experiences.

### *Motivation*

In general, motivation appears to be a predictor of success in L2 learning (Skehan, 1989, as cited in Saville-Troike, 2006). According to Dornyei (2005), motivation is conceived as the desire to attain a goal or need; the perception that learning L2 is relevant to fulfilling that goal or meeting that need; the value of potential outcomes and rewards; and the belief in the likely success or failure of learning L2. In this study, I use the term “motivation” to mean a learner's strong desire to attain their goals of being successful learners of academic subjects, and their willingness to learn in English in the classroom. However, in the literature on the relationship between motivation and successful language learning, the question remains as to whether any cause-effect

relationship is a "chicken-and-egg" matter. Either high motivation causes high L2 achievement or the satisfaction which results from successful L2 learning is responsible for increasing motivation (Saville-Troike, 2006). In addition to that, students' willingness to learn in English in the classroom is also related to how the environment influences them and how they perceive and internalize their experience of social interaction.

In the present study, Tim was described as a highly motivated student at home and in school. His aunt described him as being very self-motivated; his English teacher said that he was hard working; his Geometry teacher said he was very proactive and took a lot of responsibility for his education. Tim tried to complete and understand all of his assignments, and this work was reflected in his grades.

Yang was also a motivated student. As an example of indicators of his motivation, Yang's English teacher was impressed that he tried to stay focused and keep up with the class, that he completed his class work, and that he took the risk of coming to a different country and learning a different culture and language. Additionally, his Government and World History teacher said that he did everything that was required in the class and completed all his homework.

Jung was considered by his teachers to be a less-motivated student. As an example of indicators of his low motivation, in the classroom he often put his head down on the table, was distracted, and was not focused on reading while the other students were reading and doing their work. His Language Arts teacher said that his attention wandered and he was sometimes disconnected from what was going on in the classroom. He failed to turn in many of his homework assignments. However, Jung explained that the amount of work and information for which he was responsible forced him to study hard and learn

everything quickly. His lack of motivation stemmed from this heavy learning load and from his poor comprehension of English. However, his heavy learning load and poor comprehension of English were created by the social environment in which he did not have much opportunity to conceptualize his newly acquired knowledge in L2 through meaningful activities.

In the case of Tim, who was highly motivated and academically successful, there is a possibility that his positive learning experiences with the social environment reinforced his motivation. However, it does not seem that Yang, who barely passed some of his classes, was a successful student in L2 learning, even if he was a motivated learner. In fact, many times he perceived and internalized experience of social interactions in negative ways that made him remain quiet and isolated in the classroom learning. This situation could have led him to be a less motivated student. In contrast, he was motivated to learn English. It seems that even motivated students like Yang do not always have successful learning experiences because it takes time for English language learners to improve their second language proficiency (See Saville-Troike, 2006). However, Yang had the potential for successful language learning because he was motivated and created social contexts, at least outside the classroom, where he had interactions that facilitated his English learning. His motivation for learning English and his creation of social interactions might be related to his age. He knew what was helpful for his language learning and how to fit into a new environment. I conclude that there is a relationship between motivation and L2 achievement, and it is not a 'chicken and egg' matter of whether high motivation caused high L2 achievement, or whether the satisfaction which resulted from successful L2 learning was responsible for increasing motivation. Many

factors (including personal matters, social influences, and age) can influence students' motivation. It is likely that a motivated student is not always successful in L2 achievement, but that such a student has more potential to attain successful language learning than a less motivated student.

### **Social Factors**

Social factors can also affect individual learning experiences in L2. Social factors refer to the social environments, and relationships within them, through which learners learn their second language. Social factors in language learning are not separate from individual factors (personality and motivation) because learning is accomplished by the interdependence of internal and social processes. The quality and nature of social settings influence the quality of language learning experiences and outcomes.

#### *Learning Experiences in the School*

As I discussed in Theme 1, each participant had different learning experiences when they were learning English in their classroom environments. I found that each student perceived, internalized, and understood their experience of social interactions in and with the classroom environment in different ways. Their internalization of experience was closely connected with attaining fluency in English and forming personal characteristics in the classroom. The following section describes how differently they appropriated their experience of social interactions. These emotional experiences are also connected with their actual level of development.

Jung did not experience the classroom activity in a meaningful way because he did not have much opportunity to construct a new system of meaning in L2. As a result of this, he could not make sense of the reading process, which led to his poor reading



comprehension. He did not have an opportunity to connect his thinking processes with his writing processes through the classroom activities. He had to deal with the sheer number of unfamiliar academic vocabulary words; however, the opportunity to conceptualize the meanings of these words in L2 was limited. He was asked to work on the worksheets alone. In the situation where the classroom activities were taking place, he experienced emotions, such as intimidation, frustration, and pressure. The emotions he experienced came from social influences. His *perezhivanie* negatively influenced his perception of classroom interactions and contributed to his feeling marginalized, remaining quiet, and generally considering himself an unsuccessful student. This shows that many factors in the classroom affected his experiences and how this shaped his view of the classroom and of himself as a learner.

Compared to Jung, Tim had a more positive perception and understanding of his experience of social interaction in and with the classroom environment. In many cases, Tim's new knowledge was internalized, appropriated, and transformed through his social participation. Tim, who had background and content knowledge in L1, was able to reconstruct new ideas in L2. He was represented as a confident and good student by the classroom environment. In general, his emotional experiences were very positive. His positive learning experience with the situation (his positive *perezhivanie*) gave him the potential to develop his English language proficiency.

Like Jung, Yang's learning was not reinforced by the classroom environment. His learning experiences while performing writing activities lowered his self-esteem and made him feel disappointed. His teachers were not usually aware of how he processed and reacted to the classroom activity, and his teacher's rapid pace of speaking did not

allow him to make a new meaning in L2, rendering him invisible in the classroom. Many environmental factors influenced how he experienced his learning. Somehow, because of his age, Yang's emotional experiences in a few classes were changed from the negative to the positive. He overcame the difficult situation by finding his own learning strategies.

The descriptions of the three students' learning experiences demonstrated the complexity of learning in the classroom. They also showed how the environment influenced their emotional and cognitive development and in turn how this shaped the environment.

#### *Learning Experiences outside the School*

Outside the school, the participants' variations in terms of social interaction for learning English were obvious. Unlike inside the classroom, where much of the interactions were dictated by the teacher, outside the classroom the students' variations of social interaction were based more on the individual student's choices than on outside influences. In addition, there was a relationship between the composition of students' families and their English language use. Some students lived with all Korean families who mostly spoke Korean, while other students lived in an English-friendly environment.

Outside of school, Jung's opportunities to interact with English language speakers were limited because he was too young to figure out how to make friends or go somewhere to engage in other activities with native speakers. As a result, he did not have any American friends outside the school, while Tim and Yang had a good deal of contact with English language speakers outside the school. For example, Tim frequently stayed over at his friends' houses where he participated in diverse activities, including studying, watching TV or movies, chatting, and playing games. He also joined a tennis club. Once

a week, he played tennis and participated in tournament games. Therefore, he spent a lot of time with native speakers of English even after school. His ratio of speaking English was higher than that of speaking Korean. Yang also created many opportunities to interact with English language speakers. Through after-school extra-curricular activities, such as soccer and wrestling, he made a lot of American and international friends. After school, he interacted with some of his American friends during wrestling practice. He went to the gym, played soccer, went to movies, had dinner with friends, and participated in study groups. The students' opportunities to have interaction and contact with native speakers of English were dependent on the individual student's choices about whether or not they created social settings and situations. Unfortunately, Jung did not create the opportunities to interact with friends outside the classroom that Tim and Yang did. He was not old enough to make friends outside of school and he did not have the social and communicative skills of Tim and Yang.

Family composition had an impact on the students' variations in English language use. Jung and Yang's families were all Koreans, who spoke mostly Korean at home. However, Jung spoke English with his younger brother. Tim's family mostly spoke English with American family members and spoke some Korean with their Korean aunts. Their ratio of speaking English at home was high. Tim's and Yang's families were all Christian and Tim's family went to an American church. Yang's family did not go to a church, but they prayed together at home. The trips to church provided Tim with additional opportunities to have contact with English language speakers, opportunities that Yang and Jung did not have. This family composition and language use in their home life influenced the students' language learning. Tim changed from being a frustrated

student at the beginning to being a competent student, in part with help from his family. He said, “The family situation made me speak English. Regardless of my will, I had to speak English. I spent a lot of time with native speakers of English in both school and home.” This shows that Tim had more opportunities to speak English even at home than the other participants. The opportunities he had contributed to promoting his language learning.

Both inside and outside the school, each student had different learning experiences. Inside the classrooms, each of the participants’ emotional experiences were closely connected with their emotional and psychological development. Outside the classroom, the students’ degree of social interaction and contact with native English speakers led to differences in their language-learning experiences. In such situations (inside and outside school), learner variables such as personality, social style, social skills, social competence, motivation, and attitudes can play a substantial role in language learning (Fillmore, 1991).

### **Linguistic Factors**

In addition to individual and social factors, the learner’s individual maturity in L1 and L2 can also play an important role in L2 language learning. Each learner’s individual maturity in L1 includes first language proficiency, prior language knowledge, and schooling in Korea. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the connection or relationship between the first and second languages to better understand how one’s second language is developed.

#### *Cummins’ Interdependence Hypothesis*

L1 learning differs from L2 learning because L2 learners already know a great

deal about the world. The fact that L2 learning is heavily influenced by transfer from L1 means it would be impossible to construct a model of L2 learning that did not take into account the structure of the L1 (MacWhinney, 2005). Cummins (1979; 1986; and 2000) proposed the interdependence hypothesis, which states that academic language proficiency transfers across languages, in such a way that students who have developed literacy in L1 will tend to make stronger progress in acquiring literacy in L2.

In the present study, the participants' language proficiency in L1 was not assessed. However, the number of years of schooling in Korea could somewhat predict their level of L1 proficiency. Yang had ten years of schooling in Korea, Tim had seven years, and Jung had one year. The number of years of schooling shows that Yang and Tim had a higher level of maturity in their first language and prior language knowledge, even though they had different levels of maturity in academic proficiency. In contrast, Jung had much less maturity in Korean language proficiency and prior language knowledge. Based on the data, it seems that the participants' number of years of schooling in Korea did not necessarily result in higher levels of L1 proficiency and did not mean stronger L2 proficiency as a result. Tim, who had less Korean schooling than Yang, was the most successful student among the participants, based on school records and teachers' comments.

The question remains as to whether students who develop L1 academic proficiency tend to make stronger progress in acquiring L2 academic language. Tim was successful academically in the schools that he attended in America because he had a good conceptual understanding and background knowledge of math and science in Korean. Yang, who had ten years of schooling in Korea, described his academic experience in

Korea as not being very interesting, and said he did not engage very deeply in studying. He was not motivated to study and he did not have a good attitude towards education. When he came to America, he did not have a good understanding of math in Korean because he did not develop his background knowledge in math. It can be assumed that Yang's proficiency in Korean, based on his schooling, was fairly high, but fairly low in terms of background knowledge in math, when compared to Tim. Jung had only one year of schooling in Korea; thus, he did not have enough time to develop his academic language proficiency and prior language background in Korean. Tim's strong background knowledge in academic subjects in Korean was a supportive element of his academic L2 learning. Yang, who did not have strong academic knowledge in Korean, had a difficult time when he dealt with academic subjects in English. Jung's weak academic background in Korean did not help his L2 academic language learning at all. Overall, Jung was left clueless by his new environment.

In summary, this study supports the following statement made by Cummins (2000): "The relationship between first and second language literacy skills suggest that effective development of primary language literacy skills can provide a conceptual foundation for long-term growth in English literacy skills" (p. 192). This means that stronger L1 academic development and background knowledge in L1 positively affects progress in acquiring L2 academic proficiency. As Verhoeven's (1991a) research demonstrates, cross-lingual influence can operate in both directions, from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1. However, the present study shows transfer from L1 to L2, since the participants were immersed in English learning.

### *The Short-Circuit Hypothesis*

The basic idea of the short-circuit hypothesis (Clarke, 1980) is that firm first language reading skills alone do not help readers compensate when reading in a second language (Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995). A lack of second language verbal knowledge ultimately “short-circuited” the second language reading knowledge; in other words, low L2 oral proficiency restricts a reader’s ability to understand and interact with an L2 written text. As explained above, strong first language oral proficiency combined with reading skills contributed to acquiring L2 academic proficiency and literacy. In addition, certain maturity in L2 oral proficiency, as Tim had, can help learners compensate when reading in a second language.

The present study shows that Tim developed grammatical and linguistic knowledge in English before he moved to the United States in 2003. Tim learned English grammar, conversation, and vocabulary from his mother and in school so he had already developed a good knowledge of English. Tim described his English proficiency after first arriving in the United States as being good enough for him to understand what was going on in his classes. On the other hand, Yang did not speak English at all when he first came to the US. He did not have a good foundational knowledge of English, which prevented him from understanding academic language in the different class subjects. Jung never learned any English in Korea, and his knowledge was limited only to some of the English alphabet. He was suddenly submersed in English and was unable to understand what was going on in his classes. This slight background knowledge of the participants’ education levels upon arriving in the US was not enough to allow for the measure of the participant’s English language proficiency (which was not the purpose of the present

study). However, it gave us some insight into their previous English language experiences and the maturity of their second language proficiency before coming to the United States. This study shows the connection or relationship between the first and second language as second-language learning is developed.

