FACTORS AFFECTING KOREAN STUDENTS' RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR IN AN EFL CLASSROOM

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The remarkable shift of focus in English education in Korea from grammar and reading-oriented knowledge to productive language skills warrants an investigation of the ways in which learners' classroom behavior is related to successful language learning and teaching. Particularly, the importance of risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in a spoken English class has been documented in literature and corroborated by many second and foreign language teachers and researchers. Although several studies have been conducted to explore the phenomenon of Asian students' inactive risk-taking in ESL classroom settings, little research has been made to address the Korean students' risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom.

The present study describes and analyzes the Korean college students' perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency and the factors which help and/or hinder the students' active risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom. Fifteen freshmen students from different majors of study in a
Korean university were chosen for this study. This study was conducted using qualitative research techniques including diary entries, classroom observation, and personal data questionnaire.

The present study disclosed that all the participants perceived the importance of risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in class. They responded the affective factors and socio-cultural factors contributed to regulating their risk-taking behavior. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations for more productive teaching strategies and program planning are provided for EFL instructors and administrators in Korea.
Dedicated to my family

AND

Lord Jesus
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I would like to thank Lord Jesus for His mercy and love during my study. Him I praise with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The effects of classroom interaction on language learning have long been a focus of research for second and foreign language teachers and researchers (Allwright, 1984; Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1980, 1984, 1985, 1994; van Lier, 1988). They argue that language learning comes about as a consequence of the interplay of the factors created by the learners, the teacher, and the interaction among them (teacher-student, student-student). Allwright (1984) sees classroom interaction as "the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy because everything that happens in the classroom happens through a process of live person-to-person interaction" (p. 156).

Classroom interaction is indeed a complicated phenomenon. Teachers' perceptions of the nature of language learning, of classroom activities, and of norms for classroom
participation often differ from those of their students, who have a wide variety of proficiency levels, linguistic background, culturally predisposed ways of learning, and individual motivations and objectives in studying the language. If ignored, these differences can cause misunderstandings and create a barrier to effective language learning and teaching during face-to-face interaction within the classrooms (Rivers, 1987; Johnson, 1995).

Furthermore, in conjunction with cognitive, socio-cultural, and situational factors, the learners' affective characteristics may influence the classroom interaction and the learning process at a deeper level. In the last few decades, the main thrust of research into second and foreign language learning and teaching has involved attempts to identify critical factors in a holistic understanding of the learning process. Several researchers have argued that the affective domain is an important and unavoidable part of the learning process and thus a crucial determinant of its outcomes (Ciarain, 1984; Brown, 1987; Samimy, 1994).

Classroom research must therefore take into account the factors that derive from individual learner differences as well as from global learning situations (Ellis, 1994). It is undoubtedly of foremost importance that the affective factors
entering into classroom interaction should be subjected to careful and critical examination. Symptomatic of the operation of the affective as well as the socio-cultural aspect, which exercises certain regulatory power upon it, is the learners' risk-taking behavior. Ranging from active engagement to passive avoidance, risk-taking behavior constitutes a major testing-ground on which the success or failure of a language classroom may be determined.

Statement of the Problem

Several researchers (Ely, 1984; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978; Samimy, 1991) assert that the successful language learner is one who is willing to take risks. In a spoken language classroom, risk-taking is best manifested in active oral participation; it involves responding to the teacher's or other students' questions, raising questions, and making comments. When language learners take risks in oral participation, they actively engage themselves in the negotiation of comprehensible input and the formulation of comprehensible output (Swain, 1985), both of which are essential in the language learning process.

Swain (1985) stated that, while comprehensible input may be sufficient for acquiring semantic competence in the target
language, comprehensive output is needed in order to gain grammatical competence. In other words, language learners must make efforts to produce the output that is comprehensible to their interlocutors if they are to master the grammatical knowledge of the language.

Nevertheless, many previous studies have argued that getting students to speak up is a problem that most ESL/EFL teachers face (Beebe, 1983; Hwang, 1993; Lucas, 1984; Pica, Young, and Doughty, 1987; Sato, 1981; White and Lightbown, 1984; Tsui, 1996; Tsou, 1996; Wu, 1991). The studies reported that the students’ verbal reticence in the ESL/EFL classrooms is especially acute with Asian students. Sato (1981), for example, investigated the learner’s turn-getting behavior among Asian and non-Asian students in two university ESL classes. In classes containing more Asians than non-Asians, she found that Asian students did take fewer self-selected turns than non-Asian students. Likewise, Wu (1991) studied four ESL classes in Hong Kong, and he observed that no students took the initiative to seek clarification or check information from the teacher.

Up to now, however, this research has not drawn a specific focus on the Korean context even though in recent years interest in English language learning and teaching has
increased significantly in South Korea. Also, Korean students constitute a large portion of foreign students coming to the United States to study. Therefore, this study addresses how Korean college students perceive risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classrooms, with a focus on the affective factors and with a related consideration of socio-cultural factors that may contribute to regulating Korean students’ risk-taking behavior.

Significance of the Study

This study centers on Korean college students’ perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in spoken English classrooms. As such, the study has two different yet closely related areas of significance in terms of what it analyzes, how the analysis is conducted, and what the analysis finally reveals.

First, the study provides a body of significant data with which the EFL teachers and researchers in Korea might be better informed of more appropriate and productive teaching strategies for spoken English classes. In recent years, Korea has seen its traditional emphasis in English education on grammatical or reading-oriented knowledge shifting toward a new stress on communicative competence. This remarkable
change can best be observed in curricular restructuring at
the college level. The spoken English classes, which used to
remain on the margin of collegiate curricula as elective
courses, have moved to the center-stage and have become
required courses for all freshmen students in a number of
Korean universities. In such a context the present study aims
to investigate the students’ own perceptions toward risk-
taking behavior for oral proficiency and the factors which
facilitate/debilitate or help/hinder the students’ active
oral participation in an EFL classroom. As a result, the
findings will provide the EFL instructors and researchers
with new and valuable insights, through which they are able
to develop more productive instructional techniques.

Second, this study is significant from a methodological
point of view. Much of the research conducted to further our
collective understanding of the language learning process and
learners has been quantitative in nature, focusing on the
presumably typical behavioral traits of the learners which
can be quantitatively measured and objectively analyzed. The
limitations in such an approach are apparent, especially when
one investigates the role of affective variables in language
learning. As affective characteristics of learners are
individualistic, changeable, and extremely complicated, a
quantitative or empirical approach is most likely to fail to produce a body of in-depth and reliable data from the learners.

Alternatively, the qualitative approach taken in the present study is a better option for making what is called ‘introspective data’ available (Ericsson and Simon, 1987; Grotjahn, 1987). In particular, the diary study, which constitutes the core part of this study, is designed to reveal certain facets of language learning experience normally hidden from and largely inaccessible to an external observer. As such, the diary study provides a valuable research tool by means of which the learners’ point of view in their own learning process (e.g., how they evaluate themselves, cope with their frustrations, and develop their language learning techniques) could be obtained. If our goal is to consider the individual learner as a whole person and not just a hypothetical entity in an anonymous learning process, we should reposition the language learners to be the center of our attention. From this perspective, diary study is not only useful in itself but also invaluable from the standpoint of the holistic approach to language learning.
Definition of Terms

Affective Factors – factors that derive from learners’ subjective experience, such as emotion, motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety.

Cultural Beliefs or Practices – a set of assumptions and imperatives that govern the consciousness of individuals in a regional or ethnic culture, or a set of attitudes and behaviors that are naturalized in the individuals that belong to the culture.

Debilitating Factors – factors that hinder or discourage learners’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom.

English Oral Proficiency – ability to communicate fluently in English with native speakers of English.

External Factors – factors that originate outside the learners. External factors are related to factors deriving from learners’ cultural beliefs or practices and learning situations.

Facilitating Factors – factors that help or encourage learners’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom.

Internal Factors – factors that originate within a learner or stem from an individual’s psychological bases.

Internal factors are related to personal and
affective domains such as personality, attitude, motivation, and self-esteem.

Risk-Taking Behavior - learner’s initiative or voluntary participation. Learner’s initiative or voluntary participation includes self-selection of a turn in the absence of a solicit, either general or personal, from the instructor, and interception of a turn during another student’s turn. General solicit is a request made by the teacher for a response from anyone in class. Personal solicit is a teacher question to respond directed at a particular individual student.

Risk-taking Mode - the extent to which an individual learner takes risks in an EFL class. In this study, students’ risk-taking behavior is classified into three modes: active, moderate, and inactive modes. An active risk-taker is one who takes initiative of oral participation more frequently than the average number of self-selected turn-takings in the class. A moderate risk-taker is one whose frequency of self-selection marks the average of the class. An inactive risk-taker is one whose frequency of self-selection remains below the average of the class. In this study, the average frequency of self-selection was 2.
Socio-cultural Factors - refer to the factors that are related to learners’ learning environment and learners’ cultural beliefs or practices that are generally shared by a certain ethnic group and taught at school or learned naturally in the process of growing up in society.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study was the small number of subjects, with only fifteen participants. The findings from the fifteen students, even though they come from various majors, could not be generalized to the larger populations (e.g., all freshmen students at Korea University, or Korean college students in general). Another limitation is the fact that the subjects in this study were not chosen randomly. The individual subjects were volunteer participants, which might imply that the subjects were likely to have a stronger motivation or interest in their language learning process. Furthermore, with the lack of control over variables and the pre-experimental nature of the design, causal statements were not possible. In addition, self-reported data such as participants’ self-evaluation of English oral proficiency has its limitations.
Purpose of the Study

This study’s aim was to describe and interpret the nature of the Korean students’ perceptions toward their risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency and the nature of factors impacting their risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom. The investigation was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the students’ perceptions toward the risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in an EFL classroom?
2. Which factors are related to the students’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom?
   a. Do the external factors (e.g., class size, attitude of instructor, and teaching material) facilitate and/or debilitate the students’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom?
   b. Do the internal factors (e.g., anxiety, self-esteem, and motivation) facilitate and/or debilitate the students’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom?
3. How do students respond to their classroom experience? What are their preferences toward various EFL classroom activities?
4. Are there any changes in students’ perceptions toward
risk-taking behavior over a certain period of time (from the beginning of study to the end of the semester)?

5. If there are changes (e.g., interaction with instructor or other students, self-confidence in comparison with other students), what is the nature of these changes? Are they related to other internal or external factors?

Basic Assumptions

It was assumed, first of all, that the participants were capable of describing perceptions of themselves as language learners and their experience in the EFL classrooms in their native language, Korean. It was also assumed that the participants would be candid in their responses on the personal data questionnaire and in individual diary entries. In addition, it was assumed that the systematic analysis of data collected from participants' diary entries, classroom observations, and a personal data questionnaire would reduce the researcher's biases.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review was drawn from three areas: theoretical rationales and applications of risk-taking behavior in the second and foreign language learning; classroom research related to the study of risk-taking behavior; and factors impacting risk-taking behavior in the classroom.

Theoretical Rationales and Applications of Risk-Taking Behavior in Second/Foreign Language Learning

In the past few decades, several researchers have addressed the significance of risk-taking in learning (Bem, 1971; Carney, 1971; Kogan and Wallach, 1967; Young, 1991 c). Risk-taking was viewed as a willingness to make a decision involving something new and different without putting the primary focus on success or failure (Bem, 1971). According to Young (1991 c), learning is the reward for taking risks. Learners have to be able to gamble a bit, to be willing to try out hunches about something new and take the risk of being wrong. For, there is the risk of making mistakes and probability of loss or failure. However, there is the gain of
learning through trial and error.

In language learning, especially in learning spoken English, risk-taking behavior is an active oral participation or involvement such as raising questions, responding to the teacher’s or other students’ questions, and making comments during the classroom activities. In spoken language class, then, risk-taking may be a gain since it could provide learners with opportunities to say what they want to say. In other words, risk-taking behavior could be related to the necessity and desirability of communicating one’s thoughts in a language classroom. Students who strongly wish to communicate their own ideas perceive a greater gain than those who are unwilling to take risks.

Although there has been little attention given to risk-taking behavior as ‘main’ component of language learning and teaching research, recent trends in the field seem to suggest an increasing awareness of its significance in language learning. During the last few decades, second and foreign language learning researchers have drawn much attention to the study of communicative competence (Canale and Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983), comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), comprehensible output (Swain, 1985), and negotiation of meaning through interaction (Long, 1981). These notions are significantly related to risk-taking behavior.

Several researchers (Bialystok, 1978; Johnson and Morrow, 1981; Puhl, 1975; Taylor, 1987) have argued that
communicative competence can only be achieved by acquiring the language through active participation in real communication that is of interest to learners. Bialystok (1978), in a study of Canadian high school students learning French, claims that ‘functional practice’ helps to account for students’ performance. She defines ‘functional practice’ as attempts by the learner “to increase his exposure to use the language for the purpose of . . . increasing his ability to use the language communicatively” (p. 225). Classroom communicative competence - competence in both the social and interactional aspects of classroom language, Johnson (1995) asserts, develops by active involvement with not only what the learners will say but also how they say it. In other words, such participation can increase the opportunities for students to engage in unrehearsed communication and thereby experience doubt and uncertainty, and learn to make appropriate content and linguistic choices accordingly in the classroom situations.

Comprehensible input and interaction have been identified as critical variables in the second and foreign language learning process (Hatch, 1983; Krashen, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Long, 1981, 1983, 1985; Pica, Young, and Doughty, 1987). Krashen (1981) argued that learners must receive comprehensible input in order for acquisition to proceed. Comprehensible input can be obtained through a number of ways such as through speech modification on the
part of one’s interlocutor or through negotiation of meaning between interlocutor and learner, or among learners (see Varonis and Gass, 1985). Long (1981) proposed that active negotiated interaction promote optimal conditions for participants to adjust their input to each other’s level of comprehension. In other words, all participants in classroom interaction should ask questions in order to clarify and confirm input, thereby making it comprehensible.

Another dimension to consider is the notion of comprehensible output developed by Swain (1985). Refining the notion of comprehensible input, she mentions that comprehensible output, or productive use of language, plays a crucial role in acquisition, for it provides learners with a forum for testing out hypotheses about the target language. This is further supported by Varonis and Gass (1985) and Scarcella and Higa (1981), who argued that the optimal input for acquisition is the input that comes as a result of negotiation work through active personal involvement as opposed to simplification by one’s interlocutor.

Also, Schachter (1984) claims that, when the learners produce the language that they are learning, they are testing out the hypotheses that they have formed about the language - to try out means of expression and see if they work. Thus, fossilization, or the relatively permanent incorporation of certain patterns of error, is due to a lack of willingness to take risks. In other words, the learners are likely to remain
assured that it is safe to stay within patterns that accomplish the desired function, even though there may be some errors in those patterns. In support of the theoretical bases above, there is some evidence that more production and more correct production are associated with target language proficiency (Naiman, Frohlick, Stern, and Todesco, 1978; Strong, 1983; Peck, 1985).

For the practical application of these theories, research on risk-taking behavior can be related to every aspect of the language classroom, including pedagogical approaches. For instance, the recent trends in second and foreign language learning research have paid attention to ‘communicative language teaching’ and the ‘learner-centered approach.’

Communicative language teaching emphasizes learning and practicing language skills in real and meaningful contexts. Learners are exposed to and engaged in contextually rich, genuine, and meaningful communication. Johnson (1981) and others have argued that to fulfill real communicative functions, learners must have opportunities to use rules productively and communicatively in a full range of real situations and social settings. Communicative language teaching suggests a constructive alternative to the audio-lingual method, which is limited primarily to mechanical manipulation of utterances and thus only involves a low risk-taking situation. There is very little risk in mere
repetition and mindless manipulation based on habit, and there is no gain, accordingly, in that learners are not allowed to talk about what they want to communicate. In order to overcome such limitations, communicative language teaching stresses the importance of providing language learners with more opportunities to interact directly with the target language - to acquire it by using it rather than learn it by studying (Allwright, 1979; Brumfit, 1981; Johnson, 1981).

Another recent interest in language learning and teaching is learner-centeredness, which emphasizes concepts such as learner autonomy (Brookes and Grundy, 1988; Holec, 1979) and self-directed learning (Dickinson, 1987). Learner-centeredness assumes a much more active status of the learner as an individual and social being in the classroom. This is predicated on the idea that learners’ motivation will be enhanced and their attitude and learning behavior positively geared to learning if learners are given greater autonomy as active participants in learning, not merely as recipients of transmitted knowledge.

The notion of learner-centeredness also involves a negotiation of the teacher’s authority to direct the class. Stevick (1980) addresses this point by making a distinction between teacher’s ‘control’ and student’s ‘initiative.’ The teacher controls or creates a secure, comfortable atmosphere in which communication is possible and encouraged, in which students can feel free to take initiatives to
communicate and are motivated to do so.

One particular methodology relevant to communicative and learner-centered approach is ‘Community Language Learning’ (Stevick, 1982; Rardin, Tranel, and Green, 1988) in the second and foreign language classroom, which an approach based upon the notion of ‘Counseling-Learning’ (Curran, 1976). Curran (1976) focuses on a comfortable atmosphere of warmth and belonging in which learners could feel secure and are encouraged to exercise initiatives to communicate in the classroom.

According to Community Language Learning, more effective learning takes place when the learners have mutual trust with the teacher and with other learners. Such a secure and non-defensive atmosphere helps the learners take the initiative in conducting communication, directing their own learning process, selecting their own activities, and deciding what they want to practice. The security provided by the group and the sense of community that develops may thus make it possible for learners to take risks without feeling threatened as much as in conventional classroom (Rardin et al., 1988).

Aligned with the idea of Community Language Learning, several researchers have argued in favor of pair and small group work to increase oral production in the classroom (Brumfit, 1984; Kramsch, 1987; Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos, 1976; Pica and Doughty, 1985). According to
Kramsch (1987), the principal way in which learners learn how to use the language is through an interaction that is created anew by every group of teachers and learners. He stresses that in a group-oriented classroom, learners have the opportunity to use the target language within a variety of group tasks. In other words, learners are socially held together by the cooperative efforts of the participants, who play the role of speakers, listeners, or addressees, in turn. Learners create a desired interactional atmosphere by the way they take or avoid their turns, by the way they initiate and build topics, and by performing the repairs required by actual or potential breakdowns in communication.

Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos (1976) also assert that verbal interaction during pair-work or in small groups produces more modified interaction and more negotiation for meaning than the same task in the teacher-fronted condition. In group-work activities, learners are forced into a two-way information exchange: everyone has to give and receive information for the tasks to be done properly. Therefore, pair-work or small group activity creates an interactive learning environment in which the students can take risks. In this environment, the students are no longer passive receivers of what the teacher gives, but actively initiate about the topics, grasp the floor to speak, and cooperate with each other in order to forward the conversation or activities.
Classroom Research Related to the Study of Risk-Taking Behavior

The risk-taking behavior hypothesized to predict oral proficiency can be seen in studies representing voluntary oral participation (Ely, 1984; Gliksman, Gardner and Smythe, 1982; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978; Samimy, 1994; Seliger, 1977, 1983). Seliger (1977) investigated the relationship between external language behavior (risk-taking) in the form of intensity of verbal interaction and the effects of this interaction on language abilities. Data were gathered throughout one semester from ESL students at Queens College. He posits two types of adult ESL learners characterized by how often they use or practice any verbal interaction in the target language: high input generators and low input generators. High input generators interact intensively, initiating and sustaining conversation, and causing others to use the target language with them. On the other hand, low input generators avoid interacting and remain passive in the language class, participating minimally, speaking only when called upon. Based upon these results, Seliger concluded that the high input generators, with their greater willingness to take risks, make mistakes and allow themselves to test more hypotheses, and are better able to turn input into intake (see Krashen, 1978) than the more cautious low input generators.

In an attempt to explore the relationship between
language risk-taking and oral proficiency, Ely (1984) conducted a study on causal relationships between risk-taking and oral participation, and between subjects’ oral participation and oral proficiency. Data on classroom participation were gathered through classroom observation and audio recording. A questionnaire on risk-taking was administrated to 75 freshmen students enrolled in Spanish classes at a university in California. From the results of the causal analysis, he found that risk-taking positively predicted voluntary classroom participation, and classroom participation positively predicted oral proficiency.

Several researchers and teachers assert that a good or successful language learner is one who is willing to take risks (Corder, 1981; Faerch and Kasper, 1980; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978; Reiss, 1981, 1985; Rubin, 1975; Rubin and Thompson, 1982; Stern, 1975). They all characterize a good or successful language learner as one who is willing to guess, willing to make mistakes to communicate and get the message across, and willing to use what knowledge they have in the target language in order to create novel utterances.

Reiss (1985) conducted a study to identify the characteristics of a good language learner. A long questionnaire was distributed to ninety-eight college-level students who were studying French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish as a second language. The majority of students
(97%) reported that they 'listen closely in class and answer questions whether called upon or not,' and 'listen to other students in class and correct their errors' (76%); furthermore, they 'look for opportunities to use the language' (61%). Reiss concluded that good language learners take and create opportunities to practice what they have learned while poorer learners passively do what is assigned.

Factors Impacting Risk-Taking Behavior in Classroom

The Role of Personal and Affective Characteristics in Language Learning

In recent decades, individual differences in language learners influencing learning outcomes have attracted a lot of attention in second and foreign language learning research. Learners' personal variables and their affective states are of crucial importance in accounting for individual differences in learning outcomes (Ellis, 1994). Personal variables influence language learning at the individual level. According to Schumann and Schumann (1978), personal variables or factors interact with cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural variables in patterns that are idiosyncratic for each individual. Personal variables represent learner's gender, personality, desire to learn, and the way they choose to go about learning.

Several researchers (Brown, 1987; Horwitz and Young, 1991; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Samimy 1991, 1994; Shier, 1990; Tudor, 1993; Young, 1990, 1991 a) have paid great deal
of attention to the importance of personal and affective factors in the second and foreign language learning. Affective factors, according to Ellis (1985), are ones concerning feelings or emotional response aroused by the attempts to learn the target language. A constructive consideration of the personal and affective characteristics in the language learning process is consistent with the perspective of the ‘whole person approach’ to learning and teaching. This approach considers a language learner as a whole person, focusing on the positive development of the whole human being, that is, on the emotional as well as the intellectual development of learners (Moskowitz, 1978; Bhanot, 1983). According to Stevick (1971), language learning is a ‘total human experience.’ She stresses that language teaching should carry out “the ways in which language learning depends on the deeper reaches on [the learners’] emotions and symbolic lives” (p. 3).

The ‘holistic’ or ‘humanistic’ approach thus requires a reconceptualization of language learning and teaching. Language learning according to such a perspective can be conceived as an activity that involves learners as complex human beings and not just as language learners. Rardin, Tranel, and Green (1988) stated that “the person is seen as striving for an integrated unity of intellect and emotions functioning within an interpersonal environment of both freedom and determination” (p. 1). In this context, theories
of language learning and teaching that fail to take the affective variables into account are both incomplete and inhuman. Therefore, learner’s personal and affective factors can bring learners out of mere passivity toward full and active participation and eventually transform the language learning process from a mechanical accumulation of information into a series of more positive and meaningful experiences.

**Social and Cultural Influences on Language Learning**

Along with the personal and affective variables operating within an individual learner, the social and cultural factors add another dimension on which to configure the learner’s attitude toward language learning, or more specifically, classroom behavior (Tucker and Lambert, 1973). The holistic approach to language learning maintains that a learner is not a ‘tableau rasa’ on which the knowledge of, and the competence in, the target language could be built. Learners come to the classroom as a whole person and, accordingly, with a long train of habits or behavioral patterns entrenched in a set of values predetermined in a greater part by their society. This viewpoint has stressed the importance of social interaction within the classroom. The classroom can be characterized as an active and dynamic social environment, one in which many things are learned and shared through social interaction, including both academic and social information (Green and Waede, 1985).
According to Allwright and Bailey (1994), the language classroom is a place where a ‘socially-constructed event’ takes place, a place where the products of the interactive work of all the people in the classroom are yielded. The second and foreign language classroom, then, like other classrooms, is a socially organized place where people come together during face-to-face interaction and perform many different activities. Teaching and learning activities are, as a result, social activities conducted between and among people that are usually carried out through talk.

In addition, learners’ cultural expectations and social values play a significant role in their classroom interaction. Several researches (Brophy and Good, 1974; Cazden, John, and Hymes, 1972; Kitao and Kitao, 1985; Politzer and McGroarty, 1985; Philips, 1972; Sato, 1981; Tomizawa, 1990) illustrate the importance of cultural aspects in language learning and teaching. Kitao and Kitao (1985) emphasize that language use is strongly related to culture. They state that “[t]he purpose of language is communication, but communication cannot be achieved through language alone. Communication is part of a total cultural pattern, so good communication requires a shared cultural understanding” (p. 2).

For example, Sato (1981) revealed that cultural background influenced the language learning behavior exhibited by learners in an ESL classroom. Sato conducted an
exploratory study to examine her own learners’ turn-getting behavior in university ESL classrooms and identified the familiar stereotype of Asian learners as being more passive and quieter than non-Asian learners. Furthermore, the Asian students took fewer initiatives and were more dependent on teacher-allocated turns. The Asian students also tended to bid more than non-Asian students before speaking. Bidding refers to the behaviors by which the learners signal to the teacher when they wish to speak (e.g., hand raising or eye contact). From these results, Sato concluded that Asian learners have more constraints on their notions of permissible classroom participation patterns than do learners from other cultures. Tomizawa (1990) examined the reasons for Japanese adult learners’ reticence in using English orally in and out of the ESL classroom. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, small group discussion, and a questionnaire; the participants were college students attending the Intensive English Language Institute. In addition to the psychological and linguistic factors, he discovered, the findings were related to socio-cultural factors such as instructional pattern differences between the American and Japanese classroom, the perfectionistic nature of the Japanese students, and their being less talkative in public.

Understanding of these Asian students’ classroom behavior therefore can be obtained by taking their
traditional cultural beliefs into account. The cultural assumptions and practices salient among East Asian countries, customarily under the rubric of Buddhism or Confucianism, have received quite a quantity of attention from western researchers in recent years (Robinson, 1988; Hyde, 1993; Sheehan and Pearson, 1995). These researchers have agreed that the teacher-student relationship in Asian culture is vertical, and their roles are distinct both nominally and substantially: teacher as authoritative transmitter of knowledge, students as subordinate recipients. It is also commonly suggested that the Asians regard silence, rather than speech, as a sign of wisdom. These two factors alone may sufficiently explain the 'typical' classroom behavior of Asian students, although I propose to add a few practical observations peculiar to the Korean context.

Korea has long been a part of east Asian cultures, and as such shares many common cultural characteristics with China and Japan. Like its neighbors, Korean society is firmly rooted in the Buddhist religion and Confucian framework of morality. The traditional Korean society adhered to these principles more or less rigidly. Especially in the realm of social conduct, Confucianism became a strict set of rules for social interaction, the effects of which can clearly be seen even to the present day in almost every aspect of the Korean society, including the EFL classroom.

At the heart of Confucianism lies an emphasis on social
harmony paralleled with a conception of a hierarchical social order; everyone is to follow the social order so as not to disrupt the unimpeded flow of social intercourse (Kim, 1976; Chun, 1982). These precepts are crystallized in the sense of propriety, which helps to regulate the social relationships, vertical and horizontal, and appropriate behaviors involved in classroom interaction, too.

In the vertical relationship between teacher and students, the sense of propriety dictates a characteristic paternalism on the teacher’s part and respect for teachers on the students’ part. Such a relationship derives in part from a traditional ethical code, which posits ‘ruler, teacher, and parents are one and the same.’ This may be further corroborated by the fact - as observed by native speakers of English who taught Korean EFL classes - that “a professor occupies the highest social standing in Korean society and teachers are owed a lifelong reverence by grateful and respectful students” (Hur and Hur, 1993, p. 23).

Apart from its positive implication for social relations as a whole, the strictly normative relationship delimits the kind and the scope of classroom interaction. While the teacher dominates the classroom as authority, the students remain passive recipients of the imparted knowledge. The students should raise their hands to obtain permission to speak, the formality of which in effect discourages students’ spontaneous expressions of opinions.
While the vertical relationship of teacher and students is predicated on the hierarchical conception of social order, the horizontal social relationships among Korean peer-students are governed by the sense of the propriety more closely related to the so-called ‘shame culture.’ In the shame cultures, where violators of social propriety are put to public shame explicitly as well as implicitly, people are intimidated by the possibility of making mistakes, behaving inappropriately, or failing to comply with the social norms. In such a social milieu, it is well advised to avoid taking risks and to take the middle ground. This often leads to passivity; ‘doing nothing is better than doing it wrong.’ In a classroom situation, the fear of making mistakes begets silence, which is doubled by the notion of ‘Silence of the Wise.’

In addition, Korean students prefer remaining silent because active oral participation is likely to be interpreted by peer students as obtrusiveness or even pretentiousness. According to the sense of propriety to be observed in the classroom, one should not impede the natural flow of the class with frequent questions or comments, whether out of a desire to learn (interpreted as obtrusive) or out of self-demonstration (interpreted as pretentious). As Susan Pares (1985), a British English teacher in a Korean university, observed regarding her students’ silence, "Korean interpersonal relationships operate on the principle of
harmony; maintaining a peaceful, comfortable atmosphere is more important than attaining immediate goals” (p. 54).

Factors Related to Students’ Risk-Taking Behavior in ESL/EFL Classroom

For analytical purposes, factors influencing risk-taking behavior in ESL/EFL classroom can be divided into two categories - internal and external factors. Internal factors are those that originate within the learner himself or herself. Personal and affective factors are related to this. On the other hand, external factors are those that originate from outside learners. This category includes learners’ learning environment and learners’ cultural beliefs or practices that are generally shared by a certain ethnic group and taught at school or learned naturally in the process of growing up in society.

Internal Factors

Internal factors consist of personal and affective factors related to learners’ risk-taking behavior. They include age, gender, personality, motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety.

age

Several researchers have argued that older students are inclined to avoid risk-taking if the opportunity is available (Carney, 1971; Kogan and Wallach, 1967; Okun, 1976; Okun and Johnson, 1978; Slakter, Koehler, Hampton, and Grennell,
1971). To examine the relationship between age and risk-taking behavior of community college students, Okun and Johnson (1978) administered a vocabulary test to 74 male and 72 female students. They concluded that older students were more conservative in their risk-taking behavior than younger students.

Some studies suggest that self-consciousness increase with age (Schumann, 1975; Lightbown and Spada, 1993). According to Schumann (1975), adult learners are more cautious about taking risks than younger ones, while younger learners are willing to use a word incorrectly and to form new expressions if necessary. In other words, adult learners are more liable to be influenced by a sense of shame caused by feelings of insufficiency or fear of appearing foolish. Thus, they often deny themselves opportunities to practice for fear of making mistakes, not getting their message across, or appearing ridiculously incompetent.

**gender**

Differences between male and female speech in classroom interaction have been investigated (Busch, 1982; Labov, 1984; Gass and Varonis, 1985; 1986; Zimmerman and West, 1975). Gass and Varonis (1986) conducted a study through 30 taped conversations with Japanese speakers in an ESL classroom. Their findings revealed that male students initiated more negotiation of meaning and dominated the conversation in terms of the amount of talk than female
students did. Also, they found that in the male/female pairs, male students tended to lead the conversation even when the responsibility belonged to the female students by virtue of the task itself.

The overall performance difference between genders may be a learned behavior caused by cultural expectations and social decorum. The traditional gender-role in most Asian countries allows men to be more dominant and assertive while women are more passive and less outspoken. As Busch (1982) observed of the female Japanese students in the ESL classroom, they tended to “find a means of self-expression indirectly within the structure of the female role” (p. 130). Hwang (1993) explored factors contributing to Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese students’ reticence in the ESL classroom. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and a questionnaire. She disclosed that one of the major factors of affecting Japanese and Korean female students’ reticence was attributed to the ‘social expectation for women.’ personality

Some researchers and teachers have discussed the personality traits related to learners’ risk-taking behavior. The results of the studies, however, are inconclusive. Some studies found extroverted students and risk-taking behavior to be positively related (Chastain, 1975; Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1975; Rossier,
1975; Rubin, 1975; Sanematsu, 1980), but others found either a negative relationship (Busch, 1982) or no significant relationship (Brown, 1973; Busch, 1982).

According to Rossier (1975), extroverted learners have an obvious advantage over their introverted counterparts in learning the target language because they create more opportunities to practice the language, obtain input, and experience success in communicating. His position was supported by Sanematsu (1980). Sanematsu investigated the learners' inactiveness in oral participation in an ESL classroom and found that there was a significant relationship between his subjects’ introverted personality and their reticence in the classroom. On the other hand, Reiss (1985) examined the characteristics of a 'good language learner' suggested by Rubin (1975). Reiss concluded that good language learners might or might not be inhibited by their personality traits. Extroverted learners are active participants in the conscious learning process, while introverted learners may obtain the exposure necessary to internalize the information by active mental participation.

Several researchers (Brown, 1987; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Lambert and Freed, 1982; Lukmani, 1972; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991; Perez, 1984; Polland, 1991) have investigated the effect of motivation in language learning. Brown (1987) defines motivation as "an inner drive or
stimulus which can be global, situational, or task-oriented. Learning a foreign language clearly requires some of all these levels of motivation" (p. 115). Some studies have argued that the effect of motivation on language learning can be viewed in terms of the type of motivation: ‘integrative versus instrumental motivation.’ Gardner and Lambert (1972), Gardner (1983), Kachru (1977), and Graham (1984) noted that integratively motivated learners, who wish to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group, work harder and are more likely to participate actively in the class. On the other hand, Lukmani (1972), Perez (1984), and Polland (1991) found that instrumental orientation (a desire to acquire a language as a means for attaining instrumental goals) is associated with active involvement in classroom interaction. Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) found that both integrative and instrumental motivation influence language learning equally.

In addition, several researchers (Ely, 1986; Lalonde and Pierson, 1982; Samimi, 1991; Tomizawa, 1990) have argued that the strength, rather than a specific type, of motivation is more strongly associated with successful language learning. Tomizawa (1990) examined the factors affecting the Japanese adult ESL learners’ reticence using quantitative and qualitative approach. He concluded that motivational intensity was one of the factors influencing the Japanese students’ willingness to use English orally in and out of
ESL classroom.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has been addressed as an important factor in successful second language learning (Brodkey and Shore, 1979; Brown, 1973, 1987; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Hernandez, 1996; Heyde, 1977, 1979; Heyde-Parsons, 1983; Polland, 1991; Samimy, 1991). According to Brown (1987), no successful language learning can be carried out without “some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself, and belief in your own capabilities for that activity” (p. 101). Brown emphasizes that healthy self-esteem allows learners to be less inhibited and to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning with less threat to their ego. Heyde (1979) investigated the effects of three levels (global, situational, task) of self-esteem on oral production of students enrolled in courses of English, French, or Spanish as a second language, respectively. Results indicated that all three levels of self-esteem are correlated significantly with oral performance measures. She claimed that speaking best reflects self-esteem since speaking is an active skill that requires risk-taking in the evaluation by others of the speaker’s grammar, pronunciation, and language proficiency.

Risk-avoidance behavior in a particular situation also is significantly related with self-esteem (Foss and Reitzel, 1988). Second and foreign language learners might not take
risks in certain situations because they judge their speaking ability in the target language to be so poor that not speaking is perceived as more rewarding than speaking up with the possibility of failure.

anxiety

Studies of affective states have paid considerable attention to the situational anxiety, especially classroom anxiety. Several researchers (Beebe, 1983; Foss and Reitzel, 1988; Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986; Young 1991 b) have argued that speaking in the target language in ESL/EFL classrooms provokes anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) pointed out that speaking in the second or foreign language classroom is “likely to challenge an individual’s self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic” (p. 128). Likewise, Knock and Terrell (1991) and Price (1991) report that speaking-oriented activities receive higher anxiety ratings by language learners than any other in-class activities.

The anxiety or fear of speaking in a foreign or second language is related to a variety of complex psychological constructs such as communication apprehension, self-esteem, and competitiveness (Young, 1990). Communication apprehension is a kind of anxiety or fear associated with oral communication with another person or persons. It makes learners avoid or withdraw from the situations where
communication is likely to occur (McCroskey, 1984). A number of studies reveal the reasons for which learners are subject to communication apprehension in ESL/EFL classes (Beebe, 1983; Lucas, 1984; Price, 1991). The main course of oral communication apprehension might be attributed to fear of making mistakes or being ridiculed. According to Lucas (1984), the productive use of the target language in ESL/EFL classrooms is a kind of testing, which has the potentiality of being negatively evaluated by the teacher and other classmates or being subject to embarrassment imposed by the learner herself.

Self-esteem can also be related to language anxiety. Varying degrees of self-esteem are correlated with different levels of language anxiety. Individuals with low self-esteem tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety (Coopersmith, 1967; Daly, 1991; Heyde, 1977, 1979; Heyde-Parsons, 1983; Young, 1991 b). Heyde’s (1977) study on self-esteem and oral performance shows that students with high self-esteem have higher ratings on their oral production than students with low self-esteem. Heyde-Parsons (1983) examined how learners’ interactions with their teacher affected their self-esteem in EFL classrooms. He noted that students with low self-esteem from the start had much lower scores when the teacher simply repeated the question again when they failed to respond.

A number of researchers (Bailey, 1983; Fields, 1978; Liu, 1989) see competitiveness as one of the language
learning difficulties that the learners experience in the classroom situation. They argue that language anxiety is caused and aggravated by the learners’ competitiveness in comparing themselves with peer students rather than by any fear of negative response from the teacher. Bailey (1983) analyzed the diaries of eleven learners in a college Spanish class. She found that learners tended to be anxious when they compared themselves with other learners in the class. Also, she noted that learners’ anxiety decreased when they perceived themselves as becoming more proficient. Likewise, Liu (1989) carried out a survey of language learning anxiety with 512 students in EFL classes. The findings show that the subjects felt nervous and withdrew when their English ability was not as good as that of their fellow classmates.

External Factors

Learners’ risk-taking behavior is influenced by external factors such as their cultural beliefs or practices, their learning situation (e.g., teacher’s attitude, teaching styles) and other course-related factors (e.g., class size, classroom activity).

teacher’s attitude

A number of researchers have been concerned with the role of the teacher in the language classroom (Fanselow, 1977; Flanders, 1970; Gardner, 1973; Lee, 1998; Moskowitz, 1976; Richards, 1992; Young, 1986; 1991). According to Lee
(1998), the teacher’s behavior is a crucial component in teacher-student classroom interaction. Teachers are influential in creating the classroom environment, and it is this environment that either encourages or discourages students’ risk-taking behavior.

Learners’ perceptions toward teacher’s attitudes can be found in the studies related to teacher’s error corrections (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; Walker, 1973; Young, 1986). Students perceive the attitude of the instructor as an important influence on their risk-taking behavior. Young (1986) investigated the sources of anxiety concerning speaking in the foreign language classroom. Among the findings, most students agreed that their anxiety would be reduced if the instructor corrected their errors with a gentle and indirect manner and helped them realize that making mistakes is a natural part of language learning. She concluded that the instructor’s relaxed and positive error correction attitude could reduce learners’ language anxiety and create more willingness to participate in class.

From classroom action research on ESL teachers, Tsui (1996) reports that students’ reluctance to take risks is significantly related with teacher’s intolerance of students’ silence. Many teachers dislike or are afraid of students’ silence, and they feel uneasy or impatient when they fail to get a response from students. Thus, when a response from a student is not forthcoming, teachers allocate the turn to
another student, provide the answer themselves, or repeat or modify the questions, without allowing for appropriate wait-time. She concluded that such attitude of teachers would “frighten the students, stop them from thinking and suppress their wish to answer questions” (p. 152).

class size

Class size plays a significant role in determining the learners’ risk-taking behavior. Large ESL/EFL classes are considered as ‘difficult educational circumstances’ on the part of teachers as well as learners (Allwright, 1989; Coleman, 1989; Good and Brophy, 1987; Horne, 1970; Locastro, 1989; Nolasco and Arthur, 1988; Shamin, 1996). According to Horne (1970), the students in a large class felt inhibitions about making mistakes, hesitancy in saying aloud sounds and structures which were unfamiliar to them, and sensitivity to the criticism of their instructor and peer students. Teachers also felt strong pressure about posing questions, correcting students, and giving the opportunity to speak to individual students for a limited time.

In an attempt to explore the teacher-learner behavior and classroom processes in ESL classes, Shamin (1996) conducted an exploratory study through interviews with twenty teachers and twenty-one groups of learners in 232 classes. The findings showed that students were particularly aware that big classes offered strictly limited opportunities for practice as well as little instant response from the teacher.
Locastro (1989) conducted surveys of learners’ experiences and attitudes toward class size in EFL classes at a university in Japan. The findings indicated that the average class size experienced by most of the students was 45 and the students preferred classes of 11-20 to have more chances to speak up.

**classroom activity**

A number of studies (Gass and Varonis, 1985; Newton, 1991; Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos, 1976; Long, 1980; Long and Porter, 1985; Pica and Doughty, 1985; Rulon and McCreary, 1986) have shown that classroom activities, especially pair or small group activities, contribute to students’ risk-taking behavior. Rulon and McCreary (1986) highlight negotiational interaction between or among learners for successful language learning. According to them, more negotiation of meaning (e.g., confirmation checks, clarification requests) takes place in pair or small group activities than the teacher-fronted activities. In other words, pair or small group activity provides students with the opportunity to negotiate language they hear, helps to improve the quality of learners’ talk, promotes a positive affective climate, and motivates learner to learn.

Likewise, Long, Adams, McLean, and Castanos (1976) compared the amount and types of the target language that the learners used when they engaged in pair-work and when they worked with the teacher. They found that learners
working in pairs or in small groups produced a greater amount of language and had more freedom to negotiate what they wanted to communicate than they did in a teacher-fronted activity. Thus, they concluded that pair-work or small group work provided more opportunities for language production and variety of language use in initiating talking, interrupting, and asking for clarification.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Site and Access

This study was conducted in a spoken English course, entitled ‘Freshman Practical English,’ at Korea University, which is listed among the top ten universities in Korea. All freshmen students were required to take this course for two consecutive semesters. Each class consists of 25 to 35 students of the same major. This course follows the system of a normal semester-long course (15 weeks) and meets twice a week for 50 minutes each lesson when the study was conducted. The main course objective was to provide the students with opportunities to develop English communication skills, mainly listening and speaking skills. All the instructors were native speakers of English (see Appendix B).

My access to the class was gained through the EFL program in the Institute of Foreign Language Studies (IFLS) of the university. Because I graduated from this university
and served as an instructor for five years in the IFLS (1988-1992), there was little difficulty in gaining administrative assistance from the institute. I obtained the consent of the Director of the IFLS for the study and then wrote to individual instructors for permission to observe their classes (see Appendix D).

Purposeful Sampling

Quantitative sampling depends on selecting a truly random and statistically representative sample that will permit confident generalization from the sample to a larger population. In a qualitative research process, however, samples tend to be purposive, rather than random (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). Patton (1990) argued that qualitative samples are selected purposefully in an attempt to obtain information-rich cases whose investigation will illuminate the questions under study. Information-rich cases are those which provide the investigator with insights into the “issue of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 169).

The target population of this study was the college students at Korea University. The accessible population was freshmen students taking ‘Freshman Practical English’
in the Spring Semester of 1998 (see Appendix A). Fifteen freshmen students were selected from fifteen different programs (Education, English, Business, Economics, Journalism, English Education, Political Science, Sociology, Medical Science, Biology, Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry, Food Science, Physics) as the participants in my study. The selection was made on a volunteer basis.

Freshmen students of all colleges and universities in Korea have taken English as a foreign language as a required subject since junior high school. The central focus in English teaching at the junior and senior high school levels is heavily based on grammatical knowledge so that the students can be better prepared for the highly competitive National Collegiate Entrance Examination in which English is one of the major tested subjects.

One of the consequences of such an educational and institutional policy is an unbalanced development in students’ language skills. Overall, oral proficiency of Korean students is the weakest among their four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) upon their admission to colleges or universities. The students who participated in this study were thus characterized as a
A homogeneous group of language learners in terms of cultural and educational backgrounds. The fifteen participants' demographic information is summarized in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Prior Learning Experience in Spoken English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medical Science</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Selected Fifteen Participants
Among the fifteen participants, as seen in Table 1, there were 8 male students (60%) and 7 female students (40%). The majority of students were 20 years old, with the youngest being 19 years old and the oldest 24 years old. Twelve (80%) out of fifteen participants did not have any previous experience in studying spoken English at school or out of school before this course. Only three participants (20%) had prior learning experience: Case 3 had received spoken and listening English instruction for two years in senior high school; Case 6 had studied for six months at a private foreign language institute; Case 9 had studied for one and a half years through public educational TV programs at home.

Data Collection

For this study, three qualitative techniques were employed: diaries of selected students, non-participant classroom observation, and personal data obtained from a questionnaire. Data were collected from March to June in the Spring Semester of 1998. The data collection time frame of this study is summarized in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Selected fifteen freshmen students taking 'Freshman Practical English' at Korea University and instructed them what to write down, how to keep diary entries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>March 9 through</td>
<td>Conducted personal information questionnaire of fifteen participants and began to collect their diary entries weekly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>March 23 through</td>
<td>Collected diary entries from the fifteen participants weekly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>May 4 through</td>
<td>Observed one class for each of the fifteen participants and wrote down field notes and expanded on the notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>May 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>May 25 through</td>
<td>Collected diary entries from the fifteen participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>May 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Data Collection Time Frame (March – June 1998)
Participants’ Diary Entries

Participants’ diaries are a valuable source of data for in-depth longitudinal case studies. According to Bailey (1991), a language learner keeps an intensive diary or journal using introspection and/or retrospection, as well as observation, typically over a long period of time. Ethnographic classroom research suggests that diary studies can be of much benefit to see and understand the insider’s view of reality, for which quantitative or empirical research often does not permit accurate investigation (Johnson, 1992; Nunan, 1992; van Lier, 1988). For, as Nunan (1992) asserted, “human behavior cannot be understood without incorporating into the research the subjective perceptions and belief systems of those involved in the research, both as researchers and subjects” (p. 54). Diary studies in particular provide insights into students’ conscious, and even unconscious, thoughts through their subjective record of classroom events (Allwright, 1983; Bailey and Ochsner, 1983; Gaiés, 1983; Schumann and Schumann, 1977). Therefore, participants’ diaries serve both as a useful tool and valuable sources of data, in that they provide the opportunity to learn about something that a researcher cannot directly see from the outside.
The fifteen participants of my study were requested to keep diaries twice a week during the Spring Semester of 1998. They were asked to write in Korean about their learning experience in the spoken English class, because it was believed that they could express themselves more fully in their native language, Korean, than the target language, English. The participants were asked to reflect upon their own experiences, especially their risk-taking behavior in their spoken English class, and to record their perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for developing their English oral proficiency. They were also asked to describe their interactions with other students, instructor’s attitudes, and other factors that they reported had an effect on their risk-taking behavior in class.

The participants were given specific guidelines about how to keep their diaries and what to look out for (see Appendix C). In order to encourage the participants to reveal their feelings as candidly as possible in the diary entries, the participants were assured that the content of the diary would be treated confidentially. In using direct quotations from their diaries for illustrative purposes, the names of all students involved were changed to pseudonyms in order to ensure anonymity. The participants also gave their permission
for the diaries to be edited and for the quotes to be cited in the final study.

Bailey (1983) observed that some diarists prefer tape-recorded comments as journal entries to written logs because they find their writing cumbersome and slow. In the present study, two male students and one female student wanted to tape-record their diary entries and were permitted to do so. Diary entries were collected at the end of each week (every Friday) throughout the semester. The participants put their diary entries in my mailbox in Room 315, Liberal Arts Hall at Korea University. At the end of the semester, a total of 390 entries (312 written diary entries and 78 entries from three tape recordings) from fifteen participants were collected. Diaries and tape recordings of the participants written or spoken in Korean were transcribed into English by the researcher. Lisa Kim, a bilingual speaker of Korean and English, helped with the verification of the translations.

Non-participant Classroom Observation

Observational strategies vary in the extent to which the observer participates in the setting being studied.
These strategies range from being a full participant – the researcher is a member of the group being observed – to being a spectator (Junker, 1960; Patton, 1990). For this study, I decided to be a non-participant observer; I did not take any part in the activities of the class in order to remain objective and observe the classroom activity more effectively. A participant observer is fully engaged in experiencing the setting under study, trying at the same time to understand that setting through personal experience, observations, and talking with other participants about what is happening (Johnson, 1992; Patton, 1990). Since the researcher must manage two roles simultaneously as a participant observer, the process is likely to be complicated. Non-participant observation, on the other hand, increases not only the opportunities for witnessing the phenomenon under investigation as it actually occurs, but also helps to produce comprehensive and detailed accounts of individuals’ behavior by virtue of the researcher’s objectivity (Glesne and Peshkin 1990; Pelto and Pelto, 1978).

For this study, I observed one class session for each participant, representing a total of fifteen different class sessions lasting for 50 minutes each. Classroom observations were carried out between 10 to 12 weeks after the semester
began. There was a total of 15 hours of observations for the study. Classroom observations were conducted with the aid of an audio-cassette recorder.

Prior to the classroom observations, I tried to ensure that the participants and instructor would be relaxed and cooperative, since the observer’s presence might be a threat or nuisance, and thus might break the naturalness of the classroom behavior during observations. I thus positioned myself at the back of the classroom as unobtrusively as possible.

The general purpose of the observations and the reason for using an audio-tape recorder were explained to the students and instructor. However, the instructor and the students were not informed of exactly what was being investigated. I simply told them that I wanted to see what was going on in the spoken English class and that the recording equipment was being used to help me recall what was observed. Some scholars (Junker, 1960; Patton, 1990) argue that participants under study may behave differently when they know the purpose of observations, so the covert research approach allows the researcher to obtain the kind of information being sought.
Field notes for the observations were written during observations and immediately after each observation. Full observation notes were then generated from the quick field notes taken during and immediately after each observation (see Appendix E). This procedure of expansion followed the note-taking methods suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992). The field notes included the description of the classroom situation and the observer’s reflections. The description of situations involved detailed descriptions of the setting, its participants, interactions, and observed behavior, especially the risk-taking behavior of the student under study (self-initiated questions, answers, and comments). The observer’s reflections included my feelings, reactions, and initial interpretations of what took place.

Personal Data Obtained from Questionnaire

A questionnaire inquiry was also conducted to obtain personal information related to what was being investigated. The questionnaire (see Appendix F) provided demographic information about the students who participated in this study, including age, gender, and major field of study, as well as a set of research-oriented questions regarding prior
learning experience in spoken English, personality, motivation, and self-evaluation of English ability. Data
gathered from the questionnaire were considered as potential
variables that may affect the risk-taking behavior of
participants in EFL classrooms. The questionnaires were
distributed in the second week after the semester began and
were subsequently collected by mail with prepaid envelopes.

Data Analysis

Qualitative case study analysis approaches the problem of practice from a holistic perspective. The purpose is to
gather comprehensive, systemic, and in-depth understanding about each case of interest. In other words, by
concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (case), this approach aims to provide insight into a uniquely individual
case and interpret it in its own context. Thus, the primary concern of the case study is to seek for a rich, ‘thick’
description and interpretation of the phenomenon under study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984). In
accordance with such an approach, the analysis of this study began with a description of the fifteen individual cases,
each of which was treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself.
In addition, cross-case analysis of the individual cases was conducted. Organization and analysis of data followed the methods of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Huberman (1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a cross-case or multi-case study attempts to find out “processes and outcomes that occur across many cases or sites” and to understand “how such processes are bent by specific local contextual variables” (p. 173). Cross-case analysis brings to light the contextual variables that might have a bearing on all the cases in general, and thus induces more in-depth understanding and more powerful explanations, leading to potential generalizations beyond the particular case.

The data were analyzed inductively. Lincoln and Guba (1985) see inductive analysis as a process aimed at uncovering embedded information and making it explicit. Two essential sub-processes are involved with inductive analysis: unitizing and categorizing. Unitizing involves a process of coding in which the raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units that permit precise description of relevant content characteristics. Categorizing is sorting the units into provisional categories. In the first step, then, individual data gathered together through the diary entries, observations, and self-reporting
questionnaires were entered into a case record. All the data were read through several times from the beginning to the end. I jotted down notes and comments in the margins, including tentative categories emerging from the data. File folders were used to facilitate the analysis. After all the data were coded, the entire case record was photocopied. I then cut out the photocopied pages and placed coded sections into file folders labeled according to the category each section represented.

In order to increase the reliability of the coding used for the study, I had the cooperation of Jaesuk Suh, a doctoral student in the TESOL program at Indiana University, as an independent second rater. He coded the data according to instructions given by the researcher. The interrater reliabilities for the coding were then calculated. Table 3 presents categories for the coding and interrater reliability coefficients for each code. The inter-rater reliability coefficients ranged from .898 to .984. As suggested by Bailey and Oschner (1983), the following criteria were taken into account in analyzing the diaries within each category and across the categories:

1. Frequency of mention - the number of times a given topic is identified in the diary entries.
2. Distribution of mention - the number of other students who mention a given topic.

3. Saliency - the strength of the expression with which a topic is recorded.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Cues</th>
<th>Interrater Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive reaction toward risk-taking for oral proficiency in an EFL classroom</td>
<td>.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Non-positive</td>
<td>Non-positive reaction toward risk-taking for oral proficiency in an EFL classroom</td>
<td>.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating</td>
<td>Wanting to risk-take/effect exerted under the given situation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating</td>
<td>Wanting to give up risk-taking or avoiding trying out the target</td>
<td></td>
<td>.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affecting Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factors stemming from within the learner (i.e., personality, motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety)</td>
<td>.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affecting Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factors originated from outside learner (i.e., learning situation, cultural beliefs, and course-related ones)</td>
<td>.914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Data Coding Categories and Interrater Reliability.
Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) ask, "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 290). In other words, how trustworthy is the study? In order to increase the trustworthiness of this study, four methods were used: reflexive journal, prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, and member check.

I kept a reflexive journal and maintained it throughout the study period to chronologically track the events and insights that occurred during the process of data collection and analysis (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). The purpose of the reflexive journal was to provide a good record of the administrative details of the study. Consequently, it provided a narrative of how the study evolved by tracking the patterns that emerged, the conversations that followed, and the substantive accounts of the interaction between the participants and the researcher, and between the peer-debriefer and the researcher. The reflexive journal also served as a vehicle for the researcher to continually refer to the theoretical assumptions that have been addressed in the preceding chapter. The journal thus reminded the
researcher of the need to validate the process of data collection and analysis constantly throughout the research period.

**Prolonged engagement** adds to trustworthiness of data. It involves investing enough time with the participants to establish trust, and to become familiar with the context of inquiry. Lincoln and Guba (1985) quantify the development of trust with daily engagement of time. Mechanisms for establishing rapport and trust between the researcher and the participants under study were built through regular E-mail communications as well as occasional face-to-face interactions. Through such contacts we had several opportunities to discuss some questions and answers regarding diary entries, to give and take the interactive conversations between the participants and the researcher.

**Peer debriefing** is a technique which establishes credibility and provides methodological guidance. Peer debriefing involves the researcher evoking insights from a peer who is not involved in the research. The peer debriefer helps to make the implicit issues more explicit by questioning the researcher’s interpretation. The peer-debriefer should also provide an appropriate level of challenge and support so that the researcher may defend the
position in a credible manner, but without losing his or her sense of enthusiasm and confidence (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Jaesuk Suh, who served as a peer-debriefer, was familiar with the methodological issues involved in the study. He also served as an interrater for data coding. Peer debriefing occurred throughout the study period as I constantly questioned my interpretations and findings. I shared the process of data analysis with him, and his valuable feedback and comments helped to shape my thoughts and formulate my role as researcher.

Member check is a useful tool with which the researcher can integrate the participants’ input in the study. Guba (1981) refers to this process as the most important action that researchers take in terms of establishing credibility. I contacted each participant to clarify the meanings of some obscure comments in their diary entries and to obtain new information through the E-mail communication. In addition, I met each participant after my initial data analysis and discussed the findings. They offered some insights for further analysis.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter reports Korean college students’ perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for English oral proficiency and discusses the factors affecting students’ risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms. This chapter consists of three sections. The first section presents fifteen case studies in a descriptive manner with relevant quotes from the participants’ diary entries. Each of the cases represents the fifteen participants’ perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency and their risk-taking modes based on the diary entries and classroom observations, along with personal information regarding gender, major field of study, personality, motivation, prior learning experience in spoken English, and self-evaluation of language proficiency. In the second section, a cross-case analysis of the fifteen participants based upon the findings
from participants’ diary entries, classroom observations, and personal data from the questionnaire is presented. The possible factors that affected each participant’s risk-taking modes are listed across the fifteen participants. Some salient factors are sorted out independently of each participant, and along the axis of facilitating/debilitating factors. Finally, the third section refers back to the research questions and provides a further discussion of the findings presented and analyzed in the preceding sections.

The fifteen participants in this study were all freshmen students who entered Korea University in 1998. I examined diary entries, classroom observation field notes, and personal data from questionnaires collected during the first semester (March 2 – June 12) of the 1998 school year. Participants discussed in this study were identified by their pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. The fifteen participants could be viewed as a relatively homogeneous group of language learners because of their cultural and educational background. However, individual differences among these students, such as the instructional emphases they received in junior and senior high school, previous learning experience in spoken English, self-evaluated English proficiency, personality, and motivation in learning
in spoken English, played crucial roles in the language learning process. Table 4 shows the fifteen participants’ personal information obtained from the questionnaire regarding participants’ pseudonym, gender, major field of study, and self-evaluated English proficiency.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Self-Evaluation on English skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yong</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Soo</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Won</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dong</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mee</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hae</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jin</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gyu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medical Science</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hyeon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Chan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineer</td>
<td>L</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Seok</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Kyung</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dae</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Joon</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: S-Speaking; L-Listening; R-Reading; W-Writing; G-Grammar; L-Low; M-Medium; H-High

Table 4: Pseudonym, Gender, Major, and Self-Evaluation of English Proficiency across the Fifteen Participants
Among the fifteen participants of the study, as can be seen in Table 4, there were more male participants (60%) than female participants (40%). Academic majors of participants varied widely - Education, English, Business, Economics, English Education, Journalism, Political Science, Sociology, Medical Science, Biology, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science, Chemistry, Food science, and Physics. A majority of the participants (87%) evaluated themselves as 'high' in reading and grammar ability, while most participants (80%) evaluated themselves as 'low' or in spoken, listening, and writing English proficiency.
Case Studies

Fifteen individual cases will be discussed in a descriptive manner, based on diary entries, classroom observations, and the questionnaire regarding personal information. Each case demonstrates the fifteen participants’ perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for English oral proficiency in an EFL classroom and their risk-taking modes, along with major factors affecting their risk-taking behavior.

Case study 1: Yong

Yong is a male student. He entered the Department of Aerospace Engineering in the National Aviation University of Korea in 1994. He finished his sophomore year there. He then served in the army for two years and three months. After his military service, he entered the Education Department at Korea University as a freshman in the spring of 1998.

Yong is outgoing and sociable. He is a leader in the department. His future career is to be a good education administrator. He is an eager and active student in every subject area in his field. Such an attitude was identified easily from the classroom observation as well as in his diary entries. In the spoken English class, he positioned himself
in a front-row seat and seized every opportunity to participate in oral practice. He wrote:

I am very active in every class. In ‘Freshman Practical English’ class, like any other class, I always take in the front-row seat of the classroom to get feedback from the instructor as much as I can. I make comments and ask a lot of questions whenever I want to. Even though I am poor at speaking English, I am not afraid of making mistakes in class. Making mistakes is a necessary process in learning.

Yong had no previous experience in studying spoken English before this course. Although he admitted that he was obviously not good at speaking English, he was one of the most active participants in class. It was partly due to his active and enthusiastic attitude in learning and partly due to his strong concern for having the instructor gain a good impression of him:

From the first day of class, the instructor has urged the students to participate in class, stressing that participation in class would be one of the requirements for grading. I am also very anxious to make a good impression on the instructor, which would influence my grade. In terms of grading, I feel pressured for good grades, because I have to receive a scholarship to continue my study in this university. So I try to participate a lot because I believe that remaining silent in class never works in getting a good grade as well as in learning English well.

At the beginning of the semester, Yong’s willingness to engage in active oral participation seemed to be mainly
motivated by his primary concern for ensuring a good grade. Active oral participation as a practical learning strategy for English oral proficiency in class was a secondary consideration to him. Gradually through the course, however, he realized that active participation and constant risk-taking led to self-confidence in his spoken English ability:

At first, I was more concerned about getting a good grade in this course rather than learning spoken English itself. For that purpose, I seized every opportunity to speak up in the class, even if I knew I used incorrect expressions. The instructor seemed to appreciate my effort, too. But today I think I made fewer mistakes when I spoke. Speaking up constantly really works.

Yong perceived risk-taking behavior as a way of getting feedback or confirmation checks from the instructor or other students:

Risk-taking behavior is a way to express my ideas for getting feedback or confirmation check, through which I can make sure if what I have in my mind is right or wrong. It also helps me better prepare for next class.

Summary

Yong is a good learner. He has a very positive and active attitude in language learning. He had no previous experience in learning spoken English. Although he admitted that he could not speak English very well, he was active in oral classroom participation. His strong concern about
receiving a good grade and his willingness to make mistakes allowed him to participate freely in class. Such constant risk-taking behavior helped him gain self-confidence, if not a remarkable degree of improvement for the short term, in spoken English ability. As for the practical gain of risk-taking behavior, he thought that it could be a way to correct mistakes and check comprehension.

Case study 2: Soo

Soo is a female student studying in the English Language and Literature Department. She is outgoing but not talkative. Her special interest in English started from her junior high school years, when her English proficiency (grammar and reading ability) was among the top of her class. Excellence in her English at junior and senior high school motivated her to plan her future career as a simultaneous interpreter and to enter the English Language and Literature Department. She had a high level of confidence in her grammar and reading ability, while she evaluated herself ‘low’ on her English oral proficiency.

At the beginning of the semester, she had very little confidence about her spoken English ability. She also
confessed that her main weakness in English was listening along with speaking ability:

My English proficiency (grammar and reading ability) was always on the top list in class in junior and senior high school. So I used to have high level of self-confidence in reading and understanding English. However, I have a lot of trouble speaking and understanding English in class. I am able to understand only thirty percent of what the instructor says. Today, when the instructor asked us to do pair-work for a game, I did not understand what he told us to do. I felt frustrated about my listening ability.

Soo was not one of the active participants in her class at the beginning of the semester. She seldom participated in whole class activities, because she was afraid of making mistakes in front of the class. Her fear was due to her high self-esteem regarding her English reading and grammar ability, which would be damaged by making mistakes in listening or speaking practice:

I thought I could answer the question, but was hesitant and finally gave up trying to speak up. I was not sure if I understood the question correctly. Besides, I did not want to hurt myself by making mistakes in speaking out what I had on my mind. I did not want to make a fool of myself in front of class.

Nonetheless, she held positive feelings about active risk-taking behavior. She thought that risk-taking behavior is a way to practice correct expressions:
I think that speaking up is an effective way to develop English speaking and listening skills. It helps to practice accurate expressions through speaking out one’s ideas and listening to others.

Despite her poor speaking and listening ability, Soo’s strong concern about her English oral fluency for her future career - a simultaneous interpreter - served as a trigger to motivate her to practice English as much as she could. She looked for alternative ways to improve her English ability after school. She practiced with audio and video tapes at the audio-visual library. In addition, she received tutoring from a native speaker of English outside school:

In fact, I do not expect I can improve spoken and listening English ability with an exposure of two hours a week at school. I thought that audio and video tapes would help my speaking and listening ability to improve. Also, I decided to have an extra tutoring after school.

In her private tutoring, Soo was encouraged to speak out by the tutor. In the intimate learning environment of private tutoring, she found herself willing to make mistakes and gained more confidence. As a result, she also changed from an inactive to an active risk-taker in class, and made progress over the semester in speaking English ability:

I gained more confidence in spoken English than before and I could speak up when I wanted to. Sandy, an American private tutor, was very supportive and kind. She created a relaxed
atmosphere in which I felt comfortable enough to speak up. Even though I spoke in broken English, she was so patient that she waited until I finished. And she was so encouraging, reassuring me that she understood what I was saying by nodding her head and putting a smile on her face.

Summary

Soo, as shown above, is a good language learner with a strong motivation and an enthusiastic attitude. In comparison with her high level of self-confidence in her English reading and grammar ability, she had low self-confidence in spoken English due to the lack of prior English experience. For the first few weeks of the semester, her low self-confidence in her speaking ability made her inactive in classroom participation. But her eagerness and strong motivation enabled her to seek other sources to improve herself after class. Not only did she practice with audio and video tapes, but she also received private tutoring from a native speaker of English. Increasingly, she felt more confident in speaking up and expressing her ideas in English. As a result, she changed her attitude toward risk-taking behavior in class, moving from an inactive to an active risk-taker.

Case study 3: Won

Won is a male student who graduated from the Foreign Language High School and entered the Department of Business
in the university. He is sociable, outgoing, and somewhat talkative. He has strong motivation to study spoken English for his future career:

I like making friends. I like spending hours on meeting friends. I like to have good-interpersonal relationships. And I want to be an international businessman. That is why I want to speak English fluently. I consider myself to be very positive in attitude toward learning, and I enjoy participating in class.

Won had prior learning experience in spoken English for three years before this course. He received speaking and listening instruction in his senior high school English classes and had opportunities to communicate with native speakers of English. As a result, he showed high confidence in his spoken English ability although he evaluated himself as ‘medium’ for his English speaking and listening proficiency. He had a positive perception toward risk-taking behavior in class.

He viewed risk-taking behavior as a strategy for expressing his ideas and getting feedback from the instructor and other students:

When I was in senior high school, I had a spoken English class twice a week for two years. I feel confident in my spoken English ability, in comparison with other students who have no previous experience in studying spoken English. It makes me feel comfortable to speak out in class. I think I like to speak out so
that I can get responses from instructor or other students. My principle is "speak up whenever possible and get as much feedback as possible." There are times when I am not sure if I speak correctly, but I do not hesitate to take risks. At least, I could get comprehension and clarification checked from the instructor or other students.

However, his risk-taking behavior became less and less active as the semester continued. He did not participate as much as he wanted. His changed attitude was caused by his consideration for other students' opportunities for oral participation in class. This reflects a cultural belief in the propriety of classroom behavior. He thought that the class should not be dominated by a few students who are willing and eager to talk, so that the allocation of turns is equally available to every student in the class. Such an attitude was also reflected in pair or in small-group activities. He took his turns after his partner or other group members finished:

I do not volunteer to speak out as much as I want to. I do not want to be conspicuous in class because I want other classmates to have chances to participate. If a few students dominate in class, other students would have much less opportunities to participate. . . . I feel like participating and speaking up in class, but I would wait until other students wouldn't participate any more. I like pair-work or small group activities better because I could have more opportunities to speak up, but I am still sensitive to take initiatives.
Although Won listed his consideration for other students in the class as the main reason for his reduced oral participation, such a consideration was not without an ulterior cause:

As I finished answering the instructor with a little prolonged utterance, I saw a curiously indifferent look on the faces of some classmates. I felt awkward at the moment. And I could not concentrate on what the instructor said in response to my answer. Actually, a sort of embarrassment and discomfort stayed with me to the end of the class.

The fact that this diary entry appeared to reflect the turning point of his changed attitude reveals something significant. It is true that the reduction of his oral participation was caused by his consideration for others. But such observance of classroom propriety seemed to have been directly prompted by his realization that other students regarded him as talking too much or even showing off. This incident suggests that the culturally-defined propriety of classroom behavior may have been forced upon, rather than voluntarily observed by, Won, who in some of his classmates’ view was ‘unusually’ active in oral participation.

Summary

Unlike other students in his class, Won received
spoken English instruction for two years in senior high school. It gave him self-confidence in his spoken English ability. Also, he had a strong motivation to learn English for his future career. In proportion to his positive perception toward risk-taking behavior for English oral proficiency, he was a very active oral participant for the first few weeks. However, when he met with the classmates’ cultural sanction against his overtly active behavior, he became inactive and remained so for the rest of the semester. One major factor, strongly related to the concept of proper cultural classroom behavior, affected his risk-taking behavior in a negative way.

Case study 4: Dong

Dong is a male student majoring in Economics. He is reserved, introverted, and a careful thinker. His motivation in learning English is not very strong, but he is aware of the importance of English as an international language. Besides, he was very interested in getting a good grade. He had low confidence in his spoken English ability due to having no prior learning experience.

The instructor encouraged the students to take risks in speaking English as often as possible and emphasized the
importance of active oral participation for developing speaking fluency. Dong also perceived the benefit of active oral participation not only for oral proficiency but also for sustaining his interest in classroom activities:

The instructor tried to give us the opportunities to express ourselves and speak up in class. She told us that speaking up is an important thing for English oral proficiency and it was natural to make mistakes. I also think that active oral participation in class gives the opportunities to self-correct or get clarification check from the instructor. In addition to that, it helps me to keep focused on every topic or activity discussed or conducted in the class.

Despite his positive feelings toward risk-taking behavior, he was not very active. It was because he was conscious of his poor speaking ability and had a fear of making mistakes when he spoke. As he had a strong concern for getting a good grade and for gaining the instructor’s favorable impression of him, the failure in oral participation left Dong quite depressed:

I think my English speaking skill was not enough to speak up in class and I did not want to make a fool of myself in front of the class by making mistakes. So, despite my conscious effort, I had to remain silent in class. It made me feel so bad, since the instructor would think of me as non-participant, or even one of those uninterested students who just sit and wait for the class hour to be done. It surely would affect the grading because classroom participation is one of the class requirements.
Dong was increasingly aware that he needed to take risks in class. But it was not easy for him to do so. Above all, he tended to monitor himself too much on what he wanted to say, trying to organize his ideas in complete sentence-form with correct vocabulary before he started to speak at all. He seemed to be afraid that, by speaking up without prior self-monitoring, the utterance of his ideas would have a lot of structural and vocabulary errors due to his poor speaking ability. As a result, it often transpired that he missed his turn through hesitation, or the opportunity was taken away by other students:

Today when the instructor gave us “campus life” as a topic, I thought I had something to talk about. But, before I organized what I was going to say, the speaking turn came to me and I was just embarrassed and could not open my mouth. The instructor waited patiently, but I could not get my thoughts focused. At last, I just uttered a few words and the turn was given to another student.

Dong felt that he was willing and able to talk, and, furthermore, to express his ideas correctly only if he had sufficient time to think before he spoke, since he had sufficient grammatical and vocabulary knowledge to use. Occasionally, he had the opportunity to prove himself:

My English speaking ability is poor, but I have a good vocabulary and grammar ability. I think
I just need time to think about the given topic because I can not figure out how to speak of it immediately. So, today I asked the instructor to let me have my turn later. And when my turn came at last, I expressed my ideas more accurately and longer than before. I am sure that I can express myself in English only if I were given some more time before I talk.

Dong thought that pre-thinking was sufficient preparation for classroom participation for students like him and suggested to the instructor that topics for the next class should be given in advance:

One of today’s topics was “cyberspace.” I did not pay much attention to this kind of topic before and did not have anything to talk about it. After class I asked the instructor to tell us what we were going to talk about in advance, so that we could prepare for it.

The instructor accepted Dong’s suggestion and made a new syllabus with topics listed for each class session. Dong appreciated the instructor’s understanding. Afterwards, he prepared a lot for the class sessions. He became more and more self-confident in speaking up in class. And his growing self-confidence helped him even to take risks, as he had occasions to deal with unpredicted topics:

Last couple of weeks was wonderful! I prepared much for the class, according to the assignments or the given material on the syllabus. And I talked so confidently and correctly! To my surprise, furthermore, I could talk on the topic that I was not prepared for. I thought it was
because I could repeat the expressions that I had used before on other topics. I hesitated a little bit, of course, but I made it anyway.

Summary

Dong was an inactive risk-taker in classroom oral participation, although he felt the need to participate. His hesitancy to speak up in class was due to his poor speaking ability and his adherence to accuracy. However, Dong’s concern for a good grade and his eagerness in learning made him seek a practical strategy for success. After the introduction of a new and detailed syllabus, Dong became an active oral participant. Dong’s case demonstrated how a student with basic linguistic competence could turn from an inactive oral participant to an active one. Preparedness and familiarity with speaking topics promoted Dong’s self-confidence, which developed into active oral participation.

Case study 5: Mee

Mee is a female student studying in the English Education Department. She is neither very outgoing nor very introverted. She had no previous experience in studying spoken English before this course, and so had little confidence in her spoken English ability. But, her interest
in learning English was strong. It was due to her future career, that is, an English teacher at the secondary school level. And she was well aware of the missing element in English education at the secondary level:

I want to be a good English teacher in the secondary schools. I want to study English thoroughly in terms of all four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). We have learned English since junior high school, focusing on reading and delving into grammar structure. I think we were not given instructions or opportunities to practice in speaking and listening enough to be able to communicate with native speakers of English. And that’s an enormous loss.

Mee was also aware of the benefit of risk-taking behavior as an effective way to develop English oral proficiency. In order to be active in class and not to lose face, she worked hard in preparing a designated amount of materials or assignments before she came to class:

I know that speaking up is one of the most important practices in learning English. I see the advantages of risk-taking behavior as a good opportunity to express my opinions in English. So, each day I prepare the designated amount of text material in order to participate effectively.

Although Mee was not among the active risk-takers in her class because of her low self-confidence in her speaking ability, she made conscious efforts to participate and maintained herself as a moderate oral participant. She was
not satisfied with such moderate status and seemed to make constant efforts, which proved unproductive. The main obstacle was her unfavorable impression of the instructor and his teaching styles. She thought that the instructor was neither kind nor considerate of the students’ current speaking ability. She complained frequently:

In this class, I’m not only learning English, but I’m also learning teaching styles as a future English teacher. In that aspect, I am completely disappointed. For my instructor is very inconsistent, even careless. The instructor seems to have little, if any, teaching strategy for sustaining students’ interest. Besides, he speaks so fast. I have trouble in understanding what the instructor says. He does not seem to consider carefully that we are foreign students. Only a few proficient students are willing to talk in class. Other students, including myself, were sitting there as audience. I guess it’s because we do not understand what the instructor tells us to do and do not have enough information to talk about the given topic. I hope the instructor should speak slowly and loudly.

Mee strongly wanted to participate and was willing to take risks, but she felt uncomfortable in class. Frequently, she mentioned her unpleasant feelings towards the instructor. It became a major factor in her withdrawal into her shell:

Today the instructor entered the classroom and started to talk faster than he used to. And then he turned on the cassette player and played music with his fingers tapping on the lectern. I was confused by what was going on. There seemed to be little of a consistent lesson plan. On the syllabus we were supposed to learn Lesson 5 on
job interviews, for which I prepared to talk. I asked the girl sitting next to me what was going on. She also showed a puzzled look on her face. After a while, the instructor wrote on the blackboard: “Who? When? Where?” Then I understood that we were supposed to listen to music and talk about the content of its lyric. Because I did not know what to do at first, in addition to my poor listening ability, I missed a large part of the music. When the speaking-turn came to me, I stammered and didn’t do well. The instructor did not do anything to encourage or lead me on. He just dismissed me and moved on to another student. I felt my face blush. And I didn’t really feel like speaking up in class forever.

The instructor seemed to have rather a loose, if not inconsistent, teaching style, occasionally deviating or detouring from the text or pre-assigned material. But the unpredictable tasks that Mee had little competence to deal with must have been bewildering and frustrating to the learner. In addition, misunderstanding of behavioral patterns deriving from cultural differences seemed to work to worsen the situation. The casual and informal attitude of the instructor was interpreted as ‘careless,’ which, for the Korean students was perceived as inappropriate classroom behavior for an instructor. For the rest of the semester, Mee remained a moderate oral participant.
Summary

Mee has strong motivation in learning English for her future career as an English teacher at the secondary school level and held positive feelings about active risk-taking behavior in an EFL class. Nevertheless, her oral participation remained moderate due to her low English speaking ability. Despite her conscious and constant efforts, she could not gear herself toward more active participation throughout the semester. Major factors engendering such stasis, if not regression, were provided by the instructor. It seemed that the instructor ignored the fact that Mee, and many other students in her class, were poor listeners as well as poor speakers of English. Or, it may be that the instructor kept speaking in class at his ‘normal’ speed for instructional purposes. In that case, it is obvious that such purposes were not well served. Different cultural backgrounds also operated to discourage Mee’s classroom participation.

Case study 6: Hae

Hae is a female student who entered the Department of Journalism at Ewha Women’s University in 1997, and she transferred, after one year, to the same department at Korea University. She chose Korea University because she wanted to
compete with male students. She is a sociable and extroverted student. She had studied spoken English at a private foreign language institute for six months before she entered Korea University. She evaluated herself as ‘medium’ level in English speaking and listening proficiency. She planned to study abroad to obtain further degrees after her graduation. So, her motivation to learn English was strong.

Hae was well aware of the necessity of risk-taking behavior in language learning and showed an active attitude toward participation during the first few weeks of the semester, but her oral participation mode gradually became inactive. The attitude of the instructor seemed to negatively affect her risk-taking behavior. She was disappointed by the classroom atmosphere created by the instructor who was, in Hae’s view, impatient, demanding, and intolerant of student’s mistakes. She described her unpleasant experience in class this way:

The instructor is very impatient so she is upset and irritated whenever the students do not respond quickly and accurately. As my speaking-turn approached today in class, I repeated in my mind over and again what I was going to say, in order to respond quickly and accurately. But, I gave a wrong answer, a very funny answer. In fact, it was Question No. 4 that I was supposed to answer, but what I said was an answer for Question No. 5. The instructor was so upset and asked me where my mind was rambling about. I
could not think of anything at the moment because I felt embarrassed and humiliated.

The instructor’s error correction attitude also affected Hae’s risk-taking behavior in the classroom. Hae thought that the instructor’s instant error treatment discouraged the students from speaking up comfortably in class. She stated:

The most intimidating thing is that the instructor corrects us instantly and bluntly whenever we make mistakes. I think that students should be able to talk freely in class, that they shouldn’t be intimidated or ridiculed when they make errors. Also, the instructor demands us to speak with accurate expressions and pronunciation. In my opinion, speaking class should be focused on what the students try to communicate, not how accurately they say.

Referring to her English instructor at the private language institute, Hae said that an encouraging and supportive classroom environment as well as tender care generated by the instructor would motivate the students to take risks more actively in class:

Diane (instructor), a native speaker of English, at the private language institute encouraged me to take risks and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Diane’s attitudes of error correction were effective and anxiety-reducing for me. She merely pointed out the mistake tactfully and either modeled it correctly or prompted me so that I could find my own mistakes. These correction treatments were favorable to me -- made me feel comfortable in risk-taking.
In comparison to her previous experience with a very caring and thoughtful tutor, Hae’s experience in this course must have been debilitating. The negative attitudes and teaching style of the instructor created a threatening atmosphere in which Hae dared not take risks:

I feel scared in speaking out in class, even when I have something to talk and also have confidence in my ability to communicate it correctly. I’m not enjoying this class. I think that the threatening and uncomfortable classroom atmosphere generated by the instructor deprived me of my willingness to participate actively in class.

What was most detrimental in her case was the fact that Hae gradually lost her strong interest, if not her motivation itself, in developing her speaking ability as far as she wanted. Occasionally, however, she found a favorable environment in small group activity or pair-work. She especially liked pair-work because it did not allow for the instructor’s interruption:

Since last week, we had role-playing between two partners for 10 minutes each class. At first I didn’t have strong interest in it, because I thought the instructor would interrupt at any moment with her ‘corrections.’ But she just threw topics for the pair-work and didn’t care what was happening in each pair. It made me rather comfortable, so I started to speak without fear of being interrupted.
Afterwards, her diary entries rarely mentioned the whole class activities led by the instructor and, instead, were devoted to what she talked about with her partner or members of small groups and how the pair or small-group work produced well-organized conversations.

Summary

Hae had an opportunity to study spoken English for six months at a private language institute before this course. As a part of her long-term plan for studying abroad, such an experience fostered her confidence in her speaking ability. In the first few weeks she was one of the active risk-takers in her class. However, Hae’s unfavorable impression of the instructor’s demanding teaching style reduced her to an inactive risk-taker, even though she had a strong motivation in learning English and self-confidence in her speaking ability. Compared with the lively and non-threatening atmosphere in the private language institute, which encouraged active oral participation, the formal and static way of learning, combined with the strict attitude of the instructor in this course, blocked Hae’s usually active risk-taking behavior. Her diary entries for the later period also revealed that she resumed active risk-taking behavior in pair
or small group activities in which intimacy with a partner or members of a group and exclusion of instructor created a more favorable environment for oral participation.

**Case study 7: Sung**

Sung is a male student who graduated from senior high school in Paris, France, where his father had been stationed as a professional diplomat. He entered the Department of Politics and Diplomacy at Korea University. He had studied French for three years and was a good speaker of the language. His character is friendly, sociable, and adventurous. Although he had a low spoken English ability, he had a strong motivation in learning English. His cosmopolitan experience made him aware of the importance of the English language:

My second language is French, but I know people all over the world tend to communicate in English. You cannot travel around Europe if you speak French only. But you can go anywhere and make yourself understood in English.

Compared with other Korean students who had been drilled in grammatical knowledge of English for at least six years, Sung had a weak foundation in grammar and vocabulary. Nevertheless, according to the researcher’s class observation, his attitude towards risk-taking was
 extraordinarily active. He was fearless about making mistakes in front of people. In addition to his outgoing and adventurous personality, his educational background - the fact that he attended high school in France for three years - seemed to have given him an idea of proper classroom behavior very different from that of most Korean students:

If I have something to say in class, I just take the opportunity and speak out what I want to say. I know I’m making a lot of errors. But it’s natural. And I am not afraid of making mistakes. Come to think of it, it was the same in France when I had to start speaking in French without learning it systematically. I just stammered with only a few words and kept up with my stammering because I had to make myself understood in school, because I had to survive. And then, within a few weeks I found myself speaking the language quite fluently.

After his language learning experience in French, he seemed to have developed his own strategies for successful language learning, which he adopted in the spoken English class:

I always sit in the front and close to the instructor. It helps me to take the initiative. I can attract the instructor’s attention immediately. Considering the large class size, not everyone can have opportunity to communicate directly with the instructor. Even when we repeat a word or a sentence the instructor says, the instructor is likely to notice and correct me if I mispronounce words or sentences. Besides, another benefit of sitting in the front of the class is that I can concentrate for the whole class hour without being distracted.
Sung thought that speaking up was an important strategy for oral proficiency, and specifically as a way to discover and correct his own errors:

Through past language learning experiences, I realized that I should be willing to make constant trials and errors in order to improve my English speaking ability. The strategy I developed is to speak up as much as possible and gain the instructor’s response in order to check what I try to communicate. I believe that active risk-taking in class is not only helpful but also indispensable if you really want to increase your speaking ability.

Sung was the most active risk-taker in class. As such, he drew unwanted attention from his classmates, who regarded him as ‘aggressive’ - a very negative attitudinal term in the Korean cultural context. Yet, the classmates’ censuring looks did not deter him from continuing with active risk-taking behavior:

More often than not, I think I feel other students look upon me as too much aggressive. I understand. For sometimes I find myself talking all alone in the class. But it’s partly because they do not speak up at all. I know how an average Korean student behaves himself in classroom: respect the teacher, consider other students, speak smart and brief when you speak. However, I don’t think it works in language class. You want to learn speaking well? Then, speak! That’s the only way.
Raised in Western culture, Sung had a very different conception of appropriate behavior for a learner. And his outgoing and independent personality would not be subjected to the Korean cultural code, which in his view was not efficient for learning a foreign language and culture. His proactive attitude in oral participation remained as described below throughout the semester:

In fact, I use broken English. Sometimes in class I even use body language to express myself. To me, not being able to speak fluently is not a shame and making mistakes is natural in learning a foreign language. It’s the same as Americans who can’t speak Korean fluently from the start. I am not afraid of making mistakes. I think that speaking a little is better than not speaking at all.

Summary

Sung was an active risk-taker in class throughout the course. Apparently, his awareness of the necessity of risk-taking behavior derived from his past history as a foreign language learner as well as his extroverted personality and active attitude. His prior language learning experience in French made it possible not only to become an active oral participant in class but also to hold a very different idea of desirable classroom behavior. By virtue of his unusual educational and cultural experience in a foreign country, he distinguished himself from most of his classmate, who held on
to the Korean concept of propriety in classroom behavior and remained more or less reserved in oral participation.

Case study 8: Jin

Jin is a female student studying in the Sociology Department. She is neither introverted nor overtly outgoing. She did not have any prior spoken English learning experience at school or out of school, and showed little confidence about spoken English. But she had as much interest as any other student in learning spoken English.

Jin was afraid of making mistakes in front of the whole class. It was because she had low spoken English ability. However, she saw risk-taking behavior as a way to clarify her comprehension and to gain confidence:

I am afraid of making mistakes in front of whole class. Though I think I have a pretty good amount of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, I can’t promptly use it for oral expression. So, I am quiet in class most of time, while listening attentively to the instructor and other students talk. However, I understand that speaking up is necessary to practice spoken English and that it helps not only to clarify what I want to communicate but also to gain self-confidence.

Jin partly attributed her inactive classroom participation to the passive learning style that she had been accustomed to since her elementary school years. She observed
that the strictly defined traditional teacher-student relationship and their respective roles in the classroom had formed her passive attitude toward learning situations. Furthermore, such an attitude was hard to change, even in college classrooms. She wrote in her diary:

I am hesitant to speak up in class even though I prepared the given material pretty well for the class. I think it is partly due to lack of experience in oral classroom participation. From elementary school to senior high school, classroom participation is a rare experience in our country. We had very limited opportunities to express what we think. Instead, we had to be attentive listeners and careful note-takers most of the time in class. We had little opportunities to speak in front of class. So, most of the students are not used to volunteering to ask questions, answer the questions, or make comments in length.

In addition, the cultural concept of difference in behavior between male and female students seemed to be another factor affecting Jin’s risk-taking behavior. In fact, male students in Jin’s class tended to be more active in classroom participation, while female students tended to be passive:

Today’s topic was about ‘future job.’ The instructor asked us to volunteer to talk about the topic. But, nobody tried to speak up. The instructor urged to volunteer again. ‘Anybody? Nobody?’ After almost about a minute, a few male students replied. ‘How about female students?’ But, most of female students, including myself,
seemed hesitant to respond until they individually called upon by the instructor.

Jin attributed such passivity of female students less to their inherent nature than to the limited opportunity for women to speak in public:

I don’t think it -- why female students talk less in classroom -- is because most of us are particularly shy. In my opinion, it is rather because we are given less opportunities to express ourselves in public. If a woman is outspoken a little bit, she is most likely to get censure from everywhere. In theory, that kind of thing would not happen in classroom. But in reality that’s exactly what’s going to happen. In fact, I wanted to talk several times when I was really interested, and prepared, in the topic. I failed to seize the opportunity because of my habitual hesitation. If instructor had given opportunities to speak up one by one, then I could have expressed my thoughts.

For Jin, open discussions or turn-taking for the whole class intensified such obstacles. Alternatively, she felt more comfortable with speaking up in pair-work or small group activity:

I like pair or small group work much better because I can easily relax with just one or two more students, and feel safe enough to talk freely. I can speak out whatever comes to my mind because chances to participate are given to all group members. Briefly speaking, I don’t have to be sensitive about taking opportunities.
Summary

Jin was one of the inactive risk-takers in class. Two major factors accounted for her limited participation. One was her low self-confidence due to her poor speaking ability. The other, and no less significant one, was the restrictions upon classroom behavior which derived from cultural attitudes and assumptions. On the one hand, Jin’s inactive mode of oral participation was shaped by the previous educational system in which a student’s role as listener had been imposed. On the other hand, she felt more or less restricted in seizing opportunities for risk-taking because of the gender role expected of female students. Rather than classroom activities involving the whole class, she preferred pair or small group activity that reduced anxiety deriving not only from her low confidence in her speaking ability but also from the cultural factors described earlier.

Case study 9: Gyu

Gyu is a male student who is studying in the Medical Science Department. He is a serious and religious student. He is meditative and taciturn. He chose his major in order to be a medical missionary. He likes reading various kinds of books, in both in Korean and English.
His interest in spoken English started at the age of 17 when he met some American missionaries at his church. At that time his spoken English was poor, and he felt that he had to improve his English ability to communicate with them. He made various efforts to improve his English: for example, he listened to audio tapes and watched EBS (public education TV station) English programs on TV everyday for one and a half years. When he came to this class, he had a high level of confidence in his English speaking ability:

I had no formal instruction in speaking English. But I had studied spoken English at home for myself since the summer vacation of sophomore year at senior high school. I listened to audio-tapes such as Michigan Action English and Min Byung-Cheol Live English (a spoken English tutorial series by a Korean-American author) and watched EBS programs on TV at least two hours a day. I’m not sure if my spoken English is really good now. But I have little problem in making myself understood to native speakers of English.

Gyu considered that speaking up in class is the crucial factor in successful learning of spoken English. For him, the chief function of oral participation was to find out and correct his own errors, and to make sure he communicated his ideas accurately:

Speaking up for oral proficiency is a best way to practice language. Sometimes I correct myself if I speak up and find myself the wrong expressions. Also I think that oral participation is to get
feedback from the instructor or other students for confirmation checks.

Notwithstanding his positive perception toward risk-taking behavior, Gyu was a moderate oral participant in class. His self-confidence in spoken English ability built through prior learning experience, as well as his strong motivation deriving from his career intentions, should have enabled him to participate more actively. But he had a reason for not doing so:

There are more than 30 students in the class, which is big for speaking class. Not every student can take turn, no matter how briefly one speaks. I don’t think I can speak as often and freely as I want. I must have some consideration for others.

Because of the class size, Gyu had to withdraw from the opportunities to speak up, or had to wait until no one would take the opportunity to speak. In turn-takings, too, he spoke as briefly as possible and seldom asked questions. Even in small group or pair work, he could not talk as much as he wanted:

My partner was neither good nor very poor at speaking. Anyway, he needed much time to start. Once started, he just finished a sentence and that was it. But I could not respond in length. It might have made him feel inferior to me, which I didn’t really want to.
Sometimes, with some other partners, the pair work proved successful:

I had [one of the classmates] for my partner. He was not very good. But, somehow, I played the teacher to him. When he hesitated to continue his utterance, I gave him a kind of cue, hinting at the words or expressions that he seemed to need at the moment.

Here Gyu seemed to develop a strategy to lead the conversation with his less fluent partners, which also helped him to keep talking without looking obtrusive.

Summary

Gyu is a moderate oral classroom participant in class. His overall skills in English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are competent, and his perception toward risk-taking behavior is positive. Despite his self-confidence from prior learning experience as well as his strong motivation to learn English, he could not become as active as he wished to do. Consideration for other students’ turn-taking, strongly related to his considerate personality and further to the way in which peer relationships were constructed, prevented him from taking the initiative aggressively in classroom activity. Instead, he developed his own strategy for pair or
small group work discussion, in which both he and his partners benefited from the input he gave to his partners.

Case study 10: Hyeon

Hyeon is a female student majoring in Biology. She is shy and attentive. She usually remained quiet in class and liked to sit at the back of the classroom. Her general attitude toward learning spoken English was passive, although she was an attentive listener and careful note-taker. Not only did she have low confidence in her English speaking ability, but also her motivation to continue to learn English was not very strong:

I am taking this course just because it’s a requirement for all freshmen students. I know I have to learn spoken English because everybody has to nowadays whether one needs it to get a job or as an accomplishment. But I am not really interested in English speaking. It’s so difficult, and I’m not sure if it deserves so much effort as I have to make.

A particular difficulty Hyeon had to face was her own personality. Her close to extreme shyness was not fit for a class that required active oral participation. She confessed at the beginning of the semester that she became nervous and embarrassed when she had to speak up in public:
I am very shy in front of people. Oral participation is really a hard task for me. I always feel my tongue twist and my brain go completely blank, as I try to answer the question on my speaking-turn. Even though I prepared well for today’s class and knew what was going on at the moment, I just blushed. I spoke a few words, though. But the instructor didn’t understand and kept saying ‘Pardon?’ I think my voice was probably so low that the instructor could not hear it clearly.

Hyeon’s high anxiety seemed to be partly related to her self-consciousness about poor pronunciation:

I can’t raise my voice because my poor pronunciation would sound more funny. Sometimes I am envious of other students who are willing to speak in class and speak loud and clear, not caring whether they speak correctly or not, whether they sound funny or not.

Hyeon’s low self-confidence in her spoken English ability accentuated her fear of speaking up in public. As a result, she preferred remaining at the back of the classroom so as to avoid the attention of the instructor and kept silent in class most of the time.

Nevertheless, it was not the case that she completely lost her interest in learning English. She seemed to develop a safer, though definitely passive, strategy of her own; most of the time in class, she observed the classroom and listened attentively to the instructor and the other students talk, making notes of the expressions being used
by them. In doing so, she realized the benefit of attentive listening as an alternative strategy for improving her oral English proficiency:

I understand that active oral participation in improving one’s oral fluency is important for the clarification and modification of what one has in mind. However, students, including myself, who are shy and have low self-confidence in their speaking ability, could learn a lot from listening attentively and taking notes of how the instructor and other students use easy and familiar expressions for certain situations.

In addition to the listening strategy, pair or small group work provided Hyeon with a safer and more productive zone in which she could be more relaxed and feel like taking risks with less anxiety. Her diary entries frequently mention her interest in such activities:

I could feel more comfortable and less self-conscious in oral participation in pair-work or in small group work than in front of the whole class. It’s the intimacy of the small group, I think, that made me feel safe to speak up, even if a little.

Summary

Hyeon remained quiet and seldom took risks in class. Her shyness seemed to be her most serious obstacle in learning spoken English. She felt nervous and uncomfortable because her inherent shyness intensified her fear of making mistakes when she had to speak up in front of the class.
Comparatively, she was more relaxed in the pair-work or group work activity and was more willing to take risks in the intimate environment of such activities than in front of the whole class. Hyeon also considered attentive listening as an effective strategy for obtaining input, which could later be used during speaking occasions.

**Case study 11: Chan**

Chan is a male student studying in the Mechanical Engineering Department. He is not sociable and a little introverted. He had no previous learning experience in spoken English and showed very little confidence about his speaking ability. But he had a high level of self-confidence in his English reading and grammar ability as well as in subject areas in his field.

Unlike his other courses, Chan seldom participated in the spoken English class. He attributed his lack of oral activity to his poor English speaking ability:

> If I had self-confidence in speaking ability, I would definitely participate actively in class. My oral production is full of errors, much more than I expected. I hesitate to speak up because I worry too much about making mistakes. Due to the way English is taught at the junior and senior high school, I felt that I was very good at reading and grammar ability, but obviously such knowledge cannot be automatically
transferred to speaking and listening. It’s easier for me to handle the language if I read or write something. What’s worse, I feel very bad when my classmates do much better in the speaking class, because usually I do much better than they do in major areas.

Chan’s tension over not being able to speak English well kept him silent. Moreover, his self-esteem seemed to be seriously damaged by his sense of competition with other students and his idealized self-image as a competent student in other areas. He remained silent in class until he was called upon or expected to take a turn:

I don’t want to admit, but it’s a fact that my spoken English ability is so poor. I often compare myself to the other students, especially more proficient students, which makes it harder for me to take risks in class. Frankly, I am not an inactive participant in other subject areas in my field. It’s only in this class that I feel inferior. At least I don’t want to lose face by making mistakes when I speak up in front of class. Instead, I would rather keep silent because that does not hurt my pride much.

He was not willing to attempt a change in his classroom behavior from being a passive listener to being an active participant. Instead, he seemed to seek an alternative way to improve his speaking ability:

I believe that acquiring the speaking skill of English takes a long period of time. So I don’t think that speaking up in class is the only way to improve English speaking ability, although it is very important. The improvement of one’s oral fluency can be achieved through different
kinds of exposure to the language, for example, listening to audio tapes, watching video tapes, or practicing repeatedly by myself.

However, Chan did not seem to sustain such efforts. Nor did his diary entries towards the end of the semester show any sign of increasing participation: instead, he revealed growing indifference to the class. His unwillingness to take risks and fear of losing face in the class was so intensified as to cause a withdrawal from the learning environment. Consistent with what he revealed in his diary entries, he seemed to feel a lot of nervousness while sitting in class and tended to avoid eye contact with the instructor. Furthermore, he missed class several times throughout the semester:

Today, I decided to skip my English class and use the time to prepare other classes instead. To me, spoken English class is just one of the required courses that all freshmen students have to take. I’m not really interested in learning English.

Summary

Chan was an inactive participant in the spoken English class. He had a high level of self-confidence in his overall academic ability while he showed low self-confidence in his spoken English ability. For Chan, the most serious problem in risk-taking behavior in the spoken English class was that he
could not overcome his psychological barrier of 'losing face' in front of his classmates. His attitude toward risk-taking behavior in class was strongly related to his sense of competition with his classmates and with his idealized self-image as a competent learner in the major field of study. He seldom participated in the spoken English class until he was called upon. His silence was apparently a strategy for 'face saving.' He seemed to have sought few alternatives in learning spoken English to replace taking risks in the spoken English class. Such efforts did not last long, for his relatively weak interest in learning spoken English prevented him away from making any substantial effort to improve.

Case study 12: Seok

Seok is a male student majoring in Computer Science. He is extroverted and adventurous. Since junior high school, he has exchanged letters in English with a pen-friend who lives in Australia. Seok did not have any instruction in spoken English in junior and senior school or at any foreign language institute before this course. His strong interest in studying spoken English started from his correspondence with his pen friend. He planned to visit his pen friend in Australia next year:
We have exchanged letters since the third year of junior high school. So far I had no problem communicating with him because writing in English without time restriction is not so hard for me. I plan to go to Australia to see him next summer. So I really want to speak English fluently in order to communicate smoothly with him when we get together.

Although Seok admitted that he had poor spoken English ability, his motivation encouraged him to take risks actively in class. Also, he was aware of the importance of risk-taking behavior to improve his spoken English ability. He regarded speaking up in class as a way to discover and correct his own mistakes. Despite his poor spoken English ability, he did try to take risks in oral participation. But he was unhappy about the limited opportunities to speak up due to the large size of the class. In his diary, he stated:

I think that speaking up in class is the best way to learn spoken English, through trial and error. But under the pressure of time constraints due to the class size, it is not always possible to participate whenever I want to. There are 35 students in this class. Most of the students in the class are not given opportunities enough to take turns. I think if class size is smaller, there may be more chances to participate in class. Less than ten students, I think, would be a desirable size for spoken English class.

As Seok did not want to limit other students’ turns for his benefit, he remained moderate in taking opportunities for oral participation. His frustration over having insufficient
opportunities for active risk-taking was aggravated by another factor. He expressed his negative feelings towards the instructor’s teaching style:

I expected the speaking class to be exciting. But I am totally disappointed. Today we had to complete sentences using the expressions such as ‘I like people who are . . .’ and ‘It bothers me when someone . . .’ I hoped a college English class would be different from what we had in high school. Obviously it is not. Teaching materials are strictly restricted to structural patterns and contents in the textbook. There is little space for talking freely. I do not think that language classroom should be a place to drill structural patterns. It should be a place to learn what we want to communicate in English.

Seok continued to complain about the instructor’s text-dependent style:

After listening to a section of the audio tape, some students were called on to answer the questions given in the textbook. This is her [the instructor’s] usual teaching style. I began to get bored by our classroom activities. Stuck to the text materials, the instructor did not seem to have prepared other related materials for the class to practice the expressions given in the textbook. She is not serious about teaching this course effectively. I doubt if her teaching will ever help me to improve my spoken English.

But his discontent was alleviated to some degree by the pair or small group activities, especially games or role plays, which provided him with more opportunities for oral participation and inspired much of his interest in class:
It was interesting today. We played a game, in which we were supposed to tell what or who the instructor had in mind by guessing from her maximum 15 hints. Most of the answers were popular movie stars or pop-singers. I could feel that the whole class, including myself, got excited and focused on the game. When one got the right answer, he or she was asked to comment on the star. And it was not so difficult because one could repeat the expressions the instructor had used for her hints. Just change a few words, that was it. I got two right answers!

Two later diary entries recorded similar responses to games and corresponding enthusiasm, which indicated that Seok was asked to be lively and active participant during such class activities.

**Summary**

Seok was sometimes active and sometimes inactive in class throughout the course. He held a positive attitude toward active risk-taking for English oral proficiency. Furthermore, despite his low self-confidence in his speaking ability, he was highly motivated to improve his spoken English to take risks actively in class. But his positive attitude towards oral participation was hindered not only by the limited opportunities to speak due to the large class size, but also by the instructor’s text-dependent teaching style. However, when the instructor’s teaching style changed or when games and simulations were introduced, Seok responded
enthusiastically and recovered his interest in classroom activities, enabling him to resume his active risk-taking behavior.

Case study 13: Kyung

Kyung is a female student studying in the Chemistry Department. She is attentive but somewhat introverted. She had low confidence in her spoken English ability. She did not have strong motivation in learning English but she was aware of importance of English as an international language.

Kyung experienced extreme anxiety in the spoken English class, especially in the first few weeks of the semester. Lack of familiarity with the classmates and the instructor as well as the language tasks made her nervous and silent in class. She wrote at the beginning of semester:

When I entered the classroom for the first time, the classroom atmosphere was strange and a little intimidating. I know I always feel uncomfortable, unsettled, and nervous about a new class. But I felt much more anxious than in any other class I had been before. Probably because I have never had instructions in a spoken English and I have never talked with a native speaker of English. What will the instructor be like? Will my classmates speak and understand better than I? Will they laugh at me if I make mistakes? These are the questions that made me restless and nervous at the start of the class. And such anxiety still haunts me, although it is already the third week.
Similar feelings were frequently reported for the first few weeks. As time passed, however, her tension, nervousness, and fear of speaking English were eased by the growing familiarity with her instructor, classmates, and language tasks. Her attitude gradually changed from inactive to active towards the end of the semester. Generally, though, she was not an active risk-taker in class:

I get more and more familiar with the tasks. Also, I’ve got acquainted with my classmates in this class from doing pair-work or small group activities with different partners. I feel classroom atmosphere more familiar and more comfortable than before. Still I hesitate to speak up in front of class, while I feel more relaxed and become more active in oral participation in pair or in small group-work, especially with familiar or prepared topics.

Kyung’s passivity seemed to have originated in her cultural assumptions about gender roles. Quite a traditional thinker, she believed that a woman should keep silent in public and that, if necessary, she should speak briefly and ‘correctly’:

I do not really like the idea of a talkative woman and I never want to be one. When you have to speak in public, make your speech as short as can be. Times are changing, I know. But the principle still holds: “Less you talk, more virtuous you are.” And when you speak in public, don’t allow yourself make a single mistake. Be correct, or you will be called ‘stupid.’
Combined with her low self-confidence in her English speaking ability, the cultural value that she maintained regarding women’s speech behavior must have discouraged her oral participation in class. Yet another related factor was the limited number of female students in the class. Being a chemistry major, she had very few peers of the same sex in her department. In the spoken English class, there were only two female student, including Kyung. Both felt awkward and remained reticent among their 25 male peers:

Part of the reason that I am unwilling to participate is that we are the only female students here, surrounded by 25 males. My [female] friend and I always become partners in pair work, but do not speak up in front of the whole class except when we are called on by the instructor.

Towards the end of the semester, Kyung’s rigidity in the male-dominated class diminished, however. As she became acquainted with some male classmates, she felt more relaxed and occasionally took the opportunity to speak up in class, though her overall risk-taking behavior remained the same as before.

Summary

Due to her weak motivation in learning spoken English and her passive personality, Kyung’s attitude toward risk-
taking behavior in class was passive. For the first few weeks, the unfamiliarity of the learning environment (new instructor, classmates, and language tasks) made her nervous and anxious, which led to minimal oral participation. However, as she became accustomed to the class, she developed a preference for pair-work or small group work as an alternative to class participation. Still, her risk-taking behavior was deeply affected by her cultural values that discouraged women from speaking in public. Such a cultural assumption worked to reinforce her passivity, because the class was male-dominated. Towards the end of the semester, as she became acquainted with her male classmates, she felt a little more relaxed and could take risks occasionally.

Case study 14: Dae

Dae is a male student who failed the entrance examination for college in 1997. After one year, he entered the Department of Food Science at Korea University in 1998. He is not introverted, but not very extroverted, either. He said that he became talkative when he felt comfortable with the people around him. He did not have any experience in studying spoken English and had little confidence in his
speaking ability. With his low self-confidence in his spoken English ability, he was afraid of making mistakes in front of the class when he spoke:

Although I am not particularly anxiety-ridden about anything, I became very much afraid of making mistakes in front of class when I spoke. Much tenseness seized me in class because I felt being judged by instructor and classmates as I started to speak. I was afraid if my classmates would laugh at my broken English. It bothered me so much that my face turned red and my voice trembled when I tried to answer the instructor's question. But I believe this is a normal process to go through for many adult language learners.

Dae seldom participated in class unless he was called on or was taken for a turn. He described one particular reason for his lack of oral participation, namely, his extremely poor pronunciation. Although his utterances were recognizable, he spoke English with a very heavy local Korean accent. His speaking style in English bore resemblance to that of his Korean: fast delivery with primary accent on every first syllable. Dae stated that, even in pair-work, his partner often misunderstood what he tried to say in English because of his incorrect pronunciation:

To me, pronunciation is the greatest obstacle for effective communication in English. I have a heavy local accent in Korean, Busan (a southern port city) dialect. Today, it happened that I did not pay enough attention to my accents at my speaking turn because I was more preoccupied with what I was trying to communicate. The instructor
and the classmates looked puzzled, with an expression on their faces that they did not get what I was trying to say. The instructor asked me to repeat it again. And again. For three times it didn't work. For each time my voice became weaker and weaker. How embarrassed I was! I cannot make what I say 'heard,' not to mention 'understood.'

Another cause was his lack of motivation to continue to learn English further after this class. Dae was aware that constant oral practice would be necessary to improve his poor pronunciation, and speaking up in class would be good strategy to improve his speaking ability. But, due to his low motivation he was not willing to make more efforts to improve his weakness:

Oral practice for my poor pronunciation would be good strategy. Speaking up in class is a way to progress speaking ability in English and develop my confidence. But I didn’t feel like participating because I do not want to make a fool of myself any more. In fact, I think I need a lot of time in improving English, but I don’t feel like putting more time to oral practice because I was concerned about doing in my other courses.

Summary

Dae was an inactive oral participant in class. Because of low confidence in his spoken English ability, he was afraid of being ashamed in front of class when he made mistakes. His anxiety was intensified by his poor pronunciation. He had a local Korean accent, which
influenced his English pronunciation. He realized that his poor pronunciation was one of the reasons he feared making a fool of himself. Dae’s awareness of his own weakness did not lead to any effort to overcome it. Coupled with his low motivation to study English, he was blocked from active oral participation. He remained silent in whole class activities. However, he showed a more active attitude in pair or small group activities, in which his self-consciousness about being ridiculed lessened.

Case study 15: Joon

Joon is a male student studying in the Physics Department. He is a very sociable, talkative and easy-going person. He is an extremely active person who likes to entertain others with a lot of jokes. He described himself this way:

I am an outgoing person and hold a very optimistic view of life. They say I am extremely sociable. I agree. Indeed, I become talkative especially when I find myself among a good number of people. I like entertaining people around me and making friends with anybody. Even when someone next to me is a complete stranger, somehow I get him relaxed and to feel comfortable with me in a few seconds.

Joon apparently was an active risk-taker in his other courses, sometimes dominating class discussions. However, he
was inactive in oral participation in the spoken English class. Not only did he evaluate himself as 'low' regarding his English speaking ability, but also he showed very little self-esteem about his English competence as a whole:

I am not very good at any of the four skills - speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Despite I have learned English in terms of structural patterns and vocabulary for reading comprehension since junior high school, I still have a lot of problems in reading comprehension tasks. I even need the help of a Korean translation version of English textbooks while other students usually do without it.

Because of his perceived incompetence in speaking as well as other English skills, Joon experienced frequent frustration when he participated in classroom activities:

Today we had the whole class hour to talk about one's ideal female/male type. I was so interested in that topic. There were a lot of things popping up in my mind. But, when my turn came, only a few words came out of my mouth. It was a kind of cluster of words, not a sentence. Although the instructor gave an opportunity to speak one more time, saying 'just relax and take your time,' the instructor and classmates looked puzzled when I tried again. I felt frustrated.

After a few similar experiences, Joon withdrew from oral participation in class except for his required turn-taking. Another reason for such withdrawal was his consideration for other classmates. He felt sorry about wasting other students'
time, so he decided not to interrupt the class if participation was not required:

In fact, I did not feel ashamed when I made mistakes. But I felt sorry for other classmates. In a limited class hour, most students tend to think that they are not given turns or other opportunities enough to practice. If just a few students dominate the class, or if some others take time too much to stammer out their ideas, the situation worsens. I really do not want to waste other students’ time.

In the classroom, Joon moved to the back lest he should be called upon to speak by the instructor. He seldom took the initiative to speak out in class. However, he did not lose interest in learning English. So, for the most part, he concentrated on listening to the instructor and to the other students’ speaking and took notes of what he comprehended. He seemed to have adopted listening as a compensation strategy, while he acknowledged the importance of risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency:

I am not, and cannot become, an active participant in this class. But I think I can improve my English by attentively listening to instructor and students’ speaking because I can learn proper expressions from them. I admit that this is only secondary means. For nothing can replace active oral participation as the best way to develop oral proficiency.
Summary

Joon has a sociable and outgoing personality, active attitude, and was not afraid of making mistakes in front of the class. And he has a high level of self-esteem in his overall academic ability and is a very active participant in other subject areas. However, he was one of the quietest students in the spoken English class. His passivity was caused not only by his low self-confidence in spoken English ability but also by his consideration for other students in the class. He did not want to waste the limited class hour for his ineffective participation, and decided to remain silent so that the other students could have more opportunities to practice. While he was aware of the necessity of risk-taking behavior in spoken English class, he thus adopted an alternative strategy, focusing on listening comprehension.
Cross-Case Studies

This section presents the results from analysis of the data collected from diary entries, classroom observations, and personal data obtained from questionnaires. The analysis sought to answer questions regarding the nature of perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency across fifteen participants, the fifteen participants’ actual risk-taking modes, and the factors affecting risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms.

**Perceptions toward Risk-Taking Behavior**

Table 5 presents the perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in an EFL classroom across the fifteen participants in this study. Perceptions of individual participants are quoted from their diary entries. As can be seen, all the participants (100%) showed positive perceptions of risk-taking behavior related to English oral proficiency in an EFL classroom, while they listed various advantages of risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency, such as confirmation or clarification checks, acquisition of accuracy through error corrections, learning new expressions, oral practice of familiar expressions, or sustaining their interest in class activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Perceptions Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yong</td>
<td>“a way to express my ideas for getting feedback or confirmation check through which I can make sure if what I have in mind is right or wrong”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soo</td>
<td>“speaking up is an effective way to learn speaking and listening English skills. It helps to practice accurate expressions through speaking out one’s ideas and listening others”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won</td>
<td>“speak up whenever possible and get as much feedback as possible. . . I could get comprehension and clarification checked”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dong</td>
<td>“active classroom participation gives the opportunities to self-correct or get clarification check from the instructor. It helps me to keep focused on every topic or activity discussed or conducted”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mee</td>
<td>“speaking up is one of the most important practices in learning English. . . the advantages of risk-taking as a good opportunity to express my opinions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hae</td>
<td>“speaking out is essential if you want to develop the communicative ability so that you have no problem making yourself understood in English”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table Continues)
(Table 5. Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>“I should be willing to make constant trials and errors in order to improve speaking English. . .” to speak up as much as possible and get the instructor’s response in order to check or evaluate what I try to communicate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin</td>
<td>“speaking up is necessary to practice spoken English and that it helps not only to clarify what I want to communicate but also to gain self-confidence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyu</td>
<td>“speaking up is the best way to oral fluency . . . oral participation in class helps me to find my errors and to get ready for various situations”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyeon</td>
<td>“active oral participation in improving one’s oral fluency is important for the clarification and modification of one’s ideas and expressions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chan</td>
<td>“I don’t think that speaking up in class is the only way to achieve the competence, although it is very important. The improvement of one’s oral fluency can be achieved through different kinds of exposure to the language . . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seok</td>
<td>“speaking up in class is the best way to learn English through trial and error”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyung</td>
<td>“oral participation is hard but necessary . . . I can try new expressions so that I get used to them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dae</td>
<td>“speaking up in class is a way to progress speaking ability in English and develop my confidence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joon</td>
<td>“nothing can replace active participation as the best way to develop oral fluency”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fifteen Participants’ Risk-Taking Modes

As seen in Table 5, all the fifteen participants showed positive perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in an EFL classroom. However, the extent to which each participant took risks in class varied. Risk-taking behavior across the fifteen participants was classified into three modes: active, moderate, and inactive modes. Classification of risk-taking modes was based on the self-description by individual participants of their risk-taking behavior described in the diary entries and my impressions through classroom observation. An active risk-taker is one who takes initiative of oral participation more frequently than the average number of self-selected turn-takings in the class. A moderate risk-taker is one whose frequency of self-selection marks the average of the class. An inactive risk-taker is one whose frequency of self-selection remains below the average of the class. In this study, the average frequency of self-selection was 2.

This implies that there are factors affecting each participant’s risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom. Table 6 presents the risk-taking modes of the fifteen participants in this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Yong</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Soo (Inactive-Active)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Dong (Inactive-Active)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Gyu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Medical Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mee</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seok</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Won (Active-Moderate)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>Jin</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joon</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hyeon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dae</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Food Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kyung</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Hae (Active-Inactive)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * indicates change of attitude through the study period.

Table 6: Risk-Taking Modes of the Fifteen Participants in an EFL Classroom
Among the fifteen participants, two participants (13%) were active risk-takers throughout the study period, three (20%) were moderate risk-takers, and six (40%) were inactive risk-takers. Four participants (27%) changed their attitude toward risk-taking behavior during the course; two inactive risk-takers (Case 2 and Case 4) turned to active risk takers, one active risk-taker (Case 3) became a moderate risk-taker, and one active risk-taker (Case 6) turned to an inactive risk-taker.

Factors Affecting Risk-Taking Behaviors

In the diary entries across the fifteen participants, there were 604 units that contained references to factors affecting risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms, either directly or indirectly through the mention of possible attitude and reactions towards risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency. Table 7 presents the factors affecting participants’ risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms. The possible factors were listed across the fifteen participants. The factors that were identified were grouped under two categories - internal and external. As defined in the Introduction, internal factors are those that originate within a person or stem from an individual’s psychological
bases. Internal factors are related to personal and affective factors such as personality, attitude, motivation, and self-esteem. External factors are those that originate outside the learners. External factors are related to factors deriving from learners’ cultural beliefs or practices, and to the course-related factors.
Internal Factors

Personal and Affective Factors

Personality traits
   Introverted and shy personality
   Extroverted and outgoing personality

Positive attitude in learning
   Eagerness in seeking for opportunity to practice
   Fearlessness in making mistakes

Motivation
   Strong motivation for learning English
   Concern for a good grade
   Low motivation for learning English

Self-esteem
   Self-confidence in speaking ability due to
      prior language learning experience
   Increase of self-confidence through constant
      risk-taking or out of class practice
   Self-esteem as idealized image

Anxiety
   Fear of making mistakes due to past unsuccessful
      experience

(Table Continues)

Table 7: Factors Affecting the Participants’ Risk-Taking Behavior in an EFL classroom across Fifteen Participants
External Factors

Socio-Cultural Factors

Classmates
- Competition-comparing oneself to other classmates
- Intimidated by the active participants
- (Un)familiarity of classmates

Instructor
- Personality characteristics
- Acknowledgement toward student’s English ability
- Feedback/error correction
- Text-dependent teaching
- Inconsistency of lesson plan
- (Non)threatening and (non)supportive attitude

Cultural beliefs and practices
- Lack of participation experience due to educational background
- Concern about not showing off
- Concern about not losing face
- Concern about other students’ time
- Cultural belief in female gender role

Course-Related Factors

- Large class size
- Classroom activity (pair-work, small group-work, games)
- (In)sufficient preparation of assignments
- (Un)familiarity of topics, tasks, or materials
As seen in Table 7, there were five major internal factors and seven major external factors affecting the fifteen participants’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom. It should be recognized that many of these factors are related to one another, even across categories.

In order to identify the factors that facilitate or help the participants’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom and those that debilitate or hinder it, I present in what follows an enumeration of facilitating and debilitating factors, respectively, grouped beneath internal and external categories, along with the frequency identified in the diary entries across the fifteen participants.

Facilitating Factors

Table 8 shows the factors facilitating or helping the participants’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom across the fifteen participants. As seen, there were thirteen individual factors facilitating or helping the participants’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom. Some of them are internal factors, while others are external factors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Factors</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal and Affective Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroverted and outgoing personality trait</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitude in learning</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagerness of seeking for opportunities to practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearlessness of making mistakes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong motivation</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for getting a better job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with target language speaking people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern about getting a good grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence in speaking ability due to prior language learning experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase of self-confidence through constant risk-taking or out of classroom practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| External Factors                                                                 |           |
| **Socio-Cultural Factors**                                                      |           |
| Familiarity of classmates                                                       | 17        |
| Instructor’s encouraging attitude and teaching styles                           | 12        |
| **Course-Related Factors**                                                      |           |
| Sufficient preparation for class                                                | 59        |
| Classroom activity (pair-work, small group, games)                             | 95        |
| Interest or familiarity of topics and tasks                                    | 17        |

Table 8: Factors Facilitating the Risk-Taking Behavior in an EFL Classroom across the Fifteen Participants
Among those factors listed in Table 6, the major factors facilitating risk-taking behavior are sorted out from the diary entries across the fifteen participants: pair-work or small-group classroom activity; sufficient preparation for class; positive attitude in learning; strong motivation.

1. Pair-work or small-group classroom activity

Most of the participants (100%) preferred risk taking in pair-work or in small group activity to participating in the whole class activity. Partly due to the large class size, some active participants liked pair or small group classroom activities, as they provided more opportunities to speak up or facilitated concentration upon the activity. Other participants, who usually remained inactive in whole class activities, demonstrated a strong preference for pair-work or small group activity because they felt more comfortable and more relaxed in speaking up in pair-work or in small group activities than in front of the whole class.

Yong
In pair-works you have more opportunities to speak. Sometimes you can repeat a new expression several times until you get used to it.

Soo
I think I like the pair-work because I can express my personal feelings more freely than in the whole class work,
and also because I can practice more.

Won
I like pair-work or small group activity better, because I could have more opportunities to speak up.

Dong
In pair-works you do not have to hurry. You have enough time to organize your thought before you speak it out.

Mee
I usually feel safer in small group activity than in the question-answer turn-taking for the whole class led by the instructor.

Hae
Pair-works and small group discussions are more favorable, because I don’t have to be conscious of the instructor’s intimidating corrections.

Sung
Pair-work has the advantage of trying a new expression as often as possible, so that I can get used to it in no time.

Jin
I like pair or small group work much better because I can easily relax with just one or two more students, and feel safe enough to talk freely.

Gyu
In small group discussions, you can speak more. Besides, you also have to concentrate on what the other members say if you want to make quick and smart responses.

Hyeon
I could feel more comfortable and less self-conscious in oral participation in pair-work or in small group-work than in front of the whole class. It’s the intimacy of the small group, I think, that made me feel safe to speak up, even if just a little.

Chan
With my partner only, I became less self-conscious and could talk a little bit. I wish the instructor would provide more opportunities for pair-works.
Seok
In pair-works I don’t have to be sensitive about taking opportunities.

Kyung
I hesitate to speak up in front of class, while I feel more relaxed and become more active in risk-taking in pair-work or small group work.

Dae
It was far easier for me to talk in pair-work. Of course, I know I made a lot of mistakes. But it was only my partner who noticed them. So I didn’t really feel ashamed.

Joon
I could talk a little bit when there were only me and my partner. Actually, [pair-work] is the only opportunity for oral practice that I am willing to take.

2. Sufficient preparation for class

Preparedness for class played a significant role in facilitating participants’ risk-taking. Whether active or inactive risk-takers, students were more likely to participate in class when they had prepared themselves.

Particularly among inactive oral participants, those who kept preparing before class throughout the semester showed a sign of increasing participation. Their diary entries demonstrated a sense of pleasant surprise at their own successful oral performance, of gaining confidence, and of increasing interest in the class activities.

Yong
I wrote down my thoughts about the topic so that I could talk more accurately tomorrow.
Soo
I think I did pretty well when “My family” came up . . .
I had given much thought to the topic.

Dong
I had prepared much for the class, according to the
assignments or the given material on the syllabus. And
I talked so confidently, and correctly.

Mee
So, each day I prepared the designated amount of text
material in order to participate effectively.

Sung
I could not remember all that I prepared, but I think
I made myself understood anyway.

Jin
We were told to do pair-conversation about any topic.
So we picked up the story about marriage that we learned
in English reading class. It was not so difficult because
we could talk with some expressions learned in that class.

Hyeon
Thanks to last night’s effort, I could concentrate on my
pronunciation in class.

Chan
I went to the class today prepared for the given topic. It
made me feel less nervous.

Seok
I know I participate more frequently when I’m prepared,
although it is not always possible to be so.

Kyung
I could enjoy the class because I could speak up what
I prepared previous night.

3. Positive attitude in learning

    A positive attitude toward learning was demonstrated
in most of the active oral participants. And it was often
the case that higher self-confidence in speaking ability or stronger motivation for learning spoken English brought about a more positive attitude, which directly led to active risk-taking behavior marked by fearlessness about making mistakes. Also, learners’ positive attitude was occasionally manifested in eagerness to seek out-of-class opportunities to practice.

Yong
I seized every opportunity to speak up in the class, even if I knew I used wrong expressions.

Soo
In fact, I do not expect I can improve spoken and listening English ability with an exposure of two hours a week at school. I decide to have extra-tutoring after school.

Won
I’m thinking of myself as very positive in attitude toward learning, and I enjoy participating in this class. My principle is speak up whenever possible and get as much feedback as possible. Even when I’m not sure if I speak correctly, I take risk.

Dong
My speaking English is poor, but I am good at vocabulary and grammar ability. I think I just need time to think about the given topic . . . So, today I asked the instructor to let me have my turn later. After class I asked the instructor to tell us what we were going to talk about in advance, so that we could prepare for it.

Sung
I always sit in the front and close to the instructor. It helps me to take initiative. If I have something to talk in the class, I just take the opportunity and speak out what I want to say. I’m not afraid of making mistakes. I think that speaking a little is better than not speaking at all.
Hae
So, I decided to join the AFKN [American Forces Korean Network] club to improve my listening ability.

Gyu
I’m trying not to miss any opportunity to speak up. So I start speaking even before I organize the ideas in good shape.

Seok
It is not always possible to participate effectively in class. There are in fact a lot of obstacles. But I believe that success depends on your zeal for what you are in pursuit of.

Joon
Even though I am poor at speaking English, I am not afraid of making mistakes in class. Making mistakes is a necessary process in learning something.

4. Strong motivation

Participants’ risk-taking behavior was enhanced by their motivation or interest in learning spoken English. Those who had a strong motivation, deriving from career plans, expected contacts with target language people, or a concern for a good grade, tended towards active oral participation: those without such strong motivation were likely to be less active during classroom activities.

Yong
From the first day of class, the instructor has urged the students to participate in class, stressing participation in class would be one of the requirements for grading. . . In terms of grading, I feel pressured for good grades, because I have to receive scholarship to continue my study in this university. . . I make conscious efforts to participate actively in class, not only because spoken
English is indispensable, but also because I want to get a good grade.

Soo
I want to be a simultaneous interpreter after graduation. I want to speak English fluently.

Won
I want to be an international businessman. That is why I want to speak English fluently.

Dong
My foremost interest in this class is getting a good grade. Learning English is very important in itself, though.

Mee
I want to be a good English teacher at the secondary schools. I want to study English thoroughly in terms of all four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

Hae
I want to develop my communicative ability in English before I go to the U.S.A for further study after graduation.

Sung
My career plan to be a diplomat or an international businessman provided me with a strong interest in this class.

Gyu
My concern in learning English is strongly related to my career goal as medical missionary.

Seok
I really want to speak fluently to communicate smoothly with [an Australian pen friend] when we get together.

Table 9 demonstrates the distribution of all the facilitating factors identified in each participant’s diary entries, including those enumerated above.
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*number indicates the frequency of mention for each participant’s risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom

**Factors facilitating risk-taking behavior (A-I)
A. Extroverted and outgoing personality trait
B. Positive attitude in learning
C. Strong motivation
D. Self-confidence
E. Familiarity of classmates or instructor
F. Instructor’s encouraging attitude
G. Pair-work or small-group classroom activity
H. Sufficient preparation for class
I. Interest or familiarity of topics and tasks

Table 9: Distribution of Factors Facilitating Risk-Taking Behavior in an EFL classroom across the Fifteen Participants
Debilitating Factors

Table 10 shows the factors debilitating or hindering the participants' risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms across the fifteen participants. As seen, there were twenty-two individual factors debilitating or hindering the participants' risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms. Some of them are internal factors, while others are external factors.

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(Table Continues)

Table 10: Factors Debilitating Risk-Taking Behavior in EFL Classrooms across the Fifteen Participants
(Table 10. Continued)

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External Factors
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**Socio-Cultural Factors**

Classmates
Competitiveness with other students
Unfamiliarity with classmates
Intimidated by the active participants

Instructor’s attitude and teaching styles
Instructor’s error treatment
Lack of acknowledgment toward learners’
   English ability
Threatening and non-supportive attitude
Lack of preparation for class
Text-dependent teaching style
Inconsistency of lesson plan

Cultural beliefs and practices
Lack of experience in classroom participation
   due to educational background
Cultural beliefs toward female gender role
Concern about not showing off
Concern about other students’ time
Concern about not losing face

**Course-Related Factors**

Limited opportunities due to large class size
Unfamiliarity with topics, materials, and tasks
Lack or sufficient preparation

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Among those factors listed in Table 10, the following ones emerged as the major factors that debilitating risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom across the fifteen participants: cultural beliefs or practices; instructor’s attitude and teaching styles; anxiety; limited opportunities due to large class size.

1. Cultural beliefs or practices

   Cultural beliefs or practices have sub-categories: avoidance for face-saving, consideration for other students’ time, lack of experience in class participation, and passive gender-role for female students. A whole array of cultural assumptions and attitudes seemed to hinder active oral participation in the EFL classroom. The anxiety about losing face was one of the most serious obstacles for inactive oral participants, which is somewhat predictable in the context of the ‘shame culture’ of Korean society. In turn, such anxiety was often combined with the sense of losing the competition in the classroom, or of one’s self-image being damaged. In some cases, cultural assumptions about proper classroom behavior, concerning consideration for others, inhibition of individual conspicuousness, and
the traditional teacher-student relationship, imposed restrictions on both active and inactive risk-takers. To a greater or lesser degree, inactive female students tended to subscribe to the culturally defined passive gender role.

Soo
What's worse, I feel very bad when my classmates do much better in the speaking class, because usually I do much better than they do in major areas.

Won
If a few students dominate in class, other students would have much less opportunities to participate . . . I feel like participating and speaking up in class, but I usually wait until other students wouldn't participate any more. I wasn't volunteering much because I wanted others to participate and I didn't want to be conspicuous. If only a few more proficient students dominate in class, other students would have much less opportunities.

Dong
Without preparation I cannot speak at all in the class. So I am trying as hard as I can to prepare for the class, because I do not want to lose face.

Hae
I felt insulted at the instructor's blunt manner, and was so ashamed that I thought I would never be able to volunteer to speak in front of the class, risking another terrible shame after this.

Jin
From elementary school to senior high school, classroom participation is a rare experience in our country. We had very limited opportunities to express what we think . . . most of the students are not used to volunteering to ask questions or answer the questions in length . . . If a woman is outspoken a little bit, she is most likely to get censure from everywhere.

Gyu
I don't think I can speak as often and freely as I want. I must have some consideration for others.
Hyeon
I am not accustomed to volunteering in the classroom . . . In order to show respect to the teacher, students should not ask too many questions in class. We used to remain passive and quiet in class. How can we change ourselves into active oral participants all of a sudden?

I think I’m too shy to speak in front of people whom I am not familiar with. I cannot help it, because I think I’m a female student.

Chan
It’s only in this class that I feel inferior. At least I don’t want to lose face by making mistakes when I speak up in front of class. Instead, I would rather keep silent because that does not hurt my pride much.

Seok
Sometimes I feel like a child, unable to express what I know for sure. Especially when I make a mistake in an easy task, I’m ashamed of myself, who is but a grown-up babbling baby.

Kyung
Will my classmates speak and understand better than I? Will they laugh at me if I make mistakes?

I don’t really like the idea of a talkative woman and I never want to be one. When you have to speak in public, make your speech as short as can be . . . And when you speak in public, don’t allow yourself make a single mistake. Be correct, or you will be called ‘stupid.’

Part of the reason that I am unwilling to participate is that we are the only female students here, surrounded by 25 males. My [female] friend and I always become partners in pair work, but do not speak up in front of the whole class except when we are called on by the instructor.

Dae
[Because of my poor pronunciation], the instructor didn’t understand. At first I wondered if I gave a wrong answer. After a little while, when another student, who sat next to me, repeated what I said, she nodded indicating that she finally understood what I meant. So did other students. I felt quite ashamed.
Joon
I felt sorry for other classmates. In a limited class hour most students tend to think that they are not given turns or other opportunities enough to practice.

2. Instructor’s attitude and teaching styles

Learners in the EFL classroom seemed to be sensitive about the personality and the classroom behavior of their instructor. In particular, students’ risk-taking behavior was strongly affected by the individual teaching style of the instructor: method, material, or even speaking pace. In some cases, the instructor’s caring attitude and careful teaching style encouraged students. It was revealed in many other cases, however, that the instructor’s inconsistent teaching style or demanding attitude created a rather unfavorable, even hostile classroom atmosphere that deterred students from active risk-taking.

Soo
When instructor asked us to do pair-work for a game, most students didn’t understand what she meant because she was talking too fast.

She is so inconsiderate of the fact that we are in speaking class for the first time ever since we started to learn English.

Dong
Sometimes she shows a particular favor toward certain students. Naturally, other students feel neglected.
Mee
I'm completely disappointed. For my instructor is very inconsistent, even careless. She seems to have little, if any, teaching strategy for sustain students' interest.

The instructor didn't do anything to encourage or lead me on [when I gave a wrong answer]. She just dismissed me and moved on to another student. I felt my face blushed.

Hae
The instructor is very impatient, so she is upset and irritated whenever the students do not respond quickly and accurately . . . the instructor was so upset and asked me where my mind was rambling about. I could not think of anything at the moment because I felt embarrassed and humiliated.

The most intimidating thing is that the instructor corrects us instantly and bluntly whenever we make mistakes.

Jin
I don't think the instructor is fair. He does not wait for a poor speaker to complete his or her utterance. I wish the instructor would show more concern for the poor speakers in the class.

Hyeon
Silly as he [a classmate] was to tell quite an inadequate joke, it was also insensible of her [instructor] to be mad and tell him to come to her office after class. Classroom atmosphere was very strained. And no one seemed to want to participate in class when she continued the lesson.

Chan
I felt ashamed because I failed to give the correct answer, while my classmates were doing fine in their turns. But what really made me furious was that the instructor seemed to enjoy picking on me for my poor oral performance.

Seok
Stuck to the text materials, the instructor did not seem to have prepared other related materials for the class to practice the expressions given in the textbook.
Kyung
Sometimes the instructor does not follow the lesson plan as it appears on the syllabus. I want to prepare on the topics before class. Otherwise, I cannot participate in class at all.

Dae
The instructor often interrupted the students in order to give corrections to grammatical errors. I feel that students should be allowed for such kind of errors so that they can concentrate more on what they are trying to communicate.

Joon
Today, the instructor didn’t follow the lesson plan. I was totally dependent on my preparations for the class, which turned out useless.

3. Anxiety

Among the inactive oral participants, fear of making mistakes was the most predominant feature. The more a student was afraid of making mistakes, the less he or she took the opportunity for risk-taking. In some cases, high level anxiety about making mistakes tended to gain momentum as the semester went on. The greatest source of anxiety can be located in the students’ low self-confidence in their speaking or listening ability, which was attributed in most cases to grammar-oriented English instruction in high schools. More often than not, anxiety due to their low self-confidence in English speaking ability was worsened by an awareness of their high level of confidence in English grammar and reading ability.
Soo
I have a lot of trouble speaking and understanding English in class. I am able to understand only 30% of what the instructor says... I felt frustrated about my speaking and listening ability.

Dong
Although I do not consider myself to be a highly anxious student, in class where you are performing and being judged by instructor and classmates, there is much more tenseness and I became very much afraid of making mistakes.

My speaking English is not good enough to speak up in class and I do not want to make a fool of myself in front of the class by making mistakes.

Mee
I think we were not given instruction or opportunities to practice in speaking and listening enough to be able to communicate with the native speakers.

Hae
I was not particularly afraid of making mistakes in the class. After the experiences of being corrected so bluntly, however, I became more and more self-conscious about the possible errors I might make.

Jin
I’m afraid of making mistakes in front of whole class. Though I think I have pretty good amount of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, I can’t promptly use it for oral expression.

Hyeon
I can’t raise my voice because my bad pronunciation would sound more funny.

Chan
My oral production is full of errors much more than I expected. I hesitate to speak up because I worry too much about making mistakes.

I’m quite poor in spoken English. I often compare myself to the other students, which makes it harder for me to take risks in class.
Kyung
But I felt much more anxious [in speaking class] than in any other class I had been before. Probably because I had never had any instructions in spoken English.

Dae
Much tenseness seized me in class because I felt being judged by instructor and classmates as I started to speak. I was afraid if my classmates would laugh at my broken English.

Joon
Although the instructor gave an opportunity to speak one more time, saying ‘just relax and take your time,’ the instructor and classmates looked puzzled when I tried again. I felt frustrated.

4. Limited opportunities due to large class size

Some students expressed their concern about the limited opportunities for oral practice. Consisting of 25 to 35 students, most classes could not offer sufficient time for every student to participate within the 50-minutes class period. Turn-taking with a brief utterance was the only solution, of which active risk-takers were likely to complain.

Yong
The size of the class disables an effective and desirable communication in the class. Each student can hardly take a turn in a 50-minute session.

Soo
But there are over 30 students in this class. Most students are not given opportunities enough to try to participate.

Won
We have 31 students in the class. This is totally absurd. How are we supposed to practice in such an over-sized class?
Dong
I could try speaking a little bit more if the class is more intimate. With 35 students, it is impossible to get such a favorable atmosphere.

Mee
I am so uncomfortable in class because of the class size. Sometimes it is hard to hear what the instructor comments on a student’s answer.

Hae
In a limited class hour, most students tend to think that they are not given turns or other opportunities enough to practice.

Sung
I don’t really mind taking as much time as I want. Nevertheless, I sometimes feel a little pressed to finish my utterance before I fully develop my ideas.

Gyu
There are more than 30 students in the class, which is huge for speaking class. Not every student can take turn, no matter how briefly one talks.

Seok
But under the pressure of time constraints due to the class size, I often feel uncomfortable in participating. There are almost 30 students in this class. Most students are not given opportunities enough to take turns. And I don’t want to be exceptional. I think if class size is smaller, there may be more chances to participate in class.

Joon
If the class were smaller, I could try to speak a little bit more. But, as it is, the class does not allow for such an attempt.

Table 11 demonstrates the distribution of all the debilitating factors identified in each participant’s diary entries, including those enumerated above.
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* number indicates the frequency of mention for each participant’s risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom

** Factors debilitating risk-taking behavior (A-J)
A. Personality traits (shy in public, introverted)
B. Low motivation in learning English
C. Self-esteem as idealized image
D. Anxiety
E. Classmates
F. Instructor’s attitude and teaching styles
G. Cultural beliefs and practices
H. Limited opportunities due to large class size
I. Lack or sufficient preparation of assignments
J. Unfamiliarity with topics, materials, and tasks

Table 11: Distribution of Factors Debilitating Risk-Taking Behavior in an EFL Classroom across Fifteen Participants
Summary of Findings

This section summarizes, in terms of the research questions, the findings from the analysis of the data collected in this study and discusses the implications of the findings.

Research Question 1: What are the students’ perceptions toward risk-taking behavior for their oral proficiency in EFL classrooms?

As shown in Table 5, all fifteen participants (100%) in this study demonstrated their perceptions toward risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms as the most effective means to achieve oral proficiency. Whether active or inactive participants in class, they were well aware of the necessity as well as desirability of risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms. As for the specific advantages that risk-taking behavior would provide, the fifteen participants listed different yet related ones: clarification or confirmation checks, acquisition of accuracy through error corrections, learning new expressions, oral practice of familiar expressions, or sustaining their interest in class activity.
Research Question 2: Which factors affect the students’ risk-taking behavior?

Thirty-five individual factors seemed to influence the participants’ risk-taking behavior in the fifteen participants’ EFL classrooms. Those factors were classified into two groups, facilitating and debilitating factors. The following is a list of the identified factors realigned along the axis of internal/external factors. Each factor in both categories is ordered in the sequence according to the frequency of its occurrence. All were listed in terms of the research questions.

Research Question 2-A. Do external factors (e.g., class size and instructor’s attitude) facilitate and/or debilitate students’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom?

Among 22 external factors, 5 were facilitating factors and 17 were debilitating ones.

**Facilitating Factors**

1. Pair-work or small-group classroom activity
2. Sufficient preparation for class
3. Interest or familiarity of topics and tasks
4. Instructor’s encouraging attitude and teaching styles
5. Familiarity with classmates
Debilitating Factors

1. Cultural beliefs and practices
   a. Lack of experience in classroom participation due to educational background
   b. Cultural belief toward female gender role
   c. Concern about not showing off
   d. Concern about other students’ time
   e. Concern about not losing face

2. Instructor’s attitude and teaching styles
   a. Instructor’s error treatment
   b. Lack of learners’ cultural understanding
   c. Lack of acknowledgment toward learners’ English ability
   d. Threatening and non-supportive attitude
   e. Lack of preparation
   f. Text-dependent teaching
   g. Inconsistency of lesson plan

3. Limited opportunities for risk-taking due to large class size

4. Classmates
   a. Competitiveness with other students
   b. Unfamiliarity with classmates
   c. Intimidated by the active participants

5. Insufficient preparation for class
Analysis of data revealed that instructor’s attitude and teaching style, class size, classroom activity, cultural beliefs, and students’ preparedness among many other external factors, had an impact upon students’ risk-taking behavior in EFL classrooms. Each of these factors is discussed below.

2-A.1. Instructor’s attitude

The present study reveals that the instructor’s behavior is a critical component in a Korean EFL classroom. The instructor’s attitude contributes to classroom atmosphere, which is one of the most important factors that raise or reduce students’ affective filter. When there was a non-threatening, interactive, and comfortable classroom atmosphere, it lowered the students’ affective filter and provided a comfort-level necessary for active risk-taking. On the other hand, initially active oral participants were reduced to an inactive role when a threatening atmosphere existed. From the findings, twelve (80%) out of the fifteen participants indicated that the instructor’s attitudes and teaching styles hindered their risk-taking behavior in class. Only six (40%) participants felt encouraged to speak up in class by their instructors.
The instructor’s inflexible attitude toward error corrections in particular provoked learners’ anxiety, which reduced learners’ risk-taking. For example, Mee (Case 5) and Hae (Case 6) felt uncomfortable with or humiliated in the error treatment by their instructors and were skeptical about the desired effect of error corrections (‘meaning over form’ and ‘fluency over accuracy’) by the instructors, which consequently led to a reduced willingness to engage in oral participation. This finding supports the conclusions of a number of studies on error corrections in ESL/EFL classroom (Chenoweth et al., 1983; Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986; Kock and Terrell, 1991; Young, 1990; Walker, 1973). Researchers concluded that students want their oral errors to be corrected, but feel sensitive about when, how, and what was corrected. This implies that learners’ fear of making mistakes may be reduced and they can concentrate more upon what they are trying to communicate if the instructor corrects their oral errors with a warmer and friendlier attitude, thus helping learners realize that everyone makes mistakes.

Another finding of this study is that an individual instructor’s teaching style and his or her personal characteristics are also important factors that encourage or
discourage learners from taking risks in class. To build a comfortable atmosphere where learners feel relaxed enough to take risks, the instructor’s positive encouragement and real concern about the learners’ needs are necessary. In this study, for example, Dong (Case 4) was not only reassured of the desirability of risk-taking behavior by the instructor’s constant encouragement, but he was also enabled to participate actively and frequently in class by the instructor’s willingness to revise the syllabus, which helped to increase Dong’s preparedness for the class and his self-confidence, too.

The instructor’s negative personality (e.g., impatience, strictness, and demanding attitude) reduces learners’ self-confidence and thereby obstructs their active oral participation. For instance, Hae (Case 6) felt frustrated and neglected due to the instructor’s careless dismissal at her failure to answer correctly. In a negative response to the instructor’s demanding attitude and inconsiderateness, Mee (Case 5) often complained that the instructor as a native speaker of English spoke too fast and did not show a genuine concern to the foreign learners. Regardless of the probability that the instructors assumed that ‘normal-speed’ speaking was most profitable for the
class, basic communication in class should be maintained. Otherwise, it is not unnatural for learners to think of themselves as neglected and even deprived of the sense of care on the instructor’s part, the importance of which is directly acknowledged in humanistic approaches to language learning or teaching (see Moskowitz, 1978). As Puhl (1975) and Bannai (1981) suggest, both ESL and EFL teachers should be humanistic, in order to create a classroom atmosphere which protects language learners and releases natural human impulses to communicate, fostering ‘spontaneous talk’ which leads to communicative competence.

As for the instructors’ teaching styles, there seem to be contradictory demands from learners. Seok (Case 12) found his instructor’s text-dependent teaching style boring, thus diminishing learners’ interest and weakening concentration, while Mee (Case 5) criticized her instructor’s frequent diversions from the syllabus as inconsistent. The implication is that both too strict an adherence to the textbook and too loose an organization of teaching material should be avoided. Whatever the teaching style, effective strategies to sustain the learners’ interest are essential.
2-A.2. Pair-work or small group activity

To a greater or lesser degree, all of the participants (100%) in this study expressed their preferences for pairwork or small-group activities for various reasons. Inactive risk-takers in particular demonstrated a strong preference for pair or small-group activities. As Jin (Case 8), Hyeon (Case 10), and Kyung (Case 13) stated, they were more willing to speak out in pair or small-group work than in the whole class activity because it provided a safer and less threatening atmosphere for their risk-taking. Given that these students were introverted in personality trait and/or had low self-confidence in their English speaking ability, it can be concluded that, by creating a more intimate and person-to-person situation, pair or small-group work helps the inactive risk-takers to be less self-conscious and less afraid of making mistakes. Such a conclusion concurs with some studies (Crookall and Saunders, 1989; Crookall and Oxford, 1991), which show that teachers can transform the classroom atmosphere into an anxiety-reducing one through the use of pair work, small group work, games, and simulations.

Pair-work or small group work has another, yet related, benefit, which applied to both active and inactive oral
participants in the present study. As other active risk-takers did, Gyu (Case 9) liked pair or small group work because it provided more opportunities to practice without as much time-constraint as the whole class turn-taking. But he also learned how to communicate effectively by trying out variations of students expressing the same meaning in order to make himself understood by his partners. Hae (Case 6), who remained inactive in the whole class activities because of the instructor’s unfavorable attitude toward her oral errors, revived her interest and took some initiatives in pair or small-group work, in which she could concentrate more on communicative content without too much anxiety about incorrect expressions. As a whole, participants in this study across the line of active/inactive participation became more involved and less intimidated about the possible errors during pair-work and small group activities.

2-A.3. Cultural beliefs or practices

The findings of this study suggest that cultural beliefs and practices affect Korean students’ risk-taking behavior in classroom interaction. Most participants (93%) felt that their classroom behavior was restricted by their cultural beliefs and practices. As mentioned earlier, in
traditional Korean culture great emphasis is placed on appropriate behavior, moral training, and social harmony. In the present study, these cultural beliefs and practices converged into the concept of propriety of classroom behavior, which tended to impose restrictions, to a greater or lesser degree, upon the students’ active oral participation in their spoken English class. The following is an account of the most salient cultural factors disclosed by the participants of this study.

a. Face-saving

The cultural emphasis on appropriate behavior in Korean society is closely related to deep concern about the possible shame that one has to suffer when one is judged by others to deviate from social norms. Such a concern breeds a strong sensitivity to public opinion of oneself, on the one hand; on the other, it fosters a passive attitude, with which one tries to avoid any occasion for a violation of the social norm and thus for losing face. In the classroom, such concerns and attitudes were manifested in the students’ tendency to withdraw from oral participation, when the possibility of making mistakes and thereby losing face increased. This was true of all the inactive risk-takers -
Hae (Case 6), Jin (Case 8), Hyeon (Case 10), Chan (Case 11), Kyung (Case 13), Dae (Case 14), Joon (Case 15). And such a tendency is certainly better explained in terms of cultural attitude than of individual personality, as both introverted students - Jin (Case 8), Hyeon (Case 10), Chan (Case 11), Kyung (Case 13) - and outgoing ones - Hae (Case 6), Dae (Case 14), Joon (Case 15) - were subject to it. An extreme case was Chan (Case 11), who was totally inactive in class and often missed the class to avoid any more face-losing situations.

b. Consideration for others

Related to the prevailing tendency of face-saving, consideration for other students also had a negative impact upon students' risk-taking behavior. To a certain degree, this factor affected most of the active and moderate risk-takers in particular - Yong (Case 1), Soo (Case 2), Won (Case 3), Mee (Case 5), Gyu (Case 9), Seok (Case 12). In their awareness of limited opportunities for oral participation due to the large class size, students who were initially positive about voluntary participation would not take the initiative or answer a question until they were asked by the instructor to do so. In this, they all seemed
to subscribe to the cultural beliefs that a few students should not dominate the class and deprive other students of their due opportunity to speak out. This finding is consistent with what Allwright and Bailey (1991), Shamim (1996), and Wu (1991) described: that Asian students' reluctance to volunteer could be attributed in part to the inhibitions caused by the maxim of modesty in the classroom. It is obvious that such an attitude found in the present study derives from cultural beliefs, which emphasize social harmony over individual excellence, or modesty over self-assertion.

However, it should also be noted that a more forceful factor seemed to operate behind the students' modest attitude and reinforced it eventually. As demonstrated in Won's case (Case 3), modesty was not simply a cultural ideal spontaneously accepted by individual students, but something of an enforcement that worked through peer students' critical looks at an 'out-standing' oral participant, who may have been seen to 'show off' in their view. The result was that Won gradually turned from an active to a moderate, if not definitively inactive, risk-taker in the class. Sung (Case 7) seems to offer the opposite kind of case, in that he did not mind the cultural censure much and kept up with
his active risk-taking mode. But his awareness of such
censure and his educational background based in the
different cultural values of France mark his case as an
exception, and rather put into relief the cultural
restrictions that confront most Korean students.

c. Lack of classroom participation experience

In Korea, the basic instructional pattern can be
characterized as one-way communication from the teacher in
the role of presenting and explaining information to the
students who receive, absorb, and memorize the transmitted
information. Verbal interaction plays a minor role in
learning and is even discouraged in normal classroom
situations. Accustomed to such a learning environment,
Korean students’ classroom behavior tends to be more or less
dependent and passive, compared to their western
counterparts, who are generally characterized as independent
and assertive. Except for the case of Sung (Case 7), who had
just come from France, the participants in the present study
seemed to have brought such a traditional Korean behavioral
pattern into the EFL classroom. Although they were not
particularly conscious of the effect of former educational
background upon their risk-taking behavior in a spoken
English class, much of the difficulty they had in participating voluntarily in class seemed to stem from their lack of exposure to participatory modes of classroom behavior.

Jin (Case 8), one of the inactive risk-takers, was acutely aware of the source of her inactiveness, reflecting upon the passive attitude she had been saturated in throughout her academic career since elementary school. Her statements reveal that being a silent and attentive listener was the desirable role Korean students had to adopt, and that the formal relationship between teacher and student further prevented self-expression on students’ part. The consequences of such beliefs and practices manifested themselves in the spoken English class, where a greater number of students were not ready to volunteer to speak up, even if they knew active oral participation is desirable and necessary. Especially for inactive risk-takers with their specific obstacles, this must have imposed an additional constraint. This, too, with other more conspicuous factors, helps to explain the seeming contradiction of the finding that students remained inactive in oral participation despite their unanimously positive perceptions toward risk-taking behavior.
d. Female gender role

The present study also points out the effect of gender difference upon the students’ risk-taking behavior. Female students, regardless of their motivational strength and their English speaking ability, tended to be more inhibited in the classroom participation than male students. Five (83%) out of six female students in the present study remained generally inactive (3 inactive, 1 moderate, 1 active to inactive). The only exception was Soo (Case 2), whose growth from an inactive to active risk-taker was much indebted to private tutoring and also to her exceptionally strong motivation deriving from her career plan to be a simultaneous interpreter.

Characteristics of personality were not, collectively, a crucial factor that could explain the inactiveness among the five inactive female participants; three participants, as in the cases of Jin (Case 8), Hyeon (Case 10), and Kyung (Case 13), were introverted or shy in character, while the other two participants, Mee (Case 5) and Hae (Case 6), showed an extroverted and outgoing personality trait.

Not all five inactive students expressed an awareness of the impact of the culturally defined gender role upon their risk-taking behavior, either. Jin’s (Case 8) and
Kyung’s (Case 13) statements seem to constitute the two extremes of a spectrum in which female students’ perceptions of their own behavior in a spoken English class moved along the axis of gender difference. Subscribing to the modest, passive, and obedient female stereotype, Kyung accepted the feminine gender role in her ideal self-image, which bound her to oral inactiveness. On the other hand, Jin was acutely aware, and even critical, of the cultural censure against ‘talkative women,’ which nonetheless did not help to break her shell of reticence. This implies that female students, whether consciously resistant or unconsciously subject to the cultural values imposed on women, have an additional constraint upon their risk-taking behavior that the male students are exempted from.

2-A.4. Large class size

The present study suggests that class size have an influence upon students’ risk-taking behavior. The “Freshman Practical English” course consisted of 144 classes. Each of the classes had 25 to 35 students (the total average was 31). Such a large class size reduced the opportunity for active oral participation and allowed only for minimum turn-takings. Thus, the active risk-takers expressed their
discontent over lack of opportunities for participants due to time-constraints caused by large class size. More often than not, they had to finish their utterances very quickly in consideration of other students’ turn-taking. The most detrimental effect of large class size was not merely that students had limited opportunities for their risk-taking behavior, but also that potentially active risk-takers tended to withdraw from their initially positive attitude, as in the cases of Won (Case 3), Gyu (Case 9), and Seok (Case 12).

Students’ concerns regarding limited opportunities to speak in class seemed to affect the inactive risk-takers, too. Joon (Case 15) felt that he was wasting other students’ time in his prolonged turn-taking due to his poor ability to communicate in English, which made him consciously restrain from taking opportunities afterwards. But, in most cases of inactive oral participants, the large class size had another distinct effect. Especially those who were shy or introverted in personality such as in Jin (Case 8), Hyeon (Case 10), Chan (Case 11), and Kyung (Case 13), found it hard to try to speak up in class, because the sheer number of students in a classroom seemed to them to constitute ‘a public.’ And, in public, their introverted and passive
tendencies were really reinforced; they felt, in other words, exposed to the public eye that judged their oral performance.

It seems that the primary responsibility for the debilitating effect of large class size lies in the educational institution itself. But it is not probable that any palpable improvement in the learning environment would be obtained due to the institution’s limited resources. However, it would be also irresponsible to conclude, on the part of instructor, that there is nothing to be done. For there seem to be possible alleviating actions, if not direct solutions, which can be tried within the classroom itself. This has something to do with the physical configuration of the classrooms. According to the researcher’s class observations, most of the classrooms contained five rows of five or six seats, and there were narrow pathways between rows. Physically overcrowded and with limited space for the instructor’s movement, the classrooms allow for only limited interaction. In addition, seating of students showed a division along the line of active/inactive oral participants. Active risk-takers such as Sung (Case 7) were likely to sit in the front rows, while inactive participants
such as Hyeon (Case 10), Kyung (Case 13), and Joon (Case 15) seemed to prefer sitting in the back.

This rigidity in the physical configuration of the classroom can be lessened by the instructor in such a way that would promote classroom interactions and provide the inactive students with a more favorable atmosphere. Seating could be rearranged by forming a semi-circle instead of rows, which would increase the instructor’s contact with individual students. For it cannot be overstressed that the instructor should monitor, consciously, the quality and quantity of students’ oral participation. Another possible action on the instructor’s part would be to develop activities or context-specific tasks for pair-work or small group activity, in which students have more opportunities for risk-taking and feel safer about oral participation.

A.5. Preparedness for class

According to the findings of this study, another issue EFL instructors of Korean students need to consider is how to promote students’ preparation for the class. As ‘on the spot’ activities were deemed anxiety-inducing, a majority of the participants (60%) in this study demonstrated a greater unwillingness to take risks on unfamiliar topics or tasks.
On the other hand, it was frequently mentioned in diary entries that familiarity of topics or preparedness for the class would, and sometimes did, facilitate active oral participation. All the active risk-takers except Sung (Case 7), as in the cases of Yong (Case 1), Soo (Case 2), and Dong (Case 4), constantly prepared themselves for the next class; so did two of four moderate risk-takers - Mee (Case 5) and Seok (Case 12). Besides, it was when they were prepared for the class or a familiar topic came up that inactive risk-takers participated in the class activity more willingly and confidently. This implies that students were able to prepare adequately and express themselves effectively, provided they were given enough time to think about the topics.

The participants’ previous learning experience indicated that most of the students (80%) did not have any spoken English instruction in junior and senior high schools or other foreign language institutes. However, all of them (100%) had received intensive reading and grammar instruction since junior high school and thus how acquired a wide range of vocabulary, expressions, and basic structures of the English language. But they had had very little opportunity to use the language for real communication. It is suggested, therefore, that instructors should be aware of
the students' basic knowledge and help them to use such knowledge in coping with the unfamiliar oral tasks. As in Dong’s case (Case 4), a syllabus designed to include all the specific topics and tasks could utilize students’ potential ability and trigger their spontaneous and creative use of their basic knowledge in English.

Research Question 2-B. Do internal factors (e.g., personality, self-esteem, and motivation) facilitate and/or debilitate students’ risk-taking behavior in EFL classroom?

Among 13 internal factors, 8 were facilitating factors and 5 were debilitating ones.

Facilitating Factors

1. Positive attitude in learning
   a. Eagerness of seeking for opportunities to practice
   b. Fearlessness of making mistakes

2. Strong motivation
   a. Concern for getting a better job
   b. Communication with TL speaking people
   c. Concern about getting a good grade

3. Self-concept
   a. Self-confidence in speaking ability due to prior language learning experience
b. Increase of self-confidence through constant risk-taking or out of classroom practice

4. Extroverted and outgoing personality trait

**Debilitating Factors**

1. Anxiety
   a. Fear of making mistakes due to low self-confidence
   b. Threat to self-esteem as idealized image
   c. Competitiveness

2. Lack of motivation in learning English

3. Personality traits (shy in public, introverted)

Analysis of data revealed that anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, and positive attitude toward learning were the major factors affecting students’ risk-taking behavior, while the other internal factors were intermixed as sources or consequences of the four most salient factors discussed below.

2-B.1. Anxiety

Anxiety arises from students’ apprehension at having to communicate spontaneously in the second or foreign language. Oral participation is supposed to be a way of practicing
speaking in English. But, the pervasive perceptions held by most participants in this study were that risk-taking behavior in a spoken English class functioned as a kind of testing of how much knowledge the speaker had, or how accurately the speaker communicated his or her ideas, because the speaker’s oral performance was continuously being evaluated by the instructor and by other students. Students’ discomfort about being evaluated in their oral participation increased in proportion to the low self-confidence in their ability that individual students held. Inactive risk-takers who had a low level of confidence in speaking ability – Jin (Case 8), Hyeon (Case 10), Chan (Case 11), Kyung (Case 13), Dae (Case 14) – tried to avoid subjecting themselves to evaluation by the instructor and their classmates, and consequently withdrew from classroom interaction.

Speaking up in a second or foreign language class is in itself potentially stressful and threatening to a person’s self-esteem, as would any task where success is not guaranteed and the probability of making a fool of oneself is high. Accordingly, fear of making mistakes and the possibility of being humiliated raise the affective filter and inhibit the students from their risk-taking. This study
revealed that all the inactive risk-takers with low self-confidence were susceptible to this kind of anxiety. A representative case is Dae (Case 14), who gave up speaking out in class after a few experiences of humiliation due to his poor pronunciation as well as erroneous expressions he used.

Beyond the fear of negative evaluation from instructor or peer students, such anxiety is heightened by the sense of competition. Comparing oneself to other students, responding emotionally to such comparisons, desiring to outdo other students, and desiring to gain teacher’s approval were the manifested tendencies among the inactive risk-takers with low self-confidence in their speaking ability. In addition, high ‘global’ self-esteem, combined with low self-confidence in spoken English ability, could induce a damaging comparison of actual self with idealized self-image and thus lead to avoidance of risk-taking opportunity. To a student with high ‘global’ self-esteem, such as Chan (Case 11), making mistakes in a specific situation was seen as a threat to his idealized self-image. Thus, he felt extremely nervous about making mistakes and was preoccupied with a conviction that he should be superior to his fellow learners. Chan’s case suggests that students with unhealthy self-esteem are likely
to reinforce their own perception of poor spoken English ability.

2-B.2. Self-confidence

High or low self-esteem contributes to increased anxiety and thus to inhibiting learner’s risk-taking behavior, whereas healthy self-esteem allows the learner to be less inhibited and more willing to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning with less threat to his or her ego (Brown, 1987). Most of the participants in the present study had not received any formal instruction in spoken English and had experienced very few opportunities to communicate in English when they came to the speaking class. As a result, they showed low self-confidence in their English speaking ability. Unlike the majority, however, some students, such as Won (Case 3), Hae (Case 6), and Gyu (Case 9), had previous experience, through formal or informal instruction, in studying spoken English and held positive self-confidence in their speaking ability. From the previous learning experience, they also acquired a very strong conviction regarding the desirability and necessity of risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in a spoken English class.
However, the findings of this study suggest that Korean students’ self-confidence due to previous learning experience, alone, does not determine their risk-taking behavior. The three participants mentioned above were not active risk-takers. Although they tended to take initiatives in their classes at the beginning of the semester, their risk-taking modes changed from active to moderate (Case 3), or even to inactive (Case 6) for various reasons enumerated above.

While self-confidence deriving from prior learning experience did not have a direct impact upon risk-taking mode, the developing self-confidence due to a successful learning process played a crucial role in engendering and furthering active risk-taking behavior. For example, Dong (Case 4) gradually turned from an inactive risk-taker to an active one, as his low self-confidence due to lack of prior learning experience in spoken English was replaced by a growing self-confidence in his capacity to benefit from his own mistakes. Such healthy self-esteem, also found in Yong (Case 1), who remained an active risk-taker throughout the semester, proved essential to successful learning in the speaking class, because it reduced the fear of making
mistakes and thus facilitated active risk-taking in oral participation.

2-B.3. Motivation

This study demonstrates that the motivation level of participants had a very powerful influence upon their risk-taking behavior. Activeness or inactiveness in oral participation accorded with the degree of motivational strength. All five low motivated participants (100%) remained inactive risk-takers. Since ‘Freshman Practical English’ was a required course for all freshmen students, many students registered for this course only because they had to, rather than necessarily because they had a strong interest in learning spoken English. On the other hand, six (86%) out of seven highly motivated participants were active or moderate risk-takers. They showed ‘instrumental motivation,’ such as getting a job and communicating with native speakers of English, which led them to a more active attitude toward oral classroom participation. Soo (Case 2), for example, was an inactive risk-taker at the beginning of the course, because she had a low level of self-confidence regarding her speaking ability. But her strong motivation arising from a specific career goal made her seek out-of-
classroom opportunities to practice, which eventually enabled her to become an active risk-taker in the class. In addition, two other participants - Yong (Case 1) and Dong (Case 4) - who had a strong concern for good grades rather than for learning English itself, were active risk-takers, too.

2-B.4. Positive attitude

This study discloses that a positive attitude toward learning also plays a role in determining Korean students’ risk-taking behavior. A positive attitude was manifested among the participants primarily in two aspects. One is the fearlessness about making mistakes; the other, eagerness for seeking out-of-class opportunities for further practice.

Fearlessness about making mistakes seemed to stem from either personality or a strong awareness of the necessity of risk-taking, or from both combined, which was usually the case with highly active oral participants like Yong (Case 1) and Sung (Case 7). These two and other active oral participants shared the recognition that making mistakes was a necessary process in any language learning and felt that they did not have to be ashamed of making mistakes, particularly because they were in a spoken foreign language
class. In their low affective filter, they differed from inactive risk-takers with low self-confidence in their speaking ability, whose fear of making mistakes derived from, and was enhanced by, the same reason.

Typically, students with a positive attitude sat in the front rows of the classroom in order to obtain more opportunities to speak up and to receive feedback from the instructor. They also tended to focus more on what they wanted to communicate than on the accuracy of their expressions, which seemed to contribute to a further lowering of the affective filter. The opposite case was true for the others, who were more likely to concentrate on accuracy and thus more susceptible to the fear of making mistakes.

Some students sought out-of-class opportunities for further speaking or listening practice. This was usually the case with students with particularly strong motivation. Soo (Case 2), aiming at a future career as a simultaneous interpreter, was committed to developing oral proficiency and had a private tutor in addition to the English class, in order to overcome her low self-confidence in her speaking ability. Similarly, Mee (Case 5) tried to cope with her low listening ability by joining a students’ club for English listening practice. Both students felt that the limited time,
or some negative aspects, of classroom practice was not sufficient for them to gain as much confidence and proficiency as they desired. In both cases, the students’ positive attitude led to more active involvement in class and in development of their spoken English proficiency.

Research Question 3: How do students respond to their classroom experience? What are their preferences toward various EFL classroom activities?

To a greater or lesser degree, most of the participants (100%) in this study expressed their specific preference for classroom activities (e.g., games, simulations, and pair or small-group activities) for various reasons. Inactive risk-takers in particular demonstrated a strong preference for pair or small-group activities, because they provided a safer and less threatening atmosphere for their risk-taking. Given that many of the inactive oral participants were introverted in personality and/or had low self-confidence in their spoken English ability, it can be concluded that, by creating a more intimate and person-to-person learning situation, pair or small-group work helps the inactive risk-takers to be less self-conscious and less afraid of making mistakes. Active risk-takers also liked pair or small-group
work because it provided more opportunities to practice without so many time-constraints as was true of whole class turn taking. Generally, both active and inactive risk-takers spoke more and were less intimidated by the possibility of making mistakes in pair or small group activity, in which they could concentrate more on communicative content without too much anxiety about using inaccurate expressions.

Research Question 4: Are there any changes in students’ perceptions toward risk-taking behavior over a certain period time?

There were no palpable changes in the participants’ perceptions regarding risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in the EFL classroom. However, there were apparent changes in risk-taking behavior itself in four participants. Two participants, who were active risk-takers at the beginning of the semester, withdrew from their initially active risk-taking behavior. Hae’s (Case 6) risk-taking mode shifted from active to inactive, and Won (Case 3) turned gradually from active to moderate. Changes in the opposite direction were also found in two other participants’ risk-taking behaviors. Soo (Case 2) and Dong
(Case 4) transformed themselves from inactive to active during the second half of the semester.

Research Question 5: If there were changes (e.g., interaction with instructor or other students, self-confidence in comparing oneself with other students), what is the nature of these changes?

In the case of Hae (Case 6), the radical shift in her risk-taking behavior from active to inactive during the course was caused by the instructor’s attitude and teaching styles. Won’s (Case 3) reduction into a moderate state resulted from his awareness of, and subjugation to, the peer students’ cultural censure against his conspicuousness as an active oral participant. As an inactive risk-taker turned into an active one, Soo (Case 2) demonstrates the proportional relationship between risk-taking behavior and strength of learner’s motivation. Soo was such a highly-motivated student, with her future career as simultaneous interpreter, that she sought extra-class lessons and succeeded in gaining self-confidence in spoken English ability, which she acquired herself through more involvement in class. Dong’s change (Case 4) from an inactive to an active risk-taker was enabled partly by his
ulterior motivation — strong concern for a good grade — and partly by the encouragement and practical aid provided by his instructor, who was willing to revise the syllabus to aid students’ preparation based on student feedback.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents the conclusions of the findings described and analyzed in previous chapters. Based on the findings, two recommendations are made. One is for instructors in the field of foreign language teaching and the other is for EFL program administrators in Korea.

Conclusions

Risk-taking behavior related to oral proficiency is a complex construct in classroom interaction. As seen in this study, the perceptions held by selected fifteen Korean college students towards risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classrooms were positive. However, the risk-taking modes of each participant varied. Although the participants, regardless of their risk-taking modes, all believed that speaking up in class could help to improve their speaking ability, they actually seldom
participated in class due to many factors (e.g., poor speaking ability, fear of making mistakes, attitude of instructor). Also, some participants were in an active mode at the beginning of the semester, and then changed their attitude from active to moderate, or even to inactive, as they went through the course. Others started the course in an inactive mode and gradually became more active. However, most cases implied that the participants had potential intention to speak up in class. Therefore, identification of the factors either facilitating or debilitating their risk-taking behavior in oral participation could convert their potential for speaking up into actual risk-taking behavior.

The findings of this study show that the participants’ various risk-taking modes were influenced by a number of factors, factors that are often related to one another. In the present study, four types of factors (personal, affective, socio-cultural, and course-related factors) were seen to influence the students’ risk-taking behavior in an EFL classroom. Which factors influence learners’ risk-taking behavior more in the learning process is a highly individualized problem, however. Such complexity, in terms of the inter-relationship among these factors, cannot be
thoroughly explained by identification and description. Therefore, an understanding of the perceptions that the Korean college-level students hold toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classrooms is not a simple matter.

The findings of this study lead to a conclusion that personal, affective and socio-cultural domains are strongly related to Korean students’ successful language learning. As the holistic approach to learning reminds us, learners do not come into classrooms ‘empty-handed.’ They bring their whole experience of learning and of life into the learning process, along with their own reasons for getting involved in it, and their own particular needs that they hope to fulfill. Thus, the learning process itself may as well be defined as a point of contact between the new tasks of learning and the learner as a whole person. Because new knowledge is likely to be enmeshed with unfamiliar tasks, difficult issues, or even incomprehensible structures and forms, learners may have to confront the challenges that they think they are quite unable to cope with. Accordingly, anxiety, due to their low self-confidence in English oral proficiency, may arise. In this context, self-confidence assumes a key role in either aggravating or abating the learners’ anxiety, as was the case
with most of the participants in the present study. Also, classroom interaction generates additional anxieties deriving from learners’ sense of competition with peer students and from the nature of interaction with the instructor. Personality and motivation, too, enhance or lower such anxiety.

Anxiety in a spoken EFL classroom, however, goes beyond the anxiety found among learners of other subjects. Oral participation in a spoken English class does not merely serve a functional purpose: an interruption for confirmation or clarification checks, or for further exploration into the given learning material. For all the participants in this study, with varying degrees of consciousness, oral participation constituted, in and of itself, a performance of competence in the target language. As such, it was believed to be subject to evaluation, whether by instructor or peer students, or both at once. It is obvious then that, under such circumstances, Korean students’ anxiety-level or affective filter in a spoken English class will be heightened above the ‘normal’ level in more or less non-performative classrooms. The specific sources of anxiety vary. The fear of negative evaluation upon poor oral performance or mistakes seems to derive from the natural impulse to protect the
idealized self-image as seen in the learners with high self-esteem, while the fear of ‘losing face’ stems more from learner’s acute sensitivity to class competition. In either case, speaking up in the spoken English class thus becomes risk-taking in its literal sense.

The inherent risk-taking and concomitant anxiety in a spoken English class can be eased or still further strained by other factors. The instructor’s attitude and teaching style, among many other factors, exert a determining force upon the classroom atmosphere, in which learners, regardless of their varying levels of anxiety, can be either encouraged or discouraged to take risks. An instructor’s caring attitude and practical support are most likely to reduce the learner’s anxiety and thus facilitate their risk-taking, while learners may have additional anxieties due to a threatening classroom atmosphere created by a demanding and inconsiderate instructor. This figured not infrequently in the individual cases of the present study. For many participants in this study, the large class size was another significant factor that created tension and raised classroom anxiety, while pair-work or small group activity helped to lower it by creating a more intimate atmosphere. It is thus a strong reminder of the significance of a non-threatening and
interactive learning environment, as reflected in the fact that most students preferred pair or small group work to whole class activities.

The present study also suggests that negative factors in the affective domain tend to be reinforced by cultural factors in the Korean context. Fear of making mistakes is mixed with and intensified by fear of ‘losing face,’ which in the shame culture of Korean society means irrevocable damage to one’s sense of honor. Closely related to the virtue of reticence as a sign of deeper wisdom than any practical knowledge, the ‘virtue of modesty’ imposes constraints upon the learners in the spoken English class, who are torn between the awareness of necessity of oral participation and the cultural values in which they are entrenched.

As demonstrated in the case studies, not a few students were subject to possible cultural sanctions from peers against their ‘oral activeness,’ which is often translated in the Korean cultural context as ‘aggressivity’ or ‘pretentiousness.’ In a more positive sense, it is also true that some students overrode the cultural censure by behaving properly in the form of consideration for other students’ participation opportunities in class. This meant,
nonetheless, a loss or reduction of their own active oral participation.

The negative effect of such a conflict between the demands of the spoken English class and Korean cultural beliefs or practices manifests more powerfully in the female students. The traditional gender role of women in Korean society, whether internalized or enforced, deterred most of the female participants in this study from actively involving themselves in the oral participation. In general, Korean female students in EFL classrooms have more inhibitions toward risk-taking than their male counterparts.

Most of the difficulty that Korean students have to cope with in order to be active risk-takers in EFL classrooms seems to stem from their inexperience of oral classroom participation. Because their learning experience in institutional education, on junior and senior high school levels, is oriented toward the National Collegiate Entrance Exam, Korean students are saturated in the learning style dictated by one-way communication from teacher as transmitter of knowledge to students as its recipients. Thus structured, and further buttressed by the traditional deferential relationship of student to teacher, Korean classrooms from elementary to senior high school tend to discourage the
development of desirable behavioral patterns for classrooms that require students’ active oral participation.

Taking these conclusions into consideration, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are presented. One of the valuable contributions of this study is to allow EFL instructors of Korean students a window into classrooms through students’ eyes. This study is useful for instructors since it gives them the opportunity to reflect on their own attitudes and teaching styles as well as how to help students to speak out more confidently and actively in an EFL class setting. Also, the present study illustrates how EFL program administrators in Korea can help Korean students’ risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classrooms.

The following recommendations are intended to inform instructors and EFL program administrators of the students’ problems and perceptions in order for them to take actions to facilitate the students’ active participation in a spoken English class because most students recognize the
importance of risk-taking behavior for English oral proficiency.

For EFL instructors

The following recommendations are related to the socio-cultural and course-related factors.

1. The students need to be given enough time to think about questions or topics in advance either at home or in class before they respond in class. For, many students felt that they had potential knowledge to express themselves in English if they had been given time to think about the topics. For that purpose, the topics or the amount of material to be dealt with in class need to be put on the syllabus in advance. It is also advised that the class should start with pair or small-group work about given topics or questions and then proceed to whole class activity involving the pre-assigned topics. A turn-taking rule can be set up so that a student may anticipate his or her turn and be better prepared to respond. Taken by surprise, the inactive risk-takers are most likely to avoid or lose the opportunity, especially when the active risk-takers are ready to take the initiative.
2. Oral classroom participation needs to be put on the syllabus as one of the requirements for grading. As many students in the present study demonstrated, strong concerns for a good grade tend to motivate the students towards active involvement. Also, the instructor needs to maintain a positive attitude towards students’ mistakes and incorporate it into his or her teaching style. The instructor can encourage students not to be afraid of making mistakes, for example, by saying “That’s a good mistake that we can learn from,” or “That makes sense, but how about trying it this way?”

3. The students need to be advised to make a mutual agreement among themselves to communicate in English in the classroom and outside of it as well as much as possible for the purpose of creating an intimate classroom atmosphere. As Korean cultural beliefs and practices stress the ‘virtue of modesty,’ the students in this study tended to avoid participating actively because they were concerned about the other students’ critical gaze that censured against conspicuousness or competition.

4. The instructor can design activities to provide every student with an equal opportunity to speak up in class. The instructor should not only increase the
opportunities for pair-works or small group activities, but
also develop an effective strategy for monitoring and
giving instruction to pairs or small groups. Also, the
instructor can make the best use of whole class activity by
regularly introducing activities such as viewing a film,
bring in guest speakers, or offering cultural presentations
by the instructor or the students. Providing individualized
tutorials for students struggling to meet the course goals
may also help.

5. The instructor needs to consider the students’
learning styles and needs before selecting content,
materials, activities, and methods of instruction. Being
prepared to meet all types of students’ needs and having a
real concern for the students’ needs shall reinforce the
students’ motivation to learn English. The instructor can
also use a variety of activities and materials such as
language and culture games, teacher-made tapes, and
student-developed language games, in order to promote the
students’ interest and willingness to participate.

The following recommendations are concerned with the
personal and affective factors.

1. Instructors need to be concerned about lowering
students’ affective filter in risk-taking and about how they can motivate their students to take risks actively in class. Instructors need to have a sense of humor and interest in students, and use verbal or nonverbal communication in order to create an intimate classroom atmosphere (e.g., gestures, posture, and facial expression). In an EFL classroom, the instructor’s nonverbal behavior in particular may help to transform the formal atmosphere into a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Furthermore, the incorporation of humor by the instructor in instructional activities is likely to enhance students’ motivation and sustain their interest.

2. Instructors need to acknowledge that each student is an individual who learns in a unique way, and that options in learning should be provided for all students. For students have varying degrees of anxiety in oral risk-taking, and these command a particular attention from the instructor. In order to focus on students’ needs, instructors may create learning profiles for individual students based on the students’ classroom behavior and their needs. Profiles will not only help the instructor to locate students’ problems, but will also allow the instructor to understand each student’s learning process.
In doing so, the instructor can provide them with appropriate help. Individual tutoring needs to be provided to meet the student’s needs. Students may also be taught to support and help each other.

3. The instructor needs to create opportunities for the students to experience the sense of improvement or success in communicating in English. For that purpose, the instructor needs to help to enhance students’ preparedness by careful guidance on the assignments. Positive attitude in error correction would serve the purpose, too. Encouraging comments rather than a straightforward correction can help the students to learn from their errors and gain a sense of improvement without losing their self-esteem.

For EFL program administrators

1. One of weaknesses of the EFL program under study was the insufficient number of instructors with teaching skills and professional training in methodologies appropriate to EFL instruction. Some instructors (59%) had requirements for the license of foreign/second language teachers, while others (41%) had no relevant educational background. For instructors who have no or little
educational background in EFL teaching, a pre-service training workshop could be provided. Sensitizing instructors to the problems that confront Korean EFL students is necessary. Studies on relevant research papers or in-service training workshops could be fruitful in directing the instructors’ attention to the problems they may have to cope with in classrooms.

2. Most of the students had no experience in communicating with native speakers before they came to the spoken English class. As a result, they did not have a proper understanding of the foreign instructors’ cultural attitudes and behavioral patterns or teaching styles. Nor were the instructors equipped with an appropriate knowledge of Korean youth culture. Therefore, the EFL program administrators need to provide in-service workshop for cross cultural community understanding both on the part of foreign instructors and Korean EFL students. A pre-course orientation for instructors may serve the purpose of advising them to be open-minded and receptive to the learners’ culture.

3. EFL program administrators need to make active oral participation one of the requirements of course syllabi. Having been educated under the traditional codes of
classroom behavior, most Korean students have serious difficulties participating actively in the classroom. Thus, students should be encouraged, on the administrative level as well as in classrooms, to take risks to achieve the learning objectives.

4. Reducing class size is necessary. Policy for large class size is seen as being related to financial concerns. If the resources of the educational institution do not allow this, alternative activities and materials that make it possible for a large number of students to participate more meaningfully in class should be developed. A research group consisting of practicing instructors and professional EFL researchers may prove fruitful, as teachers’ field experiences and researchers’ theoretical insights should be combined in order to develop a more productive teaching method for the Korean EFL classrooms.

For Further study

In this study, some salient factors affecting risk-taking behavior among the fifteen participants were found. It would be necessary to study more students to see if the factors found in this study recur and if the conclusions drawn in the present study are valid and can be
generalized. Various research methodologies (e.g., interviews, large scale of surveys, and long-term observations) could be valuable in triangulating the present study’s findings.

Since this study is based on the findings from a small number of informants in a single institution, additional insights about Korean students’ perceptions of risk-taking behavior could be gained by studying students from different formal or informal institutions in Korea. To obtain a wider perspective, similar research may be administered to other ethnic groups of EFL students in Asia such as Chinese and Japanese students in EFL classrooms.

This study included only beginning level students as informants, specifically college freshmen students who were enrolled a spoken English class as a required course. Similar studies may be conducted to examine the similarities and differences for various course-levels (e.g., intermediate and higher levels) of students and for various age-levels (e.g., junior and senior high school students) of informants.

An in-depth study of the instructors’ perceptions toward students’ risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classrooms could complement the present study.
Furthermore, a teacher-researcher classroom study may open a window for the researcher to look more closely into the participants involved in the Korean EFL classroom.

Finally, it would be useful if this qualitative study could be complemented by quantitative studies which examine features such as level of English proficiency and English language oral production (e.g., via oral proficiency interviews) to determine statistical correlations between these variables and risk-taking behavior in EFL contexts.
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APPENDIX A

FRESHMEN STUDENTS ENROLLED

AT KOREA UNIVERSITY AS OF SPRING, 1998
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<th>College</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<td>58</td>
<td>336</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>346</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>196</td>
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<td>517</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Recources</td>
<td>225</td>
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<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>875</td>
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<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Science</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>Life and Science</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>4457</td>
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Table 12: Korea University Freshmen Students Enrolled in Spring Semester, 1998 (main campus)
APPENDIX B

EFL INSTRUCTORS IN INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES AT KOREA UNIVERSITY

AS OF SPRING, 1998
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>School for Internat’l Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>TESOL &amp; Spanish</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>English in EFL/ESL</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Marketing &amp; Finance</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>TESOL</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>never</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<td>Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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(Table Continues)

Table 13: Gender, Nationality, Educational Background, and Teaching Experience of EFL instructors in IFLS
(Table 13. continued)

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<td>TESOL</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>TESOL &amp; Slavic Linguistics</td>
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<td>TESOL</td>
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<td>1 year</td>
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<td>3 years</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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APPENDIX C
INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIARY-KEEPING
(KOREAN VERSION AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION)
일기 작성 요령

당신이 쓰고자 하는 일기는 두 가지 목적을 가지는다. 첫째는 당신의 영어 학습을 돕게 된다. 언어 학습자로서 자신이 느끼고 생각하는 것을 기록할 때 당신은 영어학습에서의 자신을 이해하게 되고 더 좋은 경험을 갖게 된다. 두 번째 목적은 학습이 더 효율적이 되기 위한 영어학습과정에 대한 전반적 지식을 가져오게 된다.

당신은 이번 휴가 동안 일주일에 두 번씩 일기를 쓰게 되며 매주 금요일에 연구자에게 제출하여야 한다. 당신의 일기는 연구자 외에는 절대로 다른 누구에게 의해 읽히지 않을 것이고 일기에 쓰여지는 내용 또한 절대로 비밀이 보장될 것이다.

일기를 쓰는 과정에서 준수해야 할 몇가지 사항은 다음과 같다.

1. 수업 직후 가능한 빠른 시간 내에 일기를 쓸 15분의 시간을 갖도록 하라. 편안하게 그리고 조용히 쓸 수 있는 공간을 찾아서 당신이 쓰기를 원하는 것을 자유롭게 쓰도록 한다.

2. 수업에 함께 참여하는 사람 (강사나 학생)들과의 관계에서 언어학습자로서 당신이 느끼는 것에 관하여 쓰도록 한다.

3. 일기 쓰는 형식이나 문체에 너무 신경쓰지 말고 자유롭게 그러나 정확하게 자신을 표현하도록 한다.

4. 가능한 한 예를 들어 자신의 느낌이나 생각을 표현하도록 한다. 쓰고자 하는 내용이 있을 때 "왜 이것이 중요하다고 생각하는가?"라는 질문을 먼저 생각한 후에 쓰도록 한다.

5. 일기를 쓰고 싶을 때마다 간단히 메모할 수 있도록 항상 일기노트를 들고 다니는 것이 좋다. 수업시간에 간단히 자신의 느낌이나 생각을 적을 수도 있고 수업 후에 그것이 의미하는 바를 자세히 설명할 수도 있다.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIARY-KEEPING (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

The diary you are going to write has two purposes. The first purpose is to help you with your own language learning. As you record and reflect upon what you think and feel as a language learner, you will understand yourself and your experience better. The second is to increase the overall knowledge about language learning process itself so that learning can be more effective.

You will be asked to submit your language diary entries at the end of each week throughout this semester. However, your diaries will not be read by anyone but the researcher. Your identity and the identity of others you may write about will remain unknown to anyone except the researcher.

These rules may be helpful for your diary-keeping:
1. Allow 15 minutes to write as immediately as possible after class. Keep your diary in a safe, secure place so that you will feel free to write whatever you want.
2. Write about what you think and feel as a language learner when you interact with instructor and the other students in Practical English class.
3. Do not worry about your style and organization of writing. Just write clearly.
4. Support your insights with examples. When you write something down, first ask yourself, "Why do I feel that this is important?" And then write your answer to this type of question.
5. Carry a notebook with you so that you can make notes about your language learning experience whenever you want. It might be better to first write your response briefly in the class and expand it in detail after class.
APPENDIX D

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE INSTRUCTOR
FOR CLASS OBSERVATION
Dear Professor,

I am Youngjoo Bang, a doctoral candidate in Foreign Language Education at the Ohio State University. I am currently working on my dissertation. My dissertation topic is “Perceptions of Korean students toward risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency in EFL classroom.” The purpose of my study is to get a better understanding of students’ perceptions of risk-taking behavior for oral proficiency and suggest ways to encourage more active classroom participation on the learners’ part.

My intention is to conduct a study through questionnaires, class observation, and participants’ diary analysis. I would like to observe the students in your class and ask them to volunteer to keep diaries concerning their language learning experience during this semester. I have already spoken to the program director, and he has given me his permission. I would also like to ask your permission to allow me to sit in your class through the period of Spring Semester, 1998.

If you have any further question regarding my study, please feel free to get in touch with me. I can be reached at 0343-23-3108. Your permission will be of invaluable support for my study.

Thank you very much in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Youngjoo Bang
APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION FIELD NOTES SAMPLE
Observation Fieldnotes

Case: Yong
Date: May 13th, 1998
Course: Freshmen Practical English
Place: Liberal Arts Hall, Room 216
Time: 10:00 - 10:50 A.M.

Descriptive Events

As I entered the classroom, I found the classroom somewhat overcrowded with students. I took a back seat to observe more clearly and avoid being observed. The classroom seemed not big enough to accommodate all the students. There were 27 students, 16 males and 11 females. The classroom atmosphere was a little noisy. The students were talking in Korean until the class started. I found Yong sitting in a front-row seat. He was chatting with one of his classmates next to him. Yong wore black-rimmed glasses.

A few minutes later, the instructor came in. She wore a blue jacket on a white shirt and a beige skirt. She asked me to introduce myself briefly to the students in English. I told the class who I was and what I intended to observe in this classroom, but did not give the exact information.

The instructor called the students’ name for checking attendance. One student was absent. The way the instructor eye-contacted with the students as she called out each name
suggested that she could identify every one in the class by his or her name. She also smiled at each of the students as they replied. Apparently, she seemed to have already established an intimate classroom atmosphere.

The classroom activity started with a sentence completion drill in the textbook: "I feel sad (frustrated, happy, and angry etc.) when . . . ." The instructor asked the students to volunteer. No one responded for a few seconds, and then, to my excitement, Yong raised his hand. At the instructor's nodding, Yong said, "I feel sad when I can't speak what I want to speak." His pronunciation was poor and his utterance slow, but he made himself clear. Three other students followed to volunteer. At each student's response the instructor nodded with a reassuring smile.

After a few moments' pause with no more volunteers, the instructor finally asked the students to prepare for turn-taking for the same drill. She said, "One minute to Speak-Up!" Some students were seen to jot down on their notebooks. This was unusual, and very interesting. For, in other classes I had already observed, most instructors had immediately started turn-taking upon students' silence.

As time was up for the preparation, the instructor called each student one after another, and there were a
series of variegated answers. Some of these answers included witty, if incorrect, remarks - such as "I feel sad when my girl-friend snores with her head on my shoulder," or "I am happy when I see somebody in the subway can’t find his cellular phone, keep on ringing." - at which the class was burst with a laughter. The entire classroom atmosphere was so relaxed and lively that most students in class seemed to enjoy the turn-taking. Yong was one of those who jotted down something on the notebook and gave a long and witty remark. When he finished, he looked quite satisfied.

When all the turn was taken, the instructor gave a lecture for about 10 minutes on the correct usage of the verb 'feel' and its similarity/difference from the verbs 'be' and 'get.' Citing a few examples of students' responses in turn-taking, she also identified grammatical errors and awkward expressions, and corrected them or provided modified expressions.

The next activity was a small group discussion. The instructor divided the class into six groups with four or five students in each group. Two groups consisted exclusively of female students. Each group was asked to discuss "Emotion and Everyday Life," which was given in the textbook, for about 10 minutes, and to present the conclusions of the
discussion to the class. While the students were having a discussion, the instructor came to each group, listening to their talking.

I observed Yong’s group closely. There were 5 students (4 males and 1 female), and Yong was prominent in that he spoke frequently and his utterances were long. Another male student spoke frequently, too. The other three in the group looked relaxed and occasionally spoke up but apparently led by the two active ones.

The instructor stopped the group discussion and asked the students to present the conclusions at the next session. In fact, she allowed more than 10 minutes for students’ discussion and time was running out for the class. She suggested a couple of related issues on the discussion topic, and then dismissed the class.

**Post-Observational Reflective Thoughts**

In a brief conversation immediately after the observation, Yong said that he was not satisfied with what he did in today’s session. He usually spoke up five or six times in a session, excluding pair-work and group discussion; today he spoke only three times because the turn-taking took so much time. Compared with his classmates, nevertheless, Yong
was a most active oral participant in the whole class activity as well as in small group discussion. Only another two or three students in the class stood as active as Yong. As revealed in his earlier diary entry, his major concern for getting a good grade in order to win a scholarship must have propelled his active oral participation. But I think I noticed something other than that in Yong’s classroom behavior. That is, he showed such an enthusiasm in volunteering to speak up and leading the group discussion that seems to go beyond the ulterior motivation. He looked so much interested in the classroom activities that I got the impression of his being actually enjoying the spoken English class for its own sake. Why did I get such an impression? Were there any traces that would justify my impression in his recent diary entries? I should read them again, this time more carefully.
APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE

(KOREAN VERSION AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION)
설 문지

가. 인적사항

성명 __________________________
연령 __________________________
성별 남______ 여 ________
전공 __________________________

나. 영어회화 학습경험에 관하여

1. 이 수업을 듣기 전에 영어회화를 공부한 경험이 있습니까?
   예 _______ 아니오 _______

2. 경험이 있다면 학습의 목적, 상황, 그리고 학습기간을 설명하시오.

3. 영어를 국어로 사용하는 나라를 여행한적이나 산 적이 있습니까?
   예 _______ 아니오 _______

4. 그런 경험이 있다면, 어느 나라이며 얼마나 동안인가를 설명하시오.

다. 성격에 관하여

* 각 진술에 부합하는 정도를 빈란에 적으시오 (5 - 확실히 그렇다, 4 - 그렇다, 3 - 잘 모르겠다, 2 - 그렇지 않다, 1 - 확실히 그렇지 않다).

____ 1. 대중 앞에서 말을 해야할 경우 갑작스레 수줍음을 느낀다.
____ 2. 많은 친구보다 몇몇 친한 친구만을 가지길 원한다.
____ 3. 사람들과 있을 때 대부분 침묵을 지킨다.
____ 4. 사람들과 이야기하는 것을 매우 좋아한다.
____ 5. 모르는 것이 있을 때 사람들에게 물어보는 것보다 혼자서 책을 찾아본다.
____ 6. 일반적으로 사람을 만나는 일보다 독서하기를 좋아한다.
____ 7. 사람들을 자주 만나지 못한다면 불만을 느낀다.

* 당신 자신의 성격이나 대인관계 또는 사회생활 태도를 묘사해 보시오.
라. 학습동기에 관하여

1. '실용영어'를 수강하는 이유는?
   ______ 필수과목이기 때문에
   ______ 나름대로의 특별한 목적이나 목표가 있어서

2. 영어회화를 학습하는 특별한 목적이 있다면 무엇인지 기술해보시오.

3. 영어회화 학습에 대한 자신의 등기 정도를 매김하시오.
   ______ 매우 강함    ______ 강함    ______ 보통    ______ 약함    ______ 매우 약함

마. 영어 능력에 대한 자기평가

1. 자신의 회화 능력은 어느 정도입니까?
   ______ 매우 높음    ______ 높음    ______ 보통    ______ 약함    ______ 매우 약함

2. 자신의 청취 능력은 어느 정도입니까?
   ______ 매우 높음    ______ 높음    ______ 보통    ______ 약함    ______ 매우 약함

3. 자신의 독해 능력은 어느 정도입니까?
   ______ 매우 높음    ______ 높음    ______ 보통    ______ 약함    ______ 매우 약함

4. 자신의 작문 능력은 어느 정도입니까?
   ______ 매우 높음    ______ 높음    ______ 보통    ______ 약함    ______ 매우 약함

5. 자신의 문법 지식은 어느 정도입니까?
   ______ 매우 높음    ______ 높음    ______ 보통    ______ 약함    ______ 매우 약함

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A. Personal Data

Name ______________________
Age ______________________
Gender Male ___ Female ___
Major ______________________

B. Prior Learning Experience in Spoken English

1. Have you had any experience in learning spoken English before this class?
   Yes _____ No _____
2. If yes, please describe the purpose, the situation, and study period.
   _________________________________________________________________
3. Have you traveled or lived in English speaking countries?
   Yes _____ No _____
4. If yes, which countries and how long have you lived or traveled?
   _________________________________________________________________

C. Personality Scale

* Please indicate in the space provided the degree (5 - Strongly Agree, 4 - Agree; 3 - Undecided; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Strongly Disagree) with each statement.

_____ 1. Do you suddenly feel shy when you have to speak in front of other people?
2. Do you prefer having a few special friends?
3. Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people?
4. If there is something you want to know about, would you rather look it up in a book than talk to someone about it?
5. Do you like talking to people so much that you never miss a chance to talk to a stranger?
6. Generally, do you prefer reading to meeting people?
7. Would you be unhappy if you could not see lots of people most of the time?

* How would you describe your personality, interpersonal relationship, and social behavior?

D. Motivation

1. Why do you take ‘Freshmen Practical English’?
   because it is a required course
   because I have some specific goals and purposes
2. If you have specific goals and purposes of learning spoken English, what are they?

3. Please rate the degree of strength of your motivation for studying spoken English.

   Very Low   Low   Mean   High   Very High

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E. Self-Evaluation of English Ability

1. How do you rate your speaking ability?

Very Low       Low       Mean       High       Very High

2. How do you rate your listening ability?

Very Low       Low       Mean       High       Very High

3. How do you rate your reading ability?

Very Low       Low       Mean       High       Very High

4. How do you rate your writing ability?

Very Low       Low       Mean       High       Very High

5. How do you rate your grammar knowledge?

Very Low       Low       Mean       High       Very High