INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600
PERCEPTIONS OF SELECTED INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE
STUDENTS TOWARDS ORAL CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION
IN THEIR ACADEMIC CONTENT COURSES
IN A U.S. UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Jun Liu, B.A., M. Ed

The Ohio State University
1996

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Keiko Samimy, Adviser
Dr. Robert Donmoyer
Dr. Diane Belcher

Approved by
Keiko Samimy
Adviser
College of Education
Copyright by

Jun Liu

1996
ABSTRACT

A problem of growing concern in U.S. higher education and foreign language education is the inability of international graduate students in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings to adequately adapt to an active oral classroom participation mode in their content courses. Although much research has been conducted to explore and explain the possible relationships between ESL learners’ linguistic knowledge and language performance, little effort has been made to address their oral classroom participation mode beyond ESL classrooms.

The purpose of this study is to describe, analyze, and interpret the selected international graduate students’ perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses. Twenty Asian graduate students in a midwestern university in both social science and natural science majors were selected from the six most populous international groups in American higher education--Taiwanese, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian and Hong Kong Chinese.
Data collected via both interviews and class observations found both positive and negative perceptions of the participants towards their oral classroom participation. While cognitive, affective, linguistic, communication, and strategic benefits were confirmed by the participants, concerns were also expressed over cognitive, affective, and communication domains. Among affective, cognitive, linguistic, pedagogical/environmental, and socio-cultural factors, cognitive as well as pedagogical/environmental factors were strongly expressed as facilitative for oral classroom participation, while socio-cultural as well as affective factors were regarded as debilitative. Gender, personality, content knowledge, prior experience, communication skills, lesson type, and class size were found to affect the participation mode though they varied in degrees, while major of study, and length of stay seemed to have less effect on oral participation. No cross-culture differences among Asian students was found.

The data suggest that international graduate students have the potential to speak up in their content courses. Also suggested is the fact that socio-cultural factors are mainly responsible for the participants' reticent behavior in terms of oral classroom participation.
Recommendations for international graduate students, faculty members, American peers as well as U.S. institutions of higher education are made to help international graduate students gain confidence in oral classroom participation through consciousness-raising and cultural adaptation. Directions for further research on the topic are also recommended.
To my parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deep appreciation to my adviser, Dr. Keiko Samimy, for her intellectual support, professional guidance, and scholarly enlightenment which made this dissertation possible, and for her advice and inspiration throughout my entire PhD career.

I am grateful to my committee members, Dr. Robert Donmoyer for his expertise in qualitative research and for his inspiration on my data analysis, and Dr. Diane Belcher for her continuous support, encouragement, and enthusiasm in commenting on my earlier drafts and refining my own thinking without imposing her own.

I am also grateful to my colleagues, Dr. Michele Dowell, Jette Hansen, Dr. Alan Hirvela, and Dr. Anna Soter for their encouragement throughout the writing and for their reading and willingness to read and critique my earlier drafts. Thanks also go to Peter Brandt for his technical assistance.

Special thanks go to Professors Lyle Bachman, George Braine, Leo van Lier, Jack Richards, and Tom Scovel for their interest in the topic and their external encouragement and support.

vi
A very special thanks goes to Li-feng Kuo whose early collaboration and much help has inspired me in developing the topic into my dissertation.

I am greatly indebted to my former adviser and mentor, Professor Tang Wu, who showed me the door of TESOL and has continuously encouraged me in pursuing my PhD in the United States.

I am also grateful to my family for their understanding and tolerance of my absence, and to my host family Mike and Denise Riley for their love and sharing some of my special frustrations with me.

Last but not least, I wish to thank all the participants in my study at The Ohio State University for their time and effort and invaluable data contributions.
VITA

December, 15, 1959........................... Born - Changshu, China

1981.............................................. B.A., English Language and Literature, Suzhou University

1989.............................................. M. Ed., Curriculum and Instruction, East China Normal University

1981 - 1991..................................... Lecturer, Suzhou University

1991 - present............................... Graduate Teaching and Research Associate, The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS


**FIELDS OF STUDY**

Major field: Education

Minor field: Drama in Education
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Problem description</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Purpose, objectives and research questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rationale for the study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Significance of the study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Methodological framework</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Prior research: A survey</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The mini-pilot study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The pilot study</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Limitations of the study</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rationale for the review</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. International students in the United States</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The adaptation of international students in the United States</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intercultural communication</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Asian culture and intercultural communication</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demographic information for the selected participants in the study</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Data collection time line (January -- May, 1995)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pseudonyms of the participants in the study</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cluster of nationality and gender</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cluster of majors of studies</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cluster of majors and lesson types</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cluster of prior experience of the participants</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cluster of length of stay in U.S.</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cluster of personality traits</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Holistic assessment of the participants' English communication skills</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Cluster of the participation modes of the participants</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Perceptions towards oral classroom participation in their content courses from three active cases (Cluster 1)</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Perceptions towards oral classroom participation in their content courses from five somewhat active cases (Cluster 2)</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. Perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses from five inactive cases (Cluster 3)..............................................................................281

15. Perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses from seven extremely inactive cases (Cluster 4)..............................................................................282

16. Categorical descriptions of positive perceptions of oral classroom participation in the content courses across the twenty participants..............................................................................284

17. Categorical descriptions of negative perceptions of oral classroom participation in the content courses across the twenty participants..............................................................................286

18. Factors affecting the perceptions towards oral classroom participation from three participants in Cluster 1 (Active cases).....................................................................................287

19. Factors affecting the perceptions towards oral classroom participation among five participants from Cluster 2 (Somewhat active cases)..............................................................................288

20. Factors affecting the perceptions towards oral classroom participation among the five participants from Cluster 3 (Inactive cases)..............................................................................292

21. Factors affecting the perceptions towards oral classroom participation among seven participants from Cluster 4 (Extremely inactive cases)..............................................................................295

22. Categorical descriptions of facilitative factors affecting the perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses among twenty participants..............................................................................300

23. Categorical descriptions of debilitative factors affecting the perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses among twenty participants..............................................................................302
24. Comparison and contrast of factors affecting the perceptions of oral classroom participation in the content courses...............................................................305

25. The Ohio State international students by college and sex, Autumn Quarter, 1994.................................................................359
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Data collection time line flowchart</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Data analysis framework</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Data display of the participants' communication effectiveness in English</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The order of facilitative factors against debilitating factors affecting the oral classroom participation mode of the participants in the study</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The order of debilitating factors against facilitative factors affecting the oral classroom participation mode of the participants in the study</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Task analysis (Instructional Curriculum Map): A Flowchart</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Foreign students in U.S. institutions (1994-95)</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Ohio State University international student enrollment (1981-1994)</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Ohio State University international student enrollment top ten countries, Autumn Quarter, 1994</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The Ohio State University international student enrollment geographic distribution, Autumn Quarter, 1994</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The Ohio State University graduate and undergraduate international student enrollment</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. The Ohio State University international student enrollment top ten graduate departments, Autumn Quarter, 1994...361
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem Description

A problem of growing concern in U.S. higher education and foreign language education is the inability of international graduate students in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings to adequately adjust to active oral classroom participation in terms of speaking up in academic content courses. An attendant problem is the feeling of frustration that often causes students discomfort and concern. One obvious fact is that for most international graduate students English was learned primarily as an academic subject. Even though most international students have a fairly good command of English, as evidenced in passing the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) requirement to enter American universities, there is still a gap between their linguistic knowledge and language performance in highly demanding academic content courses in which English is the medium of instruction.
In the past few decades, a significant amount of research has been conducted to explore and explain the possible relationships between the second language learner's linguistic knowledge and his/her language performance. Researchers (Brown, 1987; Ellis, 1985, 1994; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991) seem to agree that the complex process of second language acquisition cannot be solely explained by cognitive factors and suggest that affective factors are equally important in explaining differential success among ESL learners. However, the research has failed to address second language learners' oral classroom participation in their academic content courses in ESL settings from both affective and socio-cultural perspectives.

Purpose, Objectives and Research Questions

The overall purpose of this study is two-fold: One is to describe, analyze, and interpret selected international graduate students' perceptions of classroom participation in terms of speaking up in their content courses. The other is to suggest ways to help them adapt themselves more adequately and effectively in American higher education, and to help raise the consciousness of both university instructors and American peers in helping these international students with their intercultural communicative competence and comfort level in class.
The objectives are as follows:

1. To describe the selected international graduate students' classroom behavior in terms of oral classroom participation in their academic content courses via classroom observation.

2. To analyze the selected international graduate students' perceptions of their participation in their academic content courses via different interview schedules from wide-open to structured.

3. To interpret their participation behavior in their content courses together with their perceptions towards classroom participation in order to explain why they behave the way they do in class.

The major research questions include:

1. What are the general perceptions of selected international graduate students towards their oral classroom participation in their content courses?

2. Are there any differences in perceptions towards oral classroom participation between those who participate actively or somewhat actively and those who participate inactively or extremely inactively in their content courses?

3. What are some salient factors affecting their perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses?
4. What possible roles might the participants' gender, personality, major of study, content knowledge, prior experience, length of stay, and English communication skills play in their perceptions of oral classroom participation?

5. What cross-cultural differences and similarities in the perceptions of oral classroom participation among selected Asian graduate students this study might suggest?

6. Do students' participation behaviors differ depending on the lesson type, the class size, the subject matter taught, and the individual teaching method of the instructor?

7. How do selected international graduate students usually perceive the active participation mode of the American counterparts in class, and how does that perception affect their own participation mode?

Rationale for the Study

My focus in this study is the perceptions international graduate students hold towards oral classroom participation in their academic content courses. As the first language of most international graduate students is not English, they are required to take ESL courses unless they are exempted. Much research has focused on language learners' learning behavior and their participation patterns in language classrooms. However, how they behave in classes in their own content areas in terms of
their oral participation while mingled with peers who are native speakers of English has received little attention. I believe the ultimate purpose of English language teachers is to help learners improve their English language abilities so that these students feel comfortable and confident participating in their own content courses. Language learners take language courses in order to overcome various sorts of language barriers and to be competent enough to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities in their content areas. Understanding international graduate students’ perceptions of content class participation and behavior might seem remote from the foreign language education realm. But my assumption is that the classroom participation behavior of language learners in their content courses is, to a great extent, related to their linguistic abilities and socio-cultural adaptabilities.

The present study looks at second language learners (international graduate students), in a broader social context (content classes) where they are not treated and judged solely as language learners, but rather as intellectual individuals who are as knowledgeable on the subject matter as everyone else in class. How these international graduate students behave in their content courses in terms of class participation might reflect their language learning experiences in ESL classes. Understanding the relationship between their classroom
participation behaviors and their prior language learning experiences may lead to suggestions and pedagogical implications for ESL teachers, program directors, and curriculum designers. By focusing on language learners in non-language classroom settings, it is hoped that the present study will contribute to foreign language education in a broader scope.

Significance of the Study

Every year, a growing number of international graduate students come to the United States for advanced degrees. As English is the language in which they study their chosen subjects, their oral classroom participation in mainstream courses is often affected by their English oral proficiency levels. Moreover, their cultural conceptions and social values also play a vital role in their classroom behavior. The less active participation pattern -- silence -- demonstrated by most international graduate students in general, and Asian graduate students in particular, does not necessarily affect their overall performance. Conversely, those silent students are usually very serious in fulfilling their written tasks (Liu & Kuo, 1996). To what extent those silent international graduate students think that their oral classroom participation affects them in their academic success and how they think of themselves as compared to others who are active in oral classroom
participation are questions that have not been seriously addressed in the literature. By means of various interview schedules and observations, this study attempts to increase the understanding of the oral classroom participation perceptions of international graduate students pursuing advanced studies in the United States. The significance of this study is, therefore, to help raise the consciousness of both instructors and American students in understanding the perceptions of oral classroom participation of Asian international graduate students so as to create supportive means to help them in oral classroom participation. This, in turn, may also help increase international graduate students' self-confidence, promote a harmonious classroom environment, and strengthen intercultural communication.

Methodological Framework

As the international graduate students' classroom participation in their academic content courses is a very complex issue, a quantitatively-oriented survey was not enough to get in-depth data from the students. In this study, therefore, interviews were used exclusively with an attempt to explore the perceptions of the selected Asian international graduate students.
Different interview schedules are shaped by different theoretical frameworks. In the conventional one-on-one interview, the researcher or interviewer asks the subject or interviewee questions, which may be predetermined (closed-ended interviews) or developed within the interviewing process (open-ended interviews) (Bogdon & Biklen, 1992, p. 136). Answers are recorded and transcribed as a text, and the text is then analyzed and interpreted in order to support or develop some generalization or theory.

From a postpositivist perspective, the researcher in an interview has multiple intentions and desires, some of which are consciously known and some of which are not. The language out of which the questions are constructed is not bound or stable; it varies from person to person, from time to time, and from situation to situation. Therefore, the questions asked in an interview are “contextually grounded, unstable, ambiguous, and subject to endless reinterpretation” (Mishler, 1991, p. 260).

In this study, however, I tried to describe and explain the perceptions of selected international graduate students towards their classroom participation via interviews. I also tried to interpret their perceptions together with some observed oral classroom participation behaviors via classroom observation.
Prior Research: A Survey

My initial research addressing international graduate students' classroom participation (Liu & Kuo, 1996) was conducted in Winter Quarter, 1992. A survey of 51 international graduate students enrolled at different levels of both the Spoken English Program (9 in 104; 9 in 105) and the Composition Program (12 in 106; 11 in 107G; 10 in 108.02) at Ohio State was conducted by using a six-part questionnaire (i.e., risk-taking, sociability, discomfort about speaking up, motivation for keeping silent, strategies for keeping silent and cultural alienation). Subjects were randomly selected, reflecting different levels of both spoken and written English proficiency. Students' responses to the questionnaire were based upon their opinions of their classroom participation in academic content courses.

The results of the study indicated that the international graduate students surveyed had the potential to speak up in their academic content courses but were overcautious in risk-taking and socializing, partly because of their sense of inferiority in speaking the language in the presence of native speakers, and partly because of their anxiety about communicating in English. Also revealed was the fact that the language proficiency of the students did affect their oral participation in academic content courses. Students at lower levels, in both the Spoken English and Composition Programs, seemed to be highly motivated to
improve their English through exposure to U.S. culture, yet they were more reserved in speaking than the students at higher language proficiency levels. This reluctance to speak up may have been due to their uneasiness and uncertainty about both the English language and U.S. culture.

This survey, however, suggested the need for further study of the problem. As an example, to distribute the questionnaire to the selected students with the affective variables already predetermined was a limitation in itself. It precluded some other variables that might have come into play. Therefore, it was necessary to design and implement a follow-up study that addresses the same problem yet approaches it from another dimension—naturalistic inquiry—not only "what," but also "why."

The Mini-Pilot Study

Strauss (1987) suggested that "no [qualitative research] proposal should be written without preliminary data collection and analysis" (p. 286). Therefore, without any predetermined scales, I informally sat in one seminar class in my program for a ten-week quarter with the permission of the instructor to observe the classroom participation of the international students in the class. After five consecutive observations, I realized how complex the issue of oral classroom participation is for international graduate students. The change of the participation
patterns seemed to be accounted for by many factors, such as the relevance of the topic under discussion, the instructor's degree of clarification of the topics, the students' familiarity with the topics, the students' motivation to participate, the students' anxiety and risk-taking in participation, the fluency and accuracy of speaking as a factor in participation, and so forth. I did not choose to videotape any class because equipment in the class may inhibit the natural behavior of some students, especially Asian students due to their cultural conception of proper classroom behavior, and using a video camera in class is anxiety-provoking (McIntyre & Gardner, 1994). I tape-recorded five consecutive classes and counted the number of times each individual international graduate student participated in each class based on the following five categories:

1. Ask a question
2. Answer a question asked by the instructor or peers
3. Elaborate a self-initiated question
4. Make a comment
5. Engage in other verbal class activities

Although the frequency count data was "thin" in nature, I still found it somewhat helpful in determining who I was going to interview and what interview schedule I was going to develop. Therefore, I found myself in a better position to make "educated guesses" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).
After five consecutive observations, I interviewed three of the seven international graduate students in the class using three interview schedules. I used one wide-open interview schedule to obtain general perceptions of the interviewee towards classroom participation in content courses, and one semi-structured interview schedule with probing questions with another interviewee to get more focused answers. I used a structured interview schedule to interview the other student in the class. The entire mini-pilot study was completed in Autumn Quarter, 1993.

The Pilot Study

My mini-pilot study helped me in terms of field experience, but the interview schedules as well as the observation fieldnote-taking skills still needed improvement. Therefore, I needed a pilot study to learn about my research process, interview schedules, observation techniques, and myself as a researcher, an interviewer, and an observer (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I believed that adding more experience in data collection and gaining initial data analysis skills through this pilot study would help prepare me for my real study -- the dissertation. In this pilot study, I tried different interview schedules with certain individuals, and I also tried participant observation. Moreover, I ventured to gather data outside my
backyard -- education -- my program area. It was this open-field experience that convinced me to expand my research territory to the programs both in natural science and social science. In this pilot study, I tried one grounded survey based upon the data obtained in the preceding interviews as a way of member check, and I also tried several initial data analysis techniques in terms of coding and discovering salient patterns. The overall purpose of this pilot study was to try more ways other than what I had done in the mini-pilot study to find what exactly I was searching for in my dissertation. I found that the grounded survey as well as follow-up interviews were very helpful in obtaining thick data.

The study

Based on my experience in data collection and data analysis in both mini-pilot and pilot studies, I selected thirty first-year Asian international graduate students majoring in both natural and social sciences at The Ohio State University, all of whom agreed to participate in my study. I gained access through the ESL program where I have been teaching English composition. All the participants I selected were my former students. I narrowed down to twenty participants after the first-round interviews. I conducted three interviews with each of the twenty participants starting from wide-open, semi-structured to structured schedules. Interviews were tape-recorded and
transcribed and phone calls were also used to clarify important points in the interviews whenever necessary. Meanwhile, I conducted classroom observations for fifteen participants across eight disciplines, and informal interviews were conducted immediately after observations. Fieldnotes were taken during and after each observation.

Data were assembled, displayed and analyzed in five components. I started introducing my twenty participants by offering a brief description of each in terms of their backgrounds and demographic information. Then I displayed clustered information across the twenty participants. Immediately following the data display, I presented case studies via interviews and observations by describing and analyzing what I heard and what I saw. I ended my data analysis with a synthesis of various perceptions and factors influencing the participants' differential perceptions towards oral classroom participation of their content courses.

Limitations of the Study

The present study addresses the issue of perceptions of international graduate students towards their oral classroom participation in their content courses at The Ohio State University. Students' participation being such a complex issue, it is often constrained by the subject matter under study, the
teacher's instructional mode, the size of the classes, the interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers of English, as well as the interactions among non-native speakers in the classroom. In regard to the instructional mode, for instance, instructors' cultural sensitivity and linguistic tolerance of non-native speakers' oral participation, and the instructor's style of conducting classes, either encouraging or discouraging classroom participation, are of great importance to the participation of international graduate students. As for American students who are relatively out-spoken in class, their role of active participation in class and their different attitudes towards international students' less active participation also have great impact on their non-native counterparts. Indeed, I believe that perspectives from both instructors and American peers towards international graduate students' oral classroom participation in their content courses would be valuable to triangulate with the international graduate students' own perceptions of content classroom participation. However, I also believe that understanding the international graduate students' oral classroom participation from their own perspectives should be the primary focus of the investigation without which the other two perspectives would be less significant. Therefore, this dissertation only focused on the international graduate students' perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content
courses. This chosen scope, hence, might also be the limitation of the treatment of the subject matter under study.

Admittedly, the sample size of this study is relatively small, with only twenty participants throughout the study. Although from various majors, and across multiple disciplines, the twenty participants cannot represent the whole population—international graduate students at the Ohio State University. Besides, all the participants were from one large U.S. institution, and, therefore, the findings might not necessarily be generalized to other types of U.S. institutions, such as private universities, community colleges, and universities with small percentages of international students.
Rationale for the review

As the topic of the present study has not been previously investigated, I will review my literature from the multiple perspectives believed to be relevant to the study. I will start by observing the situation of international students in the United States in terms of their abilities for and difficulties in adaptation, acculturation, as well as assimilation. In order to understand the cultural backgrounds of my participants, and to have better insights in my data analysis, I will then tackle the broad issue of intercultural communication with a focus on Asian culture in intercultural communication.

Communication strategies, and classroom interaction in terms of classroom participation and classroom nonverbal communication will be reviewed as two parallel areas beneficial for the overall analysis of the data collected.
International students in the United States

For centuries, students have gone abroad in search of opportunities for knowledge advancement, and that has become one of the most enduring images in the history of scholarship. In the past few decades, the quality, scope, and sheer size of the higher education enterprise in the United States have attracted students and scholars from all parts of the world in unprecedented numbers. In academic 1994-95, for instance, there were 452,635 international students enrolled at 2,758 accredited U.S. institutions, a record high statistic to date (see Appendix A). Among all foreign students, about two-fifths (42%) were enrolled in graduate programs, and more than half (57.8%) were from Asia (Desruisseaux, 1995).

There are several reasons why the United States has increasingly attracted a large number of international students who are also beneficial to the United States. First of all, U.S. higher education is considered a very important commodity for international students to do their research and study. They come to the United States to obtain advanced education or training not available at home and to gain prestige with a degree from a U.S. institution (Spaulding & Flack, 1976). Secondly, international students can bring much to the host university -- new perspectives, diverse backgrounds and enhancement of a multicultural environment. They can help maintain desired
levels of enrollment and academic excellence by bringing different needs, because of different backgrounds, ethical values, and languages. They offer the opportunity for an exchange of ideas and information, and fostering this exchange, particularly in an open academic atmosphere, can further the cause of global understanding (Council of Graduate Schools in U.S., 1991).

Thirdly, international students have an extremely important economic impact on the United States. The reason why the United States embraces foreign students is partially due to the fact that the education of international students becomes a form of foreign assistance where all the money stays in the United States. According to a recent report released by the Institute of International Education, foreign students spend an estimated $7 billion a year in the United States, about $3-billion on tuition and fees and the balance on living expenses and entertainment (Desruiusseaux, 1995). International students can also play an important role in helping the United States forge international links in trade and industry. The high enrollment of international students in the United States has been recognized as something that is important in "the relationship between higher education system, the economic competitiveness of the state, and its potential place in the larger global economy" (Davis, T. M., cited by Desruiusseaux, 1995).
In consideration of the continuing increase of international students in the United States, there has been considerable research addressing the various needs of international students (Kwan, Sodowsky, & Ihle, 1994). Studies on U.S. university campuses explored international students' perceived needs (Manese, Sedlacek, & Leong, 1988), academic needs (Leong & Sedlacek, 1989), adjustment (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992), acculturation (Sodowsky & Plake, 1991, 1992), emotional well-being (Parr, Bradley, & Bings, 1992; Ying & Liese, 1990, 1991), stress precipitators (Oropeza, Fitzgibbon, & Baron, 1991), adjustment to stress (Leong, Mallinckrodt, & Kralj, 1990), help-seeking sources (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986), counseling style preferences (Exum & Lau, 1988; Merta, Ponterotto, & Brown, 1992; Yau, Sue, & Hayden, 1992), perception of counselor credibility (Sodowsky, 1991), and worldviews about international students (Kwan, Sodowsy, & Ihle, 1994).

Although these research studies cover a broad spectrum of the diverse needs of international students, some of the results are problematic. The reason is three-fold. First of all, many studies tend to study international students as one cultural group rather than as specific nationalities with distinct characteristics, so the results are not easy to interpret as overgeneralizing and stereotyping might easily occur. Secondly, as most of the research studies are done via survey format, differences
between/among groups are reported only as group means, thus minimizing individual differences. Thirdly, the existing studies have not investigated the attitudinal and value orientations of international students, which are believed to be of ultimate importance in facilitating communication (Atkinson, 1983; Ibrahim, 1985; Sue, 1988).

The Adaptation of International Students in the United States

While international students contribute to the diversity and add to the cultural and intellectual aspects of the campus environment, they also provide challenges for administrators, faculty and students alike (Council of Graduate Schools in U.S., 1991). International students in general, and international graduate students in particular, in the process of completing their degrees, do experience many difficulties in adjusting to an American lifestyle. The adjustment of international students seems extremely hard because of the difficulty of being away from home (Leong, 1984; Stafford, Marion, & Salter, 1980). They meet the challenge of learning to function in a totally different environment with limited English proficiency (Abadzi, 1980; Agarwal & Winkle, 1985; Miller & Winston, 1990) and experience transitional difficulties and culture shock (Coelho, 1982; De Armond & Stevenson, 1992). The difficulties international students have can be grouped into several
categories: 1) academic problems in terms of lack of English language proficiency, completing various academic tasks, and familiarizing themselves with American academic norms and expectations; 2) social problems in terms of social integration, problems in daily life tasks, homesickness, and role conflicts; and 3) financial problems in terms of insufficient financial resources (Adelegan & Park, 1985; Boyer & Sedlacek, 1986; Helkinhermo & Shute, 1986; Lee, Abd-Ella, & Burke, 1981; Meloni, 1986; Pederson, 1991; Reinick, 1986).

1. Academic problems

International students usually have stresses compounded by being plunged into an unfamiliar culture and surrounded by a language they can only comprehend to a limited extent (Huntly, 1993). Although familiarity with the larger university culture and disciplinary subcultures including accepted interaction patterns is essentially responsible for international students' academic problems (Schneider & Fujishima, 1994), a lack of English language proficiency is viewed by higher education faculty and the public alike as one of the greatest problems among international students, particularly those from Asian countries because they have less practice in using English in their home countries (Helkinhermo & Shute, 1986). However, the importance of adequate English language proficiency has
long been recognized by educators for successful academic performance by international students in the U.S. universities (Dunnett, 1985; Gibson, 1985). International students' problems with the English language have an adverse effect on their academic performance, social interactions, and general adjustment (Spaulding & Flack, 1976). In an evaluation study, Reinhart concluded that English language proficiency was one of the key factors affecting international students in their academic development (1986). In a similar vein, Chapman, Wan, and Xu (1988) found English language proficiency to be one of the two overwhelming factors affecting international students' academic adjustment to American graduate programs.

One of the most widely used measures to determine the extent to which international students have developed the English language skills necessary for successful advanced study is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987). Although evidence has been shown regarding the relationship between international students' scores on TOEFL, and their academic success (Hale, Stansfield, & Duran, 1983), the complexity of the concept of language proficiency (Canale, 1983), as well as the difficulty in measuring the variety of English language skills necessary for academic success (Cummins, 1983), have complicated the issue, resulting in many inconsistent findings. While studies by Burgess and Greis
(1970), Hell and Aleamont (1974), and Ho and Spinks (1985) all seemed to endorse the significant correlations between the TOEFL score and academic success, other studies indicated the lack of relationship between English language proficiency and academic success (Hwang & Dizney, 1970; Mestre, 1981; Mulligan, 1966; Strover, 1982). Once international students start their academic study in U.S. universities, they are involved in an ongoing process of communication in terms of negotiation and evaluation. As Canale (1983) posits, there are four major components in the communication process; namely, grammatical competence (knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and word and sentence formation); socio-linguistic competence (rules of appropriateness governing the use of forms and meanings in different contexts); discourse competence (knowledge required to combine forms and meanings to achieve unified spoken and written discourse); and strategic competence (knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies). In order to be successful in U.S. higher education, international students need all these competencies, which are very challenging for them to acquire. Therefore, mere grammatical competence, which most international students are good at, is far from being sufficient for them to be successful in an American academic environment.
Instead of using standardized scores like TOEFL to examine the impact of international students' language proficiency and their background variables on their perceived academic difficulties, Xu (1991) did a survey of 450 international students in three large universities on the east coast of the United States. This survey used a model exploring an alternative measure of English proficiency more relevant to academic settings and an alternative indicator of academic performance. This survey measured international students' self-perception of the level of academic difficulty that they encountered in performing the required academic tasks. The results indicated that students who believed that their English was adequate (based on their own self-estimates of their English competence in dealing with the required academic tasks) encountered fewer academic difficulties than those who believed it to be inadequate. Of the two language proficiency variables, TOEFL and self-perceived language proficiency, TOEFL was found to be a non-significant predictor of the level of academic difficulties the students encountered, while self-perceived English proficiency was found to be a major predictor of students' perception of academic difficulty. Several implications are drawn from the study. First of all, it is suggested that English proficiency is the single most important factor influencing international graduate students' academic coping ability. Secondly, it is implied that
International students' academic coping skills can be conceptualized as the combination of their ability to use English and their ability to handle the academic tasks. Thirdly, adequate English proficiency should be an essential requirement when recruiting international graduate students.

To investigate factors associated with academic stress of international students at U.S. universities, and to show how this has a strong negative impact on their ability to transfer the knowledge and skills learned in U.S. classrooms to their home countries, Wan, Chapman, and Biggs (1992) conducted a survey of 689 international graduate students enrolled in three major upstate New York universities. Grounded in a cognitive framework in which academic stress is understood as the consequence of students' appraisal of the stress of role demands and their perception of their ability to cope with those demands, Wan, Chapman and Biggs found that the students who perceived themselves as having better English-language skills were less likely to view academic situations as stressful and believed they were able to cope with the stress they experienced. The students who perceived themselves as having weak language skills found those same situations more stressful and believed they were unable to cope with the stress they experienced. The contributions of perceived English-language skills in reducing stress out-ranked all the other variables combined. Results of
this study suggest that academic adjustment for international graduate students is closely related to their perceived language skills, e.g., note-taking, conversing with faculty, and participating in class discussion.

2. Social problems

In addition to academic problems, most international students also face social problems in terms of social integration, problems in daily life tasks, homesickness, and role conflicts. They often feel challenged due to cultural differences (Constantinides, 1992). They often express concern about the competitiveness, individualism, and assertiveness in American culture (Perr et al., 1992), and some even feel that American culture is somewhat offensive (Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986). Therefore, there is tension and concern among international students in adjusting to American culture, which affects their self-confidence and self-esteem. An individual's sense of self-concept and self-esteem is often validated by the communication of social support from the people within the community. Communication of support usually occurs depending on culturally specified rules of role behavior (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). International students, when they first come to the United States, often feel the absence of their own traditional sources of social support. Moreover, they
are deprived of the familiar means by which the support has been expressed (Pederson, 1991). Social support is, therefore, important not only for self-esteem and self-confidence, but also for helping to reduce stress in social adjustment (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992).

According to some survey results, international students do try to seek social support from their American peers, but the relationships between international students and their American peers rarely go beyond the most superficial contacts, and many international students quickly abandon the hope of establishing deep cross-cultural friendships (Bulthuis, 1986; Helkinheimo & Shute, 1986; Miller, 1971). Interestingly, when confronted with an educational-vocational or a personal problem, international students are more likely than their American counterparts to seek help from faculty members (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986). It was reported that international students preferred to seek social support either from their immediate families or their co-nationals (Bulthuis, 1986). International students are likely to have fewer opportunities to establish social support networks among peers other than their co-nationals, which causes distress and discomfort in social adjustment (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). Some studies also reveal that there is a gender difference in terms of the social support. Due to the traditional gender role, socialization of many cultures results in women
providing their partners with significantly more social support than they receive from them (Vanfossen, 1986), hence causing marital stress, role conflict, and depression for women (Aneshensel, 1986; McBride, 1990).

To investigate international students' perceptions of their own adaptation to a new academic and social milieu, and to analyze their interactions in the host culture, Helkinkelho and Shute (1986) conducted a study by using both structured and unstructured interviews, and participant observation at a Canadian university. Results covered four aspects: language skills, academic concerns, family support and expectations, and cultural differences. As far as language skills are concerned, international students, in order to adapt successfully to North American culture, must master both conversational and formal English, the former for everyday and social life and the latter for academic work. For academic concerns, international students experienced heavy academic pressure. Family support and expectations seemed to be an important factor in students' attempts to perform well. In terms of cultural differences, most students interviewed believed that the difference between their own culture and the target culture often presented barriers to interact with native speakers of English. Unfortunately, some international students felt they were discriminated against, thus leading to insecurity and a sensation of being unwelcome. In
sum, almost all international students have experienced potential inhibitors and stimulators that affect their interaction with the host society. Obviously, language barriers can cause international students to shy away from mixing with local people, while at the same time, they might stimulate interaction. A heavy academic load, on the other hand, might reduce the time available for international students to interact and make friends with native speakers in the target culture.

In order to identify the types of social support most helpful to international graduate students, a survey was conducted among 440 international graduate students at a large eastern university were surveyed (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). It was found that quality relationships with faculty, faculty interest in students' professional development, and the quality of instruction perceived by students could provide a strong protective function against the development of depression in international students undergoing stress. This finding is in agreement with the results in some earlier studies that the quality of faculty relationships may be especially important for international students given their preference for formal sources of help (Leong & Sedlacek, 1986) and the difficulty they face in establishing social relationships with their American counterparts (Furnham & Bochner, 1982; Leong, 1984). Gender differences were also discovered in this survey. For women,
flexibility of the curriculum was related to lower levels of depression and anxiety whereas the availability of departmental support services, financial aid, and relations with other students were related to lower levels of negative life changes. Although these differences were significant for men also, they were somewhat lesser in magnitude. Female international students, therefore, might face a double jeopardy suffering from problems of being both female and an international student (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). To help international students develop strong social support, it was suggested that programs should enhance faculty mentoring, more adequately train academic advisers, and promote support among program peers (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992).

In comparing international students' preferences for help sources with that of U.S. students, Leong and Sedlacek's (1986) survey also found that international students were more likely than students from the United States to prefer faculty members and counselors and less likely to prefer friends for help with all kinds of problems.

To study intercultural contact and adjustment on a more individual basis for international students in the United States, Surdam and Collins (1984) conducted a study of more than 140 international students in a university via interviews and a questionnaire. The adaptation of students was studied to
determine possible relationships between their adaptation and certain independent variables. The result of the study suggests that students who spent more of their leisure time with Americans were significantly better adapted than those who spent more leisure time with fellow countrymen, a finding consistent with previous ones (Antler, 1970; Selltiz, Hopson, and Cook, 1956).

In an earlier study, Quinn (1975) pointed out that while most international undergraduate students had more successful adjustments living in dormitories, graduate students had to find their own housing and often end up living with students from their own countries, thus further detaching them from American culture. In terms of married graduate students, their major social impetus came from within the family rather than the community beyond it (Han, 1975). It is also interesting to note that married male students were reported to suffer from less stress than married women, probably because female students might have significantly greater role conflicts stemming from their responsibilities as wives and mothers in addition to their obligations as students (Gilbert & Holahan, 1982). Surdam and Collins (1984) also showed that those international students who spent more of their leisure time with Americans were significantly better adapted than those who spent more leisure time with fellow countrymen.
In order to help international students better adapt when they arrive on American campuses, Liu and Kuo (1996) conducted a survey of international graduate students to understand their perception of oral participation in their content courses in a major Midwestern university. One of the suggestions they made to enhance better acculturation was that international students have American roommates. There are several studies investigating the interpersonal relationship between college roommates living with someone from the same culture versus from a different culture (Saidla, 1982; 1988; 1989; Saidla & Grant, 1993; Saidla & Parodi, 1991). In their recent survey study, Saidla and Grant (1993) compared residents from traditional male and female residence halls (n=22) with residents from an international theme hall housing international/American roommate pairs (n=55) on roommate rapport and roommate understanding. It was found that American/American roommate pairs did not enjoy greater amounts of rapport than international/American pairs though International/American roommates were lower than culturally similar pairs on trust and intimacy and understanding, a finding contradictory to their earlier study (Saidla & Parodi, 1991). However, in both studies, the international/American roommates had moderate to high levels of rapport and understanding.
3. Financial problems

International students all have the expectation of being sponsored by the school or supported by their families or government. Heavy academic pressure is often experienced by international students who may be financially liable to foreign governments or to their families. To fail or to perform poorly might result in shame not only to the individual student, but also the family (Huntly, 1993). It is generally reported that students with sponsorships and government grants performed better than those without (El-Lakany, 1970). As many international students have limited financial resources and few employment opportunities in the United States because of visa restrictions, they have a tendency to take as many courses as possible in a short period of time, thus creating many problems with stress and overwork (Huntly, 1993). When asked to rank the top problems they face, international students usually put finances at the top of the list followed by lack of friends, English proficiency, homesickness, and separation from family (Guglielmino & Perkins, 1975).

Summary

Every year a growing number of international students come to the United States to pursue their advanced degrees. They have brought with them different needs due to multiple
purposes, diverse backgrounds, and various ethnic values. However, they face many problems in the process of adapting themselves to this society. These problems are classified and discussed as academic, social, and financial. Review of the literature in this area suggests that more in-depth studies are needed to understand the problems faced by international students in order to help them adapt more adequately to their new lifestyle and to successfully adjust to their academic environment.

**Intercultural communication**

Intercultural communication is a very complex socio-cultural construct. It can be written or oral. Within the oral domain, it can be distance communication via phone, or face-to-face interaction among people from different cultures in daily life. Within the face-to-face encounter, it can again be subdivided into verbal and nonverbal communication.

Intercultural communication, simply put, examines the interpersonal dimensions of intercultural communication as it occurs in a variety of contexts (Samovar & Porter, 1991). When people from various cultures communicate, the understanding is greatly facilitated when the cultural experiences are similar. Conversely, when different and diverse backgrounds are brought to a communication encounter, it is often difficult to share
internal states and feelings. As Argyle (1991) points out, the differences among cultures have an impact on interpersonal interaction, thus leading to communication problems. These problems can be grouped into six categories: language, nonverbal communication, rules of social behavior, social relationships, motivation, and concepts and ideology involving ideas derived from religion and politics.

To deal with these problems, the understanding of the connection between culture and human communicative behaviors is essential. As Hall (1991) posits, culture provides a highly selective screen between people and their outside world. This cultural filter determines not only what people attend to, but what people choose to ignore as well. Therefore, people from different cultural backgrounds tend to concentrate on the unique aspects of their environments.

All communication takes place in a social setting or environment that impacts on the communication event. We have all learned culturally appropriate patterns of communicative behavior for various social contexts in which we normally find ourselves. Sometimes communication problems arise when we find ourselves in unfamiliar contexts without an internalized set of rules to govern our behavior, or when we are interacting with someone who has internalized a different set of rules.
The study of intercultural communication is, however, carried out in various disciplines and with a variety of methods. In the field of social psychology much work has been done by Asante & Gudykunst (1989); Gudykunst (1986); Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; and Kim & Gudykunst (1988). Anthropologists have asked how field workers can understand discourse of other cultures (Hanson 1975; Liberman, 1984). Students of foreign languages have recognized that their tasks involve not only different languages, but also different cultures (House & Blum-Kulka, 1986). Linguists and social scientists have joined the field of discourse analysis to study international communication (Ulijn & Corter, 1989).

Nevertheless, the classroom environment is one of those settings that specially influences intercultural communication and interaction. The assumptions, values, rules, customs, practices, and procedures of a given culture strongly affect the conduct of a classroom activity. In their article “Intercultural communication and the classroom,” Andersen and Powell (1991) state that learning environments are culturally diverse and that they alter the communication patterns of people within those environments.

Berlo (1960) assumes that there must always be reciprocal role taking in intercultural communication. There must be a reciprocity in achieving an understanding of each other in order
for people to achieve the highest level of communication. That
is to say, knowing about your culture and the culture of the
person with whom you are communicating is not enough. The
other person must also know about his/her own culture and
about your culture as well. Berlo maintains that intercultural
communication cannot reach its highest level of human
interaction without mutual acknowledgment of each other's
cultures and a willingness to accept those cultures as a reality
governing communicative interactions.

To help improve the overall quality of intercultural
communication, Barna (1991) listed six important causes for
communication breakdown across cultural boundaries:
"assuming similarity instead of difference, language problems,
nonverbal misunderstanding, the presence of preconceptions
and stereotypes, the tendency to evaluate, and the high anxiety
that often exists in intercultural encounters" (p. 343).

Spitzberg (1991), on the other hand, summarized possible
solutions to these intercultural communication problems. Our
intercultural communication competence is increased if we are
motivated, knowledgeable, possess interpersonal skills, are
credible, meet the expectations of our communication partner,
can strike a balance between autonomy needs and intimacy
needs, reflect similarities, manifest trust, and have access to
multiple relationships.
Quite recently, the concepts of "individualism" (the subordination of a group's goals to a person's own goals) and "collectivism" (the subordination of personal desires to the goal of collectives) have been discussed as a major dimension of cultural variation in intercultural communication (Hui, 1988; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Triandis et al., 1986; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asia, & Lucia, 1988). After explaining some of the forms of these two outlooks, Triandis, Brislin and Hui (1991) offer specific advice on how members from either group can adapt to the behaviors of their counterparts. They also cautioned us that there could be wide individual differences among people within a culture. Therefore, adaptation of suggestions should be flexible.

**Asian culture and intercultural communication**

When intercultural communication takes place in a classroom setting where the Asian culture becomes a part, understanding would be facilitated if some unique characteristics of Asian culture could be identified. In Asian cultures, students often view teachers in a parental role, and they expect teachers to tell them what to do and impart "truths." In such a system, students are not expected to speak in class and they memorize what they are taught. These students are easily frustrated when applying their memorization
skills into extensive materials in American classrooms, and therefore they are reluctant to engage in class discussion (Sheehan & Person, 1995).

In terms of learning, Mead (1970) differentiated postfigurative from configurative and prefigurative societies. In postfigurative societies, older people disseminate their knowledge to younger, less experienced and less knowledgeable individuals; configurative cultures adopt primarily peer learning patterns; and prefigurative societies learn from their younger members who are more up to date. In Asian cultures, however, students would seldom disagree with a teacher whom is viewed as an authority. In traditional Asian societies, wisdom comes with age and all important learning is postfigurative. In some Asian societies, the teacher is a revered individual who is teaching sacred truth. The task of the student is to absorb knowledge, and self-disclosure is not central to the development of intimacy between the teacher and the students. The feeling of intimacy is not explicitly communicated but understood (Mead, 1970).