### *Language Processing between L1 and L2*

There are many possible factors that hinder second language learners from expressing their thoughts in speaking and writing. It seems that Tim and Yang, who already had L1 literacy abilities, experienced complicated language processing when they expressed their ideas and thoughts in English because they were more dependent on their first language. This was not the case for Jung because his first language was not fully developed yet. The following are examples of the students' experiences in language processing. Tim said he was not able to put his ideas on paper immediately, and that he had to "think a lot" before he was able to write his ideas down. Yang recounted that it took him time to think before he was "ready to say something." Yang's English teacher said that she thought he knew what he wanted to say, but that "it was hard for him to process his thoughts to find the right words." Tim and Yang demonstrated that during language production, their thinking process was "complex and complicated," and that they were uncomfortable in expressing themselves.

John-Steiner (1985) notes that students in the early stages of second language acquisition (in this study, Tim and Yang) strongly depend on their native language as the primary processor for both comprehension and production. However, the assumption that competent bilinguals think in English when they speak in English, or think in Spanish (or Korean) when they speak Spanish (or Korean), is based on a simplified notion of thought.



Thus, second language learners start the process of weaving two meaning systems together as they are increasingly able to comprehend and store information in their weaker language. John-Steiner (1985) explains that “eventually, the integration of two languages in thinking is powerful enough so that the movements from thought to expression are possible regardless of the topic or domain of discourse. This level of balanced, successful bilingualism is not reached easily” (p. 366). Perhaps, then, the participants in the present study were still in this stage of integrating their two languages, and thus it took time for them to express their thoughts, and sometimes caused them to fail to express themselves at all.

In addition, there is another possibility why each of the participants experienced complicated language processing when they expressed their ideas and thoughts in English. Kim and Markus (2005) point out that in Western cultural contexts, talking has been closely related to thinking, and thought is considered to be internalized speech; however, in many East Asian cultural traditions, including Korea, the connection between talking and thinking is weaker. Kim (2000) found that “verbalization of the thought process significantly impaired the performance of East Asian Americans, whereas the same verbalization did not affect the performance of European Americans” (p. 193). This suggests that the relationship between talking and thinking is culturally specific and socially constructed. The Korean students who were not used to verbalizing and who came from a cultural context that did not value self expression felt uncomfortable with the practice. Therefore, in the American school context where active verbal participation is expected, these Korean students could be seen as problematic. The relationship between language and thought in L2 development is complex because of the development

of a unified meaning system between two languages and because of different cultural relationships between talking and thinking.

In summary, the present study demonstrates the possibility that Tim's stronger L1 academic development positively affected his progress in acquiring L2 academic proficiency and helped his reading comprehension. However, without having a certain level of maturity in L2 academic proficiency, it was impossible to understand an L2 academic text. Yang's comment gave a possible answer, saying, "I didn't have good knowledge of math in Korean. I didn't understand math questions in English either." This implies that it might be hard for learners to solve math problems without understanding the questions in English. In other words, the learners' maturity in L1 (including prior language knowledge and schooling) enhanced L2 development, and L2 oral proficiency was a vital prerequisite to interact with an L2 text. Tim, who had a solid understanding of math and science in Korean, also would have struggled with the problems in English if he was unable to understand the L2 text. His maturity in L2 that he developed prior to coming to the US helped him compensate when reading in a second language, allowing him to understand math practice questions and solve them. Thus, Tim's maturity in L1 academic language, as well as his maturity in L2, seemed to help his achievement in school, compared to Jung and Yang who had less background knowledge in L1 academic language and L2 proficiency. A certain level of maturity in both L1 and L2 played a key role in the participants' language learning success. In terms of language processing between L1 and L2, it might be that the older learners who already developed their first language and gained cultural knowledge in Korea experienced more complexity in L2 development than the learner who did not. This would be supported by the ideas of

development of a unified meaning system between two languages and the cultural effect of talking while thinking.

### **Final Thoughts**

The present study demonstrated the complexity of L2 learning and development, meaning that we cannot conclude that any single factor contributes to second-language learning. Many factors (individual, social, and linguistic, among others) had an impact on L2 learning. Many factors influenced how the three Korean students experienced their learning. How they experienced their learning and interactions can determine their potential development, a concept of learning leading development.

As Vygotsky's sociocultural approach assumes, individual development must be understood in, and cannot be separated from its social and cultural-historical context. The efforts of individuals are not separate from the kinds of activities in which they engage and the kinds of institutions of which they are a part (Rogoff, 2003). This delivers the message that we must examine all three factors, and perhaps other factors, when we examine L2 learning in social contexts and when we assess language learners' experiences and achievement in L2 learning.

In the following section, I present how each of the participants experienced and perceived their learning. I graphically illustrate each individual student's learning to help the readers capture the complexity of L2 learning and development and of bilingualism. The learning that I demonstrate does not remain static, but rather dynamically proceeds according to the multiple factors that I have explained above.

### *Each Individual Participant's Learning*

At this point, using Venn diagrams, I graphically illustrate the individual differences in second language learning of each case. A student's maturity in learning will be different depending on how much individual, social, linguistic, and contextual factors or processes influence his or her learning. These multiple factors influenced how they experienced learning. I will demonstrate the qualitative differences between the participants' learning in a way that includes not only the factors in the circles of the Venn diagram, but also the other contextual factors that contributed to the qualitative differences between the boys' zones. The zones are closely connected with their actual level of development. Tim's, Yang's, and Jung's descriptions and Venn diagrams are as follows.

*Tim's learning.* Tim's learning in the classroom was reinforced by multiple and meaningful activities. He positively perceived and appropriated the experience of social interactions. His positive *perezhivanie* with others helped him gain confidence and motivation in learning. Tim, who was motivated to learn English and was social and talkative, created situations where he could interact with native speakers of English. His motivation acted as a positive influence when he learned English. His personality and well-developed social skills helped him make relationships with English speaking peers inside and outside the classroom. His positive self-image brought out his positive self-identity. These individual factors (age, personality, and motivation) played a crucial role in Tim's development of the social relations with his classmates that made his learning possible.

Tim, who had the L1 maturity, background knowledge in content areas, and prior language knowledge, was more successful in L2 learning than those who did not. Tim had metacognitive awareness about language learning and he knew what helped his language learning. The students' social interaction and frequency of language use with native speakers of English had an influence on their L2 development (i.e. *social situation of development*). Tim had the most social interaction, which was created by his teachers' pedagogy (i.e., a contextual factor) and by Tim's activities outside the classroom. In particular, Tim's English teacher was very supportive, had good and thoughtful pedagogy, and was a good teacher, all of which made Tim a more successful second language learner. This teacher's pedagogy put pressure on the circles to bring them closer together, which in turn created a larger area of overlap. However, since Tim was already strong in many ways (individual, social, and linguistic factors), his teacher's pedagogy did not influence the amount of overlap as much as they would have to a student such as Jung, who was not as strong. Overall, Tim's strong individual, social, and linguistic factors reinforced each other, and these contributed to create high quality learning. Figure 2 shows Tim's learning (area 4).

Briefly, Area 1 (Individual-Social Factors) indicates the overlap between individual factors (age, personality, and motivation) and social factors and how these factors impact L2 learning and development. The more positive the students' self-image, the more confidence they had in speaking, which in turn gave them more motivation to create social situations for interaction and language use. I indicate that their positive image and motivation came from how they internalized the experience of social interaction with the classroom environment. The older learners had more metacognitive

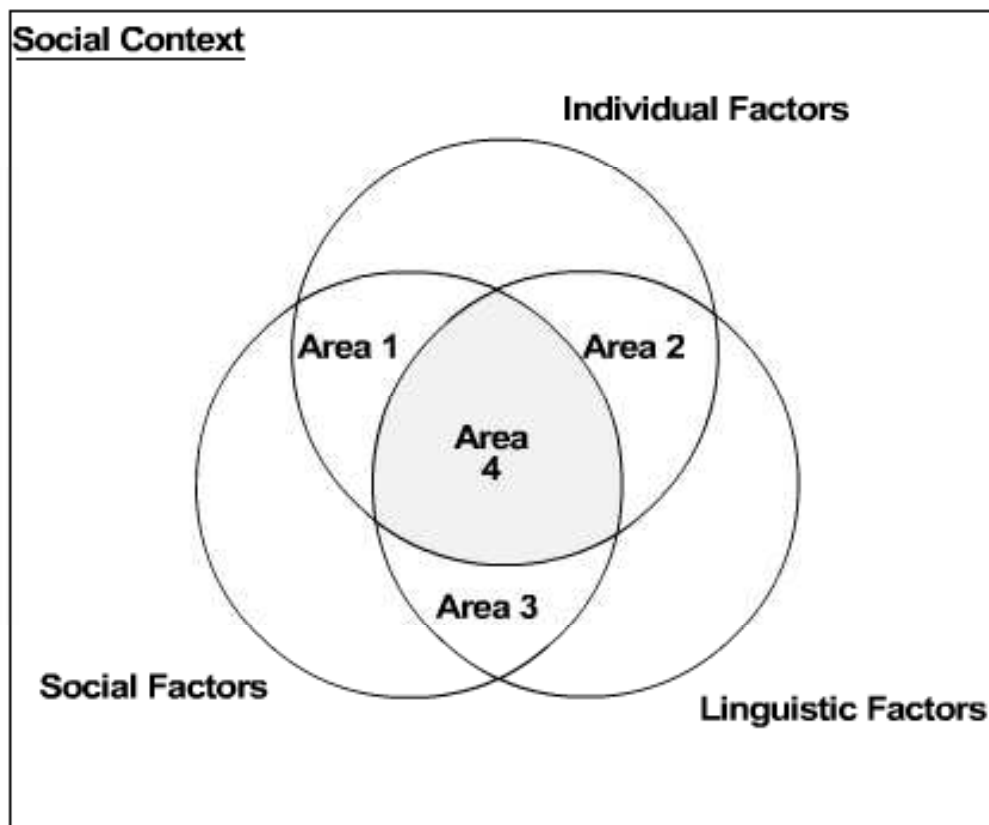
awareness and knew what helped their language learning. These combinations between individual and social factors led to successful L2 learning.

Area 2 (Individual-Linguistic Factors) indicates the overlap between individual factors (age, personality, and motivation) and linguistic factors. The students' ages alone did not determine a successful L2 learning outcome; however, the student who had the L1 maturity, background knowledge in content areas, and prior language knowledge was more successful in L2 learning than those who did not. The student who was more motivated, social, and took risks by engaging in social interaction was more successful in L2 learning than those who were less motivated and quiet.

Area 3 (Social-Linguistic Factors) indicates the overlap between social factors and linguistic factors. The students' social interaction and frequency of language use through meaningful classroom activities exerted an influence on L2 development. Their positive perception of experience of social interaction with the classroom activity was connected with their language learning and development.

Area 4 shows the complexity of second language learning and how intricate factors contributed to individual differences in language learning. Area 4 demonstrates that learning occurred within the overlap of all of these factors.

## Tim's Learning



**Figure 2.** Tim's learning.

*Yang's learning.* Like Tim, Yang had metacognitive awareness about language learning. He was also a motivated student, and this helped to make his learning successful. He had strong social skills, which enabled him to create social situations, at least outside the classroom. Compared to Tim, Yang was a quiet student inside the classroom and did not take risks by engaging in class communication. His quietness was created by the social environment in which the English language was dominant. His experience with the classroom environment (his *perezhivanie*) brought out language anxiety, and it prevented him from being able to create social interactions with native speakers of English inside the classroom. Less social interaction and lower frequency of language use in the

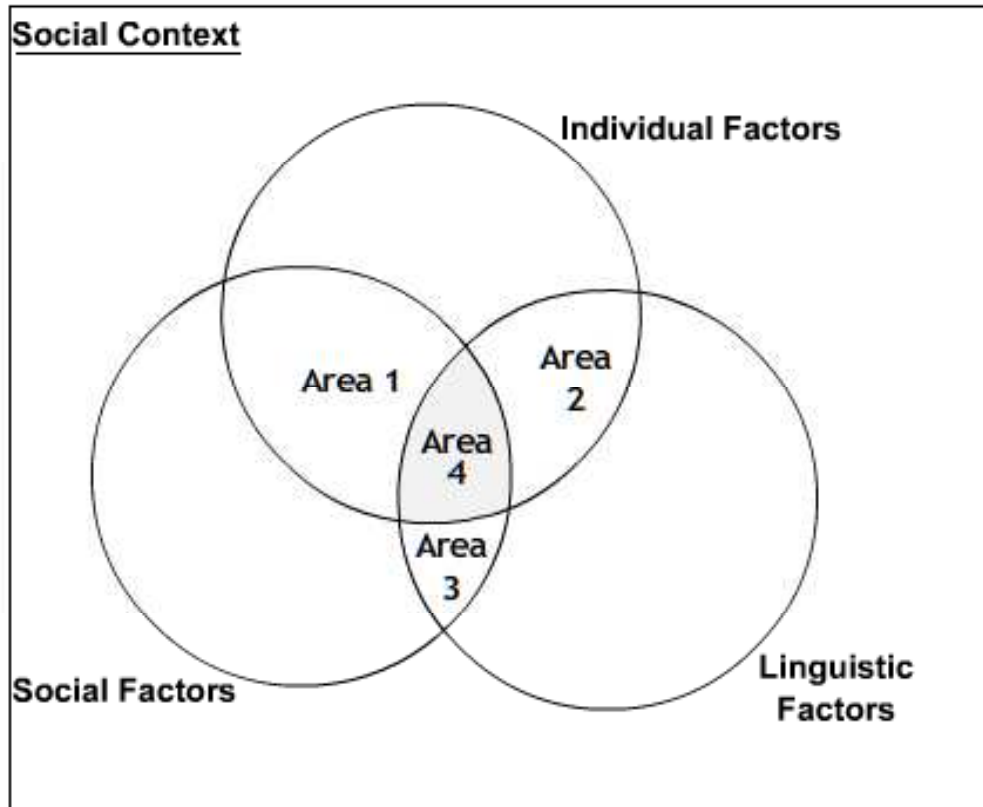
classroom, compared to Tim, restricted Yang in his goal to improve his target language. Fortunately, Yang created a social setting outside of class by engaging in extracurricular activities and by joining study groups. This helped make his language learning possible.

Yang's L1 maturity, language background, and background knowledge of the world all worked as potential elements in his successful second language learning. Compared to Tim, Yang's L1 academic language was less developed, even though he had been in school longer than Tim. Yang's low level of academic proficiency in L1 system of meaning did not contribute positively to his second language learning. In addition, as a contextual factor, the low level of social interaction and infrequency of language use created by his teachers' pedagogy and his teachers' lack of effort to engage Yang in language in the classroom were all negative influences on Yang's L2 development (i.e. social situation of development). His teacher did not give him many opportunities to engage in class communication or help to scaffold his learning. This social influence led him to have difficulty in developing his system of meaning in the L2. Her pedagogical decisions did not contribute to Yang's learning. Yang's teachers' actions put pressure outward, moving the circles within the diagram farther apart, not contributing to create the quality of Yang's learning. Smaller overlap means low quality of learning. This made Yang's learning more difficult because his teachers' actions in the classroom actually stifled Yang's attempts to improve his English. If his teachers had better pedagogy, their influences could have been both positive and stronger, and could have reinforced other factors which then could have created a stronger learning environment for Yang, who was weak in some factors. These descriptions indicate that Yang's factors were not reinforcing



to each other as much as Tim's factors were. Teachers' pedagogy can be more influential to a student with weak factors than to a student with strong factors.

### Yang's Learning



**Figure 3. Yang's learning.**

Area 4 signifies the components of second language learning and represents its complexity. This area is important because it shows the amount of overlap between the student's social, individual, linguistic, and contextual factors. Where these factors overlap, they serve to reinforce each other in a way that makes them stronger than the individual factors on their own. If any one factor is not as strong as the others, the quality of the learning is greatly reduced, along with learning experiences and attainment. This effect can be seen in the Venn diagram of Yang, who had strong motivation (individual factor)

and strong social skills (social factor) but had weak linguistic skills (linguistic factor). This made for a large overlap of his social and individual factors as represented by his area 1, but the lack of linguistic skills greatly diminished his area 4. In not creating a better learning environment for Yang, his teachers' pedagogy, a prominent contextual factor, also did not contribute to Yang's learning, nor did it reinforce other factors. Since intricate factors influence individual language learning, the quality of learning for individual students is different. A higher social situation of development makes language learning exponentially more possible. The strongest possible learning environment is created when all the factors work in combination, far greater than when the factors work alone. However, the physical space above can dynamically move but depends on the kinds of activities they do, how they perceived the experience of social interaction with the environment, and how the environment influences them.

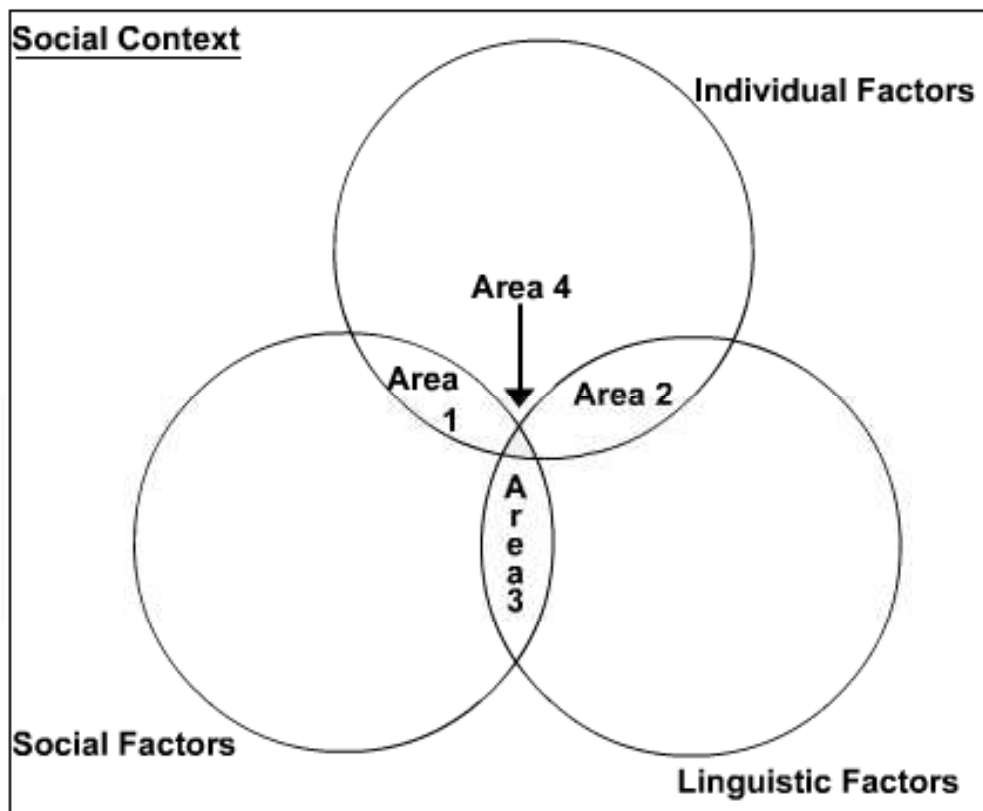
*Jung's learning.* Among the participants, Jung had the most challenges with learning. Jung's social skills were poorly developed and he had less metacognitive awareness than Tim and Yang in terms of language learning, most likely due to his younger age and lower maturity level. His low social skills and undeveloped metacognitive awareness did not allow him to develop social interactions that would have aided his language learning. With regard to personality and motivation, Jung was quiet and less motivated that was influenced by his learning experience with the classroom environment. These personality traits made his teachers view him as lazy. His image in the classroom also contributed to his negative self identity, and so he identified himself as a bad boy. Because of his poorly developed social skills, he could not create a social situation where he could engage in conversation with his friends inside or outside the

classroom. Jung's negative L2 language learning experiences were directly connected with how he understood and perceived the experience of social interactions—his *perezhivanie*.

Because he came to the US at an early age, he did not have a chance to develop his first language as much, especially in academic language. Compared to Tim and Yang, he had less maturity in L1, language background, schooling experiences, and background knowledge, all of which combined to hinder his second language learning. Additionally, as demonstrated by Jung's teachers' pedagogy, they created an environment in the classroom, where social participation and authentic communication were limited, which caused Jung to be isolated from his peers. His unsuccessful learning experience (his *perezhivanie*) caused him to lose confidence, and contributed to his lack of motivation. Low confidence and low motivation resulted in the creation of the negative self-image of a lazy and unsuccessful student, showing that the individual factors influenced each other. The teachers' pedagogy as a contextual factor served as a negative reinforcement of Jung's other factors (i.e. *social situation of development*). The teacher's pedagogy also put outward pressure on the circles within the diagram, pushing them farther apart and not contributing to the quality of Jung's learning. Jung's teachers' pedagogical methods contributed to the qualitative differences among the boy's zones. This caused Jung's learning to be more difficult. If Jung's teachers were supportive and understood second language learners' needs and they were aware of his process and reaction to the classroom activities, their influences could have reinforced other factors, creating a strong learning environment. The teachers' influences had a larger impact on Jung because he was weak in so many areas, so that he was more susceptible to outside forces

because he did not have a strong set of core skills. Had Tim been in Jung's position, it is very likely that Tim would have fared better because his core strengths were greater and would be less influenced by outside factors. In the same way, Jung's teachers could have had a more positive impact on Jung if they had provided him with the environment he needed for his language development. Overall, compared to Tim and Yang, Jung had learning environment that did not contribute to his learning of English. Figure 4 shows Jung's learning.

### Jung's Learning



**Figure 4. Jung's learning.**

Jung's smaller overlap means that the multiple factors, which are the components of language learning, did not reinforce each other; thus, each of the overlaps is smaller,

reducing his learning opportunities. Jung was an isolated and marginalized learner who did not receive social interaction with his teachers and peers inside or outside the classroom. His learning, representing the components of second language learning and showing how he experienced his learning (his *perezhivanie*), did not contribute to his learning. Jung was at the opposite end of this spectrum from Tim, and was unable to create more than a very small learning opportunity due to his weakness in all three factors, which, combined with his teachers' uninformed pedagogy, all made his language learning disconnected and sporadic.

These Venn diagrams of each case show the complexities of L2 learning and development and also of bilingualism. Many factors influence learners' English language learning and all of these factors contribute to the social situation of development. It is important to see that the overlap of all the factors makes for the richest learning environment for English language learners, and that while each factor is equally important, their convergence creates the strongest possible learning situation. It is in this overlapping area that all of the factors work to strengthen each other. The students with the strongest factors tend to further strengthen their language learning, which leads development, while those with weak factors have a much harder time building their second language abilities and skills. I conclude that no single factor can predict a student's learning and development, and every factor plays a different role and level of importance for every student. It is a combination of many factors—the strengths and weaknesses of the student, the positive and negative influences of the environment in which they are placed, as well as their *perezhivanie*—that all interact and come together to allow students to succeed or fail in their learning. Within the ZPD, many factors

contribute to the creation of system of meaning and serve as active agents, including people, interaction with peers, various degrees of expertise, artifacts (books, videos, and so on), the way that interaction in sociocultural environment is appropriated and internalized, physical and emotional influences, perezhivanie, and social situation of development.

### **Theme 3: Social and Cultural Experiences**

Relocated in the United States and exposed to English and American culture in the classroom, the three Korean students faced different social and cultural experiences. Their English immersion impacted their home language. These linguistic issues brought out individual students' psychological and emotional pain (language anxiety, feeling uncomfortable speaking English), and pain socially constructed by peer pressure. The students' rights to develop their own language were taken away by their total immersion in English; as a result, they were linguistically and contextually disconnected from their own families, culture, and Korean society.

Additionally, some of the participants faced cultural shock, which is defined as the overwhelming feeling that "is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1960, as cited in Igoa, 1995). The participants experienced cultural differences between the two countries, in manners, behaviors, friendships, styles of teaching and learning, cultural patterns in talking, and honorific language. These differences were not validated in the classroom setting. Their culture was disconnected from the school culture. These students' psychological pain was constructed in a social setting where there were different relational expectations between teacher and student and between student and student (i.e. *social situation of development*).

While immersed in a different culture and language, they were reconstructing a new cultural and social system of meaning based on their prior background, cultural, and social knowledge in L1. Although they were acculturating, they tried to maintain their own social and cultural values.

## **Language Attitude and Socialization**

In the United States, especially since the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 that is “an amendment of the previous U.S. education policy, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965” (Meyer, 2003), American schools and society have emphasized English only learning and have devalued other languages. In reality, the Act homogenizes English learners’ backgrounds and educational needs. “English only” initiatives throughout the United States require second language learners to learn English as quickly as they can and emphasize English learning as a major part in the socialization of these students into US society. The goal of becoming a fluent English speaker is embraced by most newcomers, including the students in the present study. These students felt that learning English was a fundamental requirement and a top priority for acceptance and participation in an English dominant world. Olsen (2000) states that English is not just a vehicle for communication, it is also the social and political marker of affiliation and belonging. This complex social and political issue went far beyond the matter of simply acquiring a second language in the study.

### *Second Language Anxiety*

Participants in this study were immersed in English-speaking American classrooms and experienced language anxiety to different degrees. Language anxiety can come from multiple variables, such as personality traits and unsuccessful language learning; however, the participants in this study mostly suffered from language anxiety because of peer pressure and lack of confidence and discomfort speaking English. These students also felt a lot of pressure and stress because they felt that, compared to their American classmates, their language proficiency was low. The students’ language anxiety



was psychologically and socially constructed. In other words, the classroom environment in which the English language was dominant influenced their emotional experiences.

Jung and Yang, who had the most second language anxiety, did not want to make mistakes in front of their peers. Jung's teacher said Jung felt a lot of pressure to do well, and that he did not want to be embarrassed in front of his peers. This anxiety and pressure led to emotional trauma, such as anger, crying, feeling vulnerable, and frustration. Tim said that his classmates were superior to him with respect to their English proficiency, so he felt he could not compete with them due to his deficiency in English. They were faster than him in terms of reading and completing homework and class activities. Yang felt very overwhelmed by his classmates' expressiveness in language. He felt stupid because he could not express himself fluently in English. He felt that he did not "know anything by not saying something in discussion," so he wanted to prove that he was "not stupid by saying something in discussion."

The greatest source of anxiety was having to speak the target language in front of peers (Price, 1991). Second language learners all had fears of being laughed at by others, or of making a fool of themselves in public. In addition, a great deal of their stress came from their frustration at not being able to communicate effectively. Pavlenko (2005) stated that pressure and tension come from "perceived threats to the student's sense of security or self-esteem . . . and apprehension about communicating in a language in which one may appear incompetent or ridiculous" (p. 33). When each of the participants was immersed into learning a second language, their classmates' fluency in English threatened them, leading to emotional issues, such as pressure, tension, anxiety, and insecurity. They (especially, Jung and Yang) felt alone, alienated from their fluent

English speakers, and hurt because they were not able to communicate in English effectively. Their negative emotions impaired second language performance. Tim, who was confident in speaking English and who had frequent contact with his classmates, had less language anxiety than other students in this study. His confidence was the result of his positive emotional experiences in and with the classroom environment, which also led him to have less anxiety. This suggests that teachers need to create space for second language learners to share their learning experiences, which could allow these learners to gain confidence in speaking English and could reduce their language anxiety. Doing so, teachers can take care of the learners' safety and security, and encourage risk-taking to talk for learning. The relationship between teacher and learners is an important component of their learning and them. When the learners find the comfort zone to communicate with their teachers, the learners feel safe and secure and take risks in speaking English. For example, Tim's English teacher provided him with the safety and security to talk unashamedly in the classroom by giving him many opportunities to interact with his classmates. His Chemistry teacher provided a comfortable environment in which to ask questions by accepting Tim's way of speaking English. Unfortunately, most of the teachers (especially Jung's and Yang's) did not address the second language learners' emotional needs.

#### *Impacts on First Language*

Each of the participants in this study had recently moved to the United States and was immersed in English language learning and American culture inside and outside school. The percentage of time they spoke English was much higher than the percentage of time they spoke Korean. As a result, their English language proficiency became

stronger while their primary language suffered. Their forgetting of their own language was the result of government-imposed “English-only” policy.

Jung was unable to express himself fully in Korean, and he mixed codes between the two languages. His ability to express himself in Korean and his opportunity to develop his first language was deprived. This resulted in alienation from his home language at home and in a lack of opportunities to develop his academic language in school. Therefore, it was hard to expect Jung to be able to communicate academically in Korean because he never had opportunities to learn how to do so in either Korea or Chicago. However, he was still fluent in speaking Korean as a functional language for the purpose of basic communication, which he demonstrated at home when he communicated with his parents. Jung’s mother’s perception that bilingual education hindered English language development did not help his home language continuity. Since there was no place in school where his home language was used or supported, which would have allowed him to develop full literacy in both languages and become bi-literate, the impact on Jung’s home language was that he could not maintain his age-appropriate level of academic proficiency in L1. Jung was losing cultural capital—knowledge and modes of thought in relation to specific sets of social forms (Bourdieu, 1977)—disconnecting him from Korean society. His language ability was not as good as the students in Korea so he was left behind in terms of Korean culture and language.

Tim had already developed literacy in his native language in Korea; however, English immersion in his school prevented him from further developing Korean as an academic language. Tim thought that his English was getting stronger than his Korean, as his opportunities to speak Korean were limited. He said that he forgot spellings and

sophisticated vocabulary in Korean. Olsen (2000) indicates that there are not many bilingual classes in high schools; there are even fewer in recent years because of political attacks on bilingual education. Immersion into English language in an American school caused Tim to lose aspects of Korean culture. Like Jung, Tim was left behind in regards to Korean culture and language.

By speaking English more often than speaking Korean, Yang began to forget sophisticated vocabulary and had a hard time expressing his ideas about abstract topics, like the Bible, in Korean. This created a situation in which he became less able to communicate with his family. He did not understand the new Korean words and slang that Korean high school students were using, with the result that he felt “stupid and dumb,” and also ashamed of himself and distant from his friends in Korea. He felt marginalized in Korean society as well. Losing his native language meant more than losing the language itself. He experienced psychological pain and felt contextual distance from his family members and Korean society by not being able to fully express himself in Korean. According to Fillmore (1991; 2000), when immigrant children do not receive strong support for continued development of their native languages, their loss of language and sense of culture can cause “a resultant severance” from families and homeland cultures. Therefore, when the Korean students in this study were immersed into English in the school, this immersion impacted their first language and forced their separation from families and home language and culture. These results came from a school and society that devalued multilingual and multicultural education.

Immersion into English and American culture was these students’ reality. They were faced both with learning English as a second language to ensure their academic

success, and with forgetting their first language and culture. According to Shin (2005), the English-only policy in the United States has revealed that there is an unequal distribution of power that is equated with the differences in languages especially in schools. When students learn that one language is valued over other languages and carries the most power in a society, they may decide to become proficient in the more valued language, thereby abandoning their native language. The students' language attitudes changed because of the social expectations in the specific society and culture (i.e. *social situation of development*). Their decision is socially constructed.

### **Culture Shock in the Classroom**

When each of the participants were immersed into English learning and American culture, they experienced cultural differences between the two countries, in manners and behaviors, friendships, honorific language, styles of teaching and learning, and cultural patterns of talking. Due to the cultural differences between the two countries, the students encountered culture shock. Pederson (1995) defines cultural shock in a broad and general sense: cultural shock applies to any situation where an individual is forced to adjust to an unfamiliar social system. While adjusting to an unfamiliar social system, the participants' culture was not validated. There was no room for participants to share their cultural values in the classroom.

#### *Behavior, Manner, and Attitude*

Tim and Yang experienced differences between the Korean and American cultures in terms of their American peers' behaviors, manners, and attitudes in the classroom. Tim said that manners, respect, and etiquette did not exist in American classrooms. His American classmates seemed rude to teachers, and as though they did not

have any respect or manners. He said that type of behavior is not acceptable in Korea, and if students acted that way in Korea, they would be punished. Another example was that male and female students kissed each other in the hall, a behavior that is not common in Korea. Tim thought this was “weird.” With regard to relationships between the teachers and students, Yang perceived American students and teachers as having friendships; there was no boundary between teachers and students. Both Tim and Yang interpreted and judged their peers’ behaviors and attitudes based on their own cultural values and standards. The different behaviors and manners in human relationships challenged them to understand or accept these differences, while trying to adjust and fit into this new environment.

#### *American Friends*

In terms of their relationships with their American peers, in the beginning, Tim had a hard time dealing with American ways of friendship even though he later came to fit in the best. Tim said that the issues and problems between friends in Korea were private and were not shared with others, but in the United States, students told teachers or counselors if they had a fight or had problems, which Tim did not understand. He encountered differences in relationships with, and in expectations of, his friends, and it was hard for him to accept the ways of a culture that he did not agree with. Yang described the differences between the two countries in terms of ways of spending time with friends. This showed that within a specific cultural and social context, people create or form a culture in the way they spend time with friends. Yang said, “Korean students like to play pool, go to a singing room, or go to a coffee shop, but Americans like to play sports, go to see movies, and chat and discuss serious topics. There’s nothing much I can

do with Korean friends here.” He also recounted that “I have visited one of my friends’ houses, and one of them took out a bag and asked me to do drugs. I turned him down. I guess it is common in the U.S. It is hard to accept it.” Because ways of thinking, believing, and behaving are socially and culturally constructed, the two different cultures can conflict. Without understanding and knowing the differences, misunderstanding can occur.

### *Honorifics*

There is an honorific structure built into the Korean language, which expresses the intricate and hierarchical nature of Korean society. It is impossible to speak Korean without denoting the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Korean verbs have different forms, and entirely different words are used to denote the gradations of respect between the speaker and the addressee, or a third person (Kim, 1988). In English, the pronoun “you” is used to refer to the old and young. In East Asian languages (including Korean), there are different words for “you” depending upon the level of politeness and the relationship between the speaker and listener. The importance of social relationships in East Asian societies has promoted the differentiation of linguistic codes to accommodate highly differentiated relationships (Yum, 1988).

Yang felt uncomfortable when he used the word “you” with his teachers. The word “you” did not carry any honorific meaning when used in English. Thus, the lack of explicit and carefully tuned gradations of respect in English was a source of great discomfort to Yang. He felt that English was too informal, and he felt uncomfortable when he used the word “you” with his teachers. His discomfort made him reluctant to

speaking English very often with his teachers. Many Korean students may feel uncomfortable in conversations lacking clear honorific markers of social relationships.

*Relationships between Different Styles of Teaching and Learning*

Tim and Yang said that their American peers were expressive and were unafraid of speaking their ideas and opinions during class discussions, and that their teachers also allowed students to express and share their thoughts and ideas. The communication patterns and styles in American classrooms were associated with teaching and learning styles that were found in American classrooms. Yang described the differences between the two countries in terms of students' learning behaviors. He felt that American students were much more talkative and expressive than Korean students, and that teachers encouraged this by calling on students and asking them to share their ideas. American classrooms expected the students' verbal participation. This was very different from what occurred in Korean classrooms, and these interactions between teacher and student made Jung and Yang feel overwhelmed, quiet, and pressured. This shows the relationship between *perezhivanie* and *social situation of development*.

Yang compared the different teaching styles in the two countries. Yang said that most Korean teachers tried to transfer their knowledge to their students, and forced them to study and memorize knowledge. Korean teachers never let students think or express their opinions; for example, teachers interpreted poetry and told the students to memorize what they said. On the other hand, Yang said that American teachers always asked students to interpret poetry after reading and that the teachers listened to the students' ideas and reflections. The teachers encouraged students to express their ideas, and they



respected the students' opinions. This shows that teachers and students in the two countries have different roles in terms of learning behaviors and classroom discourse.

Differences in cultural communication patterns between Western and East Asian cultural contexts are evident in formal education (Kim & Markus, 2005). Many Western cultural contexts highly value generating one's own ideas, and discussion and verbal activities are widely accepted (Blacklund, 1990). However, the participants in this study came from a culture where students' verbal participation was often not important (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). Thus, for the Korean students in this study, American ways of learning and cultural patterns of communication in the classroom came as a shock to them. Jung and Yang were especially overwhelmed and threatened by instances where American classmates expressed themselves and dominated the class discussions. Additionally, each of the participant's personalities played out differently in verbal participation in the classroom, depending on whether or not they took risks. Yang's perception that speaking out in class meant showing off was related to cultural practices in Korea. Jung and Yang said that they did not want to make mistakes in front of the class. Saving face was important during discourse, and they did not want to lose face in the classroom. Facing-saving and face-negotiation are explicitly recognized in some situations because of their importance in maintaining harmonious relations and honoring the hierarchy (Kim and Markus, 2005). The processes of face saving and face negotiating are important due to the fact that "talking is not a primary path to self-identity or achieving an individual goal" (Gao, et al., 1996, as cited in Kim and Markus, 2005, p. 185). For Yang and Jung, in being quiet, they did not have to show their lack of knowledge of English to the class. Their quietness as an effort to avoid mistakes in the classroom was an example of "safe

talk” (Chick, 1996). Therefore, their cultural norm to save face and not show off in discourses helped to prevent them from speaking out in front of the class. This led to them being quiet in the classroom. The teachers in this study often did not understand these issues. The students’ quietness was the result of many factors in the classroom environments, as I have mentioned earlier.

Thus, perhaps the different conceptions of the role of teacher and student created different structures of participation in the classroom (Philips, 1983). Clearly, conflicts or problems can arise between Western teachers and Eastern Asian students, including Korean students. This is similar to a case in a study by Philips (1983) of the differences between Anglo and Indian ways of conveying attention to a speaker. From the Anglo point of view, “Indian listeners use fewer sources of information to provide evidence of attention to the speaker. There is less back channel work in both the visual and auditory channels in the Indian interaction” (Philips, 1983, p. 55). Therefore, without this kind of understanding, it is possible in a multicultural society that different cultural identities will conflict with each other. Without an understanding of differences in cultural communication patterns between Western and Korean cultural contexts, the learning of the quiet Korean students in this study can suffer.

### **Construction of a New Social and Cultural System of Meaning**

While the participants in this study lived in the United States, they struggled to understand the relationship between themselves and the larger social world. Their social identities were constantly in flux as they experienced the contradictions and conflicts of interacting with diverse people in diverse social contexts, all of which served as part of their target language learning. It is true that the social and cultural differences constructed

these students' emotional and psychological pains. However, in spite of these pains, they were acculturating in certain ways and reconstructing a new social and cultural system of meaning in the social environment in which they were situated.

Tim experienced conflict in accepting American ways of behavior, manners, and friendship when he first came to the United States. However, as time passed, Tim interacted with his peers inside and outside the classroom by taking his classes and by joining activity clubs, such as ROTC and tennis. His social interactions with his American peers contributed to his English improvement and development, and to his acculturation to American students' ways of living. This social acculturation resembled those around him in and out of school. Tim recounted that he frequently stayed over at his friends' houses, which was a common and acceptable practice in the United States, but not in Korea. Tim's adaptation to American ways created a conflict with his parents. In spite of the fact that he adopted American ways, he also accepted the Korean way of listening to his parents.

As his English teacher mentioned, he was adjusting well to American culture and felt comfortable interacting with his American peers. He was a well acculturated and adjusted English language learner in a new environment. Interaction with American students and acculturation as a result of contact with them gave Tim an opportunity to incorporate aspects of American culture, and to have a positive perception and internalization of experience of social interaction with the classroom environment. This helped to form a personality different from the one he had in Korea. When Tim was adopting American ways, he was losing Korean ways. When the two different values conflicted, there was a conflict in Tim's self-identity. For example, at the beginning, Tim

faced issues with his peers' manners and behaviors in school. He thought that his peers did not have any manners, respect, or etiquette: they were very rude to their teachers and talked back to them. Tim interpreted and judged his peers' behaviors according to his own cultural values and standards. The different behaviors and manners in human relationships challenged him to understand and accept, while adjusting to a new environment. However, he was getting used to the American ways, saying, "I know I am a Korean, but I live in America and I think I have to live in an American way here." Tim's process of social adaptation in the US was influenced by internal and external forces that "have to do with the desires for social inclusion and affiliation and conformity" (Fillmore, 2000, p. 208). Tim was constructing a new social and cultural system of meaning based on his prior background and cultural knowledge in his L1.

Yang believed that to learn English and to fit into American society, he had to learn American views and perspectives and had to observe how his American friends socialized with their friends and how they behaved and thought. As a result, Yang was beginning to adopt American students' ideas about independence from parents. Yang wanted to create his life without his mother's involvement, saying, "She wants me to do things that she wants. That's why we had some arguments." The arguments and conflicts between himself and his mother were the struggles and negotiations involved in embracing the two worlds; they were part of the process of constructing his own independent persona. As Yang was getting used to the idea of independence, he felt more comfortable with the relationships between teachers and students, which are "casual, informal, and have no boundaries." However, he had a hard time accepting this idea when he first started school in the United States. Even if he felt overpowered by

American students' expressiveness in class, he believed that their ways of expressing themselves in the classroom were "natural and free," and so he wanted to be like them. He was envious that they were confident speaking their ideas and opinions in front of the class without any fear. He was becoming acculturated by embracing different cultural values in a different social context. This involved the process of reconstructing a new social and cultural system of meaning in a different culture and society.

As a result of Jung's exposure to American culture, he changed his behaviors and attitudes, and tried to adopt American culture. According to his mother, he wanted to chew gum in class because his peers did, and the teacher allowed them to do this. He tried to talk back to his parents, a behavior that is not normally allowed in a Korean context. Jung's mother believed that Jung learned laziness from his peers who did not take education seriously. This is hard to determine, but it seems that he was partially adapting to the target language groups' lifestyles and values (see Schumann, 1978). This does not mean that he gave up his own lifestyles and values. As evidence of the contrary, he still valued the Korean traditions his family deserved and the foods they ate. By dealing with two cultures in everyday life, he was constructing his new persona in a different country and building a new meaning system in different social and cultural practices. Compared to Tim and Yang, he was less acculturated to his new environment. This was partly because he did not have a chance, as Tim and Yang did, to build friendships with his classmates, and because his parents did not know how to help him fit into a new system.

Each of the students in the present study encountered cultural differences and shock at the beginning of their schooling in the United States. However, they began to

accept and adopt American culture, and they were acculturating to the ways in which American students behaved and thought. This adaptation to American ways sometimes created conflicts with their parents. In spite of this, they constantly changed their social characteristics, composing them to reposition themselves in the social strata in order to “acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which [would] in turn increase the value of their ‘cultural capital’” (Bourdieu, 1977, as cited in Norton, 1995, p. 444). Through social mediation and interaction, the new social and cultural knowledge is internalized, appropriated, and transformed. This is the process through which the social becomes the individual.

In the present study, their acculturation helped them adapt to a different social context and to help them survive in the US. In addition, the students’ acculturation was part of their struggle to become literate persons in a different society. When the students in this study were immersed in the English language and American culture, they were continuously constructing a new system of meaning in L2 culture through social mediation.

### **Model Minority**

When each of the participants in this study learned English in the classroom, they were faced with societal issues—with the model minority stereotype. Instead of seeing different Asian ethnicities and different individual students as being distinct and separate, the model minority stereotype lumps diverse Asian students into one group of students (Lee, 1996). Because of this stereotype, the students in this study felt pressured by being distinguished from other minority groups of students.

The stereotype that the students in the present study faced was the perception that all Asians (including Koreans) study hard and do well in school. Jung's mother felt a lot of pressure from the stereotype because her son was not doing well in school. Tim's Geometry teacher described Asian students in her class as taking a lot of responsibility for their education. She said that Asian students thought teachers had a responsibility to teach them, and, at the same time, that the students had a lot of responsibility to learn. Her perception was that if Asian students did not understand a math concept, they would study hard at home to catch up. Tim said that it was true that his American peers held the stereotype that all Asian students were good at math and science.

Examples of this stereotype were seen in the American media. On November 2, 2005, on "Good Morning America," Diane Sawyer interviewed two successful Korean American women, Soo Kim Abboud, a clinical assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Jane Kim, a lawyer who specialized in immigration issues. The topic of the interview was "Are Asian Children Smarter?" They discussed the book "Top of the Class: How Asian Parents Raise High Achievers—And How You Can Too," which the two interviewees authored. Even though the interview focused on how Asian parents raise high achievers and how other parents can do this too, it was obvious that television watchers might have had the stereotype that Asian students are high achievers in school. Critics of this stereotype argue that in order to silence the charges of racial injustice being made by African Americans and other minorities, the press began to popularize the stereotype of Asians as model minorities (Lee, 1996; Osajima, 1988).

In this study, the roles of each of the participants' parents, classmates, and friends were influential to their language learning and school success. Jung's and Yang's parents

had little understanding of American school systems so they did not help their children succeed in school. In contrast, Tim's aunts, who married Americans, knew the US system so they helped him to be successful. His perception and internalization of experience of social interaction with the classroom environment influenced his L2 learning and development. In other words, the role and influence of classroom environment played a crucial role in their learning experiences and attainment. Their classmates and friends played a key role in their academic success. Jung and Yang were not helped by their classmates; in contrast, Tim was. In terms of friendships, Tim and Yang did a lot of activities outside the classroom with their friends, unlike Jung. This shows that social and familial influences, not ethnicity itself, played a key role in school success. Not all of the Korean students in this study were high achievers in school. Furthermore, not all of the Korean students were good at math and science as is commonly perceived by American society. Though Tim demonstrated success, both Jung and Yang had a difficult time learning English and were invisible and isolated learners. By showing the diverse and complex English language learning experiences of Korean students, this study reveals the inaccuracy of the model minority stereotype. The multiple voices of Korean (or Asian) students should be heard and each of the students' English learning experiences should be considered in the curricular and pedagogical decisions of teachers.

### **Final Thoughts**

When the Korean students relocated to the United States and tried to adjust to an unfamiliar social system, they experienced emotional pain. The American education system, which devalues multilingual and multicultural education through the English-only policy and assimilation into the dominant culture, made the Korean students feel



deprived linguistically, psychologically, socially, culturally, and contextually and located them as outsiders. These environmental situations made Jung and Yang invisible and voiceless. Individual students' educational needs were not understood, and individual student learning opportunities were not reflected in teachers' curricular and pedagogical decisions. Their multiple voices were not heard, and individual differences were removed. Thus, it is important for teachers to be conscious of their students' process and reaction to their emotional experiences in the classroom environment. For the English language learners who are reconstructing L2 system of meaning based on their L1 system of meaning, teachers need to understand their students' lived experiences, knowledge, and feelings through collaborative and meaningful learning in the classroom.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study described how three Korean students experienced English inside and outside the classroom, what difficulties they faced in the process of acquiring English as a second language, and their linguistic and cultural experiences during this time.

Vygotsky's theory, in particular his concepts of system of meaning, *perezhivanie*, and *social situation of development*, helped explain the complexity of the learning processes of the three Korean students. The present study demonstrates the interrelations between the environment and development, and also shows how each participant individually perceived and appropriated social interactions. This study captures the process through which the participants made meaning of their social circumstances. In this study, many factors influenced how the three Korean students experienced their learning in the US. These factors (including individual, social, linguistic, contextual, and others) are described through Vygotsky's concepts of system of meaning, *perezhivanie*, and the *social situation of development*.

### *System of Meaning*

When the three Korean students moved to the US to learn English and were exposed to new cultures, they already had their own L1 system of meaning. Using their L1 system of meaning as a foundation, all of these students were developing their L2 systems of meaning. In this process, many factors contributed to the creation of their L2 systems of meaning.

Teachers' pedagogical decisions influenced the students' creation of their systems of meaning in L2. For example, in Jung's Language Arts class, his teacher did not help him comprehend the poem *Orange* in L2. Because of this, he could not make

sense out of the readings because he had no point of reference in his L1 system of meaning. Jung's teacher's instructional decisions, which did not provide diverse activities for Jung to understand the poem, negatively influenced his reading comprehension and resulted in him being quiet and struggling with making meaning of the poem he read in his L2. In Yang's English class, his teacher drew on his L1 system of meaning about the concept of hero. Through the class discussions, Yang had an opportunity to hear his classmates' opinions about cartoon characters as heroes. He thought their ideas were "very fresh and interesting" and that "Korean students have never imagined." Utilizing his L1 system of meaning in terms of the definition of hero as a foundation, he had an opportunity to develop his L2 system of meaning through the class activity that his teacher provided. Tim experienced vocabulary words in a greater variety of ways, including copying the vocabulary words and their definitions, skimming through the meanings of the words while writing them down, and hearing his teacher's spoken definitions of the words, which was different from the definitions given on the overhead. After this activity, the students worked individually on making sentences, and then shared their sentences with the class. In multiple ways, Tim's English language learning was scaffolded by his teacher's assistance, which helped him develop his L2 system of meaning. Thus, the teachers' pedagogical decisions contributed to the creation of the students' L2 systems of meaning. The student who repeatedly experiences this kind of activity has more opportunities to create his or her L2 system of meaning than the student who does not.

System of meaning was closely related to the students' social abilities and metacognitive awareness in learning. Jung had not yet fully developed his social skills, so

he was unable to make friends in his new social environment that could help his language learning. Since Jung was never given an opportunity to adequately develop learning strategies in L1, he was not able to know how to learn. Because of his lack of learning strategies, he felt overwhelmed with the sheer number of new and academic vocabulary words and learning workload. He did not develop his social skills and did not create a social setting in which he could have social relationships with his peers, which could have helped him develop his L2 system of meaning. On the other hand, Tim and Yang had already developed self knowledge and regulatory skills that promoted learning environments. They both transferred learning strategies they had developed in their L1 to help them create their L2 system of meaning. For example, unlike Jung, Yang used his learning strategies to learn his new and academic vocabulary words by understanding the meanings of them through the context, not just memorizing them. Both Tim and Yang also developed communicative and social skills, which helped them have deep friendships with Americans, which in turn helped them acculturate. The creation of social interactions was an influential factor in successful language learning and acculturation. Tim and Yang's social interaction and frequency of language use with native speakers of English had an influence on their L2 development – the creation of the students' L2 systems of meaning was connected with their social abilities and learning strategies.

The students' maturity in L1 academic language played an important role in developing their L2 systems of meaning. Jung did not have enough time to develop his academic language proficiency because he came to the US after one year of schooling in Korea. Yang's proficiency in Korean, based on his ten-year schooling experience, was fairly high, but fairly low in terms of background knowledge in math and science.

However, Tim's strong background knowledge in academic subjects in Korean (with a seven-year schooling experience) was a supportive element of his academic L2 learning. For example, since he already had a solid understanding of mathematical concepts from his L1, it was easier for him to negotiate such concepts in his L2. This demonstrates that stronger L1 academic development positively affects progress in acquiring L2 academic proficiency (Cummins, 2000). In addition, certain maturity in L2 oral proficiency was a vital prerequisite to interact with the L2 text. For instance, Tim's maturity in L2 that developed prior to coming to the US helped him compensate when reading in a second language, allowing him to understand math practice questions and solve them. His maturity in L2 helped him further enhance his L2 system of meaning. However, Jung and Yang did not have this kind of advantage because of their limited English proficiency prior to coming to the US. Thus, the level of maturity in both L1 and L2 played a key role in the participants' language learning success and in their creation of L2 systems of meaning. I also point out here that Tim (as well as Yang) was still in the process of constructing his meaning system in L2 through his L1 by saying that he was not able to put his ideas on paper immediately and he had to "think a lot" before writing down his thoughts. This demonstrates that during language production in L2, his thinking process was "complex and complicated." The students in the early stages of second language acquisition strongly depend on their L1 as the primary processor for both comprehension and production. Later, they start the process of weaving two meaning systems together as they are increasingly able to comprehend and store information in their weaker language (John-Steiner, 1985).

The creation of system of meaning is also related to students' personalities. In this

study, the more a student was a risk-taker and an extrovert, the more opportunities he was able to create to facilitate the learning of English and to develop his system of meaning in L2, and in turn he could be a more successful student. In this study, the participants' personalities were individually and socially constructed. Their personalities were constructed by the interdependence of internal and social processes in learning and development (Vygotsky, 1987). In other words, the students' perception and understanding of the experience of social interaction with the classroom environment (their *perezhivanie*) affected their personality as a whole and influenced the way they made meaning (Vygotsky, 1998). For instance, Jung was seen as a lazy learner in both his Language Arts and Social Studies classes. However, his laziness in the classroom, evidenced by his not organizing his files and materials in his binder and not doing the homework that he was supposed to do, was created by his difficulties with learning English. His teacher's misinterpretation of his behavior was driven from her lack of awareness of Jung's reactions to the classroom learning activities. This presents how the influence of the environment affected his perception of his experience of social interaction. His negative emotional experiences can influence his creation of system of meaning in L2.

Tim was described by his teachers as having a good sense of humor, and he was funny, bold, confident, social, and a risk-taker. Tim took risks by raising his hand to participate in the classroom activities. He was social by making friends and by doing outdoor activities with them that helped him develop his L2 system of meaning. Yang's teachers described him as a quiet and shy student inside the school; however, he was social outside the school. His quietness and shyness in the classroom were constructed by

the classroom environment in which he was overwhelmed by his classmates' expressiveness and he was afraid of making mistakes in front of them. His personality in the classroom was connected with how he perceived the experience of social interaction. Yang's negative perception of the environment negatively affected the creation of system of meaning in L2. This demonstrates how the students' *perezhivanie* is inextricably connected with their personality formation and the creation of their systems of meaning. Thus, teachers' pedagogical decisions should include an understanding of students' emotional experience (*perezhivanie*), and their teaching practices should reflect this understanding. When the Korean students have positive emotional experiences with the classroom environment, they shape positive personalities, and in turn, they have more opportunities to be able to learn English; namely, they are able to develop their L2 system of meaning.

The system of meaning is closely connected with students' motivation in learning. Before further discussion, I need to point out where the students' motivation in learning comes from. In this study motivation was connected with their learning experiences in the classrooms. Jung was considered by his teachers to be a less-motivated student. For example, he often put his head down on the table, was distracted, and was not focused on reading. However, Jung explained that the amount of work and information for which he was responsible forced him to study hard and learn everything quickly. His lack of motivation stemmed from his heavy learning load and from poor comprehension of English. His heavy learning load and poor reading comprehension was created by a classroom environment in which he did not have much opportunity to conceptualize his newly acquired knowledge in L2 through meaningful activities. His lack of motivation

came from his negative emotional experience of social interaction, and this negative *perezhivanie* resulted in less development of Jung's L2 system of meaning. Tim was described as a motivated student. He was proactive and took a lot of responsibility for his education. It seems that his high motivation came from his positive perception of the experience of social interaction with the classroom environment that helped him develop a new system of meaning in L2. Yang was also a motivated student, as evidenced by him completing his class work, staying focused, and keeping up with his class. However, his *perezhivanie* was not as positive as Tim's. His negative perception of social interaction could have made him a less-motivated learner, but he was motivated, perhaps, because of his age. For instance, Yang and Jung experienced heavy learning loads and unsuccessful learning; however, their perception and understanding of the experience of social interaction with the classroom environment were different. Although Yang had many negative perceptions of his experience of social interaction, he applied himself to learning and created social settings where he could interact with American peers. He knew what was helpful for his language learning and how to fit into a new environment. However, for Jung, his heavy learning load made him overwhelmed. He negatively perceived and internalized the experience of social interaction with the environment. His negative *perezhivanie* contributed to him to be a less motivated student. Less motivation resulted in less creation of L2 system of meaning and in turn, his less successful learning.

So far, I have described many factors (including teachers' pedagogical decisions, social abilities and metacognitive awareness, certain maturity in L1 and L2, personality, and motivation) that contributed to the creation of the Korean students' L2 systems of meaning. In addition, the three Korean students were constructing a new social and



cultural system of meaning in L2 through their L1. As a result of his exposure to American culture, Jung changed his behavior and attitude somewhat, and tried to accept American culture. He wanted to chew gum in the classroom because his peers did, and his teacher allowed them to. He tried to talk back to his parents, which is a behavior that is not normally allowed in Korean culture. There was a conflict between the two cultures; however, Jung was constructing a new system of meaning related to his attitudes and behaviors. Tim was also faced with his peers' manners and behaviors in school. He thought that his peers did not have any manners, respect, or etiquette; for example, his peers were very rude to the teachers by talking back to them –something that was not acceptable in Korea. He also thought there was no distinction between genders since they kissed in the hallway. He said that they were weird. Tim interpreted and judged his peers' behaviors according to his own cultural values and standards using his L1 system of meaning. Even if at the beginning he did not understand his peers' behaviors, he was constructing a new cultural system of meaning in L2 by saying that he has to live in an American way because he lives in the US and by accepting an idea of staying over at friend's house that created a problem with his Korean parents. Yang said that the American way of communication is different from the Korean way of communication in the classroom. He described American students as being more talkative and expressive than Korean students, who usually did not raise their hands in class. At the beginning, this communication pattern in the US classroom was part of the culture shock he faced. Because of this, he had a lot of peer pressure, which made him quiet. While facing this cultural shock, he was learning a new social expectation of class engagement, and he was envious of his peers' expressiveness. The examples from the three Korean students

demonstrate that even if at the beginning new cultural values and social expectations in the classroom were a cultural shock to them, they were developing new cultural and social systems of meaning in L2 based on their L1 system of meaning.

### *Perezhivanie*

Many factors contributed to how the three Korean students perceived and understood the experience of social interaction within the classroom environment (students' *perezhivanie*). Among many factors, the classroom environment that teachers created influenced the students' *perezhivanie* the most. For instance, in Jung's Language Arts class, his teacher's lack of specific instruction for a creative writing assignment about a penny made him feel intimidated and angry because he did not know what creative writing was. Also, he worried about his short writing about the penny. He was aware that he was different from his peers who wrote much more than he did. The teacher's pedagogy brought out Jung's negative emotions. His negative perception of the experience of social interaction could negatively influence his internal system of meaning. His thinking development could be inextricably connected with the way the environment influenced him. Another example is that in the vocabulary activity called 'team game' in Jung's Language Arts class, he did not actively participate in the game because he did not understand the meanings of vocabulary words so that he could not answer the questions. This situation made him create a distance between himself and his team and he saw himself as a person who was different from his peers and who was unable to mingle with them. His negative perception and internalization of this experience negatively influenced his development. The way he perceived the learning environment changed the *social situation of development*. On the other hand, in Tim's English class, his teacher created a

pair activity to allow him to work with an American peer. He was engaged in this activity. He perceived this experience positively by saying that the activity was fun and he felt comfortable working with his peer. His positive perception of social interaction played a positive role in his development and enhanced his interpersonal relationships. In Yang's English class, he commented on his teacher's feedback about his writing by saying that his teacher pointed out every mistake and he had to fix everything. This kind of feedback in the classroom made him feel disappointed and lowered his self-esteem. His negative experience with the environment caused negative qualitative transformations in his perception and internalization of the experience of social interaction.

As I have explained, the classroom environment that the teachers created contributed to the students' *perezhivanie*. In addition, their *perezhivanie* helped them shape their self images in the classroom. In other words, depending on how they perceived the experience of social interaction with the classroom environment, they became confident, isolated, or marginalized students. In this study, the more positive perception of the sociocultural environment the students experienced with their language learning, the more positive the students' self images and their personal attitudes became. Tim had a more positive perception and understanding of experience of social interaction, so he created more positive self images in the classroom. For example, in Tim's Chemistry class, he did not feel embarrassed because even his broken English was welcomed and accepted. He said that he felt more confident and competent in Chemistry class than English class. However, Jung's negative perception of the experience of social interaction contributed to a negative self-image in the classroom. In his Social Studies class, he was expected to work individually and quietly. He had to deal with many

questions and vocabulary words that he did not understand. He felt overwhelmed because of the workload that he had to complete by himself, which was beyond his level of L2 and cognitive abilities. His emotional experience was related to how the environment influenced him. His negative experience made him an isolated and marginalized learner. In Yang's Government class, his teacher never checked to see if Yang understood what he was saying, meaning that the teacher was not aware of Yang's expectations of the classroom activity. The learning situation engendered by the teacher resulted in Yang's perceived isolation. Yang's negative perception of the experience with the environment made him shape his self-image as an isolated learner.

The students' perception of experience with the classroom environment (their *perezhivanie*) brought out second language anxiety. Jung and Yang did not want to make mistakes in front of their peers. Both students felt a lot of peer pressure so they felt overwhelmed by their peers' expressiveness and this made them feel stupid. This anxiety and pressure led to emotional trauma, such as anger, crying, and frustration. For example, Jung cried at a parent-teacher conference. Also, Jung and Yang felt intimidated because of the cultural communication patterns in the classroom which required their active verbal participation; however, verbal participation is not valued in Korean communication. When they develop a new system of meaning regarding the communication patterns using their L1 system of meaning as a foundation, their emotional experiences are involved. Without understanding this aspect, the Korean students' attitudes and behaviors in the classroom discussions can be problematic (Lubman, 1998).

In this study, the students' *perezhivanie* was different at different ages. As

Vygotsky (1998) describes, child development is specific to the given age of the child and the reality that surrounds him or her, and the participants in this study interpreted and internalized their experiences in different ways, even if they encountered difficult learning situations in similar ways. The older learners (Tim and Yang) had an ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their performance in the learning process; they were aware of their internal processes through self-reflection and introspection. For example, Yang had a strategy of how to learn unfamiliar vocabulary words by understanding their meanings through the texts. His metacognitive awareness of learning contributed to the positive perception and understanding of his experience of social interactions with the environment. However, Jung's perception of experience with vocabulary learning in his classroom was negative. He said he did not understand the meanings of a large number of unfamiliar vocabulary words so he felt overwhelmed. This negative perception of his experience resulted in his decrease in success, decline in capacity for work, and lack of harmony in the internal structure of his personality (Vygotsky, 1998). This shows that even if they faced similar learning situations, their perception of experience with the environment was different at different ages. As an older learner, Tim also knew what helped him learn English; thus, he created a social setting where he could interact with his American peers. His experience with his peers was positive, and this positive perception resulted in positive learning processes and outcomes.

#### *Social Situation of Development*

This study presents that many factors contributed to the *social situation of development*, demonstrating the interdependence between individual and social processes in learning and development. In Jung's language Arts class, the situation in which his

teacher did not provide specific instruction about creative writing and grammar made Jung feel isolated because he had to figure out what he was supposed to do without any support from his teacher or even from his peers. Jung was defined as a non-creative and non-sophisticated thinker based on his language use in writing. His teacher considered that Jung's low language ability in English was equal to his low thinking and cognition ability. His 'self' was defined by the environment, and he adapted to it. The meaning of his 'self' changed as a result of exposure to a different environment. In contrast, Tim's English teacher was very supportive by creating authentic activities; for example, when Tim's class compared two characters (Rochester vs. John) after reading the book *Jane Eyre*, his teacher listened to her students' ideas and thoughts and wrote them on the overhead. In this way, Tim could hear other students' language and read their language on the overhead. Through listening, reading, and speaking, Tim experienced English in multiple ways that helped him develop competency in his L2. His teacher's informed pedagogy enhanced his learning.

In Yang's English class, the students read the book *Night* and then wrote a reflection paper. In his comments on Yang's writing, his teacher wrote that Yang copied his reflection from someone else. However, Yang said that it was one of the hardest projects in this class because he did not really understand the book and that resulted in poor writing. Thus, his difficulty was due to his teacher's lack of understanding about the connection between Yang's thinking processes and reading and written processes. Since there was little internalization through these activities, Yang was not able to comprehend his reading process, much less incorporate his ideas into written language.

Another example of the *social situation of development* is that immersion into

English and American culture for these Korean students was their reality. They were faced both with learning English as a second language to ensure their academic success, and with forgetting their first language and culture. When they learned that one language is valued over other languages and carried the most power in a society, they decided to become proficient in the more valued language, thereby abandoning their native language. For example, Tim was getting more accustomed to his American friends' behaviors and attitudes by saying "I know I am a Korean, but I live in America and I think I have to live like an American here." Their language attitudes changed because of the social expectations in the specific society and culture. Their decisions were socially constructed.

This study also shows the relationship between *perezhivanie* and *social situation of development* in the way the students perceived that the learning environment changed the *social situation of development*. For example, Jung's learning experience of personal narratives in his Language Arts class shows the relationship between the two concepts. In his story, Jung identified himself as Bob, a bad boy, who was good at lying to his parents and didn't study hard. The story showed that Jung was aware of what was happening to him and he was aware of his 'self.' The unsuccessful learning experiences in classroom settings led him to negatively shape his self-identity and showed the difficulty of changing his identity in a positive way. This demonstrates that his emotional experience and his self-discovery of identity were closely connected with the social situation of development.

In summary, Vygotsky's concepts including system of meaning, *perezhivanie*, and *social situation of development* helped understand the complexity of the learning processes of the three Korean students. Many factors contributed to the creation of their

systems of meaning, *perezhivanie*, and *social situations of development*. Many factors also serve as active agents within the ZPD, including people, interaction with peers, various degrees of expertise, artifacts, the way that interaction in sociocultural environment is appropriated and internalized, physical and emotional influences, and so on. Thus, teachers play an important role in orchestrating these active agents and helping all of these agents work together for students' learning and development.

#### *Future Research*

As a theoretical framework, this study used Vygotsky's theory demonstrate the interdependence of individual processes and social processes and to show how the role and influence of environment influenced human traits and development. This study investigated the participants' emotional experiences with the classroom environment in English classes and other courses. The classroom activities that the teachers created negatively or positively influenced the students' learning. Thus, future study will require examining effective pedagogical activities in reading, writing, and vocabulary teaching for English-language learners that help to increase the quality of learning, to conceptualize new knowledge in L2, and help teachers utilize these activities. Future research should further investigate specific class activities, guidelines, and materials that positively influence students' perception and internalization of experience of social interactions in more diverse content areas, such as math, social studies, geography, government, and economics. In this way, it will be useful to teachers in a diversity of content areas who do not have knowledge about English language learners and who do not create authentic pedagogy to facilitate their students' learning. Additionally, since this study found that teachers should be aware of students' processes and reactions to the



classroom activities, it will be necessary to examine training protocols of pre-service teachers in order to help them understand the students' *perezhivanie*.

I believe that this study can be a good foundation for further study in terms of examining differences between English language learners of differing ages and ethnicity. Because this study focused solely on middle and high school students, it could act as a comparison study for future studies that involve elementary school students, as well as adult learners. Additionally, the current study examined only Korean students, so studies that focus on English language learners from different countries are encouraged. I highly recommend additional studies that focus on different ethnicities than this study did, as these different groups might have different processes of second language learning, and different identity formation. Ideally, these future studies would include research into both students inside and outside the classroom so that its data could be more accurately compared to the findings of this study.

Through additional research into students' cross-cultural experiences, additional themes about second language learning could be drawn, building on the themes found in this study. The more comprehensive our knowledge about English language learners, the more resources there will be available to help teachers deal with English language learners in the classroom. This study definitely provided a piece of this puzzle as it has added some understanding of Korean students who came to the US with the purpose of learning English, a topic on which few studies have been done.

#### *Message for Families and Korean Government and Society*

This study found that, as a result of English-only policy in the US, the Korean students were deprived when it came to their rights to speak their own language and

validate their own culture. In reality, due to political and financial issues, it is impossible for the Korean students to receive bilingual education in schools where there are small populations of Korean students. This means that the Korean community and the students' parents need to put more effort into education for their children about Korean culture and language outside of school. Without parent's dedication to educate their children about their own language and culture, it is hard for their children to remain members of the Korean community in either Korea or the US.

This study has a message to the Korean government and society. As a result of the Korean government's emphasis on English education, many Korean children, some at very young ages, were sent to English speaking countries, mostly against their will. Some students in this study experienced a great deal of stress due to family separation, pressure for them to learning English and to have a successful life. As this study showed, learning English in another country had a very large impact on these students' cognitively, linguistically, culturally, and emotionally. Further, they are linguistically and contextually disconnected from their own families, culture, and society. The Korean government's political decision regarding English education is creating a situation that is oppressive to its people, especially children. Koreans (including children) are manipulated by the government's political power. Nevertheless, if parents believe that sending their children to English speaking countries is the best way to learn English, this study suggests that they need to carefully consider many aspects, including their children's age, language abilities in both Korean and English, schooling experience, and social skills. These will all be influential factors when in their children's ability to learn English. Additionally, this study suggests that the Korean government needs to

reconsider the purpose of placing such a strong emphasis on learning English, and look at the true cost and consequences of this policy.

### *Study's Contributions*

This study contributes to educators such as teachers, researchers, and school administrators because it adds awareness and understanding of how Korean students experience English and what emotional, linguistic, cultural, and cognitive difficulties they encounter. It also provides general information and understanding about English language learners' lives inside the classroom. This allows educators to have a better understanding of English language learners, which will hopefully serve as a springboard to bring out additional support and care from teachers and schools for these students. This study can be a good resource for teachers and schools to aid in their development of curriculum and pedagogy for English language learners. Specifically, this study provides understanding to teachers about how students perceive and internalize their experiences of social interaction with the classroom environment. This study delivers messages to teachers themselves that they should be aware of their students' process and reaction to their classroom activities.

The current study gives teachers an understanding of how they can help students increase or maximize their learning and development. This study contributes to how teachers' teaching practice can influence students' learning, confidence, emotion, and personality as a whole. In order to help create positive learning opportunities for students, teachers need to carefully practice their teaching. In other words, effective pedagogy can help students build a positive self image, confidence, and find a place for emotional security. Additionally, this study contributes to showing that there are multiple factors

that influence second language learning. This gives teachers who have English language learners in their classrooms an opportunity to be able to consider multiple aspects when they diagnose student's learning and then reflect on their teaching. The present study also demonstrates the emotional pains they suffered in the course of reconstructing their new social and cultural meaning systems in L2. This study holds implications for educators' understanding of their students' cultural background knowledge and what educational expectations the Korean community had. The kinds of knowledge Korean students brought to the classroom can be useful resources for teachers when they create their curriculum and when they help these students construct new systems of meaning in L2 language and culture.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of this study provide implications for the classroom environment, schools, teacher education programs in the US, and myself as a researcher.

#### *Implications for the Classroom Environment*

When the three Korean students relocated to the US and were exposed to the English language and unfamiliar culture, many factors influenced how they experienced their language learning in the US classrooms. Vygotsky's central concepts (system of meaning, *perezhivanie*, and *social situation of development*) helped explain the complexity of the learning processes of the three Korean students. However, this study demonstrates that the teachers did not always understand the complexity of the three Korean students' learning processes, though they should be aware of the complexities of learning when teaching. Since Vygotsky's concepts were helpful to explain the students'

learning complexities, classroom and learning environments should be created by understanding and utilizing these concepts for these Korean students.

The three Korean students were developing their L2 system of meaning by utilizing their L1 system of meaning. Since this study shows that the students who have developed literacy in L1 tend to make stronger progress in acquiring literacy in L2, the classroom environment should be a place that allows them to rely on their L1 system of meaning as they develop their L2 system of meaning. Learning environments in the classroom should be based on considerations of what background and cultural knowledge in their L1 system of meaning these Korean students bring to their learning. Since the teachers in this study did not understand these students' systems of meaning in language and culture, the students' cultural values were ignored and devalued in the US classrooms. Thus, the classroom environment should be a place in which teachers try to understand their English language learners' communication patterns, learning styles, attitudes, manners, and so on. By creating opportunities for Korean and other second language learners to draw on their L1 system of meaning, teachers need to help students mediate between the two cultures to help understand and construct cultural and social meaning systems in L2. When the teachers in this study did not understand these students' L1 system of meaning, the students experienced emotional pain, such as frustration, anger, intimidation, and pressure. Therefore, to reduce these students' negative emotions, the learning environment should be a place where these students' feelings are taken care of through meaningful communications; for example, by using a pedagogical tool, dialogue journals between teacher and students. Through the dialogue journals, these Korean students could have reduced their language anxiety and fear, and they could have built

confidence in risk-free and stress-free environments (Peyton, 2000; Mahn, 2008). For these Korean students, dialogue journals could have provided an opportunity for teachers to build rapport with their students, understand the emotions they have been through with language learning in unfamiliar settings, and help them make more informed pedagogical decisions in the future. Through the dialogue journals, the teachers could understand and learn about their students' *perezhivanie* and systems of meaning as well.

This study shows that teachers' pedagogical decisions played an important role in these Korean students' emotional experiences, and their *perezhivanie* affected their personality as a whole and the way they made meaning. For this reason, classroom environments for these Korean students need to be settings that provide authentic activities that promote student engagement and awareness of their learning processes by connections with their systems of meaning. Authentic activities mean that teachers' roles and responsibilities are to create opportunities for varied and dialogic interactional patterns to scaffold students' language (Gibbons, 2002). Teachers need to make everything they say clear and comprehensible to their students, and to clarify students' new learning, while new language and concepts (L2 system of meaning) should be repeated and reviewed in several ways. In the learning environment, students need to hear more language, a greater variety of language, and have more language directed toward them. Learners should interact more with other speakers and they have more responsibility for clarifying their own meanings (McGroarty, 1996). In this way, students are able to engage in their learning and be aware of their learning processes by connecting their L1 and L2 systems of meaning. Teachers can play a crucial role in helping these students build the new concepts using their existing knowledge and new

knowledge. Through the collaborative learning in the classroom, teachers need to understand students' lived experience, knowledge, and feelings. Mahn & John-Steiner (2002) suggest emotional scaffolding that "includes the gift of confidence, the sharing of risks in the presentation of new ideas, constructive criticism and the creating of a safety zone" (p. 52). Therefore, their positive learning experiences (their *perezhivanie*) with the classroom environment and its social relations contribute to the students' development. By providing authentic classroom activities with meaningful dialogue and social interaction, students are able to be active learners, and in turn, can become confident learners that help them shape positive self-images and have positive attitudes toward their learning.

#### *Implications for Schools*

In light of the fact that nearly 40% of U.S. citizens are members of racial and ethnic minorities (Davis, 2006), the cultures of students of diverse backgrounds should be acknowledged and valued. Most of these students face unfamiliar educational situations and systems, so through counselors, peers, and teachers, schools should provide specific information about courses and school activities that encourage students to interact with their peers. Schools might provide student orientation for some ethnic groups that create a space to share and exchange school information. These advisory systems might help newcomer students adjust to a new system and not feel alienated. Schools could provide continuing support through these advisory systems.

It is recommended that schools need to provide a space and time for teachers who deal with English language learners so they can share their stories and the difficulties they encountered in classroom settings and share their teaching experiences

with these students. In this way, they can communicate each other about effective ways of teaching practices for these students and ways to help them adjust to a new culture and society. Schools also can invite external educators to a conference on L2 pedagogy, and they can gain expertise on second language learning by sharing experiences. Schools can welcome people from the Korean community so they can talk teachers about Korean cultural values and educational expectations and also about funds of knowledge they bring to the US classrooms. This allows schools to collaborate with teachers, educators, and the community as a whole. With collaboration, a better learning environment will be created, and a space and time for understanding these students can be provided. These efforts with cooperation and collaboration can eventually lead to improvement in students' developing their L2 skills and help shape a positive self-image in the schools. Certainly, the dialogues teachers exchange with the Korean community, experts about L2 learning, and other colleagues can help them strengthen their awareness of these students' internalization processes and reactions to their L2 learning. Teachers' understanding of their students' *perezhivanie* is important for them to create a meaningful learning environment and to address their emotional needs while learning L2.

#### *Implications for Teacher Education Programs*

The majority of the teachers who participated in this study did not seem to have a good understanding of English language learners. Due to the small sample size of this study, this finding cannot be automatically applied to all teachers across the US. However, because the teachers in this study had received training from several different schools and organizations across the US, it does not seem too farfetched that many teachers in this country who have similar backgrounds and training would have similar limitations in



their knowledge of English language learners. Due to this, I would suggest two steps be taken to ensure that school teachers receive adequate training on how to address the needs of English language learners. First, I recommend that a broader study to assess teacher's understanding and knowledge of English language learners be conducted in order to determine exactly how wide spread this lack of knowledge really is. If the study shows that there is indeed a knowledge gap, the specific areas that need improvement should be identified. If it turns out that this knowledge gap is wide spread, there could be several failure points causing this to happen, including teacher preparation curriculum not covering this content, teacher preparation curriculum being ineffective in teaching this content, or perhaps the content being provided is too theoretical and not geared towards practical application enough for teachers to be able to use in their classrooms. The specific failure point or points would need to be identified, and the information gathered about the teachers' weakness would need to be passed down to teacher education programs and used to prepare pre-service teachers. The curriculum of the teacher preparation programs would need to be modified so that they are effectively equipping teachers to address the needs of English language learners.

As a part of this change to how pre-service teacher are trained, I suggest that the people engaged in instructing these soon to be teachers, such as professors, supervisors, and mentor teachers, need to systematically observe pre-service teachers during their practicum and student teaching in order to observe how they interact with English language learners. They should specifically look at what kind of activities the teachers are using in the classroom to teach these students, and whether these activities take into consideration the needs of English language learners. These observations would be to

provide in-service teachers with on-going and systematic feedback about how well they are addressing English language learners, and if needed, to make suggestions for improving their instructional methods for these students.

It is also my recommendation that pre-service teachers need to receive specific instruction about second language learning from professors, supervisors, and mentor teachers who have expertise in this field. Having instructors, supervisors, and mentor teachers that are highly qualified in second language learning is required to advise novice teachers on how to deal with English language learners in the classroom and how to use effective pedagogical methods for their specific learning needs. The qualifications for these instructors, supervisors, and mentor teachers should be people who have a large amount of teaching experience with English language learners in the classroom, have expertise in second language learning and acquisition, and have awareness of diverse cultures and languages. By having instruction from people who are well versed and experienced in the field, it should improve the quality and outcome of the pre-service teacher's training.

Many pre-service programs already provide information similar to what I propose above, and teachers can receive special endorsements in bilingual and ESL education. In fact, some of the teachers in this study had bilingual and ESL endorsements. One of the odd findings of this study was that despite this training, the teachers in this study still did not utilize good pedagogy for meeting the needs of English language learners. This would indicate that the professional development programs for in-service teachers need to provide a combination of theory and practice. For doing this, my suggestions are that when pre-service teachers take ESL courses, their instructors need to

teach second language learning theory and then give their students many opportunities to see examples of teaching practices that reflect the theory they learned. Examples of teaching practices can be provided by inviting guest teachers who are currently teaching English language learners and are recommended by schools or in-service teachers. Another suggestion is that instructors need to give new teachers opportunities to create lesson plans for English language learners in specific content areas and then ask them to teach the lesson they created to the whole class. After this teaching experience, they might exchange feedback and share ideas. This kind of professional development can help pre-service teachers connect theory to teaching practice and to develop good ideas, beliefs, assumptions, pedagogy, and knowledge about English language learners and learning.

#### *Implications for myself*

A final implication of this study is that I will take what I have learned and apply it in my professional career of teaching English in Korea. I have a responsibility for developing effective conditions for English learning in the Korean classroom and for investigating the best ways for the Korean students to maximize their language use. Based on my research and observations of the Korean English educational systems and policies, I have come to realize that well-trained English teachers are needed to help develop effective English-learning environments. My future research will focus on contributing to the development of curricula and classroom materials for these teachers in order to help them teach their students with expertise and with the confidence gained from what they (will) have learned from teacher education programs. I will also examine teaching methods that best fit into Korean learning contexts and create a better learning

environment by further examining the Korean educational systems and policies when I return to Korea.

## **APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX A – GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Date:

### 1. Personal information

- 1 Name:
- 2 The year you were born:
- 3 Age:
- 4 Email:
- 5 Family information:
  - 6 The school you are currently attending:
  - 7 Grade levels:
- 8 Visa Status:
- 9 The length of schooling in Korea:
- 10 The year you came to the US:
- 11 The length of staying in the US:
- 12 Grade level in Korea before coming to the US:
- 13 Pseudo name:

2. Could you explain the reason why you came to the US?

3. Was it your decision or your parent's decision?

4. Could you explain about your experience of learning English in Korea?

5. How did you prepare for coming to the US?

6. Do you know why you should (have to) learn English?

7. Do you think that learning English gives you any advantages? If so, could you explain about the advantages that you would get? If not, could you explain about that?

8. Do you think that learning English in the US gives you any disadvantages? If so, could you explain about the disadvantages that you would get? If not so, could you explain about it?

9. Could you describe your school experiences in Korea?

10. Could you describe your schooling in the US?

11. Describe the differences between the Korean educational system and the American educational system. (Examples: Homework load, quizzes, exams, more pressure or less pressures, syllabus, different levels of classes, college preparation, teaching styles and learning styles, relationship between teacher and students, communication styles, value on education, attitude on education, and so on)

12. Could you tell me your experiences when you first come to school in the US?  
(Follow-up questions)

13. If you have any difficulties or challenges in the American schools, could you explain them? (Follow-up questions: Korean language and cultural values vs. English culture and language immersion)

14. Could you describe who you are in the US or in the school? (How does English language and culture effect who you are?)

15. What are your future goals?

16. What are your parents' expectations of you?

17. Are you going back to Korea or staying here? The reasons why?

## APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR JUNG

### Specific Interview Questions for Jung

I talked to Jung's mom for a while in the Korean language school. She said Jung is being tutor, but I didn't have a chance to talk more about it. I would like to know more about it. She also said she attended to open house at the school. I would like to know more about this too.

1. Could you describe your current school experiences? (Follow-up questions)
2. Are there any difficulties or challenges that you are currently experiencing in the classroom?
3. I remember that you worked on a creative writing story about a penny. Do you remember the definition of creative writing that your teacher stated in the classroom? Could you define what the creative writing is for you?
4. I also remember that you told your teacher "My writing is short." Why does writing a small amount bother you? (Does a short writing mean a bad writing?)
5. What difficulties do you have when you write in English? Could you explain about it?
6. Based on my observations, I have never seen you initiate conversation in the classroom. Could you explain why?
7. I observed that you had a hard time answering the questions for the comprehension exercises from the book in Language Arts class. What makes it hard for you to understand and answer these questions? (I wonder about his reading fluency and reading proficiency level. What grade level of reading is he at? What type of test would allow me to figure out his level of reading proficiency?)
8. What helps you to understand the subject matter and classroom direction better (for example, handouts, teacher's demonstration) in the classroom?
9. Could you explain how you learn English both in the classroom and outside the classroom?



10. Could you explain why you did not turn in your homework 7 times?
  
11. Could you give me examples of your difficulties in Social Studies?
  
12. How do you feel about working on a lot of handouts in Social Studies? (Follow-up questions)
  
13. Does anybody help you do your homework?
  
14. Do you like watching the news for 10 minutes in Social Studies? Do you know why you have to watch it? Do you understand what they talk about? What does news mean to you?
  
15. How do you interact with your friends? (Do you have any friends, Korean or American? What do you do with them? (During the lunch time, recess, and outside the school)
  
16. How do you like the Korean language school? (Do you like going there? Do you like playing with friends there?)
  
17. Could you describe the reason why you go to the Korean language school?
  
18. How is your Korean? (Which language is more comfortable for you to speak and express yourself? If you think that you are losing Korean, could you explain why?)
  
19. Does your classroom (in ESM) talk about Korean cultures?

## **APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TIM**

### **Specific Interview Questions for Tim**

1. I remember you said that your English is not that great. Could you describe your level of English proficiency?
  
2. Two of your teachers said that you always do great in class and that you don't seem to have any problems. What do you think about their comments? Do you agree with that assessment?
  
3. I also remember that you learned English from your mother (who is a tutor). Could you explain more about this? Also, could you tell me about your experience of learning English in the classroom in Korea?
  
4. I would assume that your English proficiency has been improved since you came to the US. Do you think that is true? If you think it's true, how do you think you have been learning English? (Follow-up question)
  
5. You told me that you are taking an ROTC class. You have thought about becoming a soldier or something, even though your parents expect you to be a doctor? What do you think of their expectation? Are you willing to follow their expectations?
  
6. Your brother took summer courses in 2005. Did you take summer courses as well?
  
7. Do you like attending school in the US? If so, what reasons do you like it? If not, explain about the reasons why not?
  
8. Are there any difficulties you have experienced in the classroom? Would you describe your challenges in the classroom (for each class including English 10 class and

Geometry)?

9. You told me that you are having hard time working with learning 20 new vocabulary words a week and also you are having hard time writing in English. (The vocabulary that the teacher wrote on the board: interminable, matrons, paradox, perceive, prognosticate, realm, and so on). (Form and function in the sentence?) Could you explain more about these issues and anything else about the difficulties you have experienced in the classroom?

10. What helps you to understand the subject matter and classroom direction better (for example, handouts, teacher's demonstration) in the classroom?

11. What makes it more difficult for you to understand what is going on and being presented in the classroom?

12. Based on my observations, I have never seen you initiated conversation in the classroom. (I don't want him to make feel uncomfortable, so I will first share my own problems and experiences in the classroom.) Could you explain why you don't initiate conversation in the classroom? What makes you not to do that?

13. I observed that the classroom communication styles between your teacher and your peers, or between classmates are, comprised of questioning, answering, evaluating and feedback. They communicated very informally, and the flow of communication was fast. They sometimes talk over each other and sometimes cut off each other's communication. They also disagree with their teacher. How do you feel about the classroom communication that you have experienced? How do you feel about class discussion between the teacher and your peers? Do you see any differences between the communications in Korean classroom and the communications in American classroom? Does this communication difference make you feel uncomfortable in initiating communication? What makes you to not be willing to do that? Anything else? (Understanding? The fast flow of conversation? Hard to jump in the conversation?)

14. Could you tell me about your American peers in the classroom? What do you think

about American students' active and free expressions of their opinions in the classroom?

15. Why do you take Spanish? How do you feel about it? (How do you feel that Korean is not valued as a foreign language in Albuquerque?)

16. What is your impression of the "pledge of allegiance"?

17. Have you observed any cultural differences in the classroom? (How do you feel about the relationships between your teachers and peers? How do you feel about your peers' attitudes towards their education? How do you feel about your female peers' outfits and heavy make-up? How do you feel about their behaviors toward their teacher?)

18. Do you interact with your peers (either American or Korean friends) inside the classroom or outside the classroom? If you do, what do you do with them?

19. I remember that you go to an American church. Why do you choose to go to an American church? Do you have any American friends there? How do you interact with them?

20. If you have American friends or Korean friends, what do they mean to you in the US?

## **APPENDIX D – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YANG**

### **Specific Interview Questions for Yang**

1. You told me that your parents came to the US first. Could you explain your family situation at that time?
2. Do you like attending school in the US? If so, what are the reasons you like it? If not, explain about the reasons why not?
3. Are there any difficulties you have experienced in the classroom? Would you describe your challenges in the classroom (for each class including English class and Government class)?
4. As a 12<sup>th</sup> grader, how do you prepare for your college entrance in the US?
5. Could you describe the differences between Korean and the US with regard to college preparation?
6. Based on my observations, I have never seen you initiate conversation in the classroom. (I don't want him to make feel uncomfortable, so I will share my own experiences and problems in the classroom.) Could you explain why you don't initiate conversation in the classroom? What makes you unwilling to?
7. I observed that the classroom communication styles between your teacher and your peers, or between classmates are, comprised of questioning, answering, evaluating and feedback. They communicated very informally, and the flow of communication was fast. They sometimes talk over each other and sometimes cut off each other's communication. They also disagree with their teacher. How do you feel about the classroom communication that you have experienced? How do you feel about class discussion between the teacher and your peers? Do you see any differences between the communications in Korean classroom and the communications in American classroom? Does this communication difference make you feel uncomfortable in initiating communication? What makes you to not be willing to do that? Anything else?

(Understanding? The fast flow of conversation? Hard to jump in the conversation?)

8. You told me that one difficulty you have in the classroom is that sometimes you miss an opportunity to talk because your peers say what you wanted to say before you have a chance. How do you feel when you lose your opportunity to talk? Do you think what you are going to say in Korean first before you say it in English? (Language process/Korean helps you when you learn English?)

9. I would assume that your English proficiency has been improved since you came to the US. Do you think that is true? If you think it's true, how do you think you have been learning English? (Follow-up question)

10. What helps you to understand the subject matter and classroom direction better (for example, handouts, teacher's demonstration) in the classroom?

11. What makes it more difficult for you to understand what is going on and being presented in the classroom? Based on my observations, you sat very quietly and just looked at Mr. Peterson when he bombarded the class with a lot of review questions. You told me that it was really hard to understand. How do you feel when you don't understand what's going on?

12. Two of your teachers said that you always do great in class and that you don't seem to have any problems. What do you think about their comments? Do you agree with that assessment?

13. Could you tell me about your American peers in the classroom? What do you think about American students' actively and freely expressing their opinions in the classroom?

14. I observed that one of your peers put his hand on the teacher's (Mr. Peterson) shoulder while he was talking to him. You told me their relationship seems like they are "friends." Have you observed any cultural differences in the classroom? (How do you

feel about the relationships between teachers and students? How do you feel about your peers' attitudes towards their education? How do you feel about your female peers' outfits and heavy make-up? (Also, they kiss each other in the hall.) How do you feel about their behavior toward their teacher?)

15. You told me that you used to belong to the soccer team, and that interacting with your friends on the team helped you improve your English skills. Could you explain more about this? Do you interact with your peers (either American or Korean friends) inside classroom or outside the classroom? If you do, what do you do with them? If you have American friends or Korean friends, what do they mean to you in the US?

16. I know you are taking a Government class. Why are you taking this course? Is it required? Could you describe this class? Are there any difficulties and challenges in this class? If yes, what makes difficult?

17. Do you think that your lack of cultural capital about the American government system hinders you in understanding or in learning?

18. Based on the voting on stance of political views in the class, your stance was centralist and conservative. Could you explain more about it? What do your political views in this country mean to you?

19. You told me that you enjoyed your peer's discussion about cartoon characters as heroes. Why do you think this kind of conversation is interesting?

20. English class (one girl/proofreading/grammar issues and sentence structure issues).

21. I am told that you used to attend church, but currently your family stays at home to pray. If you don't mind, could you tell me more about this.

22. How do you prepare for your future and life in the US?

## APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MOTHERS

### (One example with Jung’s Mother)

1. Could you explain the tutoring that Jung is receiving?
2. Could you tell more about the open house at the school? (missing homework)
3. When did you come to the US?
4. Why did you decide to come to the US? (better education and better life) Who made the decision?
5. Before you came to the US, could you describe the situation?
6. How was Jung’s school experience in Korea?
7. Has he studied English before?
8. Describe your life in Chicago?
9. How about living in Albuquerque? Do you like living in the US? What do you do? What does your husband do? How about your family’s visa status? Are there any difficulties you and your family have?
10. Are you still taking courses at TVI?
11. How do you interact with the Korean community?
12. What is your impression about their value on education? How do they educate their children?
13. What benefits do you think you have while you live in the US, and what benefits do your children have while they develop their English proficiency?.
14. What disadvantages do your children have while they are here and while they develop their English?
15. What difficulties do you think he has in school?
16. What does he usually do after school? Does he study a lot? Do you help him do his homework? What difficulties do you have when you help him?
17. What does teaching Korean at the Korean language school mean to you?
18. How about Jung’s Korean? How do you evaluate his level of Korean?
19. Do you think Jung is losing his primary language? Do you speak in Korean at home? How about with his brother?
20. What are your concerns about him while he lives in the US?
21. What are your and your family’s future goals?
22. What expectations do you have for Jung?
23. Are you going back to Korea or stay here? The reasons?
24. Do you think that he is really immersed in American culture and English language in school?
25. Do you think he will learn English language and American culture at school because he lives in the US?
26. Do you think Korean culture and language should be valued in American schools?
27. How does learning English influence his Korean language?



## **APPENDIX F – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

### **(One example with Tim’s English teacher)**

1. Can I ask your name?
2. How long have you taught English class?
3. Could you describe your teaching background?
4. Have you experienced or taught English language learners before?
5. Can you describe your student Tim?
6. Do you think he is different from other students in your class? If so, why? (in terms of cultural issues, behavior, and attitude)
7. Do you think about how he experiences English in the classroom? Specifically how he learns or develops English in the classroom?
8. In your opinion, what kinds of challenges and difficulties might Tim experience as he develops English proficiency and skills (in terms of class tasks, assignments, reading and writing)
9. What is the purpose of English class?
10. Can you describe what good English writing is? Or what does Tim need to become a literate person in the US in order to survive?
11. Tim thinks his English is not great. He assessed his English proficiency as intermediate. He said he is having hard time writing in English. I asked him what earning an ‘A’ grade means. What do you think about his comments?
12. Do you have any ideas or strategies about how you can help second language learners?

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