In his action research on pair work compared to other modes of classroom interaction such as group work, individual work and teacher with whole class work in a mixed-nationality EFL classroom, Hyde (1993) found that students who complained of domineering partners were generally Japanese.
It is speculated that Japanese students may well hold different cultural and behavioral expectations in relation to turn-taking and conversation management that are not met. For the Japanese “it may be impolite to disagree to another person’s face or to interrupt someone; but many pair work tasks are set up by teachers in order to make students argue from different points of view to achieve a negotiated result!” (p. 345). In comparison, to be assertive when working with a partner is seen as domineering or rude by Japanese students whereas in Western cultures this may be seen as dynamic and positive. As Nemetz Robinson (1988) posits, “Misunderstanding between Japanese and American speakers are also influenced by different ways of structuring information. The American value of directness is contrasted with the Japanese value of maintaining harmony. Japanese use a variety of conventions to avoid direct disagreement” (p. 57).

It is assumed that Asian culture is heavily influenced by Buddhism. Cultures reflecting a Buddhist tradition hold that knowledge, truth, and wisdom come to those whose quiet silence allows the spirit to enter (Andersen & Powell, 1991). In an attempt to explain why Asian people seem to avoid public argumentation and debate unlike most North Americans do, Becker (1991) suggested that we should look at three areas of Asian cultures: the social history, linguistic features, and
philosophy and religion. As far as social history is concerned, Asian people like Chinese and Japanese depend largely on the peaceful cooperation within a community. Age and rank become the unquestioned basis for distinction of inferior and superior. Much influenced by Confucius thought, free thought and individual expression were discouraged, giving way to the safer and surer domain of classical quotation. As Asian culture indicates, taking opposite sides of an argument usually means becoming a personal rival and antagonist of the one who is on the other side. In terms of language features, take Chinese and Japanese for an example, "their telegraphic terseness and consequent ambiguities; their many homonyms; their inabilitys to make fine distinctions and abstractions; the use of language in noncommunicative ways and of intuition for communication; and their lack of logic rules and constraints" (Becker, 1991, p. 239) -- are all responsible for the fact that Asian people tend to withdraw from public debate and argumentation. In addition to social history and language features, philosophy and religion such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism in Asian culture all seem to hold negative views towards speech and language (Becker, 1991).

However, intercultural communication not only requires verbal interaction, but also nonverbal interaction 1. Like verbal

---

1 Detailed discussion of nonverbal communication can be seen under "Classroom nonverbal communication" in this chapter.
communication, nonverbal communication is largely influenced by the culture each speaker represents in interaction. Culture tends to determine the specific nonverbal behaviors that represent or symbolize specific thoughts, feelings, or states of the communicator. Culture also determines when it is appropriate to display or communicate various thoughts, feelings, or internal state (Samovar & Porter 1991).

Researchers have also found that sex differences in values, attitudes, and communication patterns were normally associated with nonverbal behavior. Eakins and Eakins (1991) noticed that male-female differences in nonverbal communication are reflected in eye contact, facial expressions, posture and bearing, gestures, clothing, grooming and physical appearance, use of space, and touch. They further pointed out that being aware of and knowing how these sex differences in nonverbal behavior operate during interaction should be helpful to both women and men as they attempt to exchange ideas, information, and feelings with one another.

In nonverbal communication, silence is of crucial importance in Asian cultures. Silence is the mode of communication for the contemplative throughout the world, but it is more practical in some cultural and social groupings than others (Ishii & Bruneau, 1991). Silence can mean different things depending on social contexts. We silence others “to gain
attention, to maintain control, to protect, to teach, to attempt to eliminate distractions, to induce reverence for authority or tradition, and to point to something greater than ourselves or our groups" (Ishii & Bruneau, 1991, p. 315). Silence as a sign of respect for the wisdom and expertise of others is often valued and rewarded in Asian cultures. Ishii and Bruneau (1991) point out that "the elderly of Asian cultural groups expect signs of respect, one of which is the silence of the young, as well as the silence of less authoritative family members" (p. 315).

Interestingly, many women in Asian countries view their silent roles as very powerful and natural. According to Ishii and Bruneau (1991), there is a power of control in silence and in the outward show of reticence.

As we know, many international students come from academic environments in their own countries which discourage active participation and speaking for any reason in class. Those students, generally Asians, find adaptation to the American classroom especially difficult and culturally alien, leading to great stress when forced to give presentations, participate in group activities, or simply ask questions (Helkenheimo, 1986).

However, the Western tradition often holds negative attitudes towards silence, especially in social and public relations. According to Wayne (1974), the U.S. interpretations of silence are: (1) sorrow, (2) critique, (3) obligation, (4) regret,
and (5) embarrassment. People tend to ignore that silences do have linking, affecting, revelational, judgmental, and activating communicative functions in Western cultures (Jensen, 1973). It should be pointed out that the intercultural implications of silent behaviors are diverse because the value and use of silence as communication vary a great deal across cultures. Therefore, more attention should be paid to the cultural views of silence and the interpretations given to silence in communication interactions (Ishii & Bruneau, 1991).

Viewing the interdependence between silence and speech from an Asian perspective, Ishii and Bruneau (1991) posit that “silence is not the ‘empty’ absence of speech sound; silence creates speech and speech creates silence; yin and yang are, in this view, counter-dependent as well as dynamically concomitant” (p. 316). This interdependence between speech and sound can also be interpreted from Gestalt theory in that while silence can be regarded as the ground against which the figures of speech are perceived and valued, silence can also be treated as figure against which the ground of speech functions (Ishii & Bruneau, 1991).

Ishii and Bruneau (1991) suggest that the notion and significance of silent communication competence should be positively introduced and researched along with verbal communication competence. Whereas verbal communication
plays an important role in promoting intercultural and interpersonal understanding, "the ultimate goal-stage of communication -- interpersonally and interculturally -- may be communication through silence" (Ishii & Bruneau, 1991, p. 318).

**Summary**

Intercultural communication requires mutual understanding, unusual sensitivity and sometimes even tolerance. However, when different and diverse backgrounds are brought to a communication encounter, communication problems, such as different first languages, social norms, concepts, ideology and so forth, arise. In a classroom setting, learning environments are so culturally diverse that intercultural communication needs to be constantly adjusted. The Asian culture has a unique impact on intercultural communication in that Asian communication patterns are largely affected by Asian philosophy of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The ideal classroom is viewed as an environment in which students sit and listen quietly to the teacher. Due to the conventional concept of Asian culture towards classroom participation, silence in class and agreement with teachers are regarded as normal and proper.
Communication strategies

Communication strategies usually refer to strategies people use in daily communication. That is to say, that different strategies are used to meet different purposes in communication. However, the literature in communication strategies seems to focus heavily on strategies used by those whose native language is not English even though L1 (first language) acquisition and communication strategies, and cognitive problem-solving strategies are all interrelated (Bialystok, 1990).

Identifying communication strategies

When communication strategies are used in a second language context, their definitions vary according to different theoretical stances, and researchers in this area have not reached a universally acceptable definition. Communication strategies of second-language learners, according to Corder (1977), are systematic techniques employed by speakers to express their meaning when faced with difficulties. There are two options for second language learners in communication: one is to tailor the message to come in agreement with the linguistic resources of the speaker. The second option is to increase, extend, or manipulate the available linguistic system to realize the intended message. The first option, strategies to manipulate
meaning/goal, are called message adjustment strategies while the second option, strategies to manipulate form, are called resource expansion strategies (Corder, 1983). When message adjustment strategies are used, the extent to which the speaker compromises the intended meaning/goal is scaled on a dimension of globalness starting from topic avoidance as the most global, to topic abandonment, semantic avoidance, and message reduction as the least global. Resource expansion strategies, on the other hand, can use the scale of risk-taking to judge the extent to which the speaker is risking communication failure. The ordering that scales the strategies from the most risk-taking to the least risk-taking is: switching, borrowing, inventing, paraphrasing and paralinguistic strategies (Corder, 1983).

One of the earliest studies in communication strategies was, however, conducted by Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976) on interlanguage production. Nine subjects with intermediate language proficiency levels from three different language backgrounds were shown two simple drawings and a complex illustration and asked to describe all three in both their native languages and English. The approaches used by different learners to solve specific communication problems were recorded and compared. The findings of this study prompted Tarone to form her topology of conscious communication
strategies. This topology consists of five major categories or strategies, with each reflecting a different sort of decision in communication problem solving. These five categories are: avoidance, including both topic avoidance and message abandonment; paraphrase in terms of approximation, word change, and circumlocution; conscious transfer by way of literal transfer and language switch; appeal for assistance; and mime. According to Tarone (1980), communication strategies are a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared.

Closely related to Tarone's topology, Varadi (1980) proposed a distinction between adjusting the meaning and adjusting the form of expression in terms of communication strategies. In ordinary communication, the speaker's goal is to convey the optimal meaning. When this optimal meaning cannot be conveyed due to lack of expressions, then the speaker has to adjust his meaning in a way he can express. The expressed outcome of this adjustment, according to Varadi (1980), is the adjusted meaning. Related to the meaning adjustment, adjusted form refers to the constraints of choices made for meanings to be expressed. When the speaker fails to express an intended meaning, she/he has to decide whether expression of that message will be based on reduction or replacement of the usual forms.
Faerch and Kasper (1983a), on the other hand, posit that communication strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal. Somewhat in agreement with Corder, Faerch and Kasper (1983a) proposed a similar system for classifying communication strategies. They thought that learners, while encountering a communication problem, have two options: they can dismiss the problem by circumventing the difficulty, thus avoiding the obstacle (cf. message adjustment strategies), or they can confront the problem by developing an alternative plan, thus achieving a solution (cf. resource expansion strategies). The former are called reduction strategies while the latter are called achievement strategies. The choice between these two approaches depends on the learner's underlying behavior being avoidance-oriented or achievement-oriented, and on the nature of the encountered problem (Bialystok, 1990). Reduction strategies can be subdivided into two types: formal reduction strategies, the learner's attempts to avoid errors (phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical) by generating speech production from a reduced system; and functional reduction strategies, the learner's attempts to reduce his/her communicative goal in order to avoid a problem. As Bialystok (1990) posits, what makes this classification of Faerch and
Kasper's most distinctive is the achievement strategies which are "developed in the planning phrase to overcome the lack of an available route to the communicative goal" (p. 32).

Paribakht (1985) developed her own taxonomy proposing that there are four possible approaches to communication problems: the linguistic approach, exploiting contextual knowledge surrounding the referent object; the contextual approach, dealing with the contextual knowledge surrounding the referent object; the conceptual approach, tackling the speaker's general knowledge of the world; and mime, utilizing knowledge of meaningful gestures. The first three approaches are displayed on a continuum of knowledge span from narrow to more wide while the last approach seems to stand by itself.

The above definitions and taxonomies, though incomplete and different in organization and criterion, all share three features of communication strategies: problematicity, consciousness, and intentionality (Bialystok, 1990). Problematicity is the idea that strategies are used only when a speaker perceives that there is a problem which may interrupt communication. Consciousness means that speakers, while using communication strategies, are aware of having done so. Intentionality refers to the fact that learners are in control of many strategies so that they can choose to use whatever meets their communication purposes.
Selecting communication strategies

While communication strategies vary under different conditions with different individuals, what communication strategies one should choose to successfully meet the communication purposes are of utmost importance. Are there predictable ways in which learners select strategies? To answer this question, Bialystok (1990) looked at potential factors affecting the selection of communication strategies. The hypothesized factors include proficiency of the learner, elicitation task, L1 influence, and speaking in a second language.

1. Proficiency of the learner

Several studies have been conducted to look at the relationship between the learner's second language proficiency and the choice of strategies in communication. Tarone (1977) rank-ordered her subjects based on her rough estimation of their proficiency levels and tabulated the frequency with which each strategy was used. The results showed that each of the subjects had his/her own strategy selection pattern, which was, according to Tarone, accounted for by personality differences. Tarone also claimed that "strategy preference and second-language proficiency level may prove to be related" (p. 202). This hypothesis of Tarone's was tested by Bialystok (1983) in her study in a French as a second language class among a group
of 17-year-old students whose French proficiency levels were determined via various test measures as advanced or regular. Interestingly, it was found that the advanced students used relatively more L2-based strategies than did the regular students, who relied more on L1-based strategies, i.e., more proficient speakers relied more on L2 strategies. Paribakht (1985), to develop a communication strategy taxonomy, examined precise relations between speaker proficiency and strategy choice among a group of native speakers of Persian who were advanced and intermediate learners of English, together with a group of native speakers of English. These two groups were requested to complete a set of communication tasks and their strategic choices were examined in terms of the four approaches in her taxonomy, namely, linguistic, contextual, conceptual, and mime. It was revealed that there were some differences for three of the four approaches (with the exception of mime), but no consistent pattern was identified. Therefore, the relationship between the language proficiency and strategy choice was ambiguous.

2. Elicitation task

It is believed that a language learner's selection of a specific communication strategy may be influenced by various elicitation tasks, such as picture description, picture
reconstruction, translation, sentence completion, conversation, narration, instruction, word transmission, and interview (Bialystok, 1990). In their analysis of communication strategies occurring in a conversation between a native speaker and a language learner, Haastrup and Phillipson (1983) noticed that the more naturalistic conversation produced the same strategy selection pattern as did more controlled laboratory studies. This result implies that there is little systematic variation in the patterns of selection that can be attributed to the types of elicitation tasks. To test the effect of elicitation task, Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) conducted a study in a French class. Students in that class were randomly assigned to three groups with three different treatments. The results showed that the three treatments generated quantitative differences in the amount of elicited speech, whereas the qualitative features of speech -- the classification of strategic choices -- were equivalent in all cases, i.e., the students, regardless of the elicitation method used, repeatedly adopted the same set of strategies.

As there is no generalized effect of the elicitation task on the choice of a strategy, Faerch and Kasper (1983a) suggested that the nature of the problem might be related to the choice of a strategy. They claimed that "problems that relate to fluency and correctness constitute a special class in that they frequently
cause the language user not to use the most 'obvious' parts of IL (interlanguage) system because he expects that there will be problems in realizing them" (p. 37). In these cases, the learners might choose reduction strategies to avoid using potentially problematic parts beyond their linguistic competence. Conversely, some students might make different choices if they were willing to take risks by perceiving a problem to be a test of fluency.

3. L1 Influence

Do learners who speak different L1s select differently from the communication strategies? The answer is "Yes." However, Tarone's (1977) study, which included three learners from each of three language backgrounds, revealed that there was no tendency for these language backgrounds to lead to different patterns of strategy selection. Even though language transfer, or cross-linguistic influence, has recently shed light on the conscious transfer of L1 strategies to L2 strategies (Kellerman, 1978, 1984; Kellerman & Sharwood Smith, 1986; Odlin, 1994), there seems to have been no systematic study which allows for direct comparison of strategy selection by subjects who differ in their L1. Nevertheless, broad comparisons across studies can be made with learners who have different language backgrounds.

What is interesting to note is that many studies base the results
on language learners with the same L1 learning the same L2. For example, Varadi (1980) studied Hungarian-speaking learners of English, Bialystok and Frohlich (1980) studied English-speaking learners of French, Faerch and Kasper (1983a, 1983b) studied Danish-speaking learners of English, and Ringbom (1987) studied Swedish-speaking learners and Finnish-speaking learners of English. Unfortunately, all these studies have failed to give us a hint that the native languages of the subjects influenced the selection patterns observed.

4. Speaking in a second language

Is it true that the strategy selection patterns the second language learner usually uses are genuinely distinct from those of the native speaker? Several research studies have addressed this question. Research in referential communication (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986; Krauss & Weinheimer, 1964) as reviewed by Dickson (1982), who defines it as “that type of communication involved in such activities as giving directions on a map, telling someone how to assemble a piece of equipment, or how to select a specific object from a larger set of objects” (p. 1) suggests that the problem-solving strategies native speakers use in speaking are similar to those used by second-language learners. In eliciting native and second-language descriptions, Tarone (1977), due to her casual transcription of the native-speaker
data, did not offer much comparison of the strategies used and the ways in which they were selected. Paribakht (1982), however, systematically compared the strategies used by Persian-speaking learners of English and those by native speakers of English in the same communication task, namely, to convey the name of an object which was pictured on a card. The result did not show many qualitative differences in the selection of strategies. To compare native and non-native data, a large-scale project, also called the Nijmegen project, was attempted for several years for studying the communication strategies of Dutch learners of English by a group of researchers in Nijmegen (Bongaerts, Kellerman, & Bentlage, 1987; Kellerman, Bongaerts, & Poullisse, 1987; Poullisse, 1987). It was revealed that the subjects consistently used the same method to complete a description task in their first and second languages. As shown, research evidence from comparisons between adults using communication strategies in their first language and second language does not indicate much difference in using a strategy and in the way a strategy is selected.

In addition to the factors addressed above, researchers have also looked at other factors that relate to the way learners select communication strategies. The effect of the target concept, for instance, was considered by Bialystok (1983) and Paribakht (1982) in determining the correspondence between
certain concepts and certain strategy types, and it was found that different concrete items tended to elicit a type of description most appropriate to that item. Tarone (1977) examined the personality of the speaker in selecting particular strategies. It was suggested that certain personality types may be related to the preferences for avoidance strategies or appeal for assistance strategies. Beebe (1983) asserted that the learner's ability in risk-taking is relevant to the style of strategy use.

However, the attempts these studies made to establish systematic links between specific factors and the selection of communication strategies have generated few meaningful relations (Bialystok, 1990). Although the communication strategies these language learners selected are all within the range of the identified communication strategy taxonomies, no single factor could predict a particular communication strategy. Therefore, factors contributing to the selection of communication strategy are complex and further investigation is needed.

Teaching communication strategies

Research has shown that second language learners use a number of strategies when communicating with an insufficient linguistic system. However, some language learners succeed
more effectively and efficiently than others, which might be explained by learners' level of strategic competence in addition to learners' cognitive strategies and linguistic abilities. The question emerging here is two-fold: whether communication strategies are teachable on the one hand, and whether communication strategies should be taught through formal teaching on the other.

This two-fold question can be explained by two different approaches identified by Poulisse, Bongaerts and Kellerman (1990) as "strong" and "moderate" views of instruction. In the strong view, language learners are taught how to solve communication problems, while in the moderate view, they are taught only that communication problems can be solved. As Bialystok posits (1990), "the strong view follows accepting the taxonomic classifications as explanations of communication strategies," while "the moderate view follows placing communication strategies in a processing framework" (p. 140).

Simply put, in the strong view of instruction, students need to learn the range of communication strategies in order to be resourceful in solving potential communication problems, and they also need to learn to recognize on what occasions and under what conditions these strategies can be effectively applied to meet their communication purposes. Nevertheless, two sources of criticism cast doubt on this strong view of instruction:
one is the nature of the taxonomies and their basis in language use, and the other is the lack of empirical evidence for the success of teaching specific strategies (Bialystok, 1990).

Unlike the strong view of instruction, which conceptualizes strategies in the taxonomic approach, the moderate view of instruction conceptualizes strategies in the process approach in which learners need to learn how to analyze and control their linguistic systems. Studies on information-processing (Ammon, 1981; Brown, Sharkey, & Brown 1987; Kahan & Richards, 1986; Shatz, 1978;) indicate that there is little point in teaching strategies per se. What most children suffer is the lack of language processing basis, and it is the processing that must be taught. In the case of second-language learners, they do not lack communication strategies, but rather the means to deploy these strategies. Therefore, what needs to be taught in class is content-free metacognitive strategies aiming to enhance the executive information-processing skills that are required to solve communication problems (Brown, Brabsford, Ferrara, & Campione, 1983; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Mananares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985 a, 1985 b). The reason these metacognitive strategies work is that they make the learners more aware of strategies already in their repertoire and make them realize that they could work (O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Mananares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985b).
As observed, the point of departure of both approaches is whether communication strategies can and should be taught directly or indirectly. The compromise could be reached if communication strategies could be taught in a way that training becomes part of the instruction aiming at improving mastery of analysis and control over the target language (Bialystok, 1990).

Summary

Communication strategies are reviewed with reference to second language learners. Due to different theoretical stances, a number of definitions of communication strategies are reviewed and different taxonomies within each stance are described. Three features across all the strategies reviewed are identified, i.e., problematlicity, consciousness, and intentionality. Although there is no single factor which could predict a particular communication strategy, some potential factors affecting the selection of communication strategies are identified including proficiency of the learner, elicitation task, L1 influence, and ability in speaking a second language. Concerning the pedagogical issue of communication strategies, both “strong” and “moderate” views of instruction are presented addressing the two-fold question: “Should communication strategies be taught?” and “Are communication strategies teachable?”
**Classroom interaction**

Classroom interaction is a complicated phenomenon. It can be teacher-student, student-student, teacher-student-student, and student-teacher-student interactions in various combinations. Nevertheless, research on classroom interaction has focused mainly on children while the dynamics of classroom settings among young adults and adults seem to be less researched (Fassinger, 1995). Furthermore, among the available empirically and non-empirically research on classroom interaction in college and graduate school classes, few researchers have uncovered certain salient elements of the college classroom as a special social context. In this section, classroom interaction will be reviewed focusing on higher education in terms of classroom participation and classroom nonverbal communication.

**Classroom participation**

It is commonly observed in American higher education that some students eagerly participate in daily classes, some listen attentively and nod their heads intermittently and maintain enough attention to laugh at the appropriate junctures in class, some appear committed enough to not alienate the teacher without at the same time showing so much involvement, while others remain silent most of the class time. However,
studies have shown the beneficial effects of student participation in class. Classroom participation in terms of raising questions and offering comments in class not only helps explore knowledge and nurture critical thinking (Smith, 1977; Morgenstern, 1992), but also enhances students' intellectual development (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; McKeachie, 1990).

In an attempt to explore the meanings of student participation in the college classroom, Karp and Yoels (1975) conducted an exploratory study of classroom behavior in ten classes of a private university located in a large city in the northwestern United States. Data was gathered throughout the semester on the interactions occurring in these selected classes. Both students and teachers were given questionnaires at the end of the semester dealing with the factors considered important in influencing students' decisions on whether or not to talk in class. The observational data indicated that the number of students participating in a given class was not affected by the class size. It was observed that a small number of students accounted for the majority of interactions in both small and large classes. Student responses to questionnaire items inquiring about factors inhibiting them from classroom participation indicated a high degree of concern with issues such as "not having done the assigned reading," "not knowing enough about

63
the subject matter," and so forth. Conversely, instructors emphasized items such as "students appearing unintelligent in the eyes of other students", "the possibility that student comments might negatively affect their grades." Based upon the data, Karp and Yoels (1975) attributed the students' non-involvement in class to "organizational features" (p. 435) of the college classroom. These organizational features, according to Karp and Yoels, included: (1) the "consolidation of responsibility" -- students know that a small percentage of the class can be relied upon to do most of the talking; (2) instructors are very unlikely to call on specific students; and (3) students are tested infrequently and the tests that are given are usually announced in advance (p. 421).

Karp and Yoels' "consolidation of responsibility" was confirmed by Morgenstern's ethnographic study of a linguistics class in a midwestern university (1992). In this study, Morgenstern observed fifteen classroom sessions and conducted four out-of-class interviews with two female and two male students. In the class studied, there were many opportunities for class participation, but a core of five to six students seemed to monopolize these opportunities. The study findings were, thus, in agreement with Karp and Yoels' findings. However, both observation and interview data suggested that there were four tacit rules for student class participation: (1) do not ask stupid
questions; (2) do not waste the teacher's time; (3) do not waste class time; and (4) try to find the answer before asking the teacher. It was also pointed out that some students operated under the assumption that only those with the most knowledge should speak, thus assuming a hierarchy of knowledge. This study revealed a gap between student and teacher perceptions of the value of participation. It was recommended that instructors reserve time at the beginning of each term and throughout the term to explain the rationale behind student speech. One of the contributions of Morgenstem's study is that it tackled the issue of student participation in class from the students' perspectives via interviews in addition to observations and questionnaires as used in most of the studies in this area.

In the research spectrum of classroom participation, great concern has been given to the possible existence of discrimination against women in the college classroom and in education beginning in the early 1970s. The most influential study seeking to document such bias is Hall and Sandler's (1982) hypotheses of chilly classroom climate (Cornell, Gray, Constantinople, 1990). Chilly classroom climate, according to Hall and Sander, refers to the disadvantage of women students at college due to professors' differential treatment of students by gender. It is speculated that instructors may ignore or interrupt
female students more than male students, and they may recall male students' names more often or give them more eye contact.

Two types of research, i.e., observation and survey, have been conducted to address five research questions stemming from Hall and Sandler's hypothesis that professors discriminate in their treatment of male and female students. These questions are: Are there gender differences in professors' behavior? Do faculty treat male and female students similarly? Do students perceive gender differences in professors? Are there gender differences in students' classroom behavior? Does faculty gender affect students' actions? (Fassinger, 1995).

The results of a number of observational studies showed that there were no gender differences in professors' tendency to call on students (Sternglanz & Lyberger-Ficek, 1977), in praise given to students, number of interactions with students, likelihood of responding to students, or number of questions asked of students (Boersma, Gay, Jones, Morrison, & Remick, 1981). However, a few gender differences were found in Statham, Richardson, and Cook's study (1991) in terms of female professors' tendency to encourage more students' class participation by soliciting student responses, to provide more positive and negative feedback, and to acknowledge students' comments.
The answer to the second question as to whether faculty treat male and female students similarly is negative. Professors were equally likely to give positive or neutral responses to male and female students (Wingate 1984), and teachers were equally likely to recognize and continue interactions with male and female students (Sternglanz & Lyberger-Flcek, 1977).

Survey studies on students' perceptions of gender differences in professors reveal that students believe that female professors encourage more classroom interaction (Banks, 1988; Crawford, 1990); female professors more often know students and call them by name (Crawford, 1990); and male professors are thought to use more offensive humor and make more offensive comments (Crawford, 1990).

In terms of student behavior in class, a trend is implied in many studies: Male students participate in classes more than female students (Banks, 1991; Brooks, 1982; Constantinople, Cornelius, & Gray, 1988; Crawford, 1990; Karp & Yoels, 1976; O'Keefe & Faupel, and Wingate, 1984). Women students also perceive themselves as less involved in class interaction (Banks 1988; Crawford 1990; Karp & Yoels 1976; Kramarae & Treichler 1990). In a survey of 761 college students, Crawford and MacLeod (1990) found that while male and female students similarly rank their reasons for not speaking, female students are significantly more likely to attribute their silence in classes
to poorly formulated ideas, ignorance about a subject, and fear of appearing unintelligent to peers. However, the reasons for male students to remain silent in class are two-fold: unpreparedness and fear of negative effects on grades. At the graduate level, Kramarae and Tretchler (1990) used open-ended questionnaires with 19 students who also were interviewed. Men and women offered different responses to the question “Under what conditions are you most comfortable talking in class?” The men indicated more concern with their own preparation and feeling of control while women showed more concern with the behavior of the teacher. Similar differences occurred in answer to the question “Under what conditions are you least comfortable talking in class?” Again, the women were more likely to show concern with the teacher’s behavior. It was also indicated that male students may remain silent when they feel unfamiliar with a topic, whereas female students’ silence may stem from their reaction to classroom process, e.g., tension, and competition.

Research also shows that there are some differences in students’ participation behavior in male professors’ classes versus those taught by female professors. Males have been found to participate more (Boersma, Gay, Jones, Morrison, & Remick, 1981; Brooks, 1982; & Constantinople, Cornelius, & Gray, 1988) and interrupt other students more often in female-taught classes (Brooks, 1982). Moreover, in female professors’
classes, students of both genders tend to volunteer more, make more follow-up comments, and respond to other students (Constantinople et al., 1988).

Although the aforementioned studies help shed light on the chilly classroom climate in college classrooms, there are several limitations to be note. While the exclusive focus is on how professors shape student interaction, peers' roles tend to be ignored. Almost all the studies conducted in class used observation or survey formats. Seldom did researchers conduct studies exploring students' own perceptions and interpretations of their classroom interaction and participation via in-depth interviews besides observations and surveys. Furthermore, the possible variance among male and female professors was not counted.

Interestingly, quite a few studies of gender influence on student-faculty interaction in the college classroom, which were originally intended to gather evidence of discrimination against female students, have instead revealed a number of important determinants of classroom participation. For instance, Constantinople, Cornelius, & Gary (1988), in their observational study designed to test Hall's (1982) assertions regarding the role male professors play in inhibiting the performance of female students, found that it was neither the sex of the student, nor the sex of the instructor, nor their interaction, but the division
of the curriculum, class size and time of semester that had significant effects on patterns of student participation in the classroom. Likewise, in a retrospective study of students’ experiences in male and female instructors’ classes, Heller, Puff, and Mills (1985) found that class year had a relatively large effect on student classroom participation. Other factors, such as characteristics of the college or university under study are also of great importance (Cornelius, Gary & Constantinople, 1990).

Evidently, student participation is determined by multiple factors and studies that attempt to reduce student participation to one or two factors, such as sex of the student and sex of the instructor, most likely will misinterpret the true characteristics of student-faculty interaction and classroom participation.

In an attempt to test the generality of the findings of Constantinople et al. (1988) and to explore in more detail the influence of factors other than sex of student or instructor on interaction in the classroom, Cornelius, Gray, and Constantinople (1990) carried out classroom observations at three college sites twice during one semester in both male and female instructors’ classes in the natural sciences, arts, and social sciences. Data were collected from the frequency of a variety of both instructor and student behaviors recorded by trained observers within each class. Verbatim records of the content of all interactions between students and instructors and
among students at two college sites were also collected. Analysis of the data revealed that division of the curriculum, class size, time in the semester, and to a lesser extent, college, were important variables in determining the type and amount of student-faculty interaction in the classroom.

In agreement with the earlier study by Constantinople et al. (1988), sex of student or sex of instructor were not significant variables. Davis (1992), in her action research in a two-year community college, found that teachers' authority and gender roles influence classroom interaction. "By researching their own classroom discourse, students can learn about the authority they must assume to participate in classroom discussion" (p. 113).

By taking into consideration multiple factors affecting college students' classroom participation, Fassinger (1995) conducted a survey of 1069 students in a small private college to assess why students offer comments or raise questions in class. Participation -- any student comments offered or questions raised in class -- was the main dependent variable while independent variables included class traits (size, gender distribution, emotional climate, interaction norms, participation grade, and interaction type), student traits (confidence, preparation, comprehension, and interest), and professor traits (inclusiveness, approachability, feedback style, supportiveness,
discussion style, and expertness). Findings revealed that student gender is a significant component in class participation. Male and female students seemed to have contrasting self-perceptions. The males saw themselves as more confident and more involved in classroom interaction than did the females, whereas females saw themselves as more prepared for class, more interested in the subject matter, and more interested in peers' comments and questions than did the males. Results also indicated that professors' gender had minimal impact on males' self-perceptions, but having female professors seemed to affect female students positively. Examination of correlations between class participation and the three types of variables (class traits, student traits, and professor traits) revealed that class traits and student traits explained the most variance. Neither professors' gender nor professors' interpersonal style played a central role in class participation. The study implied that class activities designed by professors have the greatest impact on classroom participation in fostering positive emotional climates and helping cultivate interaction.

Several suggestions were made to promote class participation. First, professors might consider starting a semester with discussions and exercises that encourage students' interaction and help strengthen their confidence. Second, professors might invite classes to design their own
norms of class interaction via discussing their ideas in small
groups, hearing others' insecurities, and developing empathy for
their classmates. Third, professors may consider offering
reinforcement for classroom interaction as bonus credit which
can supplement a student's grade. Fourth, professors may
encourage students' interaction by forming class seats in circles
or semi-circles and having students directly address and call on
other students when they speak. Finally, professors may create a
positive emotional climate to enhance the likelihood of class
participation, particularly for females (Fassinger, 1995).

Fassinger's study is one of the primary attempts to shift
the focus of research on college classroom interaction from the
professors' perspective to students' perspective. By turning
attention toward individual students and classes as groups,
Fassinger's study suggests that professors' interpersonal style
may not play a central role in classroom interaction. What really
affect students' silence or involvement, as Fassinger concludes,
are class traits and student traits.

In order to record and analyze behaviors of teachers and
students as they interact in the classroom, various instruments
have been designed and developed including teacher-student
and student-student interactions. Educational Testing Service
collected 95 instruments on classroom interaction (1990),
covering preschool grades through higher education. In the
realm of higher education, about twenty instruments have been developed. However, only three are directly related to classroom interaction.

The classroom Interaction Rating Form, developed by Knox (1973), is used to describe and evaluate the classroom environment. It is used after a classroom observation, covering teacher planning, student participation, teaching style and behaviors in adult basic education classes. The profile of Interaction in the Classroom (Crispin, 1969), an in-service and pre-service training device used to improve the quality of instruction, analyzes a teacher's interaction with students in the classroom. Furthermore, a coding system was developed by Spaulding (1978) for evaluating teacher behavior and teacher-student interaction in the classroom.

Nevertheless, none of the instruments was designed to address the multi-cultural and diverse population in courses at graduate levels as they were all developed almost two decades ago.

**Classroom nonverbal communication**

Teacher-student and student-student interactions should include nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication refers to behaviors that convey meaning to other people without the use of oral language (O'Hair & Rope, 1994). In the
classroom setting, nonverbal communication refers to the manner in which teachers and students send various signals to each other about their feelings, reactions, and attitudes in the teaching and learning process. Nonverbal communication is potentially important in two ways according to Neill (1991). The first is the complexity of classroom life, especially for the teacher who usually has to communicate with a group of students who are different in many ways. In some cases, some messages can be conveyed implicitly by nonverbal means which would be unacceptable if they were sent through more explicit channels. The second reason is that nonverbal communication is more ambiguous than speech. Unlike the verbal communication process which is usually controllable and intentional, nonverbal behavior is often difficult to manage and control, especially in a multi-cultural classroom. Nonverbal signals differ from words in that several can be emitted spontaneously with the same signal having different meanings according to which other signals are combined with it. In many instances, people are not aware of the nonverbal signals they produce in detail and cannot describe them or name them accurately (Bull, 1987).

There are several functions of nonverbal communication in the educational context. These functions include expressing one's emotions in the classroom, conveying interpersonal attitudes, presenting one's attitudes towards other people, and
accompanying verbal communication (Argyle, 1975). In a classroom setting, nonverbal communication can be described in a framework consisting of five major components, namely, paralanguage, facial expression, eye and visual behavior, gesture and body movement, and space (O'Hair & Rope, 1994). These nonverbal communication components function differently depending not only on the educational communication context, but also on the diversity of the class population.

Facial expressions, for instance, are most reliable in determining the emotional state of an individual. Research indicates that there are more than one thousand different types of facial expressions (Ekman, Friesen & Ellsworth, 1972). A teacher who is sensitive towards students' various facial expressions in class and uses appropriate feedback strategies will usually be characterized as effective in the classroom in generating greater cognitive (Gorham, 1988; Richmond, McCriskey, Kearney & Plax, 1985) and affective (Gorham, 1988; Plax, MaCroskey & Richmond, 1986) student learning. Facial expressions become more complex when students are from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. While facial expressions possess many universal characteristics, cultural differences do occur. Each culture has unique rules dictating what facial expressions should or should not be shown and what objects or events trigger an expression (Burgoon, et al., 1989;
Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Pitton et al., 1993). For instance, Japanese usually refrain from expressing negative emotions like sadness and anger while Africans reveal these expressions easily (Argyle, 1988). Burgoon et al. (1989) further point out that cultures possess facial expressions whose meanings are recognizable only by other members of those cultures. Although this claim is not always true as some cultural expressions are universal, it does imply that teachers who are unaware of the nuances of facial expressions of diverse students are unable to evaluate their nonverbal behavior accurately and empathetically.

Communication avoidance is another commonly observed classroom behavior. Students’ avoidance, both intentional and unintentional, communicate certain meanings to the teacher. Several reasons might account for students’ avoidance of direct eye-contact. Being unwilling to communicate due to being under-prepared, busy thinking of something else, too tired, and so forth, might lead to the avoidance of eye contact. Emotional arousal may also reduce eye contact (O’Hair & Ropo, 1994). However, cultural differences play an important role in eye contact. In Japan, students are taught to avoid eye contact when listening by focusing on the speaker’s neck (Bond & Komai, 1976) while in the United States, students are socialized to gaze directly at the speaker’s face when they are listening (O’Hair & Ropo, 1994).
Another aspect to be observed in nonverbal communication, is silence in class. Rather than seeing silence as indicating a problem to be avoided, or even as a weapon of resistance (Rudduck, 1978, pp. 15, 18), Rowland (1991) viewed it as "a way of interacting" (p. 97). In an attempt to explore the power relationships between the tutor and participants in an in-service course, Rowland explored the meaning of silence during the reflective discussions of the group. It was found that silence was of particular significance in its dynamic and in the changing awareness of both the tutor and participants. Rowland began to suspect, in his own words, "that the preparedness of the group to entertain silence was an indication of its achievement as an 'ideal speech' community" (p. 97).

It is undeniable that nonverbal communication patterns held within each cultural and ethnic group in a classroom help explain the participation behavior of those students. International graduate students' perceptions of oral classroom participation is closely related to their perceptions of nonverbal communication affected by multiple factors including the culturally accepted classroom behavior they had experienced before enrolling in American universities.
Summary

Classroom interaction is reviewed in the context of higher education. Two lines of research — classroom participation and classroom nonverbal communication — are highlighted. In terms of classroom participation, many factors are observed, e.g., a small number of students constantly participating and being called upon in class, gender differences of both instructors and students affecting students’ participation patterns, chilly classroom climate, class traits (size, gender distribution, emotional climate, interaction norms, grades for oral participation, and interaction type), student traits (confidence, preparation, comprehension, and interest), and professor traits (inclusiveness, approachability, feedback style, supportiveness, discussion style, and expertness). Several instruments for observing classroom interaction are also reviewed. Moreover, major functions of nonverbal communication in a classroom are summarized, i.e., expressing one’s emotions, conveying interpersonal attitudes, presenting one’s personality, and accompanying verbal communication. Cultural influence and prior educational conceptualization are believed to have an impact on students' behaviors in classroom nonverbal communication.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design of the study

Site selection

This study was conducted on the main campus of The Ohio State University (OSU). First of all, OSU is the largest one-campus university in the United States. Both the diversity of the international graduate students as well as the total number of the international graduate students are on the top ten list among all the universities in the United States. Secondly, I am an international graduate student myself, and as an insider of the research, I feel comfortable in building rapport with those selected on the campus in the study. Thirdly, through both the mini-pilot and the pilot studies, I gained confidence in getting in touch with my intended interviewees and observees on campus because of the geographic convenience, familiarity of the campus climate, and peer intimacy.
To address the diverse backgrounds of my participants with a focus on whether there is a difference in perceptions between those selected students in social science and those selected students in natural science, I selected my participants from both of these specific sites: the natural science departments and the social science departments, respectively. I gained my entree through two channels. One channel was The Office of International Education (OIE) on campus. This office has detailed information about the population of international graduate students, and I talked to an international student adviser who provided me with relevant information about the international graduate students on campus after the approval of the study by the Human Subjects Review Committee (approved as of March 16, 1995; Protocol No. 95B0086, see Appendix J). The other channel is ESL programs in OSU. I obtained the consent of the Director of ESL Composition Program and she approved my using the international students enrolled in the program with their consent.

**Sampling**

To describe the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant variation, I used “maximum variation sampling” in this study (Patton, 1990). Maximum variation sampling strategy allowed me to select my participants
from different program areas and from different cultural backgrounds. However, maximization in this particular study meant the maximum selection within the intended population. As previously mentioned, the population in my study were international graduate students, and the intended population were Asian graduate students in U.S. universities. Therefore, I selected the twenty participants (having started from thirty) from the top six Asian groups within the intended population (with the exception of India where English is the official language). Although a great deal of heterogeneity within the intended population could be a problem because individual cases are so different from each other, I believe any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared perceptions of international graduate students. I did not intend to generalize to all international graduate students, but I would look for information that elucidated individual variation and salient patterns that emerged from that variation.

The target population of this study were the international graduate students at The Ohio State University. The accessible population were first-year (having taken content courses for at least one quarter) or second year Asian graduate students enrolled in Autumn, Winter, and Spring Quarters 1994-1995.

\[1\] The statistics of international students enrollment are in Appendix B.

82
chose first and second-year full time Asian graduate students as the participants of my study because these graduate students usually spent less than two years to finish their masters and approximately two to three years for PhD courses. Therefore, the selected participants in this study should have had adequate experience in taking various courses in their program areas to form their perceptions of oral classroom participation.

I chose approximately thirty Asian graduate students in the first round -- from both natural science programs and social science programs. The students who were chosen for the study were from the top six Asian groups according to the population rate at OSU (see statistical report in Appendix A). They are Chinese (Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and Hong Kong Chinese), Koreans, Japanese, and Indonesians. I selected two to six students from each of the top four countries. In the process of selecting the participants for my study, I also considered the issues of gender and major; i.e., the students I selected from each country should represent both genders and various majors. I started my study with a wide-open interview with all thirty students selected. Then I narrowed down my participants to twenty, keeping the rich cases and maximizing the diversity. By rich cases, I mean that all the cases I kept in my study had unique perspectives to contribute to the study, such as their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. These
rich cases helped reveal the diversity within the sample. I conducted two additional interviews with each of the twenty participants and I observed at least one class for most of the participants.

I gained my access to the participants of the study via the ESL Composition Program. As I have taught English composition to international graduate students enrolled in 107G and 108.02 in that program since Autumn, 1994, I realized how comfortable it was for me to select my participants from the classes I taught on a volunteer basis for interviews and class observations. I think the legitimacy in doing so lies in the fact that my contact with each individual student selected in my study through at least one ten-week quarter in the teaching and learning process has added a unique dimension of rapport and comfort level in both interviewing and class observation. I felt that the selected participants in the study were the least likely candidates to have anxiety when I asked them questions in the interviews and observed their classes.

My participants' demographic information is shown in the following table:
Table 1: Demographic information for the selected participants in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Intended degree</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.R.China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ex. Physiology</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geodetic Sci.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Family Resource Management</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ed P &amp; L</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Consumer Science</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Textile and Clothing</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Human Nutrition</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Geodetic Sci.</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Biophysics</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Counseling Ed.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Agricultural Ed.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Early &amp; Middle Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen, the participants I finally decided to include in my study were all from the top four countries in terms of the international student enrollment at OSU. They were almost evenly divided in gender (55% male participants, and 45% female participants), and the intended degree of their study (40% PhD students, and 60% MA students).

**Data Collection**

I collected my data for the study from both interviews and classroom observations.

I selected thirty potential participants in my study and did the first interview (the informal conversational interview according to Patton, 1980, p. 280) with each of them in both January and February, 1995. I immediately selected twenty participants for both semi-structured interviews and structured interviews, respectively, and excluded ten initial participants from my study after the first interview simply because of two reasons: First, those ten students had not taken an adequate number of graduate courses to form their perceptions. Second, they were from Asian countries other than the four, and the inclusion of those students would exceed the manageable scope of the study.

Apart from three interviews with the twenty selected participants in my study, I also conducted classroom
observations. I did twelve class observations for fifteen participants across eight different programs. I also distributed a personality survey, The Keirsey Temperament Sorter, to my participants after I completed interviews and observations. However, I did not include the survey results for analysis due to the difficulty level of the language in the questionnaire, which limited the validity of the results.

My data collection time line was as follows:

Table 2: Data Collection Time Line (1995 January -- May)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>Obtained information and statistics about the enrollment of international graduate students in the 1994-95 academic year via International Education Office (IEO) at OSU</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. &amp; Mar</td>
<td>Selected thirty international graduate students enrolled in the ESL Composition Program in both Autumn 94 and Winter 95 quarters and conducted the first round interview (wide-open) with each participant</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>Conducted semi-structured and structured interviews with the selected twenty participants in the study</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. &amp; May</td>
<td>Observed twelve classes with about fifteen participants across eight programs and conducted informal interviews with some of the teachers and the participants in my study</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Personality traits survey</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My data collection process is shown in the following flowchart:

Obtaining information about Asian international graduate students from OIE and ESL Programs

Getting approval from Human Subjects Review Committee

At three different times over two consecutive quarters, selecting, and getting consent from approximately 30 potential Asian international graduate students

Wide-open interviews with 30 potential participants

Semi-structured interviews with 20 participants

12 classroom observations for 15 participants followed by informal interviews

Structured interviews across three quarters

Personality traits survey: The Keirsey Temperament Sorter

Figure 1: Data collection timeline flowchart
Interview process

In the process of designing and conducting the three different interview schedules from wide-open to semi-structured to structured in both the mini-pilot and the pilot studies, I modified and adjusted them to this study. My prior interviewing experience helped me a great deal in interacting with and probing my participants in the study. I also tried interviewing some of my Chinese participants in Chinese as an option, and some of the Chinese participants seemed to be more comfortable and became more expressive afterwards. Before each interview in this study, I contacted the person to be interviewed and negotiated with her/him about the interview site and time in order to establish a good rapport with the interviewees.

During each interview, I tried to give the interviewee adequate time to think and to reflect. I tried to give the opportunity to each individual to ask questions, and I tried to provide information necessary to help him or her feel at ease in the interview. For example, in the wide-open interview, I tried not to give any pre-designed question to the interviewee and allow the interviewee to express freely what was in his/her mind under the broad category "perceptions of participation." In the semi-structured interview, I asked a few major questions (i.e., "How do you like participating in your mainstream classes here
in the United States?", "What's your perception of classroom participation?" etc.) to the interviewees one at a time and I also probed with some subsequent questions as they naturally emerged in the interview process. In the structured interview schedule, I double checked their input about the investigated topic, and if there was any discrepancy between the structured interview and the previous wide-open as well as semi-structured interviews, I pursued this further and asked them either to clarify or justify the difference. As an interviewer, I tried to listen carefully to the interviewees and closely observe their facial expressions and body language, adjusting and clarifying some questions whenever necessary. The participants' time and efforts were always appreciated at the end of each interview.

Immediately after each interview, I listened to the tape and subsequently transcribed it. I called the interviewee soon after the transcription was done and thanked him/her for his/her help once more, and confirmed some points if clarification was needed. After each transcription, I recalled the entire interview process and kept fieldnotes (Wolf, 1992) to reflect my concerns over and experience with both the content and methodology. The interview transcriptions were then sorted and classified by the trends and patterns that became evident as determined and guided by my research questions.

90
Observation fieldnotes

Throughout my observations, I jotted down notes and made detailed fieldnotes immediately after each classroom observation to keep track of the development of my study, to visualize how my research plan had been affected by the data collected, and to remain conscious of how I had been influenced by the data. I asked the participant being observed in class as well as the instructor some questions or explanations if necessary right after the observation. I also made an effort to request the teaching materials and course syllabus of the class being observed in order to get some general idea of the course content and course format, which helped my observation data analysis.

As my observation was usually done between the second and the third interview with each participant, I tried to get pre-information about the class being observed and post-information after the class was observed. In this way, my observation could be better analyzed. I kept in mind what the observed student had offered in the preceding interview about his/her perceptions of classroom participation, and I usually wrote down what I had observed and my thoughts and reflections on the observation. While these notes might be separate entities, I then wrote an integrative reflection and synthesis of my
thoughts as observation fieldnotes which were both descriptive and reflective in nature.

By descriptive fieldnotes, I mean fieldnotes that are well endowed with description and dialogue relevant to what occurs at the setting and its meaning for the participants. Rich data are filled with pieces of evidence, with the clues that one begins to put together to make analytical sense out of what one studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.121).

My descriptive fieldnotes on observation usually contained the following data:

1. Portraits of all the students in class under observation in general, and the observed international graduate student(s) in particular.

2. Description of the physical setting of the classroom under observation.

3. Interactions between the teacher and the students and among students in class in general, and the interaction between the observed student and others in particular.

4. Account of the student’s participation mode and various conditions under which the participation takes place.

By reflective fieldnotes, I mean fieldnotes I kept after leaving the site, my reflexive thinking, wrestling, and questioning on what I had observed.
My reflective fieldnotes contained the following data:

1. Reflections on analysis

   Each time I got back home after an observation, I speculated about what I had observed, the themes that might be emerging, patterns that might have been present, connections between pieces of data, and additional ideas and thoughts that might have popped up.

2. Reflections on method

   In my fieldnotes, I also reflected on the strategies I had employed in observation, and reflected on the focus of my observation. In addition to that, I reflected on the methodological problems I might have faced in observation and how I might overcome those problems in future observations.

3. Reflections on ethical and socio-cultural dilemmas and conflicts

   Because the students I observed came from different countries and different socio-cultural backgrounds, I tried to associate their classroom participation with their cultural values and identity. I purposefully addressed issues to my participants in interviews about the cultural backgrounds they had brought with them.

4. Reflections on my own mind-set

   I tried not to come to class with predetermined assumptions about what was to expect. I also tried not to be
biased by some of these preconceptions in describing what I had observed. To meet this end, I tried to reveal my bias, if there was any, in my journal.

5. Reflections about my description

Sometimes descriptions can be an account of the fact, but it is not always the case. I tried to reflect on my description in terms of objectiveness, authenticity, and clarity of the language.

Data analysis

Everything has the potential to be data, but nothing becomes data without the intervention of a researcher who describes, analyzes, and interprets what has been seen and heard consistently and persistently (Wolcott, 1994). As data collection and data analysis were interwoven in my research, observation fieldnotes and interview transcriptions became the formative products of my data collection and the dependent source for my data analysis.

The theoretical framework of the data analysis in this study was influenced by the data analysis approaches advocated by both Wolcott (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1994). From Wolcott, I understood the logic in differentiating the three points on the continuum of data analysis: description, analysis and interpretation. Therefore, I tried to present the descriptions of the participants before I tried to analyze across
cases followed by my interpretations of some salient findings. From Miles and Huberman, I learned the three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, believing that these flows are essential and sequential for better data analysis. In my analysis, I tried to put clusters together and display the clusters in tables and charts in order to facilitate further analysis and interpretations.

What I actually did in my data analysis was not exactly the same as what I had planned to do. I had intended to view Wolcott's description, analysis, and interpretations as three stages while seeing Miles and Huberman's data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing, and verification as three steps with each stage of Wolcott's trilogy. My difficulty in balancing the steps within stages immediately arose when I started data analysis. Initially, I tried to use models for data analysis. But I gradually realized that in qualitative research, even good models sometimes do not work well without considering the specific data collected. Based upon what I collected, I tried to incorporate the techniques in data analysis in terms of data display and data clustering to facilitate the understanding and self-interpretation, and it worked.

I started my data analysis with descriptions of the participants, trying to present each one with a unique picture, and then I displayed the collected data with cross-case clusters.
in terms of gender, major, lesson type, length of stay, language proficiency level, personality traits, and participation modes. Both case studies via interviews and observations contributed to the main body of the analysis upon which I categorized the salient perceptions towards oral classroom participation formed by the participants. The analysis was concluded with both facilitative and debilitating factors affecting participants' perceptions of oral classroom participation.

**Trustworthiness (Validity)**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), criteria defined from one perspective may not be appropriate for judging actions taken from another perspective. The criteria that work quite well in positivist inquiry might not be usable in postpositivist inquiries because the basic assumptions and beliefs that lead to knowledge claims and criteria are fundamentally different between positivist and postpositivist inquiries.

In qualitative research, the word validity is replaced by the word trustworthiness. To meet trustworthiness, established as the major criterion in postpositivist research which is parallel to generalizability in positivist research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocated four relevant criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are parallel respectively
to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity in positivist research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also caution us to take into consideration several factors about the above postpositivist inquiry criteria. First of all, whether the research is trustworthy is up to the consumer of the research. Secondly, naturalistic criteria of trustworthiness are open-ended and assailable. Thirdly, there is a gap between the theory and the practice of trustworthiness. Finally, the criteria have multiple utilities (pp. 328-331).

The essential meaning of validity came to be, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) surmised, the warrant of trustworthiness. To maintain trustworthiness, I did the following things:

1. Prolonged engagement

I engaged myself in the issue under study -- international graduate students' oral class participation in academic content courses in ESL settings -- for almost three years starting with a survey, and proceeding to a mini-pilot and pilot study. I have been teaching ESL composition at the graduate level at OSU, and through constant contact with international graduate students, I have gained many insights into the topic under study.
2. Persistent introspection and observation

I have had the experience of oral classroom participation in my field as an insider-international graduate student -- ever since I came to the United States in Autumn, 1991. During these years, I have taken more than thirty graduate courses, and I have tried, felt, and introspected my own class participation behavior in comparison to others'. I have also observed other international graduate students' class participation behavior consistently in a reflective manner. In addition, I have formally observed some classes consecutively in my mini-pilot and pilot studies and have tried different interview schedules and a grounded survey.

3. Progressive subjectivity

Subjectivity is "a personal encounter with self in the course of research" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 101). To maintain my own progressive subjectivity, I recorded my own research activities and reflexive thinkings in a journal to establish the habit of dealing with my own subjectivity. The journal allowed me to have frequent personal encounters with my own constructions and expectations regarding all facets of the inquiry process and my own development as a researcher (Dickens, 1993).
4. Triangulation

Previous surveys, classroom observations and different interviews in both the mini-pilot and pilot studies helped triangulate the research methods for this study. Both interviews and observations in this study were triangulated to describe, display, analyze, and interpret the data in multiple ways.

5. Peer debriefing

My friend and classmate, Li-Feng Kuo, who was an international graduate student herself, debriefed both my initial research design and my interview schedules. Her invaluable insights and comments as an international graduate student helped me in the consideration of the affective, as well as cognitive, sensitivity of my potential interviewees in designing the questions.

6. Member checks

As soon as the interviews were done and transcribed, I either met with or called my interviewees to clarify whatever was unclear in the transcriptions. I also gave them the opportunity to make corrections and even add some new information if necessary. Upon completion of my initial data analysis, I showed the participants the quotes I cited from the interviews and asked them for confirmation.
Ethics

The participants in this study were international graduate students who were usually minorities in their classes in American universities. To understand their perceptions towards classroom participation in their academic content courses, I, as the researcher, did whatever I could to protect their rights in terms of their “dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm” (Punch, 1986). I made sure that the following things were done properly and adequately.

1. Informed consent

I obtained the approval of my application for exemption from human subjects committee review (Protocol No. 95B0086) from the OSU Human Subjects Review Committee on March 16, 1995. In both interview and observation processes, I obtained an informed consent from the interviewee and the observee ahead of time. In the case of class observations, I also asked for permission from the instructor via either e-mail, a consent letter, or a phone call. The interviewees' names were kept anonymous by using major-related pseudonyms and codes.

2. Building rapport

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) distinguished between rapport and relationship, and they advocated that establishing and maintaining rapport between the researcher and the researched was most desirable in qualitative study. In the present study,
however, I found that it was difficult to maintain rapport without establishing a good relationship first. As I am an inside researcher -- being an international graduate student myself -- I had to therefore pay attention to my appearance, speech, and behavior while contacting my participants and tried my best to be "sensitive, shrewd, non-judgmental, friendly, and inoffensive" in order to "acquire continual access to information" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 94).
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter has the following components 1:

1. Description of participants. I will describe the demographic information, personality, educational background, and prior experiences of each of the twenty participants in an narrative form.

2. Display of cross-case clusters. I will display relevant information of all the participants in clusters, such as nationality and gender, major of study, major and lesson types, prior experiences, length of stay, personality traits, communicative effectiveness, and participation modes.

3. Case studies via interviews. I will describe and analyze the twenty cases in four different clusters: active, somewhat active, inactive, extremely inactive, and I will analyze why the participants in each cluster behave the way they do in class based on three interview schedules with each.

---

1 Verbatim transcriptions will be used throughout the document in order to authentically reflect the linguistic levels of the participants.
4. Case studies via observations. Based upon the interviews I had with each of the participants, I traced most of these participants into their classrooms in their content areas for observation. However, I selected only six classes including seven participants I observed for analysis. I believe that each of these six classes has its unique characteristics between what they revealed in the interviews and what they actually did in their classrooms in terms of oral participation. I will describe each of the six classes via observation fieldnotes, something written immediately after the observation based on the fieldnotes taken right there while doing observation. I will also analyze each observed case based both on the interviews conducted prior to the observation and on the follow-up interviews conducted informally after each observation.

5. Cross-case analysis. Based upon the data from both interviews and classroom observations, I will generally analyze the perceptions of my participants in the study towards oral classroom participation in their content courses in the four clusters defined earlier. Moreover, I will synthesize the factors affecting their classroom participation modes within each cluster.

My data analysis procedure is displayed in the following flowchart:
Figure 2: Data analysis framework
Description of participants

Qualitative researchers need to be storytellers. From stories, cases are then built and illustrative examples are drawn. (Wolcott, 1994, p. 17)

The twenty participants in this study are all Asian graduate students at The Ohio State University. They are from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, and Indonesia. To protect the rights of the participants and also to facilitate data analysis, pseudonyms derived from their majors are used for each participant together with special codes denoting the country, gender, and number each participant is given within the ethnic group. For instance, a female MA student from Taiwan whose major is engineering, and placed as the first of the three Taiwanese participants in the study will be referred to as: FMAT1 engineer.
Table 3. Pseudonyms of the participants in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Intended Degree</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Given Major within each group</th>
<th>Pseudonym &amp; code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ex. Physiology</td>
<td>Physiologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geodetic Science</td>
<td>Geodetic scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Family Resource Management</td>
<td>Ecologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Educational Administration</td>
<td>Ed. administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>Chemical engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Mechanical engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consumer Science</td>
<td>Consumer scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Geologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Textile and Clothing</td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Human Nutrition</td>
<td>Nutritionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Geodetic Science</td>
<td>Geodetic scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Biophysics</td>
<td>Biophysicist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Counseling Education</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agricultural Ed.</td>
<td>Agriculture specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>English teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>Political Science teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Early &amp; Middle Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>Social studies teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

106
Case 1: Mr. Physiologist (MPHDC1)

Mr. Physiologist, a young man wearing thick glasses, studied Biology in China in the Biology Department in Shangdong University as an undergraduate. He received his MA in Physical Education majoring in Exercise of Biochemistry at Beijing University. He enrolled in the Physical Education Department at The Ohio State University in September, 1994.

He came to the United States with a rich working experience. He did a lot of laboratory research for several years in China after he received his Master's degree. He is involved in research and his major.

However, he is not a workaholic. He likes playing soccer, and sometimes does long distance running. He is also very sociable. He seems well-informed about social activities in the Chinese community on campus. He almost always appears at dance parties organized by the local Chinese student association. In his own words, "I am outgoing, and I like honest, reasonable persons."

His experience in language learning is positive overall. When asked what skill areas he was good at, his answer was: "reading and writing." But he clearly and honestly mentioned that he had many problems in speaking. With a TOEFL score of 610, and a GRE of 1999, he had no problem in getting a scholarship from the department in which he was enrolled. He
planned to spend five years in getting his PhD, and then he would look for a university job in the United States.

Comparing his learning experience in China, he felt he had a hard time studying in an American university. As he had a lot of experience in his content area, he felt as if he was reviewing in English what he had learned in Chinese:

Referring to my major, I think I just so so, because I have already had a general idea about what I am learning now when I was in China. I didn't feel having much new knowledge concerning my content courses. I just learn some English in order to improve my speaking ability and select some courses in order to take enough credits.

Among various lesson types, he likes seminar and group discussions most because:

Seminars are focused on discussion about the current research in my area, thus I can have a general idea of what is going on in my major area. In seminar, people will present their own issues, their research plans, suggestions and ideas, so that I will have enough information concerning my major area.

However, he seldom participated in class even though one of his professors told him “No participation, no class.” Why didn't he participate in class? We will come back to this later.

Case 2: Mr. Geodetic Scientist (MMAC2)

Mr. Geodetic Scientist has a round face with a mysterious smile almost all the time. He seems to agree with me on whatever I say, and yet in a few minutes he will disagree with
me. His mind is always occupied with something while in class. With a heavy local accent in Chinese, he talks to me as if he were teaching his students. His speaking style in English, however, has some resemblance to that of his Chinese, persistent and inquisitive, though with a lot of stammering. Many times when I talked to him, he would desperately look into my eyes for help when the words he used were obviously not what he had in mind.

With rich working experience, he came to the United States on his own from Germany where he was a visiting professor for one year. Unlike other Chinese graduate students who usually get scholarships from the universities, he did not have one when he came. He would rather pay the tuition by himself in order to learn "something new." He got his Bachelor's degree from East China Normal University in Shanghai in 1983. Upon graduation, he worked as an assistant instructor in Shangdong Institute of Mining and Technology for two years and pursued his MA in the same institute while teaching there.

He is obviously a thinker, not a speaker in his content classes. But he does participate occasionally. To him, asking questions in class often indicates that one does not understand the content or the subject matter under discussion. He had no problems listening to other students' talk or asking questions in
class, but his high self-confidence and knowledge of the subject matter affected his perceptions of asking questions in class:

For me, I do not have many questions to ask because it’s easy for me. Sometimes, I ask questions, but these questions are not general ones. So for my questions, the teacher usually has to explore deeper into the subject matter or has to introduce some new concepts.

The perceptions he had towards oral classroom participation in his content courses were very unique.

**Case 3: Ms. Pharmacist (FPHDC3)**

A mother of two who had to change her babies’ diapers while preparing for finals as a PhD student in the Chemistry Department at OSU, Ms. Pharmacist is truly a courageous woman. Having stayed at home as a housewife during the first two years after her arrival in the United States, she enrolled with remarkable TOEFL and GRE scores (2190, with 800 in mathematics section, 790 in logic section, and 600 in verbal section) and she received a research associateship from the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry.

Upon her graduation from Traditional Chinese Medicine College in Zhejiang Province in 1990, she worked as a doctor for a year before she came to accompany her husband who is also a PhD student. As she was away from school for quite a few years, she did admit that she had trouble adjusting to American
university life, especially during the first few quarters. In her
own words, "Actually I had a lot of trouble understanding
English in class." Recalling her English learning experience in
China, she was not very positive:

My English? Well, as I started learning English in the
countryside, My English was very poor when I was in
junior school. My English was still very poor when I
entered high school as I only got 40 (out of 100) in high
school entry exam. Since then as my high school teacher
was very strict, my English had improved a lot, and I got
90 (out of 100) in college entrance examination. Although
my English was always on the top list in class, I still had
much room for improvement compared to those in
Zhejiang University.

When she came to the United States in 1991, she was very
frustrated about her English. She could not understand others’
speaking. In order to adjust to the new environment, she
studied by herself while taking care of her babies by memorizing
words, listening to tapes, and watching television. Interestingly
enough, her working experience in a local Chinese restaurant
did help improve her listening skills. However, she is very
quiet in class, and she still prefers to speak Chinese whenever
she can. However, her silence in class is not without reasons.
These reasons will be discussed in the subsequent parts of this
chapter.
Case 4: Mr. Ecologist (MPHDC4)

Mr. Ecologist is a very traditional Chinese male: silent, diligent, respectful, but reserved. He got his BA in 1992 in the Management College in Haerbin Institute of Technology, a well-known technical institute in northern China. He went directly to graduate school in the same Institute, changing his major from Industrial Management Engineering to Measurement Information System. However, he came to the United States for his PhD without finishing his master's degree.

Mr. Ecologist had a very high TOEFL score (610) and GRE score (2000), and he was admitted into the program with a research scholarship. Like many other Chinese graduate students, Mr. Ecologist did not have any working experience, moving from the BA to the MA and then to the PhD directly. He likes sports, and watches different games. He seems introverted, but appears very extroverted when he is with people he knows well. He does not think of himself as a very good language learner. After taking both the TOEFL and GRE, he did not spend time on improving his English at all, so he felt his English was very rusty and caused him a lot of trouble when he first arrived in the United States. Due to the way English is taught in China, he felt that he was very good at reading and understanding, but obviously not good in terms of speaking and writing. When asked if he had any goal upon finishing his PhD,
he seemed hesitant because he needed more time and experience to think and to react.

Mr. Ecologist seemed very positive about his experience here in the United States. Compared with that in China, he felt that he was "at a much higher level here and the atmosphere here is also very supportive for the students." His positive impression of American higher education, in a way, reflected his negative attitude towards Chinese higher education:

I can learn some new things which I didn't know, and that's the big difference between here and what's going on in China. In China, some of the professors are not familiar with the new things and new trends in the field and thus they cannot provide for the students who are eager to know new things in social science. Therefore, in China, some students know better than some professors who are not very confident in opening a new course in a new field or a field that contains some new content.

His negative attitude towards the higher education he had experienced in China turned him into a very eager learner and receptive absorber. As he encounters new information every day in class, he seems less skeptical. The trade-off is that he sometimes feels puzzled as some professors tend to jump from one topic to another in class, leaving many gaps for students to fill in.

He is a serious student, and talks in class but not a lot. He also has his reasons for behaving the way he does.
Case 5: Miss Ed Administrator (FMAHK1)

If you talk to her and spend some time with her, you might wonder why she chose educational administration as her major. Amiable, mild, and soft-spoken, she does not leave you with the impression that she would be a manager or administrator at all. Born and raised in Hong Kong, she went to Taiwan after she finished high school at the influence of her father who has a lot of businesses in Taiwan. She received a BA degree in Foreign Language Education and taught basic English in a local cram school in Taiwan (a school after the regular school where students are specially trained to prepare for examinations).

Unlike her four brothers and sisters, she is very "stubborn," in her own words:

I am pretty quick in absorbing new stuff and I did not have any difficulty in adjusting to the new life style here. Even though sometimes I did have difficulty in adjustment, I could always make a balance.

Although she learned English in Hong Kong and taught English at a cram school in Taiwan, she is still not very confident about her English language ability. Interestingly, she thinks herself as a very fast language learner in that she learned Mandarin Chinese, which she did not speak at all in Hong Kong as she spoke Cantonese all the time, within a year after she arrived in Taiwan. It puzzled her that "I could not speak English as quickly and fluently as I learn Chinese." She attributed her
weak English ability to the lack of English-speaking environment, and naturally, gaining the new experience in the language environment brought her to America.

She is quiet in class, though smiling all the time. Is she content to be silent in class? Actually, she has her own reasons for being quiet.

Case 6: Mr. Chemical Engineer (MMAT1)

Mr. Chemical Engineer is a young man of questions, but he never asks questions in class. Serious and with thick-rimmed glasses, Mr. Chemical engineer is attentive, conscientious and meditative. A graduate from National Taiwan University with a BA in Chemical Engineering 1991, Mr. Chemical Engineer served in the army for a couple of years and worked for one year in a profession totally unrelated to his major before he came to the United States. As a language learner, he feels that he is very good at reading as he used a lot of English textbooks in Taiwan while learning English. He also confessed that his main weakness in English is speaking followed closely by listening. He is very cautious in selecting his major and he is not sure whether he should continue pursuing his PhD upon completion of the MA within two years as planned. He is also worried about his grades as he feels pressured taking four courses in which he has difficulty following his professors.
Being a graduate student at OSU seems very challenging to him. His attitude towards campus life seems very negative. In his opinion, in a quarter system school, everything is in a hurry. He describes two extreme conditions. One is that teachers teach less, and students learn less; the other is that teachers teach in a quarter what is supposed to be taught in a semester, as such, students are too busy to catch up. His frustration is, however, coupled with the departmental requirements.

Next quarter, my department asks every graduate student to take about four courses, not including English, so I have to take about 18 credits next quarter. So I feel frustrated and I'm afraid that I cannot cope with the course very well.

As mentioned above, his English speaking ability is relatively low among other skills. He asked permission several times to speak Chinese. He was permitted and when he spoke Chinese, his tone carried a lot of resentment and dissatisfaction. Why so negative? He has an explanation.

Case 7: Miss Musician (FMAT2)

Like many other Taiwanese female students in class, Miss Musician is quiet and attentive. Her musical talent is well concealed in English classes as she listens more than she speaks. A graduate from Chinese Cultural University in Taiwan with a BA in music in 1992, she taught music in a high school in
Taiwan before she came to the United States to major in piano in the Music School at OSU.

As a language learner, she does not think highly of herself. She complains about her skills in speaking, listening, and reading. The only area she has confidence in is writing. In her own words: "I feel I have made great progress in writing recently."

As a music major, she has taken some theoretical courses in which she has to listen to certain pieces of music. She has also taken a music analysis course in which she has to listen, and then offer analysis and comments afterwards. As she needs a lot of practice on the piano every day, she has to sign up quite a number of individual study hours with her piano professor. Her communication with her professor seems less verbal on her part. She thinks she can survive without speaking to the professor as long as she plays well:

In individual study course, my professor will first of all explain the music notes to me, and then he will play a segment for me and I play afterwards. He will then explain and direct me, and then we continue like that.

In many of her regular classes, she tends to sit among a group of Taiwanese students, and "we usually are very quiet. In class American students speak a lot. If we have questions, we ask them after class." Why so?
Case 8: Mr. Mechanical Engineer (MMAK1)

A graduate from Aviation University in Korea, Mr. Mechanical Engineer served in the Korea Air Force for about three years. He had a lot of experiences working in an engineering repair shop, maintenance commander office, and control towers. He first came to the United States in 1991 for his Master's Degree at West Virginia University and graduated in two years. He has persistently pursued his major -- Aerospace Engineering -- since his undergraduate study.

He likes computers and is fond of playing computer games. Reading newspapers and magazines and watching sports are part of his daily life. He is not comfortable talking to strangers, but once he knows the person well, he is very "open-minded," in his own words.

Mr. Mechanical Engineer is a student who never stops asking questions until he gets the answer that he wants. Stubborn and determined, he is always the first to turn in his in-class writing or other assignments, and yet, as he admits, his paper is more often than not full of grammatical errors. He knows that he makes mistakes, but he is too impatient to reread and check what he has written. He prefers not to concentrate on something too long. This habit of his, however, was not formed in one day. As he reveals:

I know I have problems to (with) me. It is hard for me to concentrate on some items. It means I always skip some
important things. It takes me a lot of mistakes when I write English or speak English. I will misuse the tense of verbs and some mismatch between the structures. That's the big problem of me. When I do the research job sometimes I have to read carefully over the articles several times but I think "Oh, it's not important," so I skip it, and it causes me problems. So, that's my worst weak point in personality.

His personality has affected his language learning. Unlike many people who can concentrate on learning the idiomatic speech used by native speakers, he never takes pains to memorize idiomatic expressions. Therefore, he feels that his English vocabulary is limited.

He obviously enjoys being a student at OSU as there are many classes to select. He has experienced being a student in both seminars and lectures, the two lesson types common in his field. He prefers seminars to lectures because he thinks that seminars are interesting, because I can get a lot of information from other guys, and more classes (seminars) are based on lectures in my field, and we have much, much discussion. In lectures, the professor writes down equations and solves them.

However, even in the seminars he feels most comfortable with, he does not participate in the discussion to a great extent except that he might ask a few questions. He feels a lack of confidence speaking in class in front of native speakers of English. Conversely, he feels more relaxed when international students, Asian students in particular, are sitting in class with
him. He prefers someone being in the same boat as he. Why should he have that feeling?

Case 9: Miss Consumer Scientist (FPHDK2)

Miss Consumer Scientist went to Yuhua University, Women's University, in Korea for her BA, MA and PhD, majoring in Family Resource Management. However, she did only one year of PhD course work before she transferred into the PhD program in Consumer Science at OSU. She does not have prior working experience except that she had some practical teaching as an undergraduate.

Quiet and introverted, Miss Consumer Scientist was a serious student, reducing her hobbies to study, study, and study. She does not think highly of herself as a language learner as she is reluctant to communicate with Americans or with people in general. Though she is confident about her reading skills, her speaking and writing skills bother her a lot. As mentioned, she likes to study, and she plans to study further after getting her PhD. Her aim is to obtain a post doctoral degree. Her ultimate goal is to be a university professor back in Korea. She likes being a student at OSU due to its educational system, graduate programs, and learning environment. Based on her experience as a student, she prefers class discussion to lectures as she likes classroom interaction. However, she sees her role in class as
passive even though she enjoys class discussion from which she benefits. She is afraid of asking questions and she is afraid of making mistakes. What, then, is operating behind her anxiety?

Case 10: Mr. Geologist (MPHKDK3)

Mr. Geologist is serious and conscientious in his study. He speaks English very fluently. He started his undergraduate study in geography in a college in South Korea but transferred before he graduated in Korea to the University of Denver in 1990. He completed his BA there in geography in 1993. He enrolled in an MA Geography program at Ohio State soon after his graduation from Denver. He took a year of absence due to personal problems back in Korea and resumed his study in the Winter of 1995. Actually, he has had five years of experience in studying in the United States.

The extensive exposure to an English environment from the BA to the PhD influenced his attitude towards classroom participation:

My general attitude is surely positive to participating all class activities and group work, such as study groups, so I'm thinking myself as really very positive in the attitude, and I like participating in class.

"But", he adds, "that really depends on the class characteristics." He continues:

If the class is nothing but a lecture, every student just kept listening and taking notes. But sometimes the
professor, I mean, actually, the professors are also really like active to ask the students to participate in his or her classes, such as seminars and like the group activity work and such as in my major area there is like the forecasting of the weather, so we all work together in the computer room and analyzing the forecasting data, so I think it really depends on the classes.

To him, if the professor encourages classroom participation either in lectures or seminars, he will definitely participate. If he prepares for the lesson well, he will probably participate more, and if not very well, probably less. Besides, he is not confident if he is not prepared. So having good preparation before class has become his goal, with the only exception of time constraints.

He sees the value of classroom participation from the perspective of self-check or self-evaluation. He regards speaking up in class, even though very little, as a way to discover and correct his own mistakes either in his preparation or improvised thoughts. He sees the quiet classroom behavior of people like him as a degree of anxiety:

Sometimes American students think that foreign students really cannot speak up in class, especially like the oriental people like us (who are) usually very quiet, and just kept smiling to the professor and to the students, and they think we are quiet. But we are not, because it's a kind of degree of anxiety.
Mr. Geologist also thinks that constant participating in class will help him gain self-confidence, and help others form the right attitude towards him.

His main concern about participation is communication, i.e., whether he can communicate his ideas well enough to be understood by others. To him, pronunciation and grammar are two important aspects affecting his communication quality. Between the choice of asking questions in class and after class, he still prefers after class even though he likes participating in class because, in his own words:

Sometimes I feel like I'm asking wrong and stupid questions in the middle of class. If I don't know or do not really understand what is taught in class, I would wait until after class, and then I am going to the professor or the instructor asking what I really don't understand particularly, so I do not bother the whole class. In class, you know, they also need time to listen to the professors, so I do not want to disturb even if I have a question.

On some occasions, however, like many of his classmates, he has to ask questions in class. In a way, he is not afraid of asking questions whenever necessary.

Case 11: Ms. Fashion Designer (FMAK4)

With Italian as her undergraduate major in South Korea, Ms. Fashion Designer is enrolled in the Master's Program in Textile and Clothing Department at OSU after having been a
housewife for about three years since she came to the United States in 1988. She changed her major as she had almost forgotten what she learned about Italian. She worked for a year and a half in a trading company before she came to the U.S. As she started her major in Textile and Clothing without any prior learning experience, it took her a long time to go through all the prerequisite courses. From being a housewife and a mother to becoming a part-time student meant a big change for her, but the slow change worked better for her.

As she married a Korean, for three years she spoke solely Korean with her husband at home. She relied on television for learning English during these three years, and she did not have a chance to practice speaking English until she started taking courses at OSU. It is therefore not a surprise to hear what she said:

For me it is very hard, I mean, participation is very hard task for me. I am a shy person and I have no confidence in speaking English, and my English is still poor, so yeah, I hesitate to speak and I am not a participating person.

Another reason for her not to participate in class besides her English speaking ability and shy personality is because of her background in Italian which was unrelated to her new major — textile and clothing. She did not feel that she knew her major area well enough to participate actively. She did feel, though, that she could participate under the condition that she
thoroughly prepared for class in terms of doing the class assignments and preparing questions ahead of time.

Despite her inactive role in oral classroom participation, she has seen benefits in participation in that she can make a good impression on the instructor or professor, and as a result of that, she can get good grades. When she sometimes did not participate in class, she worried about the instructor's or professor's impression of her as not studying at all or weak in background. So whenever she prepared well for class and yet she did not participate due to her shyness and other concerns, she would regret after class that she did not fully demonstrate what she had prepared for class.

However, part of her would prefer asking questions of the instructor or professor after class. Her mixed feelings is revealed as follows:

I hesitate to ask questions in class in front of a lot of students. I think if I say something in English, my grammar will be wrong to answer the question and also I am worried about the instructor who will not understand my English, so I cannot speak up in class. I prefer after class to have personal question, it is easy for me to ask questions.

The strategy she has developed is to practice speaking aloud both questions and opinions and ask or speak up when the practice is deemed adequate and successful. Otherwise, she
would give herself a chance to ask or talk to the instructor or professor after class. So it's a one-way-or-another situation.

**Case 12: Miss Nutritionist (FPHDK5)**

Miss Nutritionist graduated from a women's college in Korea in 1990 with a BA in Human Nutrition. She continued her MA there in the same major and received her MA two years later. She worked as a lab assistant in another Korean university while applying for graduate studies in American universities. Although she was admitted to OSU in 1993, she postponed her admission to the College of Agriculture as a PhD student until the fall of 1994 because of a motorcycle accident. The accident seemed to still affect her mental process, as she revealed, in that she was sometimes emotionally unstable and extremely homesick.

Miss Nutritionist is very quiet, extremely polite. She speaks in a soft tone, and always prefers to think for a moment before she speaks. She speaks very well, though, having been trained in an ESL program in another American university for half a year after she quit the job as a lab assistant. She sometimes is not satisfied with herself being quiet in an American campus. Her account of this hybrid personality reveals her inner mind:

I don't think I am very active and also not very quiet. I think I tend to be more active, because intentionally, just be quiet is not good to study abroad. Actually, I learn how to be active in Korea, but, um....I think in Korea, I was
more active than now because in Korea, I have family and I have friends so it was not very hard to adjust to be very active. But here, um...everything was new, and it just takes time to adjust to this environment and all the systems and I had to make some friends also. And also there is no relatives here so it is very hard. The first time I came here I was really depressed or upset, because even though I learned English in the United States, it was not perfect so I also had language barrier. If I were more active, maybe the time to adjust would be quicker and shorter.

She clearly expressed her needs to be active in the new environment, and yet she was aware that it took effort, much more than she could give in Korea as obviously, the cultural adjustment needs courage and self-initiative. Therefore,

If I had a chance to talk to Americans, I tried to involve in talking, conversation, and I have a good impression of Americans so I don't have any problem having conversation with them. I attended all the activities, like, um... conversation classes.

Realizing her weakness in listening, Miss Nutritionist preferred lectures more than other lesson types. She regards lectures as a way to practice her listening comprehension. She likes professors who often use clarification and confirmation checks in class.

Many professor I have had always ask questions like “Is it clear up now?” or “Do you understand what I said?”. So that’s really helpful to me. Sometimes, I don't understand about problems, but I don't ask in class, because if I say something, I feel like bothering other students.
She believes that the listening skills she acquires through lecture type classes will help her eventually participate in class.

**Case 13: Geodetic Scientist (MPHDK6)**

Mr. Geodetic Scientist is a man of confidence. Nothing seems difficult to him as he always has a smile on his face. With three years of military service experience between his BA and MA degrees in Physics, he enrolled in the Department of Geodetic Science at OSU in the Fall of 1994. He was placed in 106G, a lower level English composition course, upon arrival as his TOEFL score was only 567. “I never prepared for the exam,” he said without losing the self-confident smile on his face. He admitted that when he learned English in Korea, listening and speaking were not emphasized at all, so naturally many students including him were very weak in those skill areas.

Although he admits that he cannot speak very well, he is, as he puts it, one of those who are very active participants in class. The seminar, the common class format is not new to him.

In my country, we always adopt the class like seminar, whole of the courses are proceeded as a seminar, most of the students talk over the topic and we discuss about those topics and at the end of the class, the professor always comes to talk about our topic or what you did wrong or what is correct. That is our class type. And here it is that same, I mean, that if we want to talk about the topic to the professor and we want to discuss about that there is always a kind of class for the foreign students, we consider some of the questions to ask or to speak up.
As he reveals, he usually asks questions for clarification in class if he does not understand well, but prefers discussion after class. He feels more ready to ask questions when he prepares well for the lesson. "When I prepared well, I know the topic in class, and naturally I have something to contribute." As his listening comprehension skill is still not very well-developed, he admits that he had communication problems, especially when he first arrived at the United States. Sometimes, neither he nor others could understand each other. However, he often tries to guess an answer to a problem and expects the professor to assure him of the answer whether it is correct or wrong. While speaking up in class, his major concern is clarity.

I always concern about how can I express my opinion clearly, and that is the most important thing, usually um, sometimes I asked something they could not understand, but the first quarter when I first came here I tried to ask a lot of things to the professor or students or classmates, but they could not understand me, and some classmates would laugh at me because of the communication problem.

Due to his language problem, he chose to ask the professor questions after class in the first few courses he took. He feels more comfortable talking after class whether publicly or privately: "If I asked a question to the professor, it could bother the other students in class." Therefore, awareness of his limited speaking skill causes his concern for others in class, which is, in fact, influenced by his Asian cultural belief in consideration.
His lack of English speaking ability disabled him in communication, but also motivated him to seek help to change the situation. He did not take any Spoken English courses as he did not have time. However, he took advantage of the student dormitory environment and he practiced speaking English with native speakers at least an hour every day. “That’s really helpful,” he recalls. After half a year of practice, he feels comfortable participating in class, and asking questions or discussing issues has become more natural and intuitive to him.

Case 14: Mr. Biophysicist (MPHDJ1)

Mr. Biophysicist came to the United States in 1990 as an undergraduate. He spent four years in Birmingham Southern University in Alabama majoring in Physics. He enrolled as a PhD student at OSU upon receiving his BA.

He had about five years’ experience teaching mathematics and science at a private tutoring school in Japan run by his father. He likes sports, and is very good at karate and motorcycling. He does not have a strong sense of self-confidence in English as he should have after spending four years in college in the United States. He still feels uncomfortable studying in an environment surrounded by native speakers of English, such as in a freshman composition course. Conversely, he feels much more at ease with non-native speakers.
as he feels that he can speak relatively better than other non-native speakers. As he puts it, "Asians always like to compare
the abilities of ourselves to those of others."

Mr. Biophysicist has very much enjoyed his studies as a PhD student at OSU:

I can feel I am studying at very high level in science, so it's kind of stimulating. In my field -- Biophysics -- we usually have two kinds of classes. One is lecture type, wherein the classroom is sometimes filled with about two hundred students. In this case, it is almost impossible for students to participate, and the instructor seems aware that a clear lecture is the only way to conduct the class. However, another type of class which is fairly common in my field is a small-scale seminar, usually with less than twenty students in it. We are often encouraged to talk if we want to.

Mr. Biophysicist feels relaxed enough to participate in this type of class almost whenever he wants to. He sometimes forgets he is a non-native speaker. If the instructor does not give students enough opportunities to talk, Mr. Biophysicist will simply interrupt the class like many American students do. He admits that he likes classroom participation.

Case 15: Miss Social Worker (FMAJ2)

In 1993, Miss Social Worker graduated from a women's college in Osaka, Japan with a BA in English and American Literatures with minor concentrations in Education and Library Science. She came to the United States in 1994 enrolling in the
American Language Program at OSU to brush up on her English. Half a year later, she became a graduate student in the College of Social Work.

Maybe she herself was not clear why she chose this major. Quiet and extremely shy, she had no prior working experience whatsoever, and she suddenly found herself in the midst of classmates who were all native speakers of English and most of whom had prior working experience as social workers or were concurrently working in jobs closely related to the field. What frustrated her most was that the courses she took up to that time were all seminars in which students were required to contribute their working experiences to class. No wonder Miss Social Worker was stuck in the predicament in which she thought she could hardly survive.

As she confessed, she had neither talked nor asked questions in the classes she took in the first two quarters. All she could do in class was to take incomplete notes and watch television segments, and "That is all," she sighed with tears in her eyes.

Miss Social Worker was not someone who did not like the idea of participating in class. She did see benefits in participation. "If I talk something, maybe I will feel I join the class, or fit the class." Evidently, she felt alienated or separated from the rest of the class due to the lack of working experience.
to contribute and the lack of speaking competence to communicate.

However, when she had to ask questions, she waited until after class and asked the instructor or the professor individually. She also had occasions when her question was not understood by the professor, and she had to rephrase it to communicate. "Fortunately, my professors are very patient so they try to listen very carefully, so they can understand me." When saying this, her face was lit with a smile suggesting hope with effort and the gaining of self-confidence.

Miss Social Worker had one occasion when the professor in class asked a very tough question. No one seemed to know the answer as there was a dead silence for quite a few minutes. She thought that she knew the answer, but unfortunately, she could not really explain the answer. She realized that her language ability was not at the level where she could freely express herself if she had the idea.

Miss Social Worker used to live in the dorm where she could easily make friends and talk to many native speakers if she wanted to. Later on, she moved out of the dorm and shared a town house with a native speaker. She thought of enjoying the great opportunity to improve her speaking ability by daily contact with her roommate. But she said:

Er, I don't think that [living with Kathi, her American roommate] was my purpose of improving
my English because I used to live in Morrison where a lot of Americans live. I always had chance to talk to them. Now I'm living with Kathy, and I could only talk to one American.

Is there a good match between this person's reluctance to engage with other people and the requirements of the field of social work?

**Case 16: Miss Counselor (FMAJ3)**

I came to the United States two years ago (1993), and at first I went to the Michigan State University in East Lansing. I studied Political Science there, and I transferred to Michigan State as a junior as I had my BA in a Japanese university. So I got my second BA in political science in Michigan State. After I graduated from Michigan State, I came here to pursue my MA in counseling education.

Miss Counselor's background is very clear as she reveals it. Quiet and very respectful, she is a good listener and writes very well except that she makes quite a lot of grammar mistakes even though she took a grammar course at Michigan State. She likes spending time by herself and she also likes to spend time socializing "to have good inter-personal relationships." She likes her classes in general partly because of the fact that she can make friends and can do projects together with her classmates. As she is the only non-native speaker in class, she enjoys the friendship and help from American peers. Obviously, she has a very strong sense of community and peer spirit.
Due to the nature of her major, Counseling Education, she has had many courses in which she has to practice counseling techniques by using classmates as subjects. On many occasions, students are encouraged to participate and discuss issues raised and problems that occurred. However, she felt rather uncomfortable in a situation where a few students dominated the discussion. It seemed that those few students deprived the opportunities other students should have to contribute to the class discussion.

She thought that she was a slow thinker, and she could not answer questions when she was not ready. Therefore, she kept silent in class most of the time.

Case 17: Mr. Agriculture specialist (MMA11)

A radio anchor in an Indonesian broadcasting company, Mr. Agriculture Specialist could not show his voice quality in the classes he has taken. The main reason for him to be invisible was that he could not speak English very well. His role in class seemed to be reduced to a listener and a note taker. What was worse, he sometimes could hardly understand the instructor or the professor in class and as a result, he had trouble taking notes. Therefore, the only way to catch up with the class was reading the textbook.
Mr. Agriculture Specialist became a radio announcer after he got his BA in 1986. He was recruited as an agricultural lecturer in 1988, and he prepared himself for the teaching position for almost two years.

His self-esteem as a language learner was seriously hurt when he came to the totally new environment in which English is the language of communication. He tried hard, but there was no short cut as he realized:

Actually I speak a lot. I like to have friends, but I have disability in speaking as well as in memorizing new words. In Columbus, my disability is language, so it is difficult for me to speak a lot to make friends, to make American friends, more difficult.

Mr. Agriculture Specialist is an outgoing person. He mentioned several times that had he not had a language problem, he would have participated actively in class, and he would contribute a lot to class. Given his language disadvantage, he liked seminars in which discussions were held in small groups, and he could have the chance to try to make sure he understood the assignment or key points with the help of his peers. He expressed that he wanted to make friends with American students, and he obviously felt that he needed more practice than he had experienced before in being a radio announcer or a lecturer.
Case 18: Ms. English Teacher (FMA12)

Graduating in 1988 at a college in Indonesia majoring in English, Ms. English Teacher became an English teacher and taught college English for four years before she was sent by her government on a selective basis for her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education at OSU in 1994. She used to teach language skills and literature as well. She enjoyed teaching Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to junior students as she recalled, and she had fond memories of teaching.

She seemed to possess all the good qualities a teacher should have:

I am talkative, friendly, sometimes maybe easy-going, and hard-working. Sometimes maybe workaholic, and adventurous. I like sports. I like singing and dancing, which I think are related to my profession as a teacher. Sometimes some companies would contact me to arrange some entertainment, or recreational activities.

An active participant in classes and an outgoing person, Ms. English Teacher is a teacher after all. She listens carefully, and she asks questions along the way, without intimidation in front of native speakers of English, and contributes to class discussion her rich experience and a lot of good ideas.

However, she did not perceive herself as a successful language learner. In her opinion, if she saw herself in that view, she might not be successful in learning language. Her detailed account further clarifies her viewpoint:
I still have trouble in writing and in spoken English because I have a kind of, even though I am a kind of talkative person, I always feel, er...not good feeling. I don’t want to make a mistake if I want to speak another language. So that makes me trouble in expressing myself in that language, particularly in English.

Coming to the United States with her teaching background, she seemed very appreciative of her opportunity to do her MA at OSU. She likes campus life and she likes her professors in particular:

I like being a student at Ohio State. I have a very favorable impression on professors here. I think every professor here seems to be responsible to the progress of the students. So I can come to them and ask them everything, and they will serve the students’ needs.

Her liking of professors at OSU was formed based on her inside viewpoint of being a professor in Indonesia. Her favorable impression of the professors and their teaching styles suggest that she should feel comfortable participating in class. And actually she did. She also felt support for her participation from other students in class, native speakers and non-native speakers alike:

In my first quarter here, I tended to be quiet because I feel I need adjustment time. This quarter, I tend to speak more because other students want to encourage Asian students to speak. So when I speak something, it seems they have more attentions to what I want to say and what I want to explain.
So Ms. English Teacher attributed her active class participation to the environmental support both from professors and from peers.

Case 19: Mr. Political Science Teacher (MMA13)

Mr. Political Science Teacher graduated from a teacher's college in western Indonesia in the Department of Moral Education in 1985. After working as a moral education teacher in a local Indonesia college, he pursued his MA in General Education and Failure Education and he got his MA in 1990. He continued to teach Moral Education and some other courses in Social Science at the same college where he used to teach. A solemn looking man without a smile, Mr. Political Science Teacher gave one the impression of seriousness, but he was very kind-hearted. He considered himself rather introverted. In his own words, "I'm a silent person and I don't talk a lot in daily life." Recalling his English learning experience, he sighed and spoke in a regretful tone:

I first started learning English in Junior High School, and actually I like it very much. Unfortunately, my teacher sometimes did not use good methods in teaching, so I was unlucky to learn English very much in both junior and senior high schools. So my English ability was very poor when I graduated from senior high school. And when at college of education, maybe, the English courses are very limited. Although I took English class every semester, my English ability had not been improved a lot.
Being a graduate student at OSU, however, has changed his attitude about learning English. He likes the campus environment, the facilities and resources, and the class atmosphere as well. What struck him most was the instructors and their teaching methods:

I enjoyed the classes very much because of the professors. They are very helpful to me, and the teaching methods they used were very interesting to me.

Coming to OSU for a MA with a lot of teaching experience did influence his idea of how to be a good student. He learned a lot from the professors he has had in terms of their teaching methods. He was, indeed, unusually sensitive in appreciating the kindness and facilitation his professors gave to international graduate students like him:

I think all of my professors are very kind and concerned about the international students. Maybe because we are in this special project, so there are many Indonesians in the same area and some of the professors are our advisors.

He did try to participate in class as he thought professors in general encouraged having students participate in class. However, he always felt hesitant to speak up. He attributed his hesitancy to both language barriers and the composition of the class:

Actually I want to speak to participate in class discussion, but sometimes I have English barrier, so I hesitate to express my ideas. If the overall members
of classmates are more international students than American students, I would feel less hesitant to speak up. Needless to say, his language barrier prevented him from being an active participant in class. But whenever he felt comfortable, he could speak up and usually with very good ideas. He expressed his hope to have some American friends to speak English with. But unless he took the initiative, American students would not come to him as he could easily be judged as a man of few words, and actually he was.

**Case 20: Mr. Social Studies Teacher MMAI4)**

Mr. Social Studies Teacher is a “Yes” man. Whatever questions I asked him, he responded “Yes.” Only when I doubted what he really meant, did he pause for a while, and adds “I mean...” which suggests “No” after all. However, he did feel a lot of pressure in U.S. academic environment as a graduate student. Listening and speaking are two tough areas for him to struggle with. He did try to explain himself by adding as much body language as he could, and even real objects, but understanding half of what he said suggest a very good listener. To ask him to repeat too many times would hurt his feelings, but to pretend to understand him would do him no good. So it was really a bitter situation for him and those who were responsible for his learning.
He is a good singer, an outgoing and extremely active person who used to entertain people by using jokes a lot and who used to organize many recreational activities for his school in Indonesia. Although he got his MA in business in 1986, he liked the teaching profession, and he became a business education teacher, teaching accounting in an Indonesian college since 1989.

Mr. Social Science Teacher considered himself a good language learner in terms of reading although he complained about his English teachers' teaching methods which resulted in his weakness in listening and speaking in English. He liked being a student at OSU:

I like it [being a student at Ohio State] so much because there are so many facilities, so many references, books. for example, if I want to look for some experience of teaching I could find in some academic computer.

Mr. Social Science Teacher also likes his classes at OSU in general and he likes lectures over discussions in class. To him, to understand the teacher is much easier than to understand his classmates as they speak very fast and sometimes with dialects.

He has made progress over the quarters in listening and speaking, but not very rapidly as he admits. Somehow, he still keeps silent in class, and he himself is not satisfied with that.
Display of cross-case clusters

The aforementioned twenty cases have their unique characteristics. They came to study in the United States from different countries within the Asian continent, with various backgrounds, in a variety of programs, and for various purposes. Their perceptions of oral classroom participation in their academic content courses are thus related to multiple factors. In order to facilitate the data analysis in the next stage, I am going to display their characteristics in ten clusters: gender, major, lesson type, personality, nationality, prior experience, purpose of the study, length of stay, language skills, and participation behavior. All the clusters are formed within the twenty participants of the study. Distributions are used whenever necessary to better display the data.
Table 4: Cluster of nationality and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Overall No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No.</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 shows, among the twenty participants of the study, there were slightly fewer female participants (45%) than male participants (55%). Six nationalities were represented by four clustered communities: Chinese (China, Taiwan, & Hong Kong), Korean, Japanese, and Indonesian communities.
Table 5: Cluster of Majors of Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Specific Major</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Ed. Administration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(FMAHK1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(FMAT2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(FMAJ2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counseling Ed.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(FMAJ3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ag. Ed.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(MMAI1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>(FMAI2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(MMAI3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early &amp; Middle Childhood Ed.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(MMAI4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Ex. Physiology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(MPHDC1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geodetic Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(MPHDC2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(FPHDC3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Resource Management</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(MPHDC4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(MMAT1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(MMAK1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer Science</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(FPHDK2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(MPHDK3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Textile &amp; Clothing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(FMAK4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Nutrition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(FPHDK5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geodetic Science</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(MPHDK6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biophysics</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(MPHDJ1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 5 shows, two-thirds of the participants are from the social sciences while three-fifths are majoring in natural science. It also suggests that more female participants (62.5%) than male participants (37.5%) are in social science majors. Conversely, fewer female participants (33.3%) than male participants (66.7%) are majoring in natural science.
Table 6: Cluster of Majors and Lesson Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>GD</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geodetic Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile &amp; Clothing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Resource Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. Physiology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Nutrition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biophysics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed. Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood &amp; Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L: Lecture                      | ***: Most Often
S: Seminar                     | **: Often
GD: Group discussion           | *: Less Often
I: Individual Study            |
As seen, the lecturing, as a lesson type, is practiced across disciplines. While lecturing is more common in natural science majors, seminars and discussions are generally more common lesson types in the social science domain. However, small group discussions, a more specific category within the class discussion domain, is seldom seen as a class format in many majors. A combination of lectures and discussions seems to be more commonly practiced across fields. Due to the nature of the musical field, individual coaching or individualized instruction may work better.
Table 7: Cluster of Prior Experience of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Lab assist</th>
<th>Military Service</th>
<th>Worker</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Housewife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPHDC1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAC2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDC3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDC4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAHK1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAT1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAT2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAK1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDK2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDK3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAK4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDK5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDK6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDJ1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAJ2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAJ3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMA1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMA12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMA3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMA4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The numbers in this table refer to the year, e.g., 4 means 4 years.
As can be seen, many participants had had prior experience other than being students, with experiences ranging from being teachers, lab assistants, soldiers, workers, doctors, and housewives. Among these jobs and duties, 7 participants (35%) had prior teaching experience, 4 (20%) had worked formally, 3 (15%) had military service, 2 (10%) had been lab assistants, 2 (10) had been housewives, and 1 (5%) used to be a doctor. Interestingly, one-fourth (25%) of the participants had no prior working experience at all. They came to the United States as students directly from being students in their home countries. The range of prior working experience other than being a student was from 1 to 7 years.
Table 8: Cluster of Length of Stay in U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Length of stay (Year)</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. MPHDC1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. MMAC2</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. FPHDC3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Housewife/PhD</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MPHDC4</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. FMAHK1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. MMAT1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. FMAT2</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. MMAK1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>West Virginia/Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. FPHDK2</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. MPHDK3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Colorado/Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. FMAK4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Housewife/MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. FPHDK5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>ESL/MA</td>
<td>Maryland/Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. MPHDK6</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. MPHDJ1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>BA/PhD</td>
<td>Alabama/Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. FMAJ2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ALP/MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. FMAJ3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA/MA</td>
<td>Michigan/Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. MMA11</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. FMA12</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. MMA13</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. MMA14</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 reveals that all the participants in the study had at least half a year experience studying in the United states. The longest length of stay in the US was seven years in Case 11 (FMAK4). Nine of the participants (45%) came to the U.S. directly for a MA while four of them (20%) ended up pursuing their MA. Similarly, 5 of the participants (25%) came to pursue their PhD while two (10) ended up taking PhD courses. The four participants (20%) who did not pursue either a MA or a PhD first, started with being housewives (Case 3: FPHDC3 & Case 11: 150
FMAK4), or taking language courses (Case 12: FPHDK5 & Case 15: FMAJ2). However, five of the participants (25%) had prior experience of staying in different states other than Ohio, where this study was conducted.
Table 9. Cluster of personality traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>Observation descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. MPHDC1</td>
<td>“I think I am outgoing, I like sports and dancing.”</td>
<td>Sociable, easy-going, and extroverted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. MMAC2</td>
<td>“I can talk a lot when I want to, but I don’t like asking simple questions.”</td>
<td>Elaborative, persistent, but reserved and argumentative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. FPHDC3</td>
<td>“I seldom talk in class. One of the reasons is that I am shy in nature, I mean, in character.”</td>
<td>Shy in public, but talkative in private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MPHDC4</td>
<td>“I don’t view myself very much introverted, but I do want to communicate with people and make friends, yet I will not feel very comfortable when facing the public, only when I am willing and ready to speak.”</td>
<td>Extroverted in comfortable situations and introverted in unfamiliar environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. FMAHK1</td>
<td>“I am pretty quick in absorbing new stuff and I didn’t have difficulty in adjusting myself to the lifestyle here.”</td>
<td>Harmonious, agreeable, quiet and easy-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. MMAT1</td>
<td>“I think I am neither introverted nor extroverted, something in between.”</td>
<td>Stubborn, tenacious, meditative, and a man of few words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. FMAT2</td>
<td>“I like to listen to others talking. I feel especially comfortable talking to other Taiwanese people about our classes.”</td>
<td>Quiet, cautious, and non-risk-taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. MMK1</td>
<td>“It’s hard for me to open my mind to strangers. But once I know them well, I am very open-minded.”</td>
<td>Lack of prolonged concentration, tenacious, and inquisitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. FPHDK2</td>
<td><em>I am not outgoing, nor extroverted. I am reluctant in the communication with Americans and other students.</em></td>
<td>Study-only-type, conscientious, introverted, disliking communication, rather reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. MPHDK3</td>
<td><em>I am generally very positive about participating all class activities and group work.</em></td>
<td>Group leader, responsible, sincere, serious about study. Communicative and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. FMAK4</td>
<td><em>If I have an idea, I will just think about it to myself, and not speak up.</em></td>
<td>Reluctant, anxiety-provoking, bond of family duties, lack of enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. FPHDK5</td>
<td><em>I don’t think I am very active and also not very quiet. I think I tend to be more active, because intentionally, just be quiet is not good to study abroad.</em></td>
<td>Amiable, agreeable, and very much college-student-like, respectful, and obedient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. MPHDK9</td>
<td><em>Although I cannot speak well, but I always speak up.</em></td>
<td>High motivation and self-confidence, determined, willing to be acculturated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. MPHDJ1</td>
<td><em>I am not very out-going, but I think a lot. I am a slow learner.</em></td>
<td>Somewhat introverted, but a careful observer, lack of self-confidence but motivated to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. FMAJ2</td>
<td><em>I think I am open. But I am the only non-experienced student in the field, I feel I am isolated.</em></td>
<td>Shy and not talkative in class, intimidated by her lack of language ability and experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. FMAJ3</td>
<td><em>I like to spend time by myself, and I enjoy reading or watching movies by myself. But I also like socializing. I like to have good inter-personal relationship.</em></td>
<td>Quiet but thinking, harmonious but not very sociable, attentive in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17.MMAI1</th>
<th>&quot;Actually I speak a lot, like to have friends, but I have disability in Columbus. My disability is language.&quot;</th>
<th>Outgoing but reserved, friendly but anxious, motivated to learn, and yet unsatisfied about progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.FMAI2</td>
<td>&quot;I think I'm a kind of talkative (laugh), and friendly, sometimes maybe easy-going and hard-working, sometimes maybe workaholic. And adventurous because I like traveling by driving.&quot;</td>
<td>Very extroverted and uplifting, enthusiastic and talkative, courageous and inquisitive, perfectionistic and ambitious, highly-motivated, too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.MMAI3</td>
<td>&quot;Yeah, introverted, maybe. Although I sometimes participate in discussion, in daily life, I do not talk a lot.&quot;</td>
<td>Self-disciplined, reserved but polite, quiet but inquisitive and highly meditative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.MMAI4</td>
<td>&quot;I think I am outgoing and entertaining in class. I like to make people understand through jokes.&quot;</td>
<td>Extroverted in nature but seriously handicapped by lack of language skills, good-natured, and ultra-friendly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 9, I used quotes from each participant in one of the interviews I conducted with them believing that the participants can reflect on their own personalities to a certain extent. The observation descriptors are based on my ten-week contact with them as their intermediate ESL composition instructor and on interacting with them on various occasions in daily life. One personality scale (The Keirsey Temperament Sorter) was primarily used but abandoned in that the scale, because due to the difficulty of the language, it could not truly
reflect the students' personalities. My growing belief that personality scales are more useful when the researcher is not able to know the subjects was confirmed by the data collection process. I tend not to look at the personality traits of my participants from numerical scales, but listen to what they say and observe what they do.
Table 10: Holistic assessment of the participants' English communication skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Code</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPHDC1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAC2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDC3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDC4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAHK1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAT1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAT2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally not effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAK1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDK2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDK3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication almost always effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAK4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDK5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication almost always effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDK6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication almost always effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDJ1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication almost always effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAJ2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally not effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAJ3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAI1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally not effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAI2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication almost always effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAI3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication somewhat effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAI4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication generally not effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 10, I used TSE (Test of Spoken English) scoring scales from Educational Testing Service (1995). The scores were reported in increments of five (i.e., 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 50, 55, 60) representing communication skills on a continuum from "Communication almost always effective" (55-60), "Communication generally effective" (45-50), "Communication somewhat effective" (40-45), "Communication generally not effective" (30-35), to "No effective communication" (20-25).

However, the scales I used only served as criteria with which I evaluated my participants. I did not use the Test of Spoken English (TSE) instrument. First, I did not believe that we should determine one's communication effectiveness based on one single test as multiple factors affecting the performance of the test-taker might come into play. Second, as the rapport between my participants and me is very important for this study, asking the participants to take tests will not only distance them from me, but also create unnecessary tension and anxiety which might affect their comfort level with me during the interviews. I believe that my prolonged contact with each of the participants as an English composition teacher helped me assess holistically each participant's communication skills.

As seen in Table 10, all the communication abilities among the participants varied from 30 (communication generally not effective) to 60 (communication generally effective). In fact, the
communication effectiveness among the participants can be better seen in Figure 3 as follows:

Figure 3: Data display of the participants' communication effectiveness in English
As Figure 3 indicates, among all the participants in this study, 6 (30%) communicated in English almost always effectively; 7 (35%) communicated in English generally effectively; 4 (20%) communicated in English somewhat effectively; and 3 (15%) communicated in English generally not effectively. None of the participants fell into the category of “no effective communication.”

However, the extent to which each participant’s communication effectiveness in English affects his/her oral classroom participation mode needs further exploration. As the following table (Table 11) reveals, the classroom participation modes are classified into four points on a scale, ranging from very active (1) to extremely inactive (4). The individual participants are placed on one of the four-point scale based on 1) their own descriptions in terms of a quote from the interviews; 2) classroom observations in their content courses; and 3) my impression of each individual’s participation mode via at least ten weeks’ contact in and out of the English composition class.
Table 11: Cluster of the participation modes of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Participation scales</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPHDK3</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I participate very actively in class.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDK6</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Actually I am one of those who participate actively in class.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAI2</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I participated actively among non-native speakers.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAC2</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I ask questions selectively. I ask questions when I think they can engage further discussion.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDC4</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;In some of the classes I am very active, but some not.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAK1</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I am very active participating in some courses from my own major, but so so in other ones.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDJ1</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I think I participate, depending on many factors.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAI3</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I asked questions and sometimes I gave my opinions, sometimes I answered questions from professors. But it depended on courses.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPHDC1</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I seldom participated in classroom discussion.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMAT1</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I do not talk a lot in class, but sometimes I ask questions.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDK2</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The 1st quarter I did not ask any questions, but the second quarter I feel better. If I have question, I'd like to ask.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPHDK5</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;If I were more active, maybe the time to adjust would be quicker and shorter.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMAJ3</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I think if the teacher asks us opinions, I will not volunteer to speak up immediately.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

160
As seen from Table 11, the participants are clustered according to their participation modes to facilitate further analysis. As seen, three participants -- two male Korean PhD students (MPHDK3, MPHDK6), and one female Indonesia MA student (FMAI2) are very active in classroom participation in their content area courses. All five participants who belong to the second category -- somewhat active -- are male students.
Two are Chinese (MMAC2 & MPHDC4); one is from Korea (MMAK1), one is from Japan (MPHDJ1), and one is from Indonesia (MMAI3). However, twelve participants (60% of all the participants in this study) fell into the categories of either “not active” or “extremely inactive”. Of those five (2 males and 3 females) who are not active in classroom participation, one is from China (MPHDC1), one is from Taiwan (MMAT1), two are from Korea (FPHDK2 & FPHDK5), and one from Japan (FMAJ3). Not surprisingly, seven participants (5 female & 2 male), due to their reticence in class, are placed in the category of “extremely silent.” They were distributed among all the countries and ethnic groups in the study, such as China (FPHD3), Hong Kong (FMAHK1), Taiwan (FMAT2), Korea (FMAK4), Japan (FMAJ2), and Indonesia (MMAI1 & MMAI4).

Case studies via interviews

Needless to say, the participants in this study have demonstrated different oral classroom participation modes: very active, somewhat active, not active and extremely inactive. What accounts for the difference? Is gender a big factor? Are one’s personality traits responsible for the various participation modes? Does a certain lesson type (lecture, seminar, group discussion) have a great impact on students’ participation behavior? What kind of role does one’s major play in
determining one’s basic participation pattern? Would the participant’s nationality in which his/her cultural background is reflected and prior experience contribute to the difference? This section will address these questions through the placement of each case in four clusters according to the major participation modes (very active, somewhat active, not active and extremely inactive).

1. Why are they active in oral classroom participation?
   --- Analysis of three cases

Two Korean PhD students, Mr. Geologist who received his BA from a university in Colorado and Mr. Geodetic Scientist who lived in a dorm where he had great opportunities to practice his spoken English, and an Indonesian MA student, Ms. English teacher who was “cheerful” and “talkative”, were the only three participants (out of twenty in this study) who were extremely active in oral classroom participation in their own fields.

Obviously, these three participants enjoyed classroom participation and they played very active roles in contributing to classroom discussion. However, they perceived the benefits in active classroom participation from different perspectives.

To Mr. Geologist (MPHDK3), participation was a way to express his opinions for self-check or self-evaluation through
which he could make sure what he had in mind was right or wrong. Therefore, he seized opportunities to participate in class discussion or to ask and answer questions whenever he could. He revealed:

Sometimes, I feel like if I participate and speak up in the class, even though I am saying in a little bit wrong directions of the class topic, I correct myself if I speak up and find myself the wrong topic or the wrong subject matters at the time even though my professor agreed with me. But just like the self-evaluation process when I speak to the professor to the class and talk to everybody, so that's a kind of benefit to me correcting myself when I speak to the class knowing I was wrong in the preparation on my classes.

However, he did not regard participation as the only way to get feedback from the professor and peers for confirmation checks as did Ms. English Teacher (FMAI2). Rather, he saw it more as an effective way of self-modification. He had great confidence in judging his own output, which he understood as often imperfect or incorrect, and modifying his output, in return, helped strengthen his confidence in his ability. Confident and determined as he was, he also saw participation as a reflection of equality in the regular classroom from a non-native speaker's perspective:

Probably sometimes such as American students think that foreign students really cannot speak up in class, especially like the Oriental people like us who are very quiet and just keep smiling to the professor and to the students, and they think us we are just quiet. But we are not, because it's kind of anxiety. If I say to the entire body of the classes, say, they really, really understand what I'm saying,
that was my concern in all the stage of my study career and well, if you keep repeating what you say several times again and again whether you don't have the confidence or whatever, you still have um, like attitude you have to speak up in the class and that's kind of the benefit to me in terms of class participation.

Interestingly, Mr. Geologist also saw the advantage of participation as a way to reduce anxiety, which he assumed existed in many Asian speakers.” In reducing one's anxiety, the students had to form a good attitude towards participation which would result in speaking up without fear. Needless to say, Mr. Geologist's prior experience in the U.S. as an undergraduate student in a university in Colorado had a great impact on him as he could not express himself very well at all due to his poor English speaking skills, due to being trained in a Korean language environment, and also due to his low TOEFL score (below 515). Perhaps what he learned most upon his completion of his BA degree was that he should be more aggressive in speaking in class to reduce his anxiety and gain confidence. Therefore, it was not surprising that he felt so strongly about the benefit of active classroom participation in reducing anxiety, demanding equality, and gaining confidence through self-modification as a non-native speaker, and he did what he believed because of his own experience.

In sum, Mr. Geologist actively participated in his content classes because he viewed oral classroom participation as a way
to express his opinions. Through participation, he could modify his speech and thought. He also believed that oral classroom participation could help reduce his anxiety and eventually, he could speak up in class without fear.

Mr. Geodetic Scientist (MPHDK6), however, thought of active classroom participation as a way to “get much knowledge.” He participated a lot by asking questions in order to clarify what he did not understand. He also participated through guessing as a way to make up for his lack of listening comprehension:

Actually professors' lectures cannot concentrate me well because of my listening problem. I was wondering on that problem, and I can guess right this thing or such things that I asked him to assure that.

What was interesting to note was that Mr. Geodetic Scientist realized his problem in English and that motivated him to participate even more actively to overcome his difficulties, which is unlike many other Asian students who simply avoid oral classroom participation when they had problems in understanding and being understood due to language barriers. To Mr. Geodetic Scientist, realizing his weakness in communication served as a trigger to motivate him to practice his English as much as he could. He wanted to take some
Spoken English courses, but when he realized that he could not, he did not lose hope:

I did not have time. So I just asked my roommates when I was in the dormitory and I speak with someone about an hour everyday. That's really helpful.

In fact, by living in a dorm and constant practicing speaking with his roommates, he not only improved his listening and speaking abilities in English, but was also able to understand American culture and values better. Therefore, in the case of Mr. Geodetic Scientist, he believed that active classroom oral participation could increase his understanding and knowledge of the subject matter, and therefore he seized the opportunity of living in a dorm, and also prepared himself for active classroom participation through talking to native speakers of English in the dorm environment.

In sum, Mr. Geodetic Scientist thought of oral classroom participation as a way to enhance his understanding and gain knowledge through asking questions to clarify what was in his mind. He also believed that through active oral classroom participation he could improve his listening and speaking abilities.

Ms. English Teacher from Indonesia (FMA12) was another active classroom participant. She firmly believed that participating in class could give her a chance to explain her
ideas and develop logical thinking of the subject matter under
discussion, which would eventually help her build up self-
confidence. Having been a teacher herself for many years, she
was highly appreciative of the teachers she had at OSU. Her
favorable impression of the professors made her feel relaxed in
their classes and active in her thinking. As a result, she was
willing to contribute her ideas to class and to engage herself in
discussion. She felt strongly, based on her classroom
experience in Indonesia both as a student and a teacher, that the
encouraging and facilitative classroom climate generated by the
teacher motivated her to participate actively in class:

The professors like to give us the chances or the
opportunities to express ourselves to think from our own
angle and they let us to tell everybody in the class and they
always encourage us to speak about the topic and see the
topic from various perspectives, not like in Indonesia, if
we talk about, for example, topic "A," we much speak
everything without anything else. The Indonesia teachers
don't care if the students see the topic from the simple or
simplicity. So it seems that professors here really
encourage us to speak more in depth and there is a kind of
theoretical background if we want to speak a topic.
Sometimes maybe from your own experience, at home, at
your teaching field, everywhere.

Ms. English Teacher's concept of participation was,
however, slightly different from her American peers. She
thought that American students usually "speak what they want,"
but, coming from Indonesian cultural background, she would
speak only if she knew "more about the topic." Therefore, in
order to actively participate in class, she needed to do the assigned readings first at home. Her idea of good preparation was not emphasized and practiced in her home country. Thus, she held a resentful attitude towards "speaking without substance," and obviously, she did not "want to speak something too superfluous." She wanted to contribute to class as actively as many American peers, but she did not want to participate for participation's sake. The following quote depicted her conflict:

I want to contribute in class like American people, and try to avoid my bad feeling because I see from Americans. They speak everything, but sometimes not in-depth, but they express themselves freely. So I try to learn from them -- how to do that, and yet I want participation to be more in-depth.

This internal conflict between a free speech style in classroom participation as observed among most American students and a formal substantive speech style as reflected among many Asian students in general is, to a certain extent, the reflection of different cultural value systems and practices. For American students, spontaneous and improvised thoughts, though sometimes incomplete or "superfluous," are regarded as a brainstorming process, which is commonly observed and encouraged in classrooms. For most Asian students, on the other hand, ideas should be pre-thought and prepared before they should be shared. The idea formation takes time to process. In other words, the shared ideas are usually rule-
governed, experience-based, or reference-citing. However, in the classroom situation in U.S. higher education where these two participation patterns mingle, Asian students who take more time to process naturally are slowed down and silenced by the spontaneity-oriented participation behavior of American students. Ms. English Teacher, in order to be active in class and yet without losing her quality in contribution, often worked twice as hard in terms of thorough preparation as many Asian students do, and meanwhile being sensitive in taking the opportunity to participate. Her teaching background helped her in this adjustment, and her being an English teacher facilitated her participation as well.

After all, as she admitted, she did not participate as much as some American students did, not because she could not, but because she did not want to:

I don't want to speak as often as some Americans. Sometimes, they talk about their families, friends, something irrelevant to the topic in the class. I feel uncomfortable if I participate by bringing up the issue far from the topic exactly.

Evidently, Ms. English Teacher was among those who were highly competitive among people coming from the same cultural background. She felt bad if she was in a class and did not participate as actively as some other students, especially those
Asian students who participated actively in discussion while she did not:

Sometimes although my friends speak aloud, or speak more in class, if that conversation seems there is no relation between their speaking and the topic, then I will feel OK. But if my friends can contribute their ideas really connected to the topic, and I cannot speak something, that makes me feel bad.

Ms. English Teacher was someone who would grab the opportunity for speaking up in class if there was one. If the opportunity was taken by another student, she would feel uncomfortable. But consequently she would "be more active next time." She had a unique participation pattern both in her L1 (Indonesian), and L2 (English), which somehow reflected her habitual teaching style affected by her background as a teacher:

If I am in a class, I would tend to be the last speaker. I would see what others can contribute, and then I tend to conclude, not only my conclusion, but also try to add my idea, sort of synthesizing the ideas.

Clearly enough, Ms. English Teacher perceived the benefits of oral classroom participation as an opportunity for clarification of both the teacher's points and her own ideas. To her, clarification was the initial step in confidence-building. She also believed that participation should be of high quality, which made her competitive among non-native speakers and different from some native speakers of English in class.
In sum, Ms. English Teacher viewed oral classroom participation as a great opportunity for her to explain her ideas formed through thorough preparation and attentive listening in class. She also thought that it was a good opportunity to build up her self-confidence in speaking. Her prior teaching experience, the lively classroom atmosphere and encouragement of participation from the teachers, and her sense of competitiveness motivated her to participate actively in her content courses.

Summary

The three cases who were active in oral classroom participation were all positive about and enjoyed classroom participation although they perceived the benefits of oral classroom participation from slightly different perspectives. While Mr. Geologist saw oral classroom participation mainly as a way of self-modification, reducing anxiety and reflecting on non-native English speakers' equality to native English speakers, Ms. English Teacher viewed it as a way to do confirmation checks and build confidence. Mr. Geodetic Scientist, on the other hand, perceived oral classroom participation as a way to gain knowledge, to clarify his comprehension, and to overcome his weakness in listening and speaking.
2. Why are they sometimes active and sometimes inactive in oral classroom participation?

--- Analysis of five cases

Being active was possible, but being constantly active in class was impossible for five participants in this study. They were Mr. Geodetic Scientist from China (MMAC2); Mr. Ecologist (MPHDC4) from China; Mr. Mechanical Engineer (MMAK1) from Korea; Mr. Biophysicist (MPHDJ1) from Japan; and Mr. Political Science Teacher (MMA13) from Indonesia. Interestingly, they were all male students, and they talked a lot in class when they wanted to, but they were also very quiet when they had to.

Mr. Geodetic Scientist (MMAC2) had prior college teaching experience in China and he had been in Germany as a visiting scholar. His experiences helped him a great deal in raising thought-provoking issues or questions which would lead to heated class discussions. To him, asking questions was one thing, and asking high-quality questions was another. He felt that participation should not be evaluated only on the number of questions one asked or the frequency of participation. The level of difficulty as well as the degree of depth of the questions or follow-up discussions should reflect one's preparedness and idea synthesis. Therefore, Mr. Geodetic Scientist had his reason to brag:
The questions I raise will often initiate a heated discussion in class, sometimes, my classmates will say that the questions I ask in class will usually result in the related homework assignment. So they think high of my questions, and they think that my good-quality questions are often a step further of the class content. However, I won’t answer the questions the answers of which are obvious.

His view of asking questions in class also affected his attitude towards some “easy questions” asked by some other students. He felt strongly that those so-called “easy questions” should be asked after class as they were wasting other classmates’ time. He further elaborated: “Some questions I prefer to ask only after class. I only ask questions which I think will benefit the majority of the students in class.” However, how could one possibly know the difficulty level of the question to other students before it was asked? A tough question to one might be easy to another. There was hardly any criterion to assess the different level of the question, so the precaution in asking “good” questions might inhibit the student in active participation. But it is this kind of precaution that leads to face-saving to avoid embarrassment. Mr. Geodetic Scientist had his own experience:

One course I am now taking is a prerequisite to another course I am required to take, and the content of this course is new to me. In this case, even I have a lot of difficulties in understanding, I prefer not to ask questions. Because if I ask, my classmates might think that this is too easy, you should understand. And I do think that some
students in the class might face the same situation, yet they, like me, feel shy in asking.

Obviously, Mr. Geodetic Scientist’s concern about the difficulty level of the questions was related to his self-confidence coupled with the Asian concept of face-saving. The lack of confidence due to unfamiliarity of the subject matter under discussion was well-coated by shyness, which, in return, resulted in silence in class or an inactive participation mode.

As seen, Mr. Geodetic Scientist’s concern for the quality of the question he asked often delayed his promptness in impromptu questions. In other words, the questions he asked would have been cooked for a while in his mind. In this cooking process, he would automatically modify his speech and wording in English, which was, on the one hand, on the other hand, a way to gain confidence in producing grammatically correct sentences from the linguistic output perspective, and, on the other hand, a way to filter those so-called “low-quality” questions he should not ask. This kind of preparation phase was deeply rooted in the Asian concept of “Think before you leap.” Meditation is encouraged and prompt speech is disdained as bad as hasty action. Therefore, Mr. Geodetic Scientist’s perceptions of asking high-quality questions was commonly shared by many Asian students by and large.
He used this not only as a way of modifying his own participation behavior, but also as a way to evaluate his fellow classmates.

I would think that students should not ask a certain question of low quality. But I would say that some of my classmates, especially some American classmates would not care about other classmates’ feeling when they want to ask questions. Generally, international students will consider this aspect more than American students.

It was implied that Mr. Geodetic Scientist associated American students’ different participation style -- free and casual and improvisational to descriptors like lack of concern for other students -- egocentric and simple-minded. However, his feelings towards some American students’ classroom participation behavior reflected, in a way, the different perceptions towards classroom participation held by most Asian students who viewed listening and understanding as the priority in class, and American students who were accustomed to a lively atmosphere and free speech.

However, the more active participation behavior of many American students helped some Asian students like Mr. Geodetic Scientist in asking the questions they are afraid to ask:

Sometimes, they (American classmates) ask questions which you also want to ask. For example, some American students once asked many questions regarding the midterm examinations. I also want to know the answers and yet I feel shy to ask. So I feel very grateful to their asking.
A very interesting issue implied here is that some Asian students do have a few questions and they might get along without asking them simply because others are asking the same questions. If one is willing to wait to see whether the questions they have in mind are raised, then he or she might end up saying nothing in class. This phenomenon is commonly observed in Asian culture. As an old Chinese saying goes: “Among the flock of birds, the one whose head gets stuck out of the woods will be shot first.” Therefore, many people in a group would try not to be visible in their opinions unless someone else starts first. They are accustomed to being called upon to ask or answer questions as perhaps no one is willing to be that “bird.” In Asian culture where collectivism is emphasized, people are afraid of being judged and criticized even though they realize that someone must stand up and ask those questions. However, this cultural behavior and pattern of passiveness in action inherent in many Asian students seems to benefit them a lot when they share the classroom with American students.

Mr. Geodetic Scientist perceived the benefits of classroom participation as knowledge confirmation, mistake correction, and opinion exchanging:

First of all, when others ask questions, I can recall, and synthesize my knowledge relevant to the topic to see whether I know the answer or whether I have thought about that before. In this way, if I have an answer to the question raised in class, than I can compare mine with the
teacher's to check my comprehension or to pose further questions. This is a good chance to confirm my knowledge, and to correct my mistakes, which is more effective than I read from a book. Therefore, I benefit a lot from others' questions.

Mr. Geodetic Scientist was very argumentative sometimes with classmates as well as instructors. He would not be easily convinced unless he found the logical reasoning in others' opinions which were obviously better in both expression and accuracy. His anecdote spoke for itself:

Sometimes the teacher will misunderstand your question. For instance once I asked a question after class, the teacher said that it was a stupid one immediately after I asked. Then I elaborated my question immediately and then the teacher suddenly replied that my question was not stupid after all. Sometimes, you need clarify your questions because the way you ask might not be understood the same way as you intend. Therefore, communication between the teacher and the students is sometimes of concern.

In fact, when we talk about classroom communication, we often tend to look at it from the perspective of how difficult it is for international students to follow instructions as they still lack language abilities to comprehend the instructor. We seldom investigate how difficult it is sometimes for professors to understand the students due to the students' limited language proficiency. Many Asian students like Mr. Geodetic Scientist would either modify their questions before they are raised, or hold the questions until after class due to the nature of the
question, i.e., if it is more appropriate to ask after class, or due to the language barrier in processing the question. Those who choose the latter will probably end up participating in the class rather inactively.

Although the benefits of participation were obvious to Mr. Geodetic Scientist, he still perceived that participation was not absolutely important in terms of achievement:

I think my achievement in attending a class does not depend on whether I participate or not. Sometimes I also benefit from listening to others' questions and answers as long as I am active in thinking. The participation is not the only factor in evaluating one's achievement. Understanding is the most important.

When understanding the class is regarded as the ultimate importance in class, then participation becomes a facilitative means to meet this end. Asian students like Mr. Geodetic Scientist could survive understanding without participation, at least sometimes as they were trained to be passive, obedient, and respectful from early on, so the active role of participation would not necessarily be important. However, American students who were trained to be active from early on would not demonstrate their understanding without participation as it was regarded as an essential component in the process of a successful class.

Mr. Geodetic Scientist's participation behavior -- sometimes active, and sometimes inactive -- could also be
explained by his perceptions of question types and class/lesson
types. To him, questions supposed to be asked in class might
end up being asked after class for various reasons:

I think there is not a clear line between the questions
asked in class and those after class. But some questions
related to you directly, like clarity about the assignment, I
usually ask only after class. Sometimes you want to ask a
question in class, but there is no chance in class, for
instance, the teacher indicates in class that he or she has a
lot to talk in class, or sometimes the teacher prefers to
entertain all the questions after she finishes what is
intended to be covered in class, so you have to ask it after
class.

According to Mr. Geodetic Scientist, on many occasions, a
student should have a very good sense of the appropriateness of
asking and answering questions depending on the instructor's
intent and mood. It is true that sometimes even one off-topic
question might destroy the usual class tempo, shift away the
students' concentration, and disturb the entire teaching plan.
Conversely, a good question sometimes can motivate thinking,
generate more focused questions, and stimulate the discussion.
Perhaps the key to Mr. Geodetic Scientist's double role in
classroom participation is his sensitivity in when to ask what and
how.

In sum, Mr. Geodetic Scientist did not perceive oral
classroom participation as absolutely necessary unless the
questions asked or the issues raised were of high quality. His
prior college teaching experience in China and his prior
experience as a visiting scholar in Germany prompted him to see the value of classroom participation as a reflection of one’s preparedness for class and readiness for improvised synthesis. Based on his value-driven criterion in asking questions, he was sometimes very active in participation when he had something to ask or say what he believed was of value, and sometimes he was not active in participation. To him, the general benefits of oral classroom participation were knowledge confirmation, mistake correction, and opinion exchange. However, in his opinion, oral classroom participation did not reflect one’s academic achievement. In other words, one’s oral classroom participation did not equate with one’s academic achievement. What seemed to be the key determining factor affecting his participation mode was his sense of appropriateness in classroom communication.

Mr. Ecologist (MPHDC4), unlike Mr. Geodetic Scientist, appeared to be more introverted and serious as was described earlier. Classroom participation, to him, was not an issue in China in his previous experiences as a college and graduate student. As he recalled, he never had a chance to speak in class while at college. In OSU, he felt he only participated by expressing his opinions or asking questions when he felt very
confident. He preferred speaking up in a small group discussion with about six or seven students:

I feel free to talk among these students who I know well and even though I make some mistakes when speaking up, yet I will not hold back by mistakes. However, when I am with more students in a big classroom and when I am not familiar with the professor I will speak less.

It was clear that the level of comfort played a major role in affecting his participation behavior. When he felt more comfortable in a group situation, he did not care too much about making mistakes. As a result, he participated more in discussion. Conversely, he felt uncomfortable in a big class and with the concern of making mistakes, he withdrew from participation and remained rather "introverted." Therefore, his double role in classroom participation was circumstantial depending on whether he was in a small group discussion or a big classroom.

His active role of participation in small groups could be explained through his own reflection:

I like small groups. For one reason, it can stimulate my thinking, and another I can practice my English. On the other hand it also gives me a better understanding of the content.

He was good at answering questions when he was in small groups. To him, whether there were proportionately more non-native speakers of English in class or not did not matter to his comfort level of participation. He found that having more non-
native speakers would make him feel more comfortable in that these students should have more in common and share similar cultural background.

Because I have intuition if we are from the same country and I say something he can understand but the native speaker may not understand well, so that is why if I am the only non-native speaker in the class, I may not participate a lot, but I will still participate.

Mr. Ecologist attributed his active participation to several factors: interest level and knowledge of the subject matter, and encouragement from the instructor in class. He also felt that if other students in class participated very actively, he would be stimulated and encouraged to participate more actively. It was clear to him that he could benefit from active classroom participation in several ways, namely, exchanging opinions, enhancing comprehension, and improving his English:

I think first of all, we can learn a lot of this course and also English studying through participation. I think the major idea is to get knowledge so I can exchange my opinions and share opinions with others, which can make us to have a better understanding of the course, and I think it is also a good way to improve our oral English.

In fact, improving his English was his main goal in class. He did not have many opportunities to speak English outside his classroom as he shared an apartment with several other Chinese students and he was not as sociable as Mr. Exercise Physiologist (MPHDC1). His concerns regarding class participation and expectation of having more American peers in class ("50% at
least" in his opinion) were all related to his language exposure motivation. One of the disadvantages of having many international students in class was perceived as the divided attention on the part of the instructor because of the diverse needs of the students, and lack of opportunity to learn American English on the part of Mr. Ecologist. Though it sounded somewhat selfish, he truly felt this, as did many students besides him, such as Ms. Pharmacist (FPHDC3) and Ms. English Teacher (FMAI2). There is a hidden factor: competitiveness among Asian students.

However, listening comprehension seemed to be a big obstacle for him when he assumed the passive role in classroom participation. His trouble was not merely due to his lack of listening ability, but also somehow due to the instructor's accent which was not as standard as radio announcers:

In some classes I am not very active because I could not understand the teaching materials or the content well. There is always problems with me about what the teacher is saying. Some of the instructor's pronunciation is not very standard so I cannot understand very well and thus can not catch the ideas and follow very closely.

As many Asian students learned English in their own countries where they were exposed to radio programs like VOA (Voice of America) and BBC (British Broadcast Company), and various audio and video-tapes, they usually feel comfortable with and expect that kind of standard pronunciation. They seldom have
opportunities to be exposed to English spoken fluently, and yet with a heavy accent. This adds a lot of problems to the linguistic adjustment of Asian students like Mr. Ecologist.

When he sometimes finished a class with little or no participation while other students participated a lot, Mr. Ecologist would feel very uncomfortable:

In most of the cases when the class is most devoted to discussion and I did not say much, I usually will worry. That means I have not prepared well, and I do not have any opinion and I do not understand quite well.

But if no one in class seemed to participate a lot due to the lecture-type class which had many students in it, it would be all right for him to take notes and listen to the lecture like others were doing. To him, asking questions and raising issues in a big class (exceeding 100 students sometimes) would be wasting class time. This perception of his led him to form a negative attitude towards some American students' active participation:

Some of the American students do not care about others. If they do not understand well, no matter whether it is a very basic question or a very difficult one, they will ask, and I will feel uncomfortable.

Mr. Ecologist was very textbook-dependent. He understood very well if what the instructor talked about was based on the textbook and the questions he asked would usually be related to the textbook. As he revealed:

Sometimes I really cannot follow some instructors when they talk a lot of things beyond the textbook, so they will talk about daily life and some other things which I cannot
understand. Sometimes, I will try to understand, and sometimes I will just read the textbook, I know it is not related to the textbook.

Yes, Mr. Ecologist considered himself very active among Asian students and rather inactive among American students. In Asian culture, he recalled, it would be regarded somewhat impolite or not respectful to the teacher if a student talked too much or asked too many questions:

I think the students should be very polite in asking questions. The students cannot ask questions without teacher's permission. I think the way is very different, because in America, the students think the teacher and the students are equal, but in Chinese culture, they are at different level and different relationship.

Coming from that background, Mr. Ecologist felt that he had already changed a lot in his participation behavior from inactive to active over a couple of quarters. One of the reasons for this change was the influence of the active participation of other students, such as many American students. Clearly, he made a conscious effort in adjusting to the American classroom climate.

In sum, Mr. Ecologist, though quiet most of the time, was moving his role in classroom participation from inactive to more active as influenced by American classmates. He was text-dependent and willing to participate when the topic under discussion was directly related to the textbook. However, he felt most comfortable speaking up in a small group discussion with a certain number of American students. To him, small group
discussion was ideal for him to practice English and get feedback from group members. He kept silent most of the time in lecture-type classes, partly due to his concept of proper cultural behavior as being silent, and partly due to his consideration of not wasting other students' time.

**Mr. Mechanical Engineer** (MMAK1) could be speechless during the entire class, or could be shooting endless questions on a topic of his interest, dominating the whole discussion. He was, after all, very extroverted, fearless of making mistakes in speaking, and yet did not speak at all about something he was not interested in.

Mr. Mechanical Engineer attributed his inactive classroom participation to the limited opportunities given by instructors who were mostly non-native English speakers themselves. He also thought that the overall majority of the students in engineering classes being non-native speakers of English also inhibited the students' participation mode:

I think I don't have any chance to speak except some questions during the class, the professor not much asks the students to think, we just communicate using paper or the blackboard not much speaking, because in the engineering the majorities are non-native speakers. They are almost all international students, more than native speakers and also professor is not native speakers, that's the strange situation in engineering area.
However, in a class where the students were predominantly Americans, Mr. Mechanical Engineer also felt somewhat inhibited in participation:

If the class is dominated by the native speakers, there is some classes in my field dominated by the native speakers. It is hard to talk because...as somebody sometimes worried about if their questions are answered. Sometimes I could not understand their meaning so sometimes frustrated.

It seemed he only felt comfortable actively participating in class when many Asian students were present. Moreover, he felt that the course and the subject matter of the course were actually the most important factors affecting his participation mode. He was most comfortable participating in classes when the subject matter was of great interest to him. The instructor's teaching style also affected his participation behavior. To him:

If the instructor used like transparency or read book as usual is boring, and if some instructor teaches more easily step by step and gives some examples, then it's more easy to understand.

However, Mr. Mechanical Engineer was very self-confident in his special area “Flight Control Systems.” He not only thought he was a specialist in that area, but he felt that he had a lot of ideas in that area to contribute to class. What held him back sometimes in participation was his lack of vocabulary and his inability to “translate” his own language into English. But he did not care when he made mistakes if the question was something he really wanted to get the answer for. In fact, as he
revealed, he would mind if he made mistakes in speaking up in class in Korea. But his few years experience of studying in the United States convinced him that making mistakes was not that terrible:

When I arrived in the United States, I realized that American students always asked some stupid questions, but they don’t care. So when I made mistakes in speaking English in class sometimes, I don’t feel shameful either.

Maybe this social concept of “take it easy” eased his concern about making mistakes in speaking, which helped him participate actively on the subject matter of his interest.

When he participated, he would not accept the professor’s explanation if he thought it was wrong. He would confine his participation style mainly to asking questions about the content of the class. He usually would save technical questions about the assignment schedule and homework until after class.

Mr. Mechanical Engineer had a very interesting perspective on taking courses with American students versus taking courses with other international students in general, and Asian students in particular. His attitude towards being a student with either group, to a certain extent, affected his participation mode. He felt more comfortable in taking courses with American students as he felt it was easy to understand them. Another reason was that he felt he could get a higher
grade in skill courses like mathematics where he had many American peers:

In terms of grading, I prefer to take classes with Americans, especially in classes like mathematics. The more American students in class, the higher grade I can usually have because the mathematics skill in Asia is much higher.

Clearly, he cared about grades as most Asian students do and he could easily get by without much participation if he could get high grades in courses like mathematics with American peers. However, he felt unusually competitive when he described his feeling in taking courses like mathematics with many other Asian students. He thought that Asian students who took mathematics courses were normally high-achievers. So it was extremely hard to get a higher grade among Asian students without extra effort. But, he could feel more relaxed in participation as other Asian students did not usually speak well. He confessed:

Because as usual, international students have to pay more money and they are eager to study. They don't have many chances to play, they have much time to study, so it is more hard to compete with them. But in English it is easier to take classes with more international students, because they don't speak very well.

To Mr. Mechanical Engineer, the nature of the course was also an important factor affecting his participation mode. Even though the professor encouraged discussion in class, students could hardly be involved in discussion when the content of the
course was related to mathematics. According to him, "Mathematics is always unique, there is no opinions, no suggestions about mathematics. The question is always the mistakes in professor's explanation of equations." So participation was therefore confined to true or false identification of the mathematics formula.

In sum, Mr. Mechanical Engineer's participation mode was interest-driven. He could participate very actively without worrying about the mistakes he made in speaking if the topic was of interest to him. Conversely, he did not care about participation when the topic of discussion did not interest him. He felt comfortable in classes with many American students for two reasons: One was that he could get a higher grade, and the other was that he could understand them better, but he felt inhibited in participation as he was a non-native speaker who lacked the vocabulary to express himself as clearly as he should. Conversely, he also felt uncomfortable in classes with many international students in general, and Asian students in particular, for two reasons: One was that he felt highly competitive to get higher grades among them, and the other was that they were no better than he was as a speaker in class, so it was more difficult for him to understand their English. However, he would not feel threatened in participation in terms of the language.
Mr. Biophysicist (MPHDJ1) was more Americanized in many ways as he went through college in the U.S. However, his oral classroom participation mode was somewhat difficult to describe. In his special field—biophysics—lecture was the common lesson type and there were usually many students in a class. There were more than one hundred students in a biochemistry course he was then taking. Obviously, the teacher “could not communicate with people well,” and he had to “talk all the way through.” In another class he was then taking, there were fewer than twenty students and the professor gave many opportunities for class discussion. In the lecture-type class, Mr. Biophysicist did not participate as he saw no opportunity at all. In the latter class, he did participate without feeling himself a non-native speaker. He spoke English very well due to his four-year college exposure and his participation was not affected by a sense of inferiority in English which many other Asian students usually feel. When he wanted to ask questions or raise issues, he would “just go ahead and interrupt the instructor,” especially on the occasion that he found some mistakes in the instruction. Therefore, mistakes made by the professor was an important factor affecting his participation. “Whenever there is some disagreement between mine and the professor’s, I would speak up.” This behavior of his was not commonly practiced by
many Asian students who might feel impolite confronting the professor even though the disagreement did exist. They might ask the professor after class, because they were very much concerned about face-saving. Mr. Biophysicist, on the other hand, was more straightforward, and this directness could be related to his prior college experience in the U.S.

Another factor that facilitated his active role in oral classroom participation was, similar to what Mr. Mechanical Engineer felt, his interest in the subject matter discussed in class. If the topic interested him, he could keep talking. The pressure which he had felt when he was at college no longer existed as a PhD student.

Mr. Biophysicist saw participation and learning as two separate entities. To him, participation could be enjoyable, but did not necessarily mean learning. Learning, in his view, was "just understanding the materials as memorizing some information." As he further elaborated:

> If I participate well, I can understand what the teacher is talking about, but doesn't mean we are learning very well. Some people participate the class very well, but actually they do not learn anything. They just talk with teachers.

What he implied here was that sometimes students could understand the teacher well even without oral classroom participation. So they could be content at the level of understanding without actively engaging in participation. In
order to participate, he thought that two things were important: One was "to get rid of the hesitation," and the other was "to forget I am an international student."

However, sometimes he did not participate in class discussion simply because of the lack of adequate preparation. Sometimes when he prepared for the class, chances were that he felt more focused in participation. He was very judgmental towards the questions raised by other students in class:

I just check whether the question is suitable for class, or the appropriacy of the question level. If they ask some easy questions, I would wonder why they should ask such questions.

Mr. Biophysicist benefited from his classmates' questions in that he would check whether the teacher's answer was consistent with the one in his mind. If not, he would seize the opportunity to ask the teacher to clarify the point. He would not be hesitant if the teacher asked others' opinions first. Therefore, he was often engaged in classroom participation.

Mr. Biophysicist also exercised caution in his oral classroom participation. He tended to think and phrase his ideas before he spoke in class, if time allowed, because he did not "want to make mistakes." He felt that he could speak better than many other non-native speakers due to his longer length of stay and learning experience in the U.S.
According to Mr. Biophysicist, college life in Japan was no fun for Japanese students who could not ask questions in class:

In Japan, we always think that the professor is superior to students, and we always think the materials taught by the teacher is correct. We could not argue with the professor, and we could not show our own opinions.

His participation mode in terms of picking up the mistakes in professors' lectures could be very offensive in his own country. If he were educated in a Japanese college, he would not have had the courage to participate as much as he could in his content courses in the U.S. Therefore, the cultural differences as well as the professors' expectations of classroom participation in the native countries of many Asian students did influence their participation modes in general. But the length of stay and prior American college experience did acculturate Mr. Biophysicist in a way that he no longer behaved like a Japanese student in his PhD program in an American university.

In terms of the attitudes of native speakers towards their international peers, Mr. Biophysicist thought that native speakers sometimes did not really understand how much non-native speakers knew, what their feelings were, or what they were thinking because they did not usually speak a lot in class. However, their silence in class did not necessarily reflect their lack of thinking and lack of understanding. Mr. Biophysicist's experience revealed that if non-native speakers tried to speak
without worrying about their grammatical errors, they would get help from the native speakers. In fact, the things non-native speakers were concerned about most, such as grammar and usage, were not that important to native-speakers as long as they could understand the meaning. But if international graduate students did not speak up in class, American students could not really understand what they thought.

In sum, Mr. Biophysicist's prior college experience in the U.S. enabled him to be confident in active oral classroom participation providing that the instructor encouraged participation, that he was prepared for class, and that he was interested in the subject matter. What concerned him the most in participation was not the language but his preparedness for the class as well as his interest level in the class. He believed that the active classroom participation among non-native speakers could help native-speakers in class understand them and be able to help them better. Although learning and participation were different, participation could help the deeper level of learning.

Mr. Political Science Teacher (MMA13) was usually very quiet in class, but he was highly engaged in his thinking. Whenever he could not follow the instruction, he would show a great deal of puzzlement on his face, at which a sensitive
Instructor would have to stop and ask him whether he had questions, and he would always say yes. He could not express himself very well due to his heavy accent, and knowing his weakness inhibited him from active question initiation. Once he was given a chance, he could be very verbal and argumentative.

Mr. Political Science Teacher was truly appreciative of his professors and the academic environment he was in. As a teacher himself, he liked classroom discussions and cooperative learning styles. He thought the close attachment of his professors to Indonesian students including him was due to the fact that they were in a special exchange project:

I think all of my professor are very kind and concerned about the international students. Maybe because we are in this special project, so there are many Indonesians in the same area and some of the professors are our advisers.

The supportive environment and the tender care from the professors should have motivated him in active participation, but his hesitation was unconquerable:

Actually I want to speak to participate in class discussion, but sometimes I have English barrier so I hesitate to express my ideas to speak, except that members of the class is international students or Indonesian students are more than Americans. So I have hesitation to express myself.

What held him back from active participation seemed to be his lack of English speaking ability. But he made an effort “to try to participate in every class.” His participation mode was also
dependent on his understanding as well as his interest level in the subject matter under discussion. However, there was another interesting and yet understandable reason, as he described:

Because almost all the courses which I take require the students to speak, to give opinions, and maybe participation in class is one of the requirements for grading. So I try to speak in every class.

Admittedly, he would not participate as much as he could if participation were not required. He would do so only when the lesson type was discussion in nature, such as seminars. Perhaps as a teacher himself, it was his habit to do what was required. He would always do what the teacher asked him to do:

In one of my courses, the professor asked me or asked the students to prepare questions at home. I read the book some chapters earlier, and then prepared the questions and opinions. So when I came to the class, I was well-prepared.

Whether he was required to participate or he volunteered, he perceived the benefits in participation as three-fold: improving his spoken English ability, exchanging opinions and ideas with others, and building his self-confidence.

To Mr. Political Science Teacher, the most essential factor determining his participation mode was preparation for class on his part. He would feel ashamed of himself if he came to class without doing the assignment. This, again, was closely related to his being a teacher himself. The great sense of responsibility for
doing whatever he was required to do as a student was a true reflection of what he had been preaching: moral principles and proper behaviors. His responsibility, however, obliged him to prove that he was responsible:

I want my professor to know that it’s my intrinsic motive that I want to ask and express my ideas. And I am interested in the topic, for example, the content, and want my professor know that I care about what they talk about and they can trust me that I understand and participate in this class.

While he was a student back in Indonesia, Mr. Political Science Teacher was very active in classroom discussion because he did not have any language barriers, whereas in the U.S., he did experience discomfort and shyness when he was requested to repeat and explain again and again until his meaning could be understood. Therefore, the reaction others had towards his output in participation sometimes made him feel embarrassed and shameful, which, in a way, demotivated his participation to the point that he was suggestive rather than aggressive in speaking his mind.

In order to compensate for his weakness in speaking clearly in class, he tried to go over the question he was about to ask several times or even "write the question down" if he did not have the confidence. To him, lower-quality questions would have already been deleted in this mental process, so all the questions he eventually asked would have been prepared in one
way or another. This could reduce his overall participation rate, but meanwhile, it could also protect him from losing confidence in participation.

Towards taking classes with more American students versus with more international students, Mr. Political Science Teacher had his unique perspectives, which echoed many dilemmas other Asian students have:

There are both advantages and disadvantages for me. For example, I have some advantages for the classes with a lot of Americans in the class. Although they speak fast and unclear, I can learn about speaking, little by little and step by step, I understand the style of their speaking. The disadvantages of this kind of class is that sometimes I do not have the confidence participating because I am sometimes shy and worry about my English. But if in this class, there are a lot of Indonesia students as well as Asian students, non-native speakers, I feel more comfortable participating in this type of class. Unfortunately sometimes we are not speaking English in class. We speak Indonesian among my group.

This reflection of his was familiar among other Asian students. They tend to keep themselves very close to their own ethnic community, speaking their native languages, exchanging strategies to survive courses. Here, students' cultural identity played a major role. They felt they would be alienated if they kept speaking English rather than their own language in their own community. As Mr. Political Science Teacher realized, "We feel awkward not to use our own language when only we Indonesians are together." The problem was that these students
were aware of the importance of practicing speaking as much as possible, yet, they would rather use their own languages to keep their own cultural identity.

According to Mr. Political Science Teacher, he had experienced both supportive and unsupportive attitudes from American peers towards his oral classroom participation:

Usually all the teachers whether elementary or high school, they are very supportive. Sometimes I asked them how to spell and how to pronounce a word, for example, they would help me and help my friends. But some younger or less experienced teachers are not very supportive. If we talk, they are not very friendly. And maybe it is not only my feeling but from my Indonesian friends. They have the same feeling. Some of the Americans had bad manners because of our English.

Besides American peers' mixed attitudes in class towards him in terms of his oral participation, he, too, had experienced inhibition due to the teaching style of a few professors. "Because they cannot create atmosphere for us in the classroom to ask questions, so we are reluctant to ask questions." All in all, he was trying his best to do what he was expected to do in class, and perhaps obligation was something he had required or would require his students to do.

In sum, Mr. Political Science teacher was a good participant in class. Had he not worried about his speaking ability, he would have been more active in speaking his mind in class. Although the overall environment was facilitative for oral
classroom participation among non-native speakers, he did feel uncomfortable because of some negative attitudes of a few native speaking peers and instructors. His sense of responsibility associated with his having been an instructor of moral principles played a major role in his classroom participation in terms of his motivation and persistence in speaking in class. His confession that it could be so easy for him to keep within his own ethnic community made him wonder how he was going to improve his English speaking skills.

Summary

The five cases who were unstable in oral classroom participation modes were all male students. The reasons for their changing modes in participation were different. For Mr. Geodetic Scientist, his mode of participation depended on whether he thought the question he was to ask was of high quality or not as he was concerned about what other classmates would think about him more than what he could benefit from asking the question. Heavily influenced by the cultural belief that students' proper classroom behavior was being silent and that questions should be centered on the textbook, Mr. Ecologist's oral classroom participation mode was determined by his comfort level in class and his judgment of the relevance of his questions to the text. Mr. Mechanical Engineer, like Mr.
Biophysicist, seemed to let his participation mode be decided by his interest level in the subject matter under discussion. However, Mr. Biophysicist's prior learning experience as an undergraduate in a U.S. university enabled him to be confident in classroom participation. His preparation for class also enabled him to be keen on picking up mistakes the instructors made in class, which would have been totally inappropriate in Asian culture. Interestingly, Mr. Political Science Teacher, though not comfortable in speaking up in his content courses because of his language abilities, felt obligated to participate in class due to a sense of responsibility as he used to be a teacher himself back in Indonesia.

3. Why do they seldom participate in class?
--- Analysis of five cases

Mr. Exercise Physiologist (MPHDC1) had a lot of teaching experience in his area back in China and he was very knowledgeable about his field as he completed his MA in China in the same field before he came to the U.S. Among all the courses he had taken, he liked seminars and discussion types the best. However, this did not mean that he would participate in discussion. His interest was in getting others' ideas:

I think I prefer to listen because usually seminars are focused on discussion about the current research in my
area, thus I can have a general idea of what is going on in my major area. In seminar, people will present their own research issues, their research plans, suggestions, ideas so I'll have enough information concerning my major area.

Besides listening and absorbing ideas from his classmates, Mr. Exercise Physiologist did want to participate as his professors sometimes would request him to do so. However, he was too worried about his language ability, and he found that the native speakers usually spoke faster than they did in daily conversation. As he stated:

In discussion, they speak much faster than what the teacher speaks in the lecture. So you can catch up the professor in class, but you may feel yourself lost in discussion. Sometimes you even didn’t know where they had been especially when you have some new words in their fast oral speaking.

Evidently, the major reason for him to seldom participate in class discussion was his poor English speaking ability. As he confessed:

If I had no language problem, I would have no trouble participating in class discussion. What's more, if I were allowed to use Chinese in discussion, I would not only participate, but also contribute a lot to discussion. But in English, I sometimes did not even know what they were talking about.

His poor listening and speaking abilities affected him as a TA (teaching associate). He found that he could not catch what his students sometimes discussed in class unless they deliberately slowed down for him. That bothered him a lot. However, in
informal gatherings of a small group of students with their advisor, he felt more relaxed and comfortable speaking in English.

His language problem was concealed by his lack of participation. He felt that there was miscommunication between his adviser and himself in some classes. His adviser encouraged him to participate as often as possible, but he did not have the courage to tell his adviser what exact problems he had in participation. He thought his adviser might be aware of his problems, but:

At the very beginning of this semester when we were having a discussion, all the native speakers spoke very fast, and my adviser asked me: "Can you understand what we are talking about?" and I said, "Yes."

Did he really understand? Probably not. But why should he say "yes" while he actually meant "no?" Again, this is related to Asian culture. In Asia, people are usually very polite especially in the hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student. The student would feel stupid to admit that he does not know what he is supposed to know if the teacher asks him the question. The usual practice would be that the student would go ahead and say yes to whatever he does not really understand and later on he would find out what that means in one way or another. In Mr. Exercise Physiologist's case, he might be better off if he admitted to his adviser that he did not
understand what the discussion was about, but he concealed his weakness and suffered immensely until his weakness in listening and speaking skills was discovered. Why should he care so much about face-saving?

It was true that Mr. Exercise Physiologist did have a great deal of knowledge in his content area and many ideas in his mind. However, his English language skills were not good enough to help him to communicate in a classroom setting. Only on one occasion when he was well prepared for class, did he try to ask questions or participate in discussion.

Although he seldom participated in class, he still held positive feelings about active classroom participation:

I think participation can enlarge the scope of the topic. Some points might not be mentioned without discussion. So I think through students' participation, we can understand a certain topic better and deeper.

He knew that he was not a good oral classroom participant, but he would rather be silent than ask stupid or low-quality questions for the sake of participation. He did not think highly of what some of his classmates did in class:

I think some classmates ask some irrelevant questions, such as "Where is this formula?", which seems to be of no importance. But in order to show that they are participating in class, they might ask questions despite of its quality.

According to Mr. Exercise Physiologist, his as well as many other international graduate students' participation mode largely
depended on whether it was required and counted towards the overall grading of the course. If participation was a must in order to get an "A" in class, he would either write down the questions before class and ask what he had prepared, or ask simple questions to show his participation. When he had real questions in class, he would carefully phrase them in his mind several times until he felt comfortable asking them. But he preferred asking them and discussing them with some of his classmates after class, or asking the professor after class. He was concerned that if he could not express himself well, he would waste others' time.

Mr. Exercise Physiologist thought that his reticence in class was affected by his cultural background in addition to his language ability. As he recalled vividly:

In China, classroom participation is relatively rare. In undergraduate courses, the first two years in particular, there are about one to two hundred students in a class, so participation and discussion is not possible. Students do have questions, but they usually ask them after class. Sometimes, the teacher will arrange time for questions at a special session. Only in graduate courses, sometimes discussions are encouraged. I think, in general, teachers in China are not good at encouraging students in class discussion and participation. They usually lecture, and students, too, are willing to listen, but not very aggressive in thinking and asking questions.

Yes, as a student in China, his role in class was always passive, which had something to do with the Chinese educational system encouraging students in class to be passive absorbers. When he
became a teacher in China, however, his expectation for his students was different:

In my class, I prefer my students to ask questions if they do not follow me, because the question one student has is often or might be shared by many students. But the reality is that none of the students is willing to take the initiative by asking that question. Once it is asked, many students would feel anxious to know the answer.

But his expectation as a teacher in China was not easily met by his students whose thoughts were exactly the same as his when he was a student.

Different classroom participation modes are deeply rooted in different cultural beliefs. In American culture, it seems natural for students to express their ideas and concerns in their learning process. So that is why American students are quite free in expressing themselves in class. Mr. Exercise Physiologist did feel the need and the possibility for this adaptation:

Before we came here, we sort of knew that American classrooms were very lively in many aspects. After a few classes with them, I was convinced and felt it natural to see them act very actively. In this environment, our concept of participation is thus changed.

In sum, two major factors accounted for his inactive oral classroom participation mode: one was his lack of confidence in speaking English in class due to his poor speaking abilities. The other was his contention of being a passive absorber in class as affected by his Chinese cultural concept that a good student
Mr. Chemical Engineer (MMAT1) was a silent student in class most of the time. He was under great pressure due to the course load required by his department. He was resentful of the fast-pace quarter system. He did not talk a lot in class, but he sometimes raised questions when he wanted to make sure that he understood the teacher. However, he preferred "to ask questions after class because the time in class is precious." The questions he asked were mainly related to the homework assignments.

He asked questions in class when he was well-prepared. However, when he was under-prepared, he did not ask questions simply because:

I think I can find an answer if I read the textbook after class. If I ask questions without realizing that the answers are right there in the textbook, then I think it's a waste of others' time.

Consideration of others' time plus reliance on the textbook inhibited his participation. Nevertheless, he did not undermine the importance of participation. He thought that if the students did not participate in class, the professor would not get to know them personally.

Based upon his limited experiences as a student in the classes of his own major, Mr. Mechanical Engineer preferred the
teacher who could initiate and encourage discussion because:

In discussion I can benefit from others' questions which I have not thought of before, and we can thus check our potential answers with that of the professor.

Mr. Mechanical Engineer felt stressed as he took too many courses without being able to drop any. He was always in a low spirit, complaining about the heavy course work he had to do every day and worrying too much about his grades due to lack of participation and insufficient time to do homework. From the bottom of his heart, he wanted all new graduate students not to jump into heavy course work as soon as they arrived. His advice was straightforward:

First of all, before they come, you should try their best to learn English well. After their arrival, they need time for adjustment. I don't think it a good idea to force them to take more credit courses than they feel comfortable with. If I could start again, I would not have taken so many courses as I did the first quarter, four courses besides English. I don't think taking too many courses is good for newcomers.

Unlike many other Asian students who did not participate in class discussion because of their concern with their lack of speaking abilities, Mr. Mechanical Engineer did not seem to care too much about his English even though he was obviously not a good speaker. He believed that being a non-native speaker, it was excusable to make some grammatical errors in speaking, "because everybody knows that I am a foreign student." His excuse for himself actually demotivated him in speaking English
in class. Instead, whenever possible, he would speak Chinese to other Chinese students in class either in small group discussion or in between classes simply because “It won’t take me too much time to communicate within them.”

Mr. Mechanical Engineer’s negative attitude towards taking courses was aggravated when he could not follow the instructor. Many times when misunderstandings occurred, he would give up listening and simply “go home and study hard,” or discuss with his classmates in Chinese. He did not care too much about the lesson type as long as he could survive the course.

In sum, Mr. Mechanical Engineer was not an active oral classroom participant at all. He still had problems adjusting to the quarter system in American higher education. He felt stressed due to heavy course loads, resentful due to the impossibility of dropping any courses as requested by his department, and he was demotivated in participation due to his indifference. His passive role in oral classroom participation was not directly related to his inability to speak English, but related to his lack of enthusiasm due to heavy course loads.

Miss Consumer Scientist (FPHDK2) graduated from a women’s university in Korea. She was never late for class. A careful note-taker and attentive listener, she always tried to do
her best on her assignments and homework, and yet, she was very quiet in class.

Participation to Miss Consumer Scientist was a matter of teaching style. It totally depended on the instructor, and the students could only do what the teaching style allowed them to do. Her account was convincing:

I think the main responsibility is on the teachers. Some teacher in the last quarter in my major classes encouraged us to think more and more about the main subject. In this case, the students wanted to talk about the subject more and more. The other instructors just lectured all the time and there is no response, no questions.

Unlike other Asian students who usually had questions when they were well-prepared for their classes, Miss Consumer Scientist was just the opposite:

I think it depends. Because if I prepared well the lecture, I could have no question about that, and so I have no question, and so if I didn't prepare anything about the teacher's lecture, I can have some questions.

Her lack of questions after preparation could be understood by the fact that she was good at finding answers to the questions through reading. Her seriousness in her assignments could enable her to discover the answers to her initial questions in her process of preparation. She was very self-disciplined and she did not let a question go without trying to find the answer first. Her persistence in pursuing the question usually led to her discovery of why she was puzzled. Her account indicated that
she would have questions to ask if she did not prepare anything for the lecture. She would not let it happen, and she was so disciplined that she simply would not allow herself to go to the class without preparation. The irony was that, consequently, she had no questions to ask and so she would not participate in class actively at all.

Despite her inactive role in class participation, she did perceive the benefit of participation as an effective way to communicate with the instructor:

In oral classroom participation, there are usually open questions and so all the students in the classroom can hear what is the question and the teacher can catch what is the exact questions and so we can communicate with the teacher very effectively.

In addition to her lack of questions to ask in class as a result of her over-preparation, she was also concerned that she might not be understood by the instructor if she did participate. Obviously, she did not have enough self-confidence in her speaking ability. When sometimes she did have something to ask, she would often ask after class. Her reasons in doing so could be found in her following account:

After class, usually we have enough time because usually class time is very short, only 40 or 50 minutes, and also I feel more relaxed. I don't need to care about what other people will think about me.

Her lack of confidence in speaking English was originally caused by the negative attitude she received when she first came
to the U.S. and tried but found it hard to express herself in class.

I had no pride and I was not sure whether I should really participated in the class or not, and I was worried about whether I could understand the professor exactly or not, I was not sure at all.

So she decided to study hard by herself. Gradually, she formed the habit of studying alone as a compensation strategy for her silence in class, and gradually participation in class became irrelevant to her.

Although she seldom participated in class, she was very alert to others' questions and answers. She was active in comparing the answers from either the professor in class or her classmates. If discrepancy occurred, she would probably try to give her opinions when she felt certain that hers was a better answer and a correct one.

Miss Consumer Scientist felt comfortable with some of the other non-native speakers in class, and she also felt comfortable with many native speakers in class, who were usually very supportive and kind. However, her comfort level with non-native speakers was comparatively higher due to her sense of community because all her peers had more or less the same language problems.

Miss Consumer Scientist associated her classroom behavior in the United States with her former experience as a student in high school and college:
In Korea, there are two different ways. One is the respect, I mean, one is formal and one is informal. Whenever we ask a question, we should use the respect one. For instance, we cannot say to teacher as "you." We don't say "you" to the teacher.

In order to show respect to the teacher, students should not ask too many questions in class, and should not ask questions without raising their hands. They should not dominate the talking unless requested to do so by the teacher. The teacher is the boss who controls everything in class, and to be a good student, one should do what he/she was required to do by the teacher.

In sum, Miss Consumer Scientist was a serious learner. Her inactive role in classroom participation was due to her cultural concept of showing respect for the teacher by not talking too much in class. Her thorough lesson preparation as a compensation strategy for building her self-confidence resulted in her silence in class though her thinking process was active. Her English speaking ability did prevent her from active participation, but it was the teaching style, as she firmly believed, that determined the participation mode of the students with herself included.

Miss Nutritionist (FPHDK5) came to pursue her PhD after half a year of ESL training in another U.S. university. Friendly
and approachable, she always tried to maintain a good relationship with her classmates and her instructors. In class, she was an attentive listener, but she seldom participated in discussion unless she was called upon. She was very expressive, nodding her head and putting a smile on her face sometimes indicating her understanding and agreement, and frowning and shaking her head sometimes to indicate her puzzlement and disagreement. She expressed two main reasons for her intimidation in participation, namely, poor understanding and difficulty in expressing herself in class:

First of all, I couldn't understand what the question is exactly, and secondly, I don't know sometimes how to say and how to ask them, and how to express my idea very appropriately. Besides, I think I don't feel like I belong to class. I mean, maybe without any mention, because there is no exchanging of ideas with the professor with the students.

Apart from these two reasons, she also thought that the fact that she was not familiar with her classmates inhibited her initiatives in participation.

Miss Nutritionist associated her reticence in class with her earlier college life in Korea. She recalled vividly that her professors at college usually treated the students like passive knowledge absorbers because these professors thought the limited class time should be used for knowledge enhancement via lectures. Influenced heavily by her former learning style as a

216
good listener without being encouraged to ask questions in class, Miss Nutritionist, when encountering questions in class, would try to seek help from her classmates first before she tried to ask the professor after class.

Miss Nutritionist, though she seldom participated in class, did see the benefit of participation:

Sometimes other students will say the question what I have, so even though I didn’t ask my question, they can ask, then I can get some knowledge from them.

To her, the active participation of other students helped her clarify her doubts and demystify her questions although she did not participate herself. She could get by without uttering a sound, but she felt “lonely,” and she had a sense of “not belonging to the class.” Therefore deep in her heart she did want to participate had she had enough confidence about her speaking ability:

Even though I am sure about the answer, sometimes I want to show myself how much I know, because without speaking, I worried about what they are thinking of me. They will think: “Oh, she doesn’t have any question or she is very silent and quiet.”

To compensate for her silence in class and to get answers to her questions not addressed in class, Miss Nutritionist seemed to lean on study groups after class in which she believed she could exchange her ideas and discuss issues with her classmates. She also preferred to ask professors after class to confirm the ideas.
she was not sure of:

Professors understand that I am a foreign student so he will understand I am afraid asking him during class. So he explained very clearly. If I ask if it's true or not, he said directly: "It's true, because there are two reasons: One is this and the other is that." So if he said like that, I can understand very much. And also I can ask some of my ideas into the two reasons. So when I said my opinion, he said: "All right, your idea is right," so I can give respond and I can make sure upon what I thought.

To her, one-on-one help from the professor was more concrete and more direct to her personal questions. She believed that the professor, realizing that she was a foreign student, would use foreigner talk or teacher talk, which would make her feel more comfortable and feel taken care of. Even if she was unable to express her ideas well when talking with her professor after class sometimes, she would not regard it as negative. Instead, she would feel stimulated to try sometime later.

However, Miss Nutritionist felt that talking with professors in the U.S. was much easier than talking with professors in Korea. She felt less restricted and more relaxed in the U.S.:

In Korea, I have to be polite always. When I meet with my professor, I bow, and I always try to use very polite language and I have to be very nice to them and this is really very hard. I cannot ask very directly and I cannot against their opinion. So when I have an idea I have to be careful when I explain. But here I can explain directly, maybe they can more understand because if I say something not directly, they could not catch my point. So I like it.
There were many native speakers of English in the content classes Miss Nutritionist had taken. She felt very comfortable with them. She regarded it as a very good chance to practice her listening comprehension and also if she could speak either in class or after class with them, she felt "very confident" about herself. It was easy for her to switch from English to Korean if she was with her co-nationals, but in communicating with native-speakers, she had no other choice but to speak in English.

Although Miss Nutritionist was not an active participant in class, she did reveal her potential and motivation in reverse to her role in class as she continued improving her English speaking skill, adapting to the culture well, and increasing her knowledge base in her field.

With her background as a student in a women's university in Korea, she had unique perspectives about the role of female college students in Korea, which she thought related to their classroom participation mode. As she recalled:

As a student in Women's University, I don't know other school, and I don't know about men's ideas, but usually Korean woman is very passive and they are also afraid of asking questions to the professor. But they are very good in exam. But I don't think they are good in participation in classes. I know they study really hard and I am sure they have a lot of questions but they prefer to exchange their ideas just with the other students.
Having been a student in a women's school and a women's college did prepare Miss Nutritionist to be a polite and sensitive student, and she admitted that the women's college did produce quiet, responsible and competitive students. But, as she recalled after being a student in coed schools, she did see a lot of disadvantages to being a student only with other women:

From the first time I had to choose university, I think it doesn't matter the school with men or women. But after graduating I realized just studying with other men would be better to develop personality and social skills. If I were a governor in education, maybe I will definitely make all the schools mixed.

She felt that had she not been a student with only females students, her personality would be better shaped towards active oral participation in class.

In sum, Miss Nutritionist did not participate actively in her content courses for several reasons, such as her lack of listening and speaking ability, her inhibition toward being aggressive in class as influenced by her being a student in a Korean women's school and a women's college, and her unfamiliarity with classmates. However, she did see the benefit of active oral classroom participation, and she did feel support from the professors and group discussion after class. She was confident that once she improved her language skill, overcame the cultural barrier, and had more course-taking experience, she would reverse her participation mode from passive to more
active. She was looking forward to the return of her true personality -- extroverted -- which had been concealed for such a long time, from when she was a student in a women's school and in a women's college.

**Miss Counselor (FMAJ3)** was the only international graduate student in the classes she had taken in her major--counseling education. As she recalled, the classes she had taken were mainly combinations of both lectures and discussions. Quiet and modest, she did not participate in class, but she did contribute to group discussions. Due to the nature of her major, she had to counsel other students as subjects in group work, and vice versa. She could speak very well as she had two years prior experience in another midwestern university in the U.S. as an undergraduate, but she was “shy in nature.”

It was true that Miss Counselor was slow to react. She would allow herself enough time to think about something before she could react or respond. Admittedly, she found it rather a disadvantage for classroom participation. As many of her American classmates were very active and spontaneous in reaction, she sometimes had to skip over chances she had to contribute to class discussion. Sometimes she felt herself hopeless in participation as American peers always asked “too many questions.”
She thought she was not only slow, but also passive. “I think if the teacher asks us opinions, I will not volunteer to speak up immediately. I cannot organize fully my thought because English is my second language.” Evidently she needed more time to think than her American counterparts and that reduced her opportunity for participation in class.

Unlike some of the other students, Miss Counselor would like to ask questions when she had no preparation. She usually would not have questions when she was well-prepared, and chances were that she was always well prepared. This habit of thorough preparation was not uncommon among Asian students. In Asia, it is highly recommended and stressed by schools and parents that students should be responsible for lesson preparation. They are supposed to find the answers to their questions through reading, and well-preparedness on the part of the students is the guarantee for school success.

Nevertheless, Miss Counselor perceived participation as a means to help her to be courageous in speaking, and not so much as a means to improve her English. Meanwhile, not participating would also worry her as she cared about the professor’s impression of her as a non-participant. So she would try to ask her professors questions after class.

She was appreciative of her classmates’ questions in class. As she revealed, “I think most of them are very challenging
questions, so I can benefit from them and sometimes I can understand the questions in depth." She felt that she needed the stimulus from her classmates' questions to engage herself in thinking. She found that answering questions was more challenging than asking them. She would have plenty of time to think about and to phrase a question before she actually asked, but it would take her a longer time to answer others' questions. As a result, someone else in class would answer the question ahead of her.

Miss Counselor preferred classes with a mixture of lectures and discussions. She liked the systematic presentation of the subject matter in a lecture, and she also liked various opinions from class discussions. She also thought that the lesson type should depend on the content. One of the courses she had taken, "Introduction to Counseling Education," for instance, would be better offered as a lecture, according to Miss Counselor, because "it is an introduction."

According to Miss Counselor, it was the normal behavior of students in Japan to sit in class, taking notes and listening to the teacher carefully. There was also a difference in behavior between male students and female students:

I think there should not be difference between the male students and the female students. But in reality, I think there is the gender difference. Boys tend to be aggressive and girls tend to be quiet. But generally, girls understand better than boys in class.
In sum, the main reason for Miss Counselor not to participate in class was that she appeared slow in response and shy in confrontation. Although she could speak very well as she had prior learning experiences in another university in America, she would excuse herself as being a second language learner among native speakers in class. She would ask her professors questions mostly after class and was usually very active and comfortable in small group discussions. To her, participation could help her to be more courageous although she did not expect to improve her English via participation. She only asked questions when she did not know the content, but her questions were usually resolved in her careful lesson preparation. Therefore, her thorough class preparation reduced her likelihood to ask questions. Her passive role in participation was also associated with the role of female students in Japanese culture.

Summary

The five cases who seldom participated in class did not do so solely because of their lack of language abilities for communication. To a great extent, their cultural belief of listening attentively and solving problems before they are asked played a major role in their silence in class. In the case of Mr.
Exercise Physiologist, his lack of speaking ability could be compensated by his thorough lesson preparation, and yet his belief in attentive listening as priority in class would not be easily changed. For Mr. Chemical Engineer, his passive role in oral classroom participation was not directly related to his lack of language proficiency in communication; he was under great pressure due to heavy course loads, which affected his attitude and motivation in class. To Miss Consumer Scientist, her prior educational experience in women's schools and colleges confirmed her cultural belief that keeping silent in class is a sign of showing respect to the teacher. She felt comfortable not to participate actively in class, and she also thought that it was not the linguistic ability, but the teaching style that should determine the participation mode of the students in class. With a similar educational and cultural background in women's colleges in Korea as Miss Consumer Scientist, Miss Nutritionist was even more inhibited from taking an active role in class. Lack of linguistic ability was one factor, and she also felt a great need to overcome the cultural barrier and take more courses to adjust to the new academic environment. Miss Counselor, who spoke English very well after achieving her BA in a U.S. university, attributed her silence in class to her personality -- slow in response and shy in nature. She also associated her inactive role in class with the role of female students in Japan.
and her thorough lesson preparation that helped to solve many problems before they are asked.

4. Why did they never participate in class?

--- Analysis of seven cases

Ms. Pharmacist (FPHDC3) was a mother of two and she had been a housewife for three years before she started her PhD program in Pharmacy at OSU. Although she had very high TOEFL and GRE scores, she was poor in listening and speaking in English, which, however, were not the only reasons for her silence in class.

In her department -- Pharmacy -- lecture was the common class type. Interestingly, about three-fourths of the students in that department were Chinese. So they spoke in Chinese all the time. She felt that it was hard and unnatural to talk with her fellow country people in English. Besides, she was shy in nature. In a situation where she was surrounded by Chinese people, she felt secure in using Chinese and she thought it was easier for her to get her meaning across:

I use Chinese when I ask some Chinese students for help because it's more comfortable and easy to explain what the real problem it is. Most of them have very strong background in this area. So they understand well, sometimes even better than others.
From being a housewife taking care of two children to a PhD student in pharmacy, her change was unsurprisingly abrupt. As she admitted, her high TOEFL and GRE scores got her into the program, and yet only she knew how painful it was to sit in class understanding only twenty to thirty percent of the instruction because:

I don't have much background knowledge, so I just keep listening and if there is any question, I just keep in my mind until after class. I will look in literature and the textbook. If I still don't understand after checking the textbook, I will first ask my classmates, and then if they do not know the answer, I will then go and ask the professor.

It should be noticed that her way of dealing with questions, "textbook-classmate-teacher," is a normal practice for many Asian students. The Asian concept of face-saving was in play here. To avoid embarrassment, she wanted to make sure that the textbook did not provide answers to her questions before she asked her classmates, and checking with her classmates would make her feel confident that the questions she was to ask the instructor should be of quality or of worth. This double checking process was often used by Asian students like Ms. Pharmacist as a safety net in communicating with professors.

Besides her shy nature and lack of background knowledge that prevented her from classroom participation, she did not deny that her weakness in speaking was also a big factor keeping
her from participating in class: “Sometimes when the teacher asks me a question, I know the answer, but I will still have trouble, and I get nervous. So I cannot answer well.”

Ms. Pharmacist mentioned the possibility of participating in class only when she was well-prepared. But the fact was that in her courses, the professors usually did not use textbooks. They relied heavily on handouts distributed in class, which did not give her enough time to prepare. When she was not well prepared, she would have no idea what to talk about. Therefore:

If I do not have any idea in mind, I will never ask stupid questions. Even though my classmates might not think that I am stupid, but I will. How can I ask questions without even thinking them first by myself?

Classifying herself as a non-participant in class, Ms. Pharmacist did see lots of benefits in participation. First of all, she thought that the questions asked by the students in class could be answered by the teacher by offering a detailed explanation:

I think, if you have a good question, the teacher, without knowing how much you know about the question, will usually offer detailed explanation, so you can understand more thoroughly and deeply.

She also believed that through other students' participation and questions, her thinking could be stimulated and challenged. She received immediate benefits on the past mid-term exam from a question raised by her classmate:

In the recent mid-term, I answered a question based on a question a classmate raised in class. It seemed no one took notes when that question was answered in class, but I
did and as a result I got two extra points in getting the answer straight in the mid-term exam. I was the only one who got the right answer. The professor later told me that I surprised him. The student who asked that question in class only got one point while I who listened carefully to the answer got two points. So I was very glad indeed.

If Ms. Pharmacist's two extra points in the mid-term exam were a result of her paying attention to the answer to her classmate's question, then what really mattered would not seem to be whether one participated in class or not. Rather, it would be whether one listened carefully and thought thoroughly. In Ms. Pharmacist's case, she could gain confidence in receiving the knowledge through others' questions and answers without necessarily participating herself. Moreover, her non-participation behavior in class could be justified by her consideration of the teacher as well as her classmates:

If the teacher tries to answer a question, it takes a lot of class time. As a result, the planned content should either be cut off or highly condensed. Another reason is that there are so many people with different knowledge backgrounds, and they have to listen to you and the answers without necessarily feeling interested in. In the case of a big class like over 60 students, I don't think it's quite appropriate to ask questions.

Ms. Pharmacist was very particular about her examination scores. Her low self-esteem due to the lack of participation in class was compensated by her high scores on examinations. She confessed:

In my case, I might only understand 30% in class, but I spend a lot of time preparing for the exam and I can
usually get 80 to 90% in the exams. American students seem to understand far better in class, but their examination results are not surprisingly good at all. Their average score is only about 50-60%.

She also had an interesting perspective on what her American counterparts would think of her:

I think they should be surprised to see us keeping silent all the time in class and we do better than they do in exams. I think they would attribute this to our hard-working. But I think they know exactly that we would have much more difficulties than they do.

However, doing well on examinations should not be a reason for not participating in class. Neither should participation in class be regarded as irrelevant to performance on examinations. Ms. Pharmacist did well on her exams which could be related to her diligence and concern about her scores, but her high scores on examinations also reflected the benefits she got from other classmates' participation in terms of questions and answers. It was certainly not a good idea for her to be content with receiving rather than giving in class.

Ms. Pharmacist valued gains rather than means. She cared about her scores rather than the impressions her instructor and her American classmates had of her. To her, the scores on an examination were the important thing. Without the high score on the TOEFL and GRE, she would not have enrolled in her PhD program. She firmly believed that a high score was the true reflection of her knowledge and ability. Prompted by this belief,
she evaluated the course by what she actually learned regardless of the teaching mode. She preferred lectures to discussions:

Sometimes, my advisor wants to ask questions and questions, and by the end of the class, I feel I have not learned anything. But in lecture type class, in the end, I would have taken at least four or five pages notes, and I would feel that I have accomplished a lot. So in terms of efficiency, I feel lecture type class is better than discussion type even though through discussion, I feel the class is active and our thoughts are stimulated.

If the preference of a lesson type does reflect one's learning style, then how could one's learning style be adapted to the lesson type? There is not much control on the part of the students in terms of the lesson type a particular instructor uses, but there is a certain degree of control in shaping the class to the mode the majority of the students prefer. Ms. Pharmacist, like many other Asian students, preferred the lecture mode as she was accustomed to it and was capable of doing a good job with it. Conversely, many American students receive their earlier education through much more lively discussions, and they naturally feel that they can learn best in classes where discussions are present. American students would feel a sense of loss if they did not participate in a class in which participation were encouraged and facilitated, whereas Asian students would not feel the same degree of loss if they did not participate. Therefore some Asian students' perception of participation as secondary to understanding does affect their role in
participation, as was true for Ms. Pharmacist.

In sum, Ms. Pharmacist believed that her personality -- shy -- her poor listening and speaking abilities in spite of her high TOEFL and GRE scores, and her lack of content knowledge, all had effects on her inactive role in class participation. As a result, she did not care too much about her participation as long as she got a high score on course exams. However, she admitted that she benefited from her classmates’ participation. Moreover, she benefited from the teacher’s lecture, a teaching mode she preferred as she could learn something real and concrete.

Miss Ed Administrator (FMAHK1) never talked in class except for small group discussions. She found it hard to catch the discussions not to mention the participation. She did not have any background knowledge in educational administration, and she was not sure whether her ideas or suggestions could be valuable to the class. That was perhaps one of the major reasons for her to be silent in class:

The most important reason is that they are talking about American educational system which obviously I don’t have much to say and they are talking about their own classroom activities which I do not know much. I might know some terms but I have no ideas about some practical problem, so I cannot participate.

She was intimidated by the rich experiences of many of her American classmates:
I think most of students in Educational Administration are veterans, i.e., that is they are full of working experiences. I am obviously having no experience, so even though I speak, they would not listen to me or they would not take seriously of what I speak because of my lack of experience. Actually I am an international student and I look young while they all have about ten years working experience.

Another reason for her to be silent in class was the big class size. Due to her personality, she felt shy in talking in front of many classmates. In the classes she had taken, she often had about forty classmates. Therefore, she felt more comfortable and less pressure in small group discussions in which she sometimes participated because:

We have only six or seven people in group and I am also a little bit familiar with the topic. And I think people in the small group are very supportive so I try to understand and communicate with other people.

Although Miss Educational Administrator did not participate in class, she did see the values of class participation. She preferred discussions to lectures in class because she could listen to more opinions and experiences other than the professor's. She was at first surprised to see that her classmates (all Americans) were so open in discussion. She simply enjoyed listening and sharing their experiences, and sometimes compared their experiences with those in her own culture.

Like Ms. Pharmacist, whenever Miss Educational Administrator had a question in her reading or in her classes, she would first try to find answers in the textbook or from her
classmates. Only when she was desperate did she turn to professors, but "always after class."

In sum, there are several reasons that Miss Educational Administrator did not participate in class. First and foremost, she did not have the knowledge and working experience that many of her classmates did. Due to the nature of the courses in her major, her lack of experience and knowledge caused her uncertainty in the potential value of her contribution to discussion. Besides, the big class size was also debilitating for her participation. Nevertheless, she did enjoy and benefit from her classmates' active participation and discussion in class.

Miss Musician (FMAT2) could easily be forgotten as she always sat in a corner in the classroom without uttering a sound. Obviously, she was not an active participate in class at all.

There are generally two types of classes in her piano major. One is theoretical courses similar to other general courses, but listening to certain pieces of music is required as an addition. The other type is music analysis course in which the students are required to listen first and then offer analysis and comments afterwards. In the former courses, lecture is the usual format whereas in the latter courses, participation is required.
As she is not an active participant, she could easily get by in the first type of course, but not the second one in which participation is required. She thought that her problem in participation was actually her English speaking ability:

Sometimes, I still have language problems. We usually have quite a number of students from Taiwan, so we usually are very quiet. In class, Americans usually speak a lot. If we have questions, we often ask them after class.

She did not feel so bad not being able to participate as she was not alone. Several Taiwanese students together could make each other feel more comfortable as they all empathized with each other coming from the background where class participation was not required or emphasized. Sometimes if she really had questions and she could not find the answers either in the textbook or from her classmates, she would go to the teacher after class together with a few other Taiwanese students because:

If I cannot express well, others can help clarify or modify. We can discuss before or after talking with the teacher. We often get together discussing issues related to the text and whenever we write projects, we would often discuss about them.

When they had discussion together, they would used Chinese simply because they wanted to communicate their ideas, not to practice their English. Therefore, if one of the group members did not speak Chinese/Taiwanese, the whole situation was uncomfortable:
Once, when we were discussing something, a Korean student joined us, so we had to speak in English. But we did not feel comfortable because we could not really express what we wanted to say in English. Thinking of the points for discussion is difficult for us, speaking about it in English is even more difficult.

Although a non-participant, Miss Musician did see the benefit of oral class participation in that the questions raised in class could be answered immediately by the teacher or the classmates, without which understanding would not be continuous. However, due to her past educational experience in Taiwan where participation was not encouraged, she preferred that the teacher talk most of the time. She justified her choice of lecture type over discussion type for two reasons:

On the one hand, I would feel no pressure while listening. If the teacher pushes us to talk, I would feel a great deal of pressure. On the other hand, I want to absorb what the teacher says in class.

In sum, Miss Musician's inactive role in class participation was chiefly affected by her lack of language ability and her over-reliance on her Chinese counterparts. She segregated herself from the broader community as she found empathy among her Chinese classmates who were all in the same situation. However, she did benefit from class discussion without her participating, but she still preferred lecture type as she was accustomed to it ever since she started her education in Taiwan.
Ms. Fashion Designer (FMAK4) had the longest stay in the U.S. of any of the students in this study. As Textile and Clothing was not her original major for the BA, she did not have extensive background knowledge. She had spent almost three years as a part-time student taking prerequisite courses. For her, oral classroom participation was very challenging as she studied Italian at college in Korea and she learned English basically through watching television programs. She was a shy person and she had no confidence speaking English as she had not had opportunities practicing speaking English before. She was very much concerned about her speaking if she participated in class. Therefore, to save face and yet to let the professor know that she prepared for class, she often chose to ask the professors questions after class. Before she asked her professors questions, she would always phrase and rehearse her questions several times before she actually asked. She did try to make an effort to present herself the best she could.

However, Ms. Fashion Designer did see the benefits of oral classroom participation in several unique ways. First, she thought she could give a good impression to the instructor or professor, and she could probably get good grades. Secondly, she thought that she would also gain confidence about the class and about her English speaking abilities.
Ms. Fashion designer did not really care whether she had more native speakers or non-native speakers in the classes she took. To her, the instructor was the authority. The only person who she should listen to was the instructor of the class:

Because I am learning some subjects from the instructor, not from the classmates. So I don’t care about students. But if all the students are Americans, and I can make friends, my English might be improving.

She preferred lecture as the mode of instruction because she could not participate in class a lot. She would prefer listening to the instructor and she felt comfortable in listening.

She liked the support from American classmates who usually came to her help when she was struggling with a phrase or made a grammar mistake. But she did not think she could get the same help from other international students whose level of English ability was thought to be more or less the same as hers. Sometimes when she could not follow the instructor, she would “take a memo, and then after class, borrow notes from American friends.” She only went to ask her instructor if neither the book nor the notes were helpful. When she asked the instructor, she was extremely careful about her grammar in her sentences.

In sum, Ms. Fashion Designer was shy person. Although she stayed in the U.S. for many years, she did not have many opportunities to speak English. As a result, she lacked self-
confidence in speaking. She liked lectures in which she could avoid her weakness in speaking. She sought help from the textbooks or classmates' notes but seldom did she want to talk to them. She asked the professor after class if she was desperate to solve her problems. She was not sociable and that greatly reduced her many opportunities to make friends and practice her spoken English.

**Miss Social Worker (FMAJ2)** never spoke in class. Intimidated, isolated and feeling neglected, she strongly felt that she did not fit into the group -- people from her major and courses in her major. She did not even know why she chose the major in the first place. All her classmates were experienced social workers and all of them were American part-time students. Miss Social Worker had neither working experience to share with her classmates nor the comparable language with which to share information. She felt extremely miserable to be stuck in that predicament. The following was how Miss Social Worker compared herself to her classmates:

*Because they need social work license so they came here at Ohio State to study. So they can talk experience because their jobs are related to social work. But I don't have the background, so I cannot speak my experience. I can understand the class, but I cannot participate.*
In fact, Miss Social Worker was not sociable in class at all. She tried to listen, to take notes, and watch television in class. If she had questions, she saved them and asked the instructor after class or even called the professor at home. To her, the professor was the one she should ask, not her classmates. Obviously, she felt alienated from her classmates. But sometimes she had trouble making herself understood to her professors:

When I asked professors, sometimes they could not understand what I said, and then I tried to speak very slowly for them to understand. Fortunately, my professors are very patient, so they try to listen carefully, and they can understand me.

As Miss Social Worker was the only international student in class, she felt that sometimes she was neglected by her instructors. In order to draw their attention, she had to ask them questions. However, due to her lack of working experience and poor language skills, she could only ask them questions after class and that would make her feel better. She thought that if there were more international graduate students in class, the professor might show more concern for her as well as other international students.

Miss Social worker admitted that in Japan when she was an undergraduate student, the classes she was in were usually very big, and the teacher would not encourage participation in class. Therefore, she would feel natural sitting in class without
participating, and the only thing she seemed to care about was understanding the lecture. Sometimes she did feel that she had something to contribute to the class, but when she tried to prepare questions, she found it very hard to put her thoughts into words, and therefore she ended up not participating at all.

Her weakness of being unable to express herself well in English could have been the motivating factor for her to share an apartment with an American friend. Unfortunately, she did not share the apartment with an American because of her desire to practice English more frequently. On the contrary, she moved into the apartment with an American because the rent was cheaper than the dorm she used to live in. She had had plenty of opportunities to speak in English with many native speakers of English while living in the dorm, so she did not share the apartment with an American for the particular reason of practicing her English even though she needed practice badly.

Miss Social Worker did not think that she was sociable. Due to her low language proficiency, she did not enjoy group discussions. Instead, she preferred the lecture type. To her, it was not easy to speak in a group of American students who could share their experiences so easily, and she did not and could not share her own experiences with them.

Perhaps sitting in class and listening to the teacher was the normal behavior of students in class in Japan. As Miss Social
Worker recalled, the normal class size in Japan would be about sixty students and it was impossible to have oral class participation. Besides, it would be regarded as impolite to interrupt the teacher in class.

In sum, Miss Social worker was an outlier in her classes in social work. With no prior working experience and weak listening and speaking abilities, she did not participate in class at all. She was not comfortable with her classmates whose working experiences and no-language barriers overshadowed hers. However, the only resource person she would turn to was her instructor. Due to her educational background in Japan, she respected the instructors and tried to ask them questions after class, and sometimes even called them at home. She realized her weakness in English, but she did not utilize the advantages of sharing an apartment with an American friend. She was puzzled and wondered in which direction she should go if not social work.

Mr. Agricultural Specialist (MMAI1) was an outgoing, sociable and talkative man in his own language, but a totally silent man in English. His biggest trouble in participating in class was his English skills (listening, speaking, and writing, if not reading), and he realized that:

I like being a student here, but language is still my problem. I can hardly understand what the lecturer said
in class and how to take notes, I still depend on the textbook.

His lack of speaking ability was actually aggravated by his anxiety toward practice teaching as required in one of the courses he was taking. He knew the content he was to teach very well, but it was the language that bothered him. However, realizing his weakness in speaking, Mr. Agricultural Specialist expressed his interest in making more American friends so that he could possibly have more opportunities to practice his spoken English.

Mr. Agricultural Specialist, though he never participated, did see some benefits in participating in class: "If I participate in the class, I can learn a lot about the materials and if I asked a question, the answer would not be forgotten." However, whenever he sat in class and said nothing, he felt lonely and somewhat like an "outsider." To make up for his lack of participation, he tried to concentrate on lesson preparation: "I usually done my assignment. I have done my best to do my assignment as well as possible."

Sometimes when he had a chance, he asked classmates to clarify the main points of the class in order to make sure that he understood the class. But as he could not ask the questions in his mind very clearly, he could not get much help from his classmates. On these occasions, he felt very embarrassed and
very anxious. To avoid this kind of embarrassment, he hesitated to ask his classmates, and if he asked, he had to have enough time to process the question and phrase it in his mind several times before he actually asked. Sometimes, if he could not phrase it well in his mind, he might cancel it before he could ask, because personally he did not “want to make a mistake and don’t want to be laughed at.”

His intimidation in speaking was also affected by the fact that most of his classmates were native speakers of English. So the teacher as well as his classmates did not use teacher talk or foreigner talk in their communication, which completely threw Mr. Agricultural Specialist into the darkness. He thought that he would feel much better in class where he was not the only international student: “I like classes with a lot of students like me. It makes me safer because I am not the only foreigner.”

Due to his limited English language proficiency, Mr. Agricultural Specialist preferred the lecture type of class even though he preferred the discussion type in Indonesia. In this way, he did not have to feel embarrassed not to speak in English as he was not able to. When he was lost in class, he tried to remember the topic and read the book after class. He leaned over to whoever was sitting besides him to seek immediate help if possible. If his questions remained throughout the class, he sometimes asked the instructor on a one-on-one basis.
In sum, Mr. Agricultural Specialist's outgoing personality completely disappeared in classes he took in the U.S. It was not the content that puzzled him, but his poor English language abilities that reduced his possibility to participate. As a result, he preferred the lecture type although he would have preferred discussion type in Indonesia. He did not talk to his American classmates as much as he would have talked to his Indonesian classmates: He held his questions without asking them as he would have had asked without any hesitation in Indonesian. He felt the urgent need to improve his English and he believed that he would behave differently in terms of oral classroom participation if he made progress in his spoken English.

Mr. Social Studies Teacher (MMA14)'s prior teaching experience in an Indonesian high school did not help him a lot in taking an active role in oral classroom participation in the courses he took at OSU. He never volunteered to speak up in class. He only participated in discussion when he was called upon because of his prior teaching experience. In order to get his meaning across, he used body language a lot. He had very positive impression of the instructors he had had: "They are very patient and helpful." He did not quite understand his classmates' speech (native speakers of English and non-native speakers alike):
They speak with not very good pronunciation, because they speak too fast but usually teachers, even though they speak fast I can still hear clearly. I don't understand why, maybe the dialect or the teacher has a good performance in speaking.

However, he only felt comfortable taking classes with his co-nationals. If he could speak Indonesian in class, he believed that he would be a main contributor in class. Even if he were called on in class, he felt he would be much more relaxed to speak Indonesian:

Because, I mean, I had no worry about my mistakes. All people can understand what I am speaking. For example, when I speak in my class and when I looked around they did not understand me, then I said to the professor, and the professor would explain again to the class what I said.

Mr. Social Science Teacher's difficulty in participation in class was also related to his reading ability and reading speed. He was not a speed reader and due to an unusual amount of reading assignments he had everyday, he had to learn to skim. As a result, he was not understanding the reading materials well enough to participate in class discussion and even if he did understand, he still had trouble in expressing his ideas. He felt very uncomfortable with his limited listening and speaking abilities, which totally changed his character.

Due to his poor listening comprehension, he felt that it was sometimes very hard to understand others' questions to him. He had to nod and then shake his head if he noticed the
surprise on the questioner's face. He was a slow reader, weak in listening and speaking, but he always put on a smile, showing an understanding which was not real. He felt obligated to be pleasant even though he had severe pain inside. He concealed his agony of not understanding the lecture, and he walked out of the class with a smile, while deep in his heart he knew that he had to reread his assignment in order to catch up with what was going on in the class. He was desperate to improve his English and he was also eager to obtain survival skills to help him get through the remaining courses.

In sum, Mr. Social Science Teacher hardly participated in class discussion. His biggest problem was his lack of adequate English language abilities. His reading speed was not fast enough for him to cope with the coursework, his listening comprehension was not good enough for him to follow the instruction, and his speaking was not skillful enough for him to feel free to participate in class. He knew all of this, but he could not change the situation within a short period of time. He was desperate, but he did not completely lose hope. To help him reduce his anxiety, he tried to be a cheerful person, but he believed that he needed to improve his English language skills.
Summary

The seven cases who almost never participated in their content courses expressed their reasons in various ways. However, one thing was common: They all saw the benefits of active oral classroom participation, though from different perspectives. There were three major reasons accounting for their silence in class. The lack of background and content knowledge, and the lack of working experience inhibited Ms. Pharmacist, Miss Ed Administrator, Ms. Fashion Designer, and Miss Social Worker from oral classroom participation. The cultural beliefs that keeping quiet in class is a sign of showing respect to the teacher and showing concern for the classmates’ time, and the cultural practice that understanding the teacher and getting good scores in examinations are more important than oral classroom participation have resulted in Ms. Pharmacist, Miss Ed Administrator, Miss Fashion Designer, and Miss Social Worker feeling comfortable in lectures without having to speak up, in seeking help from native fellow classmates in their native languages, and in concealing their weakness in speaking English and not taking risks. Poor language skills in terms of listening and speaking became a great obstacle for Miss Musician, Mr. Agricultural Specialist and Mr. Social Studies Teacher. However, in the cases of Mr. Agricultural Specialist and Mr. Social Studies, realizing their weaknesses in
communication motivated them to improve as they obviously perceived the benefits of active oral classroom participation. However, in the case of Miss Musician, her weakness in speaking seemed less able to be improved as she was unwilling to step out of her comfort zone -- keeping herself within the Chinese community. Therefore, it is the socio-cultural belief in the value of oral classroom participation rather than the linguistic ability per se that appears to determine and predict the classroom participation modes of individual participants.

**Case studies via observations**

In order to see with my own eyes how the participants in my study behave in their content courses, I observed more than half of my participants in at least one class each. I sent their instructors requests for permission to observe classes through the students I was about to observe a week ahead of time, and I received their permission either verbally through my students or via e-mail. When I went to observe their classes, I always had a brief talk with the instructors either before or after class. Some of the instructors were very interested in my study. I jotted notes while observing and kept fieldnotes on the same day of my observation. However, I selected only six classes for analysis as I believed that they were unique in many ways. I will provide my observation fieldnotes to draw a picture of what was happening.
in class and then I will try to analyze why the particular students I observed behaved the way they did. Their perceptions of oral classroom participation through interviews will also be integrated into my analysis.

Observation I: Mr. Biophysicist's (MPHJ1) class

Observation fieldnotes
Quarter: Spring 1995
Date: April 13, 1995 (Thursday)
Course: Biophysics 795
Lesson Type: Seminar
Place: Biological Science Building (Riff Building), Room 609
Time: 4:30 - 5:30 pm
Case: Mr. Biophysicist

I arrived ten minutes early and happened to see Mr. Biophysicist, the participant I was to observe, when I got off the elevator. There were about five students in the classroom when we walked in. Mr. Biophysicist took a front seat and I took the back seat in order to observe more clearly and avoid being observed. Among the first five students was a presenter who was from India, judging from his appearance. He had set the overhead projector early and seemed very concentrated. A few minutes later, other students came in, taking seats randomly. It was not a surprise for me to see a few Chinese students walking in together and they sat together talking in Chinese until the class started.
I was informed by Mr. Biophysicist earlier that the class I was to observe was a seminar. All the graduate students at both masters and PhD levels were required to take a seminar for ten consecutive courses. This was a one-hour course and was offered every quarter. The course objective was to provide the graduates within the department a forum for exchanging the newest information and knowledge from the recently-published experimental reports with classmates through various sources. Students were required to keep abreast of the up-dated information through the extensive reading of journal articles and reports, and then each student had to select something of his/her interest to present in a pre-signed time slot each week during the quarter. The students in this seminar were required to participate in the discussion about the presentation.

As soon as the bell rang, the Indian student started his presentation. His topic was "Introduction to Fluorescence Lifetimes and Fluorescence Resolution of the Intrinsic Tryptophan Residues of Bovine Protein Tyrosyl Phosphatase," a recent research report from a journal. The presentation was well-organized though the presenter's strong Indian accent was difficult for me to understand, and later I found that Mr. Biophysicist as well as many of his classmates who were non-native speakers had the same problem. (But Mr. Biophysicist
later told me that usually the native speakers of English did not seem to have trouble in understanding this kind of accent at all.)

The presenter was very fluent and used transparencies as an aid throughout his presentation. As he talked very fast, not a lot of questions were raised in class. There were only two occasions during which questions were asked. On one occasion, he was interrupted by another Indian student asking him to clarify a point in his presentation, and the same student asked a further question after the presenter answered his first one. On another occasion, the presenter paused for a minute and asked whether the class followed his presentation. An Asian student asked one question and then a European student asked another. Both of these questions were thought to be important by the presenter.

The whole presentation lasted until the last minute, and there was no time left for discussion. However, the students' facial expressions expressed their disappointment at not being given time for questions. There was no interactive atmosphere at all. There were two handouts distributed: One was a summary of the presentation, the other was a course requirement for the students in the department. There were altogether twenty-two students in the class and eleven of them were Asians with seven or eight Chinese among them. I heard the Chinese talking as soon as the presentation was over, and to
my great surprise, there was not a single American student in class. When I asked Mr. Biophysicist about it, he told me that usually when there were a few American students in class, they would always ask many questions or help clarify some points when the presenters had trouble getting their meanings across, as most of them were non-native speakers of English.

Mr. Biophysicist, however, did not participate in class at all. When I talked to him about it, he said that on one occasion he wanted to ask a question but his question was asked by the Asian student sitting beside him. So he lost his opportunity. "Why didn't you ask early?" I asked. He said that he usually would wait to see whether there is someone else who would like to ask first. When I asked him how he felt about losing his opportunity to ask the question, he said that he did not care because he was used to this situation back in Japan: trying not to be too aggressive in taking turns.

Unfortunately, the instructor who was supposed to be present was sick that day so the chair of the department was supposed to come instead. However, she only made her appearance for about five minutes in the middle of the presentation and left without a word. It seemed that no one cared about her presence.
Observation analysis

This class was not a pure seminar. It was a student-initiated presentation after all. Without the presence of the instructor, the students in class felt more relaxed, but they could also feel less responsible to participate because many Asian students had the tendency to behave better when the teacher was present. Having native-speaker students in class obviously reduced the opportunities for questions as the presenter's accent was not very comprehensible to many non-native speakers in class. The high density of the presentation was surely not the sole factor depriving the students in class of the opportunity to ask many questions.

Mr. Biophysicist wanted to participate, but his attempt to ask a question failed because his classmate asked the same question ahead of him. However, Mr. Biophysicist did not really care about this as he had often experienced his chances being taken by his classmates in Japan. But what surprised me most was that he did have a question, and perhaps he had it in his mind much longer than the other student had, and yet he did not get the chance to ask it. He did admit afterwards that he was struggling regarding whether the question in his mind was worth asking. If the presenter were his teacher, he would have the audacity to go ahead and interrupt him/her because he liked to challenge the teacher. Moreover, Mr. Biophysicist could be
very articulate when he asked questions, and he did not really care about his grammar mistakes when he spoke, but he was hesitant before he opened his mouth. It was not that he lacked the desirable speaking ability. In fact, he spent four years in the U.S. as an undergraduate student and he could speak very well indeed. It was his caution in meditating on the idea, which he expected to demonstrate his knowledge or ability, that delayed his promptness in asking questions and smoothed his aggressiveness in participation. Quite consistent with what he revealed in the interviews, Mr. Biophysicist was sometimes an active, and sometimes an inactive participant in classes depending on the occasion.

Another interesting observation was the sense of L1 community among the Chinese students in this class. They showed up together, sat together, and spoke in Chinese together. Why did they not venture out of their own L1 community and make friends and talk in English? As some Chinese students confessed, they were with their family speaking Chinese all the time, went to lab speaking Chinese with their colleagues, and went to a Chinese grocery during the weekend. No wonder they could not improve their spoken English. Many of them were not risk-takers.
I arrived a few minutes early. Some students had already been there chatting and discussing issues of concern about the subject matter of the course. Among them sat Miss Ed Administrator, eating Wendy's fries, something she would undoubtedly not have done in her own culture. The professor came in with some videotapes that she wanted to show to the class. I went over and introduced myself and she greeted me warmly. Miss Ed Administrator told me that this professor worked in her own parent education clinic and she was invited to teach at OSU. She may have had a lot of experience with educating and counseling parents.

Miss Ed Administrator, as she had earlier told me, was the only international graduate student in the class. There were about sixteen American students in class besides her (3 males and 14 females altogether). All the students were sitting in a big circle. The professor started her class with a brief introduction
of the agenda, and all the students seemed to understand what she meant and soon afterwards, a female student went to the front of the classroom, and began leading the discussion of the first topic of the day: “Characteristics of children at different age groups and what kind of parents these children need.” She asked for feedback and wrote her classmates’ ideas down on the blackboard. The participation was fabulous. Many classmates including the instructor contributed to the discussion for about ten minutes, all the characteristics were formed and subsequently written on the board. And then the characteristics desired for parents at different stages were also listed. However, Miss Ed Administrator did not participate. She did not say a word up to this point.

After listing these characteristics on the board, the discussion leader divided the class into five groups with three to four students in one group. Each group was required to discuss one stage of child development according to the handout, and they came up with some possible ways to define the concept. I joined the third group which Miss Ed Administrator was in. Our topic was “Industry vs. Inferiority stage.” Our task was to find ways for parents to recognize their children’s efforts which would lead to a sense of industry. We came up with four points, and Miss Ed Administrator contributed one of them. She said: “We should encourage schoolwork to be functioned. That’s to
say, we should cooperate with school to see the assignment and requirement by the school be done."

At about 7:45, another student took over the discussion on measuring the effectiveness of parent education. She summarized three major models of parent education, namely, reflective, behavioral, and Adlerian. She did not have small group discussion and hers was a rather short presentation.

After the break, two more discussions were done by two other individuals. In the first of the two discussions, the class was divided into three big groups, and Miss Ed Administrator was in the third group which I observed. The topic for discussion in this group was: "How does parent satisfaction of parent performance affect the family?" This time, Miss Ed Administrator did not say anything. I thought there were two reasons, which was later confirmed by Miss Ed Administrator. First, the discussion period was relatively short. Second, there were about five people in this group and not everyone in the group spoke before the time was up.

The professor then spent the last thirty minutes of the class talking about her own experience in educating parents. She gave a few examples and finished the class by showing the video clips of herself and her assistant talking to three parents whose children had chronic diseases.
Observation analysis

I was impressed of this class. Apart from the interesting subject matter discussed in class, I thought this was a highly interactive class in nature. It seemed that many of the classmates were parents themselves. One student had a three-day-old baby, and there was also a mother of five in the class. They could easily associate their experiences as parents to the subject matter under discussion and that helped the dynamic nature of the class.

I talked to Miss Ed Administrator after class for a while. She seemed to like this class a lot. As the youngest member of the class, she enjoyed listening to the class discussion, but she also felt that it was hard to jump into the class discussion as she did not have any parenting experience or American cultural background, something I had not expected before I talked to her. In fact, lacking parenting experience could stimulate her curiosity in discussion. But her Asian cultural background could also make her feel shy in discussing issues she has not experienced before. She read the assigned readings and was very clear about the discussion points. But whenever there was a discussion going on in class, experience seemed more important. Therefore, she was happy to listen to others' discussion in class.
But she did participate in one of the two small group discussions, which coincided with what she had told me in our previous interview. She felt comfortable talking in a small group with only a few people because she would not feel that she was being judged, and she could try out what she had prepared in a relaxed atmosphere. However, if under pressure and time constraints like in another small group situation, she would feel uncomfortable in participating even though that was still a small group compared with the class discussion. She was usually quiet and introverted.

It was obvious that her classmates who were all native speakers of English were very supportive and helpful. In her small group discussion, they listened to her carefully and helped her with a few phrases when she was not sure of the wording. Miss Ed Administrator knew that and she realized that her confidence in speaking increased because of the supportive learning environment.

Observation III: Ms. Fashion Designer's (FMAK4) class

Observation fieldnotes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter:</th>
<th>Spring 1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>May 15, 1995 (Tuesday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course:</td>
<td>TXTL &amp; CLO 879.02 (3 cr.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson type:</td>
<td>Lecture and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place:</td>
<td>Campbell Hall, Room 251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>2:30 - 4:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case:</td>
<td>Ms. Fashion Designer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This was one of the most fascinating classes in both content and format that I had observed. I came to the classroom well in advance as usual. After a few minutes, the professor appeared, well-dressed and in high spirits. As the classroom was affected somewhat by the noise from the inner construction of the building, we had to move to another classroom available downstairs. I introduced myself and exchanged brief notes with the professor while walking towards the new classroom.

To my great surprise, all the students in this class were female. Most of them were graduate students, but a few were honors undergraduate students who had permission from the instructor to attend this class. The class seating was arranged in a half circle with the table in the center on which there were some sample bottles of perfume and some of the professor's personal collections of fragrances.

The class started soon. The topic for today's class was "Fragrance and self-presentation." The instructor covered five aspects as categories for men's and women's fragrances, media blitz and subliminal advertising (bottle design), aroma therapy, disorders/ethics, and class experiment. She lectured very systematically and in a very informative and interesting manner for the first twenty minutes. She talked about the historical development of the fragrance industry, sociology of odors, scent identity, and classification of fragrance. Immediately after that,
the whole class was involved in the activity of identifying odors contained separately in the six bottles she brought to the class. All the students stepped to the front, and laughter and chatting could be heard. The entire atmosphere was so relaxed and lively that it seemed everyone in class enjoyed it. The students were requested to jot down the name of the fragrance to match the number assigned and then they revealed their choice in class. Though disagreement existed, the majority of the students had a similar sense of judgment. They could easily tell the difference between floral and fruity, between fresh to woody, and between musky and oriental.

The next activity was to form three small groups among the twenty students and the students were then asked to choose a particular target audience and produce the kind of fragrance to appeal to this specific group of potential buyers. At this time, the class was even more lively. Actions and talking were mixed and the whole activity from initiating the idea to reporting to the whole class was full of fun. I followed Ms. Fashion Designer’s group which consisted of four students, two Korean and two American students. One American student served as the reporter, but Ms. Fashion Designer and the other Korean student contributed a lot to the discussion. When the group reports were made, the whole class enjoyed all strange terms
and peculiar mixtures, such as "Gravity," "Behold me in the dark." The names, unfortunately, did not match the mixtures.

The instructor came to talk to me again while the students were having a discussion. She had both a textile and clothing design and a sociological background and one of her major interests, as she told me, was the socio-cultural perspective of textile and clothing. She had done a lot of research in this field, and she is very knowledgeable in research methodology as well. The class ended with a few minutes lecture, and the students obviously enjoyed the class a lot.

Observation analysis

Two things struck me after this observation. One was the active role Ms. Fashion Designer played in the small group discussion situation. Ms. Fashion Designer, like other students in the class, did not talk at all while the teacher was lecturing, but was busy taking notes and following the lecture. She thought of herself as extremely inactive in class participation. However, as revealed in her interview, she thought the instructor was the authority and the only person she should listen to. Her class behavior, therefore, could be shaped by how the instructor taught the class. The professor in this class highly encouraged group activities and the end product of group discussion was expected by the professor. It was through this motive and
facilitative anxiety that Ms. Fashion Designer became active. She participated as actively as others in the small group discussion. In fact, all the students in class were active in the group discussion because they had specific tasks to fulfill. It was hard to tell the differential participation behavior between nine native speakers of English and the three non-native speakers in class in this small group discussion situation -- everyone was excited and active.

How was it possible that all the students who were so serious in class listening to the lecture and taking notes became all of a sudden so active participating in group activities? It must be the teaching style, hence my second great impression after observing this class. I believe, to a great extent, that it was the professor who made the active classroom participation possible by presenting her ideas succinctly and highlighting the necessary and important content within a concentrated period of time to motivate the students for active participation in groups. Needless to say, her highlighting a few points based on the students' prereading, and her skillful engagement of her students in all the class activities were all responsible for the success of the class.

I totally enjoyed this class, and I found that participation largely depended on the instructor's teaching method. The professor lectured for the first twenty minutes, with no
discussion at all. Then she arranged group discussion for the next ten minutes. If she allowed participation or discussion earlier, she might not give students sufficient time for discussion when they needed it. Therefore, "lecture while lecture, discussion while discussion" might be a good strategy welcomed by the majority of the students.

Observation IV: Mr. Agricultural Specialist's (MMAI1) class

Observation fieldnotes

Quarter: Spring 1995
Date: April 27, 1995 (Thursday)
Course: Ed-Std 833 or Ag. Ed. 833
Lesson type: Lecture
Place: Ramseyer 332
Time: 4:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Case: Mr. Ag (Agricultural) Specialist

As I was informed, this course was a study of the planning, development, management, and evaluation of instructional systems in vocational education. The topic of today's class was "Strategic Curriculum Planning." As usual, I arrived early, and Mr. Ag Specialist was already there, sitting by himself. There were four Turkish students sitting in the front row, who, as I was told, had a lot of trouble speaking. The composition of the class was a mixture, including Chinese, Korean, Turkish, Indonesian, and a few American students. The professor who taught this class kept asking questions all the time, and time
was always given for the answer to each question. He probed a lot, too. Instead of giving an answer to the question, he was very good at initiating discussions, expecting answers from different students, and stimulating the topic under discussion. For instance, in talking about competitors, he asked "Why do we have to be concerned with competitors?" "Why in education do we have to be concerned about competition?" Discussions followed each of these questions.

It was interesting to notice that though there were only a few of them, the American students dominated the entire discussion. Three of them were particularly active in participating. One was the director of a business company, one was a policewoman, and the other was a man full of business experience. They had things to talk about, to add, to disagree, and to argue about while having much in common to refer to. When they were in the midst of discussion, the rest of the class was sort of listening, but could not participate as they might not be familiar with the background for discussion.

Mr. Ag specialist was silent all the time. Admittedly, he had difficulties in understanding the teacher's as well as some American students' arguments. And when he was not sure of his understanding, he did not have confidence in participating. When asked how much he understood out of that day's class, he
said honestly about 50%. He still needed time to digest what the teacher talked about in class.

Upon close observation, Mr. Ag Specialist was not comfortable whenever the professor asked a question. He did try to understand each question but he seemed extremely nervous when the professor walked around expecting an answer. He lowered his head most of the time to avoid the direct eye-contact. On one occasion the professor expected him to answer a question, and his face turned red as he said "Sorry." When I asked him about his reaction after class, he said that he could not follow the lecture well and he had no idea what to answer when the professor called on him. He also told me that in order for him to follow the lecture, he had to spend much time reading the textbook. But he felt very frustrated when the professor did not lecture according to the textbook he was assigned to read, and he could do nothing about it.

Observation analysis

I was not surprised that Mr. Ag Specialist kept silent all the time in the class I observed except for a "Sorry" reply, and I was interested to see the context in which he kept silent. Although he had many chances to participate as the professor used a lot of questions to guide his lecture, he was not ready to participate. Consistent with what he revealed in his earlier
interviews, his listening comprehension was not good enough for him to follow the lecture. So he felt a lot of stress sitting in class. He felt sorry that he could not answer the question he was asked by the professor and he seemed to use the strategy of lowering his head to avoid the embarrassment of being asked. However, he was grateful to a few American students in class who dominated to the entire class discussion and who became the resource persons whenever the professor needed someone to talk. But the professor's over-reliance on these American students in discussion, by and large, demotivated the rest of the class including Mr. Ag Specialist from participating. The professor did not use teacher talk to appeal to the rest of the class. Even though the class was lively as the discussion never ceased, the real participants were only a few. Many international graduate students like Mr. Ag Specialist were ignored. No wonder, Mr. Ag Specialist wished that he did not have to attend a class which was not designed for him.

The real issue here was whether the professor should maintain the standard teaching tempo as he did or cater to the general needs of international students whose language abilities were not as good as the American students'. Mr. Ag Specialist did not learn a lot from this class, and he felt great relief when the class was over. He knew that he should improve his English. What could the professor do then?
Observation V: Mr. Ex (Exercise) Physiologist's (MPHDC1) class

Observation fieldnotes

Quarter: Spring 1995
Date: April 23, 1995 (Friday)
Course: Ex Physics 714
Lesson type: Lecture
Place: Larkins Hall 217
Time: 2:30 - 3:30 pm
Case: Mr. Ex. (Exercise) Physiologist

After the interview with Mr. Ex. Physiologist, I followed him to his class in the same hall and observed his class which lasted an hour. The class was a lecture type. The professor talked about the historical development of the theory and experiments of dehydration.

There were about eleven students altogether. They were all Americans except for Mr. Ex. Physiologist. The professor came to class on time and soon distributed his handouts to the students in class. With the aid of transparencies which were handwritten with different colors, the professor walked the students through the literature of the concept of dehydration. To my surprise, even I who did not have any background knowledge on the topic could follow the lecture well. The professor used some examples for illustration. At several points, he stopped for comprehension checks and several students asked questions that were immediately answered by the teacher.
though the answers were very brief. For instance, The professor used questions like “Does everyone follow me?,” and he would call on several students if there was no volunteer. The entire class was conducted in a one-way method, and the students seemed to feel that listening was tedious, or were not very active in participating at all according to my observation. Mr. Ex. Physiologist did not utter a single word in this class. When I asked him whether he wanted to say something in class even if he did not, he said that he did not want to participate for two reasons. First, the content the professor introduced in the class was very familiar to him and so he did not have any questions to raise. Secondly, he was comfortable in listening. He said, in this type of class, his task was to follow the instructor and he did. Therefore, participation was not necessary. When I asked him what he thought about the questions his classmates raised in class, he smiled and said that these questions were all very simple and they were all to clarify the content.

The class finished on time and the students did not show any excitement when the class was over. The professor was very friendly to me and we talked a little bit after the class. I wondered whether he taught all his classes in this way.
Observation analysis

Mr. Ex. Physiologist did not participate in the class, and he did not feel the need to participate. On one hand, he was familiar with the content the teacher introduced in class, so he did not have any questions to ask about the content. In a way, he was reviewing in English what he had learned in Chinese. On the other hand, he could avoid his weakness in speaking by not participating in class. What he cared about most was the content knowledge. In his early interview, he revealed that the Chinese cultural concept of “listening attentively” as a priority for students in class had a great impact on him. When he was a teacher in China, he expected his students to ask questions, but usually no one asked questions in class and he had no problem with that. So it was natural for him to assume the role of a good listener when he became a student himself. He did admit that after class that sometimes the teacher would call on him and he had to give his opinions. He was not comfortable being pushed, but he appreciated the attention the professor paid to him, and he well understood the benefits of participating in class and he was willing to make a change in his classroom behavior from being a passive listener to an active participant. He also realized the urgency and importance of improving his listening and speaking abilities in English.
Observation VI: Indonesian-only class (Mr. Political Science Teacher and Mr. Social Studies Teacher)

Observation fieldnotes
Quarter: Spring 1995
Date: April 21, 1995 (Friday)
Course: Ed T & P 925. C10
Lesson Type: Seminar
Place: Ramseyer 400
Time: 9:30 am - 12:00 pm
Cases: Mr. Political Science Teacher and Mr. Social Studies Teacher

I arrived ten minutes early and I was the first person there. This was a class specially designed for Indonesian students who were sent by the Indonesian government to study in the College of Education. The class was called Customized Seminar on PDS (Professional Development School) in an Indonesian context. The students in class were supposed to discuss the implementation issue of this PDS in Indonesia. As this class was only for Indonesian students, I wanted to observe the students' participation in a homogeneous group in general, and Mr. Political Science Teacher, Mr. Social Studies Teacher, and Ms. English Teacher in particular.

Spacious and bright, the room had two big tables sitting in the center surrounded by about fifteen chairs. On the table close to the door both coffee and tea were ready. A few minutes before the class started, the students walked into the room in twos and threes, and they exchanged greetings with me while
taking their seats. Then they talked in Indonesian until their project director walked in together with three other faculty members. Almost simultaneously, the rest of the students came in including Mr. Political Science Teacher, and Mr. Social Studies Teacher. Unfortunately, Ms. English Teacher was ill and she did not show up.

I introduced myself to the program director and soon afterwards, she started the seminar. She and the other three faculty members (2 language art teachers and 1 professor in math education) spent quite a while talking about the course requirements for the students in this class in summer and they also clarified the courses to be offered. All the students listened carefully and asked a few questions regarding individual cases. It seemed that the discussion was rather informal and students were relaxed and comfortable.

The topical discussion was initiated by the program director at about 11:00 am after all the students seemed to be clear about what courses to take in the summer quarter. The discussion was in a question and answer format at the beginning. A student asked about the framework of establishing PDS in the U.S. and faculty members took turns answering the question. The interaction between the students and the faculty members was very smooth and three types of interaction patterns occurred: first, a student initiated a question, and a faculty
member answered; second, a student asked a question and multiple answers were offered by both the faculty members and the students; third, faculty members asked questions to elicit comprehension and opinions among the students, and open discussions were followed by the students. Almost all the students had chances to participate and they all did. To my great surprise, Mr. Social Studies Teacher, who said in the interviews that he almost never participated in his content courses, was very active asking questions even though the questions were not really comprehensible. He spoke on behalf of his group, which was assigned for leading today's discussion. He prepared a very detailed transparency on the implementation of PDS in Indonesia. His transparency consisted of four pages and he went over the major points in each transparency with a marker in his hand, and he was stopped for questions at various occasions by the four faculty members. It was very interesting to note that many students in the class were very actively helping him, and trying to answer the questions raised by the faculty members. The group was very supportive to one another and there were no hostile attitudes when the opinions differed. Sometimes, however, the discussion was carried away a bit too far and the program director had to find a way to get back to the topic on several occasions, which suggested that the discussion was very active.
The Political Science Teacher, whose participation was different on specific occasions, was very quiet at the beginning, but he asked a few good questions in the middle of the class.

Unfortunately, I had to leave the class at about 11:00 am as I had my class to teach a class at 11:30 am. I was informed later that the class lasted another half an hour, and it maintained the same format: questions and answers. The faculty members were always there, participating in the seminar in order to raise questions and they were all very much involved in this Indonesian project.

Observation analysis

Obviously, this was a very interactive seminar in which all the students took active roles. All these students did not speak very good English, but they all participated and the whole atmosphere was supportive and lively. The presence of a few faculty members who constantly initiated questions, challenged their thinking and provided sources might be an important factor. However, what made them feel more relaxed and active in participation was that they knew one another so well and they felt secure making mistakes among their fellow country people. This was, to some people, the advantage working with a homogeneous group. But I wonder whether they behaved differently in classroom participation when they were mixed
with both American students and other international students.

Mr. Social Studies Teacher's active participation was beyond my expectation. I interviewed him by phone that evening and tried to understand why he felt so comfortable talking and taking the leading role in participation that day. This was what he said:

Of course, I feel much more comfortable in speaking in this class because all my classmates are my fellow countrymen and they are all helpful. Besides, we are at about the same level in speaking and we are not afraid of making mistakes.

He also mentioned that their prior teaching experience helped their contribution to the content and their similar language proficiency level helped reduce their anxiety in being judged:

Because many of us had the teaching experience before and we have a lot to contribute to the class when the topic we were discussing was interesting and relevant to us. Also we feel free to express ourselves because we speak more or less the same in terms of our speaking proficiency.

Mr. Social Studies Teacher's feeling about participating in this class was shared by Mr. Political Science Teacher who, although he did not participate very actively, did ask a few good questions. He cared more about the quality of his questions and he felt that being in a homogeneous class, he did not have to worry about his English because no one could speak without making mistakes.
Cross-case analysis

Oral classroom participation in the content courses was perceived differently across the twenty participants in this study. Also different were factors affecting each participant in the formation of his or her perception towards oral classroom participation. In this section, all the possible perceptions will be listed across the twenty participants in the order of four clusters used in the previous analysis, and all the possible factors will also be listed to accompany the listed perceptions. In conclusion, some salient perceptions towards oral classroom participation as well as salient factors governing the perceptions will therefore be sorted out independent of each participant.

Perceptions of oral classroom participation across clusters
Table 12: Perceptions towards oral classroom participation in their content courses from three active cases (Cluster 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Geologist (MPHDK3)</td>
<td>1) A way to express his opinions for self-modification through self-check or self-modification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) A way to demonstrate the equality with native speakers of English in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) A way to reduce anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Geodetic Scientist (MPHDK6)</td>
<td>4) A way to enhance his understanding and gain knowledge through questions for clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) A way to motivate him to improve his English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. English Teacher (FMA12)</td>
<td>6) An opportunity to build confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7) An opportunity to explain her ideas and logical thinking of the subject matter under discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13: Perceptions towards oral classroom participation in their content courses from five somewhat active and somewhat inactive cases (Cluster 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mr. Geodetic Scientist (MMAC2) | 8) A way to demonstrate and confirm one's knowledge by asking high-quality questions and raising thought-provoking issues to stimulate discussion  
9) Not a way to ask easy questions which can be found in the textbook or which might be more appropriate to ask after class  
10) The quality not the quantity of participation should be the matter of concern  
11) A way to reflect one's preparedness of the class and the ability to synthesize what is going on in class  
12) A way to exchange ideas, correct mistakes, and check comprehension  
13) Not comparable with achievement |
| Mr. Ecologist (MPHDC4) | 14) A way to exchange and share opinions with his classmates  
15) A way to improve his English and enhance his speaking ability and listening comprehension  
16) A waste of others' time asking questions in a big class  
17) The Asian cultural belief that asking too many questions is rude and egocentric |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Mechanical Engineer (MMAK1)</th>
<th>18) Oral classroom participation was not as important as getting a good grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19) An opportunity to elaborate on something of his interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Biophysicist (MPHDJ1)</th>
<th>20) A separate entity from learning: Participation could be enjoyable but did not necessarily mean learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21) A way to check the instructor's answer against that of his own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22) Non-participation in class among many Asian students did not necessarily reflect their lack of thinking and lack of understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Political Science Teacher (MMA13)</th>
<th>23) An opportunity to improve his English in general, and speaking ability in particular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24) An opportunity to exchange opinions with other students in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25) Building self-confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

280
Table 14: Perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses from five inactive cases (Cluster 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Exercise Physiologist (MPHDC1)</td>
<td>26) A way to get information, ideas, and opinions from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27) A way to enlarge the scope of the topic so that the understanding of the topic become better and deeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28) Important in cultural adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Chemical Engineer (MMAT1)</td>
<td>29) A way by which the professor gets to know the students personally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30) A way to benefit from others' questions and discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Consumer Scientist (FPHDK2)</td>
<td>31) An effective way to communicate with the instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32) Non-participation in class is thought of as a way to show respect to the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Nutritionist (FPHDK5)</td>
<td>33) A way to get answers to the questions in her mind asked by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34) Lack of sense of belonging to class without participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35) Compensation for non-participation in class through group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Counselor (FMAJ3)</td>
<td>36) A means to help her to be courageous in speaking, not so much in improving her English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37) A way to have the instructor get a good impression of her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

281
Table 15: Perception of oral classroom participation in their content courses from seven extremely inactive cases (Cluster 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Pharmacist (FPHDC3)</td>
<td>38) A later stage of thinking through textbook-checking, classmate-consulting, and teacher-confirming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39) A way to elicit thorough discussion about the issue or question raised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40) Her thinking could be stimulated by other students’ questions and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Ed Administrator (FMAHK1)</td>
<td>41) A way to get more opinions and experiences other than the teacher’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Musician (FMAT2)</td>
<td>42) Questions raised in class could be discussed and answered immediately by the teacher and classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Fashion Designer (FMAK4)</td>
<td>43) A way to impress the instructor in order to get a good grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44) A way to build her confidence about the class as well as about her speaking abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Social Worker (FMAJ2)</td>
<td>45) Something she could not benefit from at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Agricultural Specialist (MMAI1)</td>
<td>46) A way to facilitate the learning of the materials and help retain what has already been learned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Synthesis of perceptions

As seen, there were about forty-six individual perceptions of oral classroom participation from the twenty participants across four clusters in this study. However, some of these perceptions towards oral classroom participation were positive and some negative. Therefore, I categorized these individual perceptions into two major groups: positive and negative. To categorize them, brief descriptions were offered and accompanied by the numbers with which the individual participant could be traced and reflected upon, and the frequency could also be taken into consideration.
Table 16: Categorical descriptions of positive perceptions of oral classroom participation in the content courses across the twenty participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorical descriptions</th>
<th>Perception No.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating knowledge</td>
<td>8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting preparedness</td>
<td>11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training synthesis skills</td>
<td>11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborating one's interest</td>
<td>19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing ideas</td>
<td>7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing knowledge</td>
<td>4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping and increasing understanding</td>
<td>4), 27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining information, ideas and opinions from others</td>
<td>26), 30), 41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulating thinking</td>
<td>40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating prompt problem-solving</td>
<td>42)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating the learning and the retaining of the materials</td>
<td>46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulating competitiveness</td>
<td>2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building self-confidence</td>
<td>6), 25), 44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing anxiety</td>
<td>3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping to be courageous in class</td>
<td>35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To impress the instructor</td>
<td>37), 43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get a good grade</td>
<td>43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving English listening and speaking skills</td>
<td>5), 15), 23), 44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping correct mistakes</td>
<td>12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 16 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication benefits</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate cultural adaptation</td>
<td>28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building up a sense of belonging</td>
<td>34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanging ideas</td>
<td>12), 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing opinions</td>
<td>14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping professors to know students individually and personally</td>
<td>29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective in communicating with instructors</td>
<td>31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic benefits</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-modification</td>
<td>1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-check</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension-check</td>
<td>12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation-check</td>
<td>8), 21), 33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

285
Table 17: Categorical descriptions of negative perceptions of oral classroom participation in the content courses across the twenty participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorical descriptions</th>
<th>Perception No.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive concerns</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-comparable with achievement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A separate entity from learning</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as important as getting a good grade</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participation does not mean lack of thinking or understanding</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not beneficial at all</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective concerns</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A waste of others' time if the class size is big</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude and egocentric asking too many questions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication concerns</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participation is a way to show respect for the teacher</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participation in class could be compensated by participating in small group discussion</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will not ask a question unless desperate for the answer</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors affecting the perception towards oral classroom participation

Table 18: Factors affecting the perceptions towards oral classroom participation from three participants in Cluster 1 (Active cases)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Geologist (MPHDK3)</td>
<td>1) Impact of his prior experience as an undergraduate in an American university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Strong belief in the benefits of oral classroom participation as self-modification, demanding equality, and reducing anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Geodetic Scientist (MPHDK6)</td>
<td>3) Self-assessment of his language ability as a motivating factor for his active participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Strong will as the result of a three-year military service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) Constant practice of his English with American students living in the same dorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) Strong belief in oral classroom participation as confidence-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. English Teacher (MPHD4)</td>
<td>7) Firm belief in the benefit of oral classroom participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8) Six years prior teaching experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9) Encouraging and facilitative classroom atmosphere and supportive climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10) Thorough lesson preparation influenced by her cultural belief and practice in Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11) Strong sense of competitiveness with other Asian students in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19: Factors affecting the perceptions towards oral classroom participation among five participants from Cluster 2 (Somewhat active cases)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Geodetic Scientist</td>
<td>12) Seven-year prior college teaching experience and one-year experience as a visiting scholar in Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MMAC2)</td>
<td>13) Self-confidence in asking high-quality questions which were well-received by the instructor as well as classmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14) Asian cultural beliefs in face-saving which could filter the low-quality questions before they are raised; in listening and understanding as the priority of the students in class; and in collectivism in terms of considering other students' interest and time by not talking too much in class versus individualism which might prompt one to ask as many questions as he or she wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15) Overly concerned with the quality of the questions and speech which could reduce his opportunities to participate in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16) Concern about the fact that due to limited language proficiency, the questions he asked might not be understood by professors, and repetition and clarification afterwards would not only embarrass him, but also waste class time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Ecologist (MPHDC4)</th>
<th>17) Introverted personality stressing listening and understanding in class and feeling uncomfortable speaking in class but not in a small group of about five to seven students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18) Lack of experience in oral classroom participation in his college as well as in graduate studies back in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19) Feeling more comfortable with many non-native speakers in class who could share similar cultural backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20) Interest level and knowledge of the subject matter under discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21) Encouragement from the instructor and active oral participation of other students in class as stimulus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22) Uncertainty in understanding due to the lack of listening comprehension as well as the accent of some instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23) Textbook-dependent, asking questions only based on the textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24) Making conscious effort to adjust to the American classroom climate as influenced by the active participation modes of American peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Mechanical Engineer (MMAK1)</th>
<th>25) Extroverted and persistent in asking questions of interest to him; fearless in making mistakes; but ignoring something in class he was not interested in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26) The fact that the overall majority of the students as well as the instructors in his department were non-native speakers inhibited the active oral classroom participation climate whereas when the majority of the students were Americans he was intimidated in speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27) Felt comfortable participating only when the majority of the students were Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28) The lesson type and the interest level of the subject matter of the class as well as the instructors' teaching style were actually the most important factors affecting his oral participation mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Biophysicist (MPHDJ1)</td>
<td>29) Americanized in many ways as he spent his college life in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30) Lesson type determined his participation mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31) Relatively good English speaking skills helped him keep high confidence in speaking among other Asian students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32) Interested in picking out mistakes made by the instructors, and disagreement with the professor always stimulated his participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33) His interest level of the subject matter discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34) Mental readiness “to get rid of the hesitation” and “to forget I am an international student”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35) Difference in participation modes depending on whether he prepared for class or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36) Avoided making mistakes by thinking and phrasing his ideas before he spoke up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Political Science Teacher (MMA13)

37) Lack of English abilities in terms of heavy accent and low fluency and accuracy in speaking, resulting in his lack of confidence to participate as he was not easily understood by his teacher and classmates

38) Six years of prior teaching experience in Indonesia favoring classroom discussion and cooperative learning styles

39) The supportive environment and the encouraging professors enhanced his participation

40) Understanding and interest level of the subject matter under study

41) Participation was required by the instructor

42) Sense of responsibility and obligation to prepare for class, which affected his participation mode

43) Readiness in asking questions which had been processed in his mind for a while

44) Over-reliance on using Indonesian wherever possible inhibited rapid improvement in English and acculturation

45) Both supportive and unsupportive attitudes from American peers as well as instructors towards his struggle in expressing his ideas
Table 20: Factors affecting the perceptions towards oral classroom participation among the five participants from Cluster 3 (Inactive cases)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Exercise Physiologist</td>
<td>46) Whether participation was required by his professor or counted towards the overall grade of the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MPHDC1)</td>
<td>47) Lack of confidence in speaking as he was often worried about his language ability in speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48) Felt relaxed and comfortable in small group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49) Cultural belief in face-saving, concealing his weakness in language by avoiding asking so-called &quot;stupid&quot; or &quot;low-quality&quot; questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50) Cultural influence that participation was not emphasized in China and students took passive roles in class as long as they followed the instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Chemical Engineer</td>
<td>51) Under stress due to heavy course loads and resentful towards fast-paced quarter system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MMAT1)</td>
<td>52) Believed class time was valuable, and preferred asking questions after class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53) Textbook-dependent and asked questions only when the textbook failed to answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54) Thought that making mistakes in speaking was unavoidable as a non-native speaker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Consumer Scientist (FPHDK2)</th>
<th>55) Graduated from a women's university in Korea, and was deeply affected by traditional Asian culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56) Believed that the instructor's teaching style was the key to students' oral classroom participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57) Good preparation could eliminate the possibility to ask questions, and persistence and self-discipline could resolve questions even before they are asked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58) Concern about whether she could be understood by the instructor if she asked questions due to her lack of confidence in speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60) Good at studying alone and problem-solving strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Nutritionist (FPHDK5)</th>
<th>61) Poor listening comprehension caused her some trouble in understanding the teacher and other students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62) Difficulty in expressing herself in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63) Her prior college life in Korea in which her professors treated the students as passive knowledge absorbers via lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64) The role of female students in Korea as being polite, sensitive, quiet, responsible, and competitive was thought to be related to their participation mode in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

293
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Counselor (FMAJ3)</th>
<th>65) Being the only non-native speaker in the classes she took in her major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66) A lot of group work required by her major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67) Two years of college experience in U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68) Shy in nature and passive in communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69) Slow in reaction in that she always allowed herself more time than most of her classmates for response and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70) Adequate lesson preparation and solving questions before they are asked, something encouraged by Asian culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71) Concern about the professor's impression of her due to her inactive participation and activeness in small group discussion as a compensation strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72) Cultural belief in being a good student: taking notes and listening to the teacher carefully</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

294
Table 21: Factors affecting the perception towards oral classroom participation among seven participants from Cluster 4 (Extremely inactive cases)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Pharmacist (FPHDC3)</td>
<td>73) A mother of two and housewife for three years, she learned English mainly through television and pleasure reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74) Lecture being the main common type in her major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75) Easy and secure to use Chinese often as many of her classmates were Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76) Shy in nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77) Poor listening comprehension and understanding in class due to lack of content knowledge and language ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78) Asian cultural concept of face-saving in avoiding asking stupid questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79) Handouts distributed in class did not give her enough time to read and respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80) Consideration of other classmates and the teacher in terms of the class time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81) Strong concerns about grades and high scores led to thorough lesson preparation as a compensation strategy for her inactive oral classroom participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82) Preferred lectures to seminars or discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Ed Administrator (FMAHK1)</td>
<td>83) Lack of background knowledge and working experience, and unsure of the value of her ideas and suggestions if shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84) Intimidated by the rich experiences of other classmates who were native speakers of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85) Due to her shy nature, she felt embarrassed talking in front of many classmates in a big class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Musician (FMAT2)</td>
<td>86) Her poor English speaking ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87) Over-reliance on American peers to ask questions she had in mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88) Coming from a background in which participation was neither emphasized nor required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89) Reliance on Chinese study group in solving problems in Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90) Preferred lectures to the discussion type as affected by Asian cultural beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Fashion Designer (FMAK4)</td>
<td>91) No background knowledge in her major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92) Shy in nature and not sociable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93) No confidence in speaking English and very much concerned about her English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94) Spent excessive time phrasing the speech before it was made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95) Believing that the instructor was the authority, she preferred lectures and enjoyed listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96) Appreciated the support of American peers to help her out when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>97) Adapted “take a memo, check the notes, and consult the textbook” strategy to avoid the embarrassment of participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Social Worker (FMAJ2)</td>
<td>98) A growing sense of being intimidated, isolated, and neglected by her classmates as she had no working experience, no prior knowledge, and poor English speaking ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99) Not sociable at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100) Saw the professor as the authority and preferred asking professors questions after class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>111) Believed that participation in class was not necessary based on her prior learning experience in Asian culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>112) Did not take advantage of having an American roommate as she lacked motivation for self-improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

297
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Agricultural Specialist (MMA11)</th>
<th>113) Extroverted in Indonesian (outgoing, sociable and talkative), but introverted in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>114) Language (speaking and writing in particular) was his weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>115) Anxiety in speaking in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>116) Did class assignments to compensate for the lack of oral classroom participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Social Studies Teacher (MMA14)</td>
<td>117) Four years of teaching experience in Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>118) Used body language a lot in communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119) Poor English abilities in four skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120) Lacked the confidence he had in Indonesian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Synthesis of factors

As seen, there were about 125 individual factors affecting the participants' perceptions of their oral classroom participation in their content courses. Some of these factors affected the formation of the participants' positive perceptions, and others negative ones. As in the "Synthesis of perceptions" section, I categorized these factors into two groups: facilitative factors and debilitative factors. To categorize them, brief descriptions were offered and accompanied by the numbers with which the individual participant could be traced and reflected upon, and the frequency could also be taken into consideration.
Table 22: Categorical descriptions of facilitative factors affecting the perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses among twenty participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorical descriptions</th>
<th>Factor No.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive factors</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of prior teaching and working experience</td>
<td>1, 8, 12, 38, 117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorough lesson preparation</td>
<td>10, 35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High interest level in and knowledge of the subject matter</td>
<td>20, 25, 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement with the professor</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness in asking questions which had been thought about for a long time</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong belief in the benefits of oral classroom participation in various ways</td>
<td>2, 6, 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical &amp; Environmental factors</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lesson type (seminar or discussion) and the instructor's teaching style</td>
<td>28, 30, 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging professors</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative learning styles</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When participation was counted into the grades</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation was required by the class</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitative classroom atmosphere and supportive climate</td>
<td>9, 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive attitude from some American peers</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used body language in communication</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant practice of English with American peers and friends</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

300
Table 22 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective factors</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement from the professor and others' active participation</td>
<td>21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong will</td>
<td>4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making efforts in coping with American peers in active participation role</td>
<td>24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroverted and persistent in asking questions</td>
<td>25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearless in making mistakes</td>
<td>25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental readiness to take risks</td>
<td>34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making mistakes is natural</td>
<td>54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern about the professor's impression of her if she does not participate in class</td>
<td>71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social-cultural factors</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong sense of competitiveness</td>
<td>11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to adjust to American culture</td>
<td>12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable when the majority in class were Asians</td>
<td>27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior learning experience in the U.S.</td>
<td>29, 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of responsibility and obligation to prepare well for class</td>
<td>42, 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American peers were supportive</td>
<td>96)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic factors</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment of language ability</td>
<td>3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good English speaking skills</td>
<td>31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23: Categorical descriptions of debilitative factors affecting the perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses among twenty participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorical descriptions</th>
<th>Factor No.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-cultural factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-saving by avoidance</td>
<td>14), 49), 78)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of collectivism by concern regarding other students' interests and time</td>
<td>14), 16), 80)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable in class only with non-native speakers with the similar cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of experience in classroom participation</td>
<td>17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation was not emphasized in the native culture</td>
<td>50), 63), 88), 111)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuable class time should not be taken by questions</td>
<td>52)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from a women’s college with deeply rooted Asian culture</td>
<td>55), 64)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female roles in Asian culture as quiet, polite, sensitive, &amp; responsible</td>
<td>64)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good preparation and persistence reduced chances to raise questions</td>
<td>57)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good at self-study and problem-solving strategies</td>
<td>60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentive listening and note-taking constitute a good student</td>
<td>72)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining a good grade can compensate for the lack of participation</td>
<td>81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of work experience</td>
<td>83), 98)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidated by others' rich experience</td>
<td>84)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-reliance on L1 study group</td>
<td>89)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regarded the instructor as the authoritative figure and assumed a passive role in class</td>
<td>95), 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective factors</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non risk-taking by not participating</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sociable</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation for acculturation</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassment in making mistakes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introverted personality</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety in speaking, and making mistakes</td>
<td>36, 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence in speaking and not being understood</td>
<td>37, 47, 58, 93, 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress due to heavy course load</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few non-native speakers in class</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy in nature and passive in communication</td>
<td>68, 76, 85, 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow in reaction</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of intimidation without adequate experience</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibition in English, but not in L1</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic factors</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited language proficiency</td>
<td>16, 114, 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor listening comprehension due to the speed or accent of the instructor</td>
<td>22, 61, 77, 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong accent, not fluent and inaccurate in speaking</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-reliance on using L1</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in expressing ideas</td>
<td>62, 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned English via television</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidated by native speakers in class</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent excessive time before speaking up</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive factors</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening and understanding as the priority</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong concern of the quality of the questions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge of the subject matter</td>
<td>20, 77, 83, 91, 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook-dependent</td>
<td>23, 53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

303
Table 23 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical &amp; Environmental factors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture was the major lesson type</td>
<td>74), 82), 90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handouts distributed in class did</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not allow adequate time to read</td>
<td>79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and respond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-reliance on native speakers</td>
<td>87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in class asking questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibition if non-native speakers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>become the majority in class, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intimidation if the majority of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class are native speakers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsupportive attitude from some</td>
<td>26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American peers</td>
<td>45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt comfortable only in small group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discussions</td>
<td>48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many other students in class spoke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same L1</td>
<td>75)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As displayed in Tables 22 and 23, the order in terms of occurrence of the mentioning of both facilitative and debilitative factors by the participants is different. This difference can be further clarified in Table 24:
Table 24: Comparison and contrast of factors affecting the perceptions of oral classroom participation in the content courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Facilitative Factors</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Debilitative Factors</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>Socio-cultural</td>
<td>(26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Pedagogical</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Socio-cultural</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Linguistic</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>Pedagogical</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total No. 46 69

As seen in Table 24, the order of facilitative factors is different from that of debilitative factors. Further comparison and contrast of factors are presented in Figure 4 and Figure 5.
Figure 4: The order of facilitative factors against debilitative factors affecting the oral classroom participation modes of the participants in the study
Figure 5: The order of debilitative factors against facilitative factors affecting the oral classroom participation mode of the participants in the study
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I discuss my data presented and analyzed in the previous chapters in terms of summary of the findings (what is there), conclusions (why it is there, and so what), and recommendations (what to do, and how to do it). I believe that these three components, namely, data, meaning, and guidance, will help synthesize this study.

Summary of the findings

1. What are the general perceptions of selected international graduate students towards their oral classroom participation in their content courses?

The twenty participants in the study formed forty-six individual perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses. Some of these perceptions were positive and some negative; all are summarized as follows:
Positive perceptions towards oral classroom participation

The participants in the study perceived the benefits of oral classroom participation from cognitive, affective, linguistic, communication, and strategic perspectives.

Cognitive benefits

1) Oral classroom participation could help one obtain information, ideas, and opinions from others. It could stimulate one's thinking, enhance one's understanding, increase one's knowledge, and train one's synthetic skills.

2) Oral classroom participation could demonstrate one's knowledge, reflect one's preparedness for the class, help express one's ideas and elaborate one's area of interest, and facilitate the learning as well as retention of the material.

Affective benefits

3) Oral classroom participation could help build one's self-confidence, reduce one's anxiety, and encourage risk-taking in class.

Linguistic benefits

4) Oral classroom participation could help improve one's English, especially listening and speaking skills, and it could help one correct mistakes.

Communication benefits

5) Oral classroom participation could facilitate one's adaptation to U.S. culture.
6) Oral classroom participation could help one build up a sense of belonging to the class.

7) Oral classroom participation could help foster a mutual exchange of ideas and opinions.

8) Oral classroom participation could help instructors know one individually and personally, and help one communicate with the instructor effectively.

**Strategic benefits**

9) Oral classroom participation could make one more competitive in class, impress the instructor, and help one get a good grade.

10) Oral classroom participation could help one make confirmation-checks, comprehension checks, self-modifications, and self-checks.

**Negative perceptions towards oral classroom participation**

The participants of the study expressed their concerns and reservations from cognitive, affective, and communication perspectives.

**Cognitive concerns**

1) Oral classroom participation does not necessarily reflect one's achievement in learning.

2) Not participating orally in class does not imply a lack of thinking or understanding.
3) Oral classroom participation is not as important as getting a good grade.

**Affective concerns**

4) Oral classroom participation might be a waste of others’ time in a big class.

5) Oral classroom participation is rude and egocentric if one asks too many questions.

**Communication concerns**

6) Not participating orally in class is a way to show respect for the teacher.

7) Not participating orally in class could be compensated by participating in small group discussion.

8) Participation is only necessary when one does not understand and is desperate to get an answer.

2. Are there any differences in perceptions towards oral classroom participation between those who participate actively or somewhat actively and those who participate inactively or extremely inactively?

**Positive perceptions towards oral classroom participation**

Students in both Group One (active and somewhat active) and Group Two (inactive and extremely inactive) perceived the benefits of oral classroom participation almost equally from cognitive and affective as well as communication perspectives.
However, students in Group One saw more linguistic and strategic benefits than students in Group Two.

**Negative perceptions towards oral classroom participation**

Students in Group One had more cognitive concerns than students in Group Two. Only students in Group One had affective concerns whereas communication concerns were only expressed by students in Group Two.

3. What are the salient factors affecting their perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses?

As analyzed in Chapter IV, there were about one hundred and twenty-five individual factors affecting the participants' perceptions of oral classroom participation in their content courses. Factors that affected their positive perceptions were called facilitative factors, while factors that affected their negative perceptions were called debilitative factors. Both facilitative and debilitative factors contained almost the same categories of description, namely: cognitive, affective, linguistic, socio-cultural, and pedagogical/environmental. However, the order in which facilitative and debilitative factors occurred according to the frequency of occurrence was different.

Forty-six facilitative factors were ordered in the sequence of cognitive (fifteen), pedagogical/environmental (twelve),
affective (nine), socio-cultural (eight), and linguistic (two), whereas seventy-nine debilitative factors were ordered in the sequence of socio-cultural (twenty-six), affective (twenty-one), linguistic (fourteen), cognitive (nine), and pedagogical/environmental (nine). These factors can be summarized as follows:

**Facilitative factors**

**Cognitive factors**
1) Impact of prior teaching and working experience
2) Interest in and knowledge about the subject matter
3) Strong belief in the benefits of oral classroom participation
4) Sufficient lesson preparation
5) Raising questions about the content and the professor's explanation

**Pedagogical/Environmental factors**
6) The lesson type (seminar and discussion) as well as the individual instructor's teaching style (encouraging)
7) Facilitative classroom atmosphere and supportive climate
8) Supportive attitude from American peers and cooperative learning style
9) Participation was required in class or counted towards grades

**Affective factors**

10) Self-confidence, strong will, and great effort

11) High risk-taking (positive attitude towards, and fearless of making mistakes)

14) Personality traits (extroverted and persistent in asking questions)

15) Encouragement from the professor as well as concern about the impression on the professor

16) Impact of the active participation role American peers usually play in class

**Socio-cultural factors**

17) Obligation and responsibility in lesson preparation

18) Prior learning experience in the U.S.

19) Strong sense of competitiveness

20) Willingness to adjust to U.S. culture

21) Peer support from American students

22) Comfortable in a class surrounded by other Asians

**Linguistic factors**

23) Adequate English speaking skill

24) Self-confidence in speaking though not good

25) Constant practice in English with American peers and friends, and assistance by using body language
Debilitative factors

Socio-cultural factors
1) Face-saving by avoidance
2) Sense of collectivism by being concerned about other students' interests and time
3) Comfortable only with other non-native speakers in class with similar cultural backgrounds
4) Lack of participation experience as it was not emphasized in the native culture
5) Belief in attentive listening and note-taking, obedient to the teacher as authoritative figure by keeping quiet
6) Belief that valuable class time should not be taken by questions, and adequate lesson preparation enables one to solve questions before they are asked
7) Good at self-study and problem-solving
8) Intimidated by the rich experience of others and lack of working experience
9) Obtaining a good grade can compensate for the lack of participation
10) Over-reliance on L1 study group
11) Graduated from women's college and the belief in the female role in Asian culture as quiet, polite, sensitive, and responsible.
Affective factors

12) Lack of confidence in speaking and concern about not being understood
13) Personality traits (introverted, shy in nature, passive in communication)
14) Anxiety in speaking, embarrassment in making mistakes, and inhibition in speaking English (but not L1)
15) Intimidation due to lack of experience and slow in reaction
16) Stress due to heavy course-load
17) Insecurity due to few non-native speakers in class

Linguistic factors

18) Limited language proficiency and poor listening comprehension due to the speed and accent of the instructor
19) Difficulty in expressing ideas
20) Strong accent, disfluent and inaccurate in speaking
21) Over-reliance on using L1
22) Intimidated by flawless English of native speakers in class
23) Spending excessive amount of time before speaking up
24) Learned English in non-interactive ways (e.g., television)

316
Cognitive factors
25) Lacking knowledge of the subject matter
26) Dependent on the textbook
27) Listening and understanding as the priority
28) Overly concerned about the quality of the questions to be raised

Pedagogical/Environmental factors
29) Lecture as the lesson type
30) Insufficient time to read and respond to the handouts distributed in class
31) Over-reliance on the native speakers of English asking questions in class
32) Inhibited if the majority of the class are non-native speakers, and intimidated if the majority of the class are native English speakers
33) Lacking supportive attitude from some American peers
34) Felt only comfortable in small group discussion
35) Many other students in class share the same L1

4. What possible roles might the participants' gender, personality, major of the study, content knowledge, prior experience, length of stay, and English communication skills play in their perceptions of oral classroom participation?
Gender

Among twenty participants in the study, nine (45%) were female and eleven (55%) were male. Among the eight active or somewhat active participants, only one student was female (12.5%). However, of the twelve inactive or extremely inactive participants, eight (66.7%) were female students. The present study suggests that gender does play a role in students' oral classroom participation.

Personality

Three out of three (100%) active participants were all extroverted. Three out of five (60%) somewhat active participants were introverted, but they were all determined, persistent and inquisitive. Four out of five (80%) inactive participants were introverted, and five out of seven (71%) extremely inactive participants were introverted. It could be inferred that extroverted personality traits could help oral participation, whereas an introverted personality could inhibit active oral participation.

Major of study

Eight participants (40%) majored in social science while twelve participants (60%) majored in natural science. Only two out of eight (25%) participants in social science were active or
somewhat active in oral classroom participation, whereas six out of twelve (50%) participants in natural science were active or somewhat active in oral classroom participation. These data suggest that the major of study alone might not be crucial in determining the oral participation mode of the participants.

**Content knowledge**

Content knowledge was mentioned by at least three participants as an important factor affecting their active oral contribution in class. Lack of knowledge of the subject matter was also mentioned by five participants as a debilitating factor inhibiting their oral classroom participation.

**Prior experience**

There was a great difference in the oral classroom participation mode between those who had prior working or teaching experience, and those who had no prior working or teaching experience. Of the five participants who had no prior experience, three (60%) were inactive and extremely inactive in oral classroom participation. Of the seven participants who had prior teaching experience ranging from two to seven years, for example, five (71%) were either active or somewhat active in oral classroom participation. Therefore, one's prior experience did appear to have an impact on his/her participation mode.
Length of stay

Length of stay seemed to help some participants' cultural adaptation and active or somewhat active role in oral classroom participation. For example, Mr. Biophysicist spent almost five years attending a college in Alabama; Mr. Geologist also had had five years living in the U.S., first as a transfer student in a university in Denver, then later as a master's student at OSU; Mr. Mechanical engineer spent more than two years getting his MA in a university in West Virginia. However, it did not help others like Ms. Fashion Designer and Ms. Pharmacist, who spent seven and three and half years, respectively, at home taking care of their children, speaking their own languages, and being quite detached from the American community. Therefore, length of stay could not determine the oral classroom participation mode of the participants in the study without specifying the context in which they stayed.

English communication skills

Of the six participants who communicated in English almost always effectively, four (67%) were either active or somewhat active in oral classroom participation. Of the seven who communicated in English generally effectively, three (43%) were either active or somewhat active in oral classroom
participation. Of the four who communicated in English somewhat effectively, only one (25%) was somewhat active in oral classroom participation, and all three (100%) who communicated in English generally not effectively were extremely inactive in oral classroom participation. It could be inferred that one’s English communication skills do affect one’s oral classroom participation mode. In particular, students with poor communication skills seem to be unlikely to participate actively in class.

5. What cross-cultural differences and similarities in the perceptions of oral classroom participation among selected Asian graduate students might this study suggest?

All the twenty participants in the study were from East Asia except for four from South-East Asia, Indonesia. Their similarities, however, were greater than their differences. They started learning their English in more or less the same way -- grammar translation. They were all accustomed to the lecture type class and attentive listening and careful note-taking. They were all motivated to pursue their advanced degrees in the United States. The only difference among these cultural groups was the different financial sources. All the Chinese graduate students had Research Associateships (Mr. Geodetic Scientist recently became a RA). All the Indonesian participants were
supported by their government. Students from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong were either self-supported or sponsored by their families. However, different financial sources did not make any difference in their perceptions towards oral classroom participation. Although there were many differences in the perceptions towards oral classroom participation among all the participants, no pattern could be identified cross-culturally. Therefore, the nationality of each participant within the spectrum of Asian culture was not of concern in this study.

6. Do students' participation behaviors differ depending on the lesson type, the class size, the subject matter taught and the individual teaching method of the instructor?

The answer was "Yes". Many participants expressed their concern about oral classroom participation in a big class. They cared about other students' interests and time. Many of them preferred to speak in a small class, in a small group discussion within a class, or after class. They would participate more in seminars or discussions rather than lectures. They also found that the individual teaching style of the instructor who either encouraged or discouraged oral classroom participation of the students in various ways was crucial in their participation mode. Moreover, the subject matter taught and discussed was
extremely important in motivating their interest and stimulating their thinking and discussion.

7. How do selected international graduate students usually perceive the active participation mode of the American counterparts in class, and how does that perception affect their own participation mode?

As perceived by many participants in the study, American peers were usually very active in oral classroom participation. First of all, some participants in the study found that the active participation of American peers was stimulating and encouraging, and they felt motivated to participate themselves. Some participants felt intimidated by the active oral classroom participation mode of American peers, which resulted in their giving up speaking in class. Some participants, due to poor speaking abilities, took advantage of American peers' active oral classroom participation and benefited from the discussions and questions and answers without making an effort to try to participate themselves. Others expressed resentment towards the active oral classroom participation of American peers as a waste of others' time and not respecting others' interests by talking about something irrelevant to the content in a big class. In terms of support from American peers, many participants in the study felt grateful and appreciative when they sometimes
were in trouble in expressing themselves in class, and their American peers helped them express their ideas. A few did not like the attitude of some American peers who seemed to be indifferent to the difficulty some non-native speakers often felt in oral classroom participation.

Conclusions

This study, as a whole, yielded the following interpretations and implications:

1. Oral classroom participation is a complex issue that needs further exploration.

This study illuminates the complexity of the issue under discussion: the perceptions of selected international graduate students hold towards oral classroom participation in their content courses in an American university. The exploration of its complexity in this study in terms of the interrelationships among multiple factors affecting the differential perceptions in various ways highlights the necessity for further research addressing this issue that U.S. higher education and foreign language education face with the annual increase of the international student population in the United States.
While perceptions are formed based on individual experiences, the perceptions could be altered if the participants' new experiences were different from the old ones. However, as the participants in this study accumulated their experiences over a few consecutive quarters, their perceptions towards oral classroom participation in their content courses became independent of any specific class. In this regard, their perceptions were derived from their classroom experiences, but influenced by their socio-cultural, educational, linguistic, and other backgrounds.

As seen, the perceptions held by selected international graduate students towards oral classroom participation were both positive and negative. Some participants formed positive perceptions towards oral classroom participation from the very beginning when they took their first classes in the United States, or they changed their perceptions from positive to negative as they went through more courses. Some participants started with negative perceptions and gradually changed them into positive ones. However, this does not necessarily mean that the participants whose perceptions are positive are active in oral classroom participation. Likewise, the participants whose perceptions are negative may not necessarily be absolutely inactive in class. Sometimes, the students who perceive the benefits of oral classroom participation might be those who
actually seldom participate in class due to many factors (e.g., poor speaking ability, low communication skills, introverted personality), whereas those who do not see many benefits of classroom participation might be active participants under certain circumstances (e.g., eager to make a good impression on the instructor, and being concerned about receiving a good grade from participation).

Nevertheless, the perception once held is not always fixed. Some participants had perceived many benefits of oral classroom participation and later felt frustrated when they could not enjoy the benefits as they were actually unable to participate as actively as they wished to due to many factors. Other participants might not have seen so many benefits in oral classroom participation and yet they ended up speaking a lot in class, which helped modify their earlier perceptions to be more positive.

Therefore, to understand the perceptions international graduate students hold towards oral classroom participation in their content courses is a complicated matter. Its complexity cannot be explained thoroughly by mere identification and description. In fact, the point is to understand why they form the perceptions as identified and how all the explored factors affecting their formation of the perceptions interact, and what we can do to help the target population, international graduate students (Asian graduate students in particular) in U.S.
universities, feel comfortable and confident in oral classroom participation in the target culture.

2. Socio-cultural and affective factors are salient in debilitating oral classroom participation while cognitive and pedagogical/environmental factors are pertinent in facilitating oral classroom participation of the selected international graduate students.

The findings of this study suggest that the participants' differential oral classroom participation modes are affected by five general factors -- affective, cognitive, linguistic, pedagogical/environmental, and socio-cultural. But the rate at which each general factor affects the differential oral classroom participation modes is different. It is socio-cultural factors, not linguistic factors, that are decisive in the formation of perceptions that lead to participants' silent participation mode in class. This finding belies the common assumption that students' linguistic abilities usually determine their oral participation frequency and quality as experienced by many teachers in ESL classrooms.

The participants in the study, though from different countries in Asia, share more or less the same socio-cultural concepts, attitudes, and beliefs, which are reflected in the deeply-rooted Asian concept of face-saving, the often-praised
sense of collectivism as well as the often-criticized sense of individualism by following the trend and avoiding confrontation with the teacher or other students in class, the sensitivity to interpersonal harmony, the over-reliance on peers who share the similar cultural backgrounds, the blind obedience to the teacher by listening attentively and concealing and tolerating disagreement, the sense of guilt in expressing aggression directed towards authority figures, and the self-discipline in solving problems through reading the textbook.

In traditional Asian culture, a great emphasis is often placed on obedience, proper conduct, moral training, and the acceptance of social obligations (Bond, 1986). Naturally, independence and assertiveness, which tend to encourage active oral classroom participation, are not emphasized. Therefore, the ways Asian students behave in class are generally affected by their socio-cultural backgrounds although the degree to which each participant in the study was influenced by Asian culture, concepts, and beliefs is different. Various degrees of Asian cultural influence on the individual accounts for their differential oral classroom participation modes. Moreover, the obligation and responsibility emphasized by Asian culture could make the students work twice as hard at lesson preparation to find out the answers to the questions in the textbook before they ask them in class, or could make them spend much time solving problems
accumulated in the previous class by reviewing their notes and textbooks.

The participants in the study also expressed achievement motivation. As long as they can get a good grade, as long as they can learn, they will be satisfied. In their opinion, obtaining high grades is equal to high achievement in class. Therefore, if oral classroom participation is counted towards the overall grade, even the least active students would try hard to speak up in class. However, as some of the students were shy in nature, they prepared thoroughly for one or two questions before class or even wrote down what they intended to say before class. Unfortunately, they either end up saying what they have prepared at the wrong moment, or they would not find the opportunity to fit their prepared oral output into the lesson because their oral participation is more canned than improvised. Subsequently, they do not enjoy participation as it becomes an obligation.

Apart from social obligation and responsibility reflected in the educational setting, Asian students are motivated in terms of higher achievement. Based upon my own observation, it seems that achievement motivation is more firmly rooted in the collectivist than in the individualistic orientation. As cooperative efforts by members of a group towards achieving collective goals are emphasized more than individual
competitiveness, the participants who do not participate in class always feel more comfortable participating in small group discussions. Some of them feel even more relaxed in contributing to the small group discussion when the instructor is not present.

The socio-cultural training Asian students receive in their earlier education contributes largely to their character formation. In Asia, dependency, conformity, modesty, self-suppression, and self-contentment are taught from early on. Dominant moral and religious thoughts or doctrines, such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, penetrate the socio-cultural beliefs. In a way, most Asians are known as socio-oriented people who believe in collectivism rather than individualism, and in other-orientation rather than self-orientation, and in relationship and authoritarian rather than competitive and equalitarian orientations. Asian people's disposition is often characterized by submission rather than enjoyment, in inhibition rather than autonomy, and in effemination rather than expressiveness (Abbott, 1970; Vernon, 1982).

When all these socio-cultural beliefs and concepts are taken into consideration, we will not be surprised to notice that the inactive role many Asian graduate students selected in this study had towards oral classroom participation were deeply
affected by their early training in their own Asian cultures. The affective factors which followed immediately after the socio-cultural factors in terms of the frequency counts, therefore, could also be explained under the broad spectrum of socio-cultural factors. They are interrelated. Personality traits, for example, were found to be related to the oral classroom participation mode. The extroverted students were more active than introverted students. Perhaps there is a link between Asian culture and the introverted characteristics of Asian students in class as Asian students were often trained to be quiet as a sign of proper classroom behavior and respect for teachers (Liu & Kuo, 1996). We should, therefore, have more empathy in understanding and explaining the classroom behavior many Asian students in this study showed: the lack of motivation to participate in class, low-risk taking, inhibition, anxiety in speaking, intimidation by native speakers of English in class, and sense of inferiority in the English language.

While socio-cultural factors are most responsible for the silent behavior of international graduate students in class, cognitive factors in terms of one's prior work experience, interest in and knowledge about the subject matter, strong belief in participatory benefits, sufficient lesson preparation, and being active in thinking in class all affect the formation of positive perceptions resulting in active oral classroom participation.
Likewise, pedagogical/environmental factors, such as lesson type, teaching style, lively atmosphere, supportive environment from both the instructor and American peers, and oral classroom participation being counted towards one's overall grade in the class, are indispensable in students' active oral classroom participation.

3. International graduate students have the potential to speak up in their content courses, and speaking ability is not the most important factor determining the participation mode of the students.

The differential perceptions (both positive and negative) held by selected international graduate students towards their oral classroom participation in their content courses are centered around three perspectives: cognitive, affective and communication. However, no negative perception was formed in either the linguistic or strategic domains. That is to say, the participants, regardless of their oral classroom participation modes, all believed that oral classroom participation could improve their speaking ability and could help confirm their thoughts and clear the doubts in their minds. It implies that international graduate students, regardless of their speaking abilities, have the potential to speak up in their content courses, a finding consistent with the earlier research (Liu & Kuo, 1996).
Therefore, identification of the factors either facilitating or debilitating their oral classroom participation modes could help illuminate the possibility to convert their potential of speaking up into actual classroom participation.

While perceptions of oral classroom participation were positive in terms of linguistic gains, linguistic factors, which reflect the actual linguistic abilities of the participants, become important next to socio-cultural and affective factors inhibiting participants' active oral classroom participation. Some participants, such as Mr. Agricultural Specialist and Mr. Social Studies Teacher, wanted to contribute to class, or wanted to ask questions in class, but they could not express themselves well enough to be understood. This sometimes raised their affective filter and inhibited them from further participation. However, the linguistic barrier disguised by non-participation behavior enabled the participants to seek a balance via attentive listening, careful note-taking and checking, thorough lesson preparation, and review in order to retain achievement motivation.

The findings of this study suggest that positive perceptions of the participants towards oral classroom participation could motivate them to make efforts in improving their linguistic abilities. Therefore, maintaining one's positive perceptions towards oral classroom participation is more essential than the mere improvement of linguistic skills. However, one's negative
experience in making mistakes in class through oral classroom participation could prevent one from practicing further as in the cases of Miss Musician, Mr. Social Science Teacher, and Mr. Agricultural Administrator who, after a few cases of humiliation in class due to a lack of speaking abilities, simply gave up participating at all. Moreover, inhibition in oral participation could also change positive perceptions towards oral classroom participation into negative ones. If the changing perceptions towards oral classroom participation from either direction is unavoidable, then to maintain the positive perceptions despite one's actual linguistic abilities needs motivation and willingness to practice in class.

4. Gender is an issue in the oral classroom participation mode among Asian graduate students.

The findings in this study suggest that gender does play a role in oral classroom participation. Female students in the study were more inhibited in oral classroom participation than male students regardless of their linguistic abilities and interest in and mastery of the content knowledge. Ms. Pharmacist, Miss Nutritionist, Miss Consumer Scientist, Ms. Fashion Designer, Miss Counselor, Miss Ed. Administrator, and Miss Social Worker all expressed their socio-cultural belief of how a woman should behave in class in their own culture. Therefore, part of the
reason for these Asian women students to be silent in class can be associated with their cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Miss Nutritionist could speak English very well and was very talkative after class, but she chose not to be talkative in class. Interestingly, almost all the female students in this study were all introverted in class although some of them behaved differently after class, or with their co-nationals. However, Ms. English Teacher was the outlier who did not fit the stereotype. The study implies that one's personality is context-dependent, a finding consistent with Peirce (1995) who challenged the classical way of distinguishing personality traits as introverted versus extroverted. She believes that we are living in various social contexts, and therefore, our personality varies accordingly. The context is, however, associated with one's cultural concepts and belief systems. The cultural concepts can, therefore, shape one's social behavior in a given context, such as the classroom.

This finding of gender difference was consistent with Fassinger (1995) in that student gender is a significant component in classroom participation. However, the differential role each gender plays in oral classroom participation could be related to the Asian societal concept of the role of women which is often characterized as being passive, obedient, submissive, and quiet. Although some female participants in this study were extroverted in personality, they tended to be very cautious in
oral participation, trying to be quiet in class, or trying not to be aggressive if they spoke up in class in order to maintain the image of a woman in their own culture, a finding consistent with Carson and Nelson's study (1996), in which Chinese students' primary goal for the group was characterized as social -- to maintain harmony -- and that this goal affected the nature and types of interaction they allowed themselves in group discussions. This gender difference in oral classroom participation implies the need to help female Asian students emancipate themselves by establishing equality in class with male students through active involvement in oral classroom participation.

5. Content knowledge and prior experience affect one's participation mode while length of stay, alone, does not.

The participants who did not have much knowledge in the subject matter but were highly interested in their majors were cautious in oral classroom participation, whereas the participants who had neither interest nor knowledge in their majors were non-participants in class because they had nothing to contribute. The active participants were those who had sufficient knowledge and a high level of interest in their majors. Therefore, interest in as well as knowledge of the subject matter one pursues appears to be of crucial importance in affecting the
active oral classroom participation mode of students. For example, Miss Ed. Administrator found herself having nothing to contribute when the class was discussing the parenting experience. On the contrary, Mr. Mechanical Engineer was very enthusiastic in a class discussion about a mechanical problem in operating a plane as he had three years’ experience as a airplane mechanical engineer.

Closely related to the interest level and knowledge base of one’s major is the major-related prior experience one has. This study’s findings suggest that the majority of the participants in the study who had had either teaching or working experience before, such as Mr. Geodetic Scientist, Ms. English Teacher, and Mr. Biophysicist, were more active in oral classroom participation than those who had not. Hence, one’s prior experience in a major-related job appears to be a plus in one’s oral classroom contribution.

The findings of this study also suggest that length of stay, alone, does not determine one’s oral participation mode. Ms. Fashion Designer, for example, stayed in the U.S. for almost seven years, but her spoken English was still “very poor” in her own words. She belonged to the group that participated the least. Mr. Geodetic Scientist from Korea, on the other hand, was very talkative in class even though he had only been in the U.S. for half a year at the time I interviewed him. These findings
suggest that length of stay could not determine one's overall language skills nor the extent of cultural adaptation.

Rather, length of stay is context-dependent and motivation-driven. In Ms. Fashion Designer's case, she spent most of her time at home taking care of her husband and child, and she spoke Korean at home and within her community. However, in Mr. Geodetic Scientist's case, he lived in a dorm surrounded by many native speakers of English, and he practiced English every day and made American friends and participated in many American social activities. Naturally, his cultural adaptation rate and socio-linguistic ability improved more rapidly than Ms. Fashion Designer's, as she segregated herself within a Korean community. Therefore, length of stay does not have absolute significance without considering the context in which one stays and the motivation with which one acculturates to the English-speaking community. That is to say, if one stays within one's own L1 community in the target culture, length of stay does not help much. However, if one spends or is willing to spend much time in the target culture and target community, then length of stay becomes a facilitative factor helping not only language improvement, but also the understanding of the cultural concepts under which the language operates. This is consistent with an earlier study by Oyama (1975) who found that length of stay had little effect on
immigrants' acquisition of a nonnative phonological system. However, the contribution of the present study lies in the fact that it looks at length of stay from a broader perspective in terms of acculturation and accommodation rather than a linguistic perspective in terms of acquisition of a phonological system.

6. The overall positive oral classroom participation mode of many American peers could either encourage or inhibit the active participation mode of the international graduate students. Asian graduate students are usually very good at reading and solving problems, but due to their cultural inhibition and linguistic disadvantage, they tend to have mixed feelings towards the general active oral classroom participation mode of their American peers. However, different reactions of the participants in this study towards the active participation mode of American peers in class have several implications. First of all, American peers' active oral classroom participation could serve as a good example for international graduate students to follow under the condition that American peers do not dominate the discussion. Secondly, American peers might refine their oral classroom participation by not over-elaborating on the main points so that the international students are not overwhelmed by the brevity of their own responses as opposed to the detailedness of their
American peers' responses. Thirdly, as international graduate students have the potential to speak up, they will feel greatly encouraged if American peers could help them with phrases or words while they are struggling to participate.

7. The content area instructors' teaching style is crucial to the oral classroom participation mode of international graduate students, and one's major of study is not as important as the lesson type or the class size.

The findings of this study suggest that the content area instructors' teaching style is crucial to the oral classroom participation modes of the participants regardless of their major of study. However, this finding contradicts a recent survey study of over 900 professors at four different institutions by Ferris and Tagg (1996a). They found that the degree of interaction reported in respondents' classes varied significantly across academic disciplines. The present study also found that lesson type and the class size are important factors affecting students' participation modes, and that seminars and discussion lessons usually facilitate oral classroom participation regardless of the major of study. Large class size inhibits oral classroom participation for Asian students as they are concerned about others' time and the quality of their contribution or questions. The individual instructor's teaching style is also an important
factor affecting students' oral classroom participation modes. Lively, humorous, and strategic teaching styles are likely to encourage students' participation regardless of the lesson type, and are also likely to alleviate the Asian concept of inconvenience of participating in a big class, or in a lecture.

This finding is in agreement with that of Ferris and Tagg (1996a), whose survey found that the frequency of the various interactive tasks were also clearly correlated with class size, i.e., the smaller the class size, the more interactive the tasks. A possible explanation could be that Ferris and Tagg surveyed large samples of instructors from/at four different colleges. Ferris and Tagg's opinions were more general than my study, in which one single institution was sampled. Based on their findings, they recommended that context-specific oral tasks be designed to cater to students in different disciplines. However, the findings of my study suggest that the bottom-line for international graduate students to be active in oral classroom participation is socio-cultural adjustment and the lowering of their affective filter in risk-taking. The results of my study also imply that students in different fields of study usually have good content-knowledge. Instead of worrying about what they could contribute, instructors' concern should be about how they can motivate their students to participate actively in class. In this regard, context-specific tasks designed by instructors to
facilitate classroom participation can be helpful under the condition that students in class are motivated to do the tasks.

Ferris and Tagg (1996b) made an important point that university and university-preparatory ESL classes should do something to better prepare their students for the oral/aural tasks in their courses. While they also mentioned that content-area professors should be responsible for improving international graduate students' oral participatory skills, the results of the present study suggest that content-area professors should work closely with ESL teachers via collaboration and create opportunities for students to practice the language skills they acquire in ESL courses.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

**For international graduate students**

1. International graduate students in U.S. universities should make efforts to raise their consciousness about the similarities and differences between the English-speaking community and themselves in terms of beliefs, values, customs and conventions. Consciousness-raising could help them build
needed skills and increase successful performance in their content courses. Cultural conflicts often occur due to misunderstanding, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice. To minimize these conflicts, however, international graduate students should develop intercultural sensitivity without losing their own cultural identities. They should adjust to the English-speaking community and U.S. society to better understand it, but not necessarily adopt everything at the cost of their own thoughts and beliefs.

2. An understanding of the relationship between commonality and diversity and between the individual and the group is necessary in the development of effective intercultural communication skills. The development of oral classroom participation skills for international graduate students is related to their attitudes and preferences as well as to their ability to identify their personal needs which are derived from their native culture and compelled by the target culture. Therefore, to understand and to appreciate the U.S. academic culture is of key importance in developing the appropriate oral classroom participation behavior.

3. Oral participation could be self-taught through participant observation and trial and error. International graduate students should be motivated to bring questions to class and to ask them in class.
4. International graduate students should be encouraged to make friends with American peers and seize opportunities to speak English with them and to have social activities with them whenever possible.

5. To acquire competent speaking skills in order to participate in the content courses without language barriers, students should be encouraged to venture out of their own L1 communities.

For teachers

1. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide the kind of environment that is conducive to oral classroom participation. This study suggests such an environment would facilitate students' self-confidence and comfort level necessary for active oral classroom participation. It is also suggested that the teacher maintain the proper interaction and meaning negotiation between him/herself and the students and among students. Teachers should be sensitive to international graduate students' needs in class and make efforts to balance the participation modes among the whole class, native speakers and non-native speakers alike.

2. Oral classroom participation should be encouraged and factored into the final course grades, and be specified in the course syllabus.
3. Opportunities should be given to students who do not speak up in class by using group discussions. Efforts should be made to encourage less active international students to participate in class.

4. Handouts, transparencies, and outlines of the class lecture should be provided to facilitate oral classroom participation.

5. Teacher talk in terms of meaningful repetition of key points and pause for emphasis, as well as sensitivity to the students' needs would be very helpful.

6. Course evaluations should address and monitor the comfort level of students in oral classroom participation and the factors affecting their participation modes in order to help teachers become sensitive in teaching and class management.

7. Teachers should show interest in students' professional development and encourage their participation efforts, which means a lot to Asian students who trust the teacher as an authoritative figure. In fact, the "authority" person can use his/her authority to, in effect, minimize his/her authority. By that I mean that teachers, knowing the Asian cultural view of teacher as an authoritative figure in the eyes of the Asian students, could assume the role of authority to invite students' participation in order to decrease his/her authoritative role in class.
For American peers

1. As Berlo (1960) posits, there must be a mutual reciprocity in achieving an understanding of each other in order for people to achieve the highest level of communication. Based on this study's findings, it is highly recommended that American peers try to listen carefully whenever an international graduate student speaks in class, and be sensitive to the needs of international students especially when they have trouble expressing their ideas.

2. According to survey reports (Bulthuis, 1986; Heikinheimo and Shute, 1986; Miller, 1971), international students try to seek social support from their American peers, but the relationship between them and their American peers rarely go beyond the most superficial contacts, and many international students quickly abandon the hope of establishing deep cross-cultural friendships. The findings of the present study strongly suggests the importance of mutual friendships between international graduate students and American peers. Strongly recommended is that American students be willing to make friends with international graduate students, and be willing to be their conversation partners and cultural informants.

3. This study has shown that the active role American peers take in class could both facilitate or debilitate
International graduate students' oral classroom participation. However, it is recommended that American students try to participate actively and yet without dominating the class in order to influence but not control the academic climate and atmosphere.

**For U.S. Institutions**

1. When planning orientation and community relation programs, U.S. institutions should encourage international graduate students to be open and receptive to the target culture as adaptation to American society is related to academic, social, financial, cultural, and language-related issues. Helping these students with their English skills could be a starting point, and placing them in English language courses would reduce their anxiety and provide needed help. Through language courses, the U.S culture can be introduced and penetrated. Therefore, university personnel should support and invest in the development of ESL programs. Meanwhile, ESL program administrators and instructors should consider the cultural adjustment of international graduate students in their syllabus design and try to incorporate cultural components in the course tasks by acknowledging and utilizing instead of ignoring the rich L1 backgrounds of the students.
2. The finding of this study that linguistic ability is secondary to socio-cultural factors affecting the classroom participation mode of the selected international graduate student has necessitated the need to design and implement an instructional course "Language across Culture," which will provide model activities and cultural experiences for international graduate students in addition to the regular spoken English and composition courses. Students enrolled in this course would be given a series of culture-related topics such as banking, telephoning, shopping, renting a house, etc. shown in given contexts by either instructors or videos. Students would be encouraged to retrieve, synthesize, and choose to take risks using both linguistic and extra-linguistic expressions in a given situation. By the end of a ten-week program, students would be expected to be aware of cultural aspects of the target language and feel comfortable communicating with native speakers. In this way, students could expect to be better prepared for oral classroom participation in their academic courses cognitively, socio-culturally, and affectively. To specify the task, an instructional curriculum map is drawn in Figure 6.
Task Analysis (Instructional Curriculum Map): A Flowchart

Increase cultural awareness and language skills while decreasing anxiety and discomfort of speaking up in academic courses.

1.0 Cultural awareness (IS)

1.1 discrimination of cultural similarities and differences (IS)

1.2 oral statement of cultural differences (V5)

1.3 strategy of using extralinguistic expressions (V1)

1.4 synthesis of linguistic & non-linguistic expressions (IS)

2.0 language knowledge and skills (IS)

2.1 identification of expressions in reading materials (IS)

2.2 a strategy of short-hand writing (CS)

2.3 understanding of listening materials (IS)

2.4 oral expression in a given situation (V1)

3.0 Reduction of anxiety and discomfort

3.1 choose to imitate verbal & non-verbal expressions (AT)

3.2 choose to take risk using linguistic & non-linguistic expressions (AT)

3.3 choose to communicate with native speakers (AT)

3.4 oral expression in a given situation

Can you solve problems using English in a given situation?

Entry level:

- ability to understand native culture (IS)
- ability to identify English lexical units (IS)
- ability to discriminate English sounds from native language (IS)
- ability to pronounce English sounds clearly (MS)
- aspiration to learn English & to communicate in English (AT)

The codes used in this chart mean (Gagne, 1968):

IS = Intellectual Skill  MS = Motor Skill
CS = Cognitive Strategy  AT = Attitude
V1 = Verbal Information

Figure 6: Task analysis (Instructional curriculum map): A flowchart
3. Conversation partners and international/American roommate services should be provided to meet the international graduate students' needs to be acculturated, and also to help American students be internationalized. Furthermore, the establishment of an international theme hall housing only International/American pairs and provision of special activities and programs should be seriously considered by university personnel as they have a positive impact on the adjustment of the international students, and it meanwhile facilitates the American students' appreciation of other cultures.

4. Articulation workshops and panel discussions on topics concerning the adaptation and adjustment of international graduate students in their campus life should be held by departmental and college personnel inviting not only international students, but also faculty members and American counterparts.

For future research

1. A comparative study on the perceptions of faculty members in university settings towards the oral classroom participation mode of international graduate students in general, and Asian graduate students in particular, in content courses could be valuable to triangulate the present study's findings and explore similarities as well as differences between both studies.
2. The findings from a similar study on the perceptions of American students towards oral classroom participation in their content courses could be compared to the findings of the present study.

3. A comparative study on the perceptions of American peers towards oral classroom participation of international graduate students in their content courses could also be helpful to compare the findings with this study.

4. Based on the findings of this study together with the above three proposed studies, a three-part comprehensive survey among international graduate students, university faculty members, and American peers at different university sites would be very helpful in bringing more integrative insights to the issue under study and would lend support to enhance a dynamic academic environment in which international graduate students enjoy the equality of classroom participation and contribute to class without inhibition. International graduate students would, therefore, have more autonomy and adaptability to American culture and the American higher education system.

5. The fact that this study has not found cross-cultural differences within Asian culture in terms of the perceptions of international graduate students towards oral classroom participation does not necessarily mean that there are no differences. On the contrary, Asian cultures can vary
considerably. Additional insight about the perceptions of oral classroom participation could be gained by studying students from different countries separately and comparing the results across countries.

6. It would be interesting to compare the perceptions of international graduate students towards oral classroom participation in their content courses with the perceptions of American students towards oral classroom participation in their content courses in Asian universities. Therefore, a comparable study could be conducted in the same fashion as the present one in Asian countries to see the role American students play in the Asian context. The findings could lend support to encourage cultural awareness and increase sensitivity to issues concerning global education.

7. Perceptions of international graduate students towards their oral classroom participation in content courses are extremely complex. Although this study is based on the results from a small sample in a single institution, it is consistent with previous theory and research. This study could generate a large scale survey and log linear and multivariate analysis could be used to examine the relationship among factors affecting the different perceptions.
APPENDIX A

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN U.S. INSTITUTIONS,
1994-1995
Figure 7: Foreign students in U.S. institutions (1994-95)

APPENDIX B

THE STATISTICS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLMENT AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AS OF AUTUMN 1994

Sources in this appendix are all provided by the University's 14th Enrollment List for the Autumn Quarter 1994 by the Office of the University Registrar.
Figure 8: The Ohio State University international students enrollment (1981-1994)
Figure 9: The Ohio State University international student enrollment top ten countries, Autumn Quarter, 1994
Figure 10: The Ohio State University international student enrollment geographic distribution, Autumn Quarter, 1994
Table 25: The Ohio State University total international students by college and sex, Autumn Quarter, 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College, School or Division</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Medical Professions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Education</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Hygiene</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engineering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Ecology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pharmacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>892</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>1,464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Postbaccalaureate Professional**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optometry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Pharmacy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>2,595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total University**

| Total                             | 2,608 | 1,473 | 4,081 |

Statistics provided by the Office of the University Registrar
Figure 11: The Ohio State University graduate and undergraduate international student enrollment
Figure 12: The Ohio State University international student enrollment top ten graduate departments, Autumn Quarter, 1994
APPENDIX C

CONSENT LETTER TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY
March 2nd, 1995

Dear potential participant:

I am Jun Liu, a doctoral candidate in Educational Studies in the College of Education at the Ohio State University. Currently, I am writing my dissertation. My topic is: "Perceptions of selected international graduate students towards oral classroom participation in their academic content courses in American universities." The overall purpose of this dissertation is to understand international graduate students' perceptions of classroom participation in order to suggest ways in which they might adapt themselves more adequately and effectively in American higher education. My focus is on Asian graduate students.

I need approximately twenty volunteers like you to participate in my study. All you have to do is to be interviewed, observed in one of your mainstream classes, and fill out some questionnaires in the remaining winter quarter and the spring quarter.

Your participation is greatly encouraged and will be deeply appreciated.

Please sign your name here: ___________________________

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jun Liu
APPENDIX D

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PROFESSOR
FOR CLASS OBSERVATION
April 7, 1995

Dear Professor:

I am Jun Liu, a doctoral candidate in Foreign Language Education in the Department of Educational Studies in the College of Education here in OSU. I'm currently doing my dissertation research on the perceptions of international graduate students toward their oral classroom participation in terms of speaking up in their academic content courses. The overall purpose of this study is to understand international graduate students' perceptions of class participation in order to suggest ways in which they might adapt themselves more adequately and effectively in American higher education. My focus is on Asian graduate students.

I'd like to interview my participants in the study, and to observe some of their content classes, one of the participants in my study happens to be in your course ( ) this quarter. I have already talked to this student to observe one class in which she/he is a student, and she/he has agreed. Now I'd like to seek your approval to allow me to sit in on your class on , 1995.

Please give me you approval at your earliest convenience, and I would really appreciate your consent.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Jun Liu

365
APPENDIX E

TELEPHONE SCRIPT FOR PERMISSION
Dear Professor:

This is Jun LIU, a Ph.D student in foreign language education in the Department of Educational Studies in the College of Education here in OSU. I'm currently doing research on the perceptions of international graduate students about their oral classroom participation in terms of speaking up in their academic content courses. In order to get rich data and thick description, I'd like to do both observations and interviews to a certain number of international graduate students who are randomly sampled in this study. one of the participants in my study happens to be in your course in this quarter. I have already talked to him/her to be with him/her in one of the class session, say. I'd like to seek your permission to allow me to sit in that class just once.

Is it OK? Professor?

Thanks for your permission and I appreciate your help (If “Yes” is the answer).

(If the answer is delayed or some kind of refusal occurs...) Persuasion I: Well, as you see, I have already got the permission from the Human Subjects Review Committee for this study, and I have already talked to the subject I'm going to observe, so your help at this moment is very crucial to my study. (Wait for the response)

Persuasion II: As you see, I am also a graduate student in OSU, why don't you just regard me as one of your students in class? I won't do anything to disrupt your normal classroom procedure. Please let me in.

(If rejected, appointment will be made and face-to face contact will hopefully be favorable to my position because I can explain more clearly and successfully. I'm pretty confident that I will get the permission after all.)
APPENDIX F

WIDE-OPEN TELEPHONE SCHEDULE
The following questions might be asked in this first-round interview (open-ended) depending on the specific interview dynamics and the individual interviewee as long as he/she feels comfortable. I will state my purpose for the study and specify my procedure in terms of what I expect from him/her as a participant of the study in detail before I start the interview. An interview of approximately half an hour will be scheduled for each participant ahead of time, and the location of and time of each interview will be negotiated between me, the interviewer, and the interviewee.

1. Can you tell me something about yourself, e.g., your educational background, your previous experience of learning and working, your personality, your areas of interest, your hobby, and your own feelings about yourself as a person and yourself as a language learner? What is your ultimate purpose of studying in the United States?

2. How long have you been in the United States? How do you like being a student at The Ohio State University? What have you enjoyed most about your classes? What have you disliked?

3. What is your opinion of the courses you have taken so far in your special area/s? How much did you enjoy the classes you have taken? What kinds/types of classes do you like most, i.e., lectures, seminars, group discussions, etc.? How do you feel about oral participation in classes in general?

4. Why did you volunteer to participate in this study? In what ways do you believe this study might be of help?
APPENDIX G

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
Introduction

Hi, I'd like to talk with you now in the next half an hour. I'd also like to tape record our interview. I hope you won't mind. Your response will be kept confidential. So please don't worry. What I'd like you to talk about is your perceptions of oral classroom participation in terms of speaking up in your academic content courses. You can say what you feel and what you think about your participation as an international graduate student. I will ask you some questions, if there are some questions you don't want to answer, please feel free to let me know. If there are some questions which you don't quite understand, please point them out so that I can clarify them for you. Anyhow, please bear in mind that today's interview is for the benefit of international graduate students like you and me, so please feel relaxed and at ease.

Do you have any questions before we start?
Are you ready? OK. Now let's start.

1. How do you feel about participating in your content courses in terms of speaking up?

Possible probes:

--What is the most important factor that causes you to actively or inactively participate in classroom activities?
--How do you feel in participating a discussion when you are well prepared as opposed to ill-prepared?
--In what ways do you think you can benefit in oral classroom participation?
--What's your primary concern in speaking up in class?
--What will you probably worry about if you have nothing to say in class?

2. How do you feel about asking or answering questions in class?

Possible probes:

--Under what circumstances do you like to ask questions?
--How do you feel about yourself when you asked "silly" questions?
What is your feeling when you cannot ask the exact questions in your mind because of your limited English proficiency?

What's your immediate reaction when someone in class asks a question?

How do you like the idea to mentally go over the answer before you speak up?

3. What's your perception of your American peers in class as related to your oral participation?

Possible probes:

--How do you like taking classes with native speakers of English in terms of oral classroom participation?

--What kind of feelings do you think you would have if you spoke in your native language in class?

--What's your attitude of active oral participation of some of the native speakers of English in your class?

--How do you perceive what your American peers think about you when you actively participate or inactively participate in class discussion or simply remain neutral?

--How do you like your American peers' help in terms of rephrasing your potential questions, remaking your broken sentences and so forth in class?

4. What is your opinion of the instructor who creates many chances for class discussion and interaction vs. the instructor who dominates the class by lecturing?

Possible probes:

--What is your reaction toward a teacher who encourages her/his students in every way possible to participate in class discussion?

--What is your reaction toward a teacher who lectures most of the class time?

--How do you react when you cannot follow your instructor?

--How do you like asking your instructor questions after class?

--What are you concerned about most in your interaction with the instructor in class?
APPENDIX H

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

373
1. Do you participate in classroom discussion actively or inactively, or remain neutral? Why or why not?
2. Do you like to guess an answer to a question raised in class and speak up? Why or why not?
3. Do you prefer to practice silently before you speak up in class? Why or why not?
4. Are you afraid of making mistakes in class participation? Why or why not?
5. In small group discussion, do you feel more comfortable to talk with American peers or other international graduate students? Why or why not?
6. Do you feel very much relaxed in class participation? Why or why not?
7. Do you tend to ask questions whenever you feel like it in class? Why or why not?
8. Are you nervous when you know that you are to be called upon? Why or why not?
9. Do you feel frustrated when you cannot follow the instructor? What is your immediate reaction?
10. Do you prefer to keep silent in class as long as you understand the teacher? Why or why not?
11. Do you feel very uncomfortable if the teacher talks all the time in class? Why or why not?
12. Do you think frequent oral classroom participation will impress people negatively as "show-off"? Why or why not?
13. What do you care most about your oral participation, errors in pronunciation and grammar or errors in idea-expressing? Why?
14. What are your frequently used strategies in active or inactive classroom participation? Why do you like using it/them?
15. What is the proper behavior in your own culture in terms of oral classroom participation?

The above boldfaced words are the key words in this interview. Though structured, this interview schedule can still vary in the way of asking without changing the key words. It all depends on the individual and the context.
APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLES
(The followings are transcription samples of wide-open, semi-structured, and structured interviews with Mr. Geologist (G). Jun Liu (L) did all three interviews, and they were all conducted in March, 1995 at The Ohio State University.)

Interview I: Wide-open

L: Hi, G, how are you today?

G: I am fine. How about yourself?

L: Pretty good thank you. Today I actually want to ask you some questions regarding my dissertation. Let's see how long it takes. If it's too long we can leave it for another time, but if not, we will continue.

G: Ok.

L: First of all, can you briefly tell me about your educational background, for instance, what year did you have what degree and when did you come here, and things like that, very briefly.

G: Ok, I graduated from high school in South Korea in 1989 and I just got into the college in South Korea and I just finished the freshman years...

L: What major?

G: I was in the geography major and when I finished the freshman years I just transferred to the University of Denver, Denver Colorado in 1990 and started my bachelor program over there until 1993.

L: So you had three years undergraduate study there in Denver?

G: Yeah, I graduated from the University of Denver in 1993 and then um... I entered the master program in Ohio State University at the major geography, starting September, 1993 and I finished my first year by 1994, I mean the spring of 1994, and then I had to pack all my personal belongings and went back to Korea for the personal reason and then came back last winter quarter of this year, I mean the winter of 1995 and started my second year, my master program again.

L: Ok, so now you are in your master program and you have been here in the United States for 5 years altogether, with first three years as undergraduate student in the University of Denver, and then you came here for your graduate study. Actually you must have known and experienced a lot about participation. Have you been with a lot of American students in your undergraduate study?

G: You mean like...?
L: You have taken a lot of classes with them, right?

G: Yeah, that's right.

L: Did you have to take any English classes before?

G: Actually, what University Denver set the standard for the foreign students was if foreign students cannot pass the 515 in TOEFL score, they must take English as a second language as a credit course for the university. So I took one, the university classes, I mean the University English class, which was designed for the foreign students as a second language program. So I took it then, and honestly I didn't have enough time to get ESL program before transferred to the University of Denver, so there was like a little bit awkward situation between the transferring from the university in South Korea to University of Denver.

L: I see. Ok, what is your general reaction or feelings or thinking about your participation in your major courses?

G: In my major courses?

L: Yeah, what is your general attitude toward participation in terms of speaking up, talking or contributing or asking questions in the courses in your area, what is your general attitude?

G: Um..., my general attitude is surely positive to participating all class activities and group work, such as study groups, so I'm thinking myself as really very positive in the attitude.

L: Ok, you like participating?

G: Of course, of course. I participate very actively in class.

L: Well, I think we should pause right here. Thank you very much.

G: You're welcome.
In today's interview, I'd like to concentrate on the topic of participation and ask you some questions related to that issue. If you cannot understand what I am asking, please feel free to let me know.

G: Sure.

L: The first question I'd like to ask you is: How do you feel about participating in your content courses in terms of speaking up? Do you consider yourself as someone very active participating or inactive or neutral in classes?

G: That really depends on the class characteristics, such as...um...

L: Tell me a little more about it.

G: Such as if classes are the requirement, and nothing more than there is a lecture from the professors, every student just kept listening and taking a note, it's like the inactive participation for the whole entire student group in class, but sometimes the professor, I mean, actually, the professors are also really like active to ask the students to participate in his or her classes, such as seminars and like the group activity work and such as in my major area there is like the forecasting of the weather, so we all work together in the computer room and analyzing the forecasting data, so I think it really depends on the classes.

L: But if the instructor encourages you to speak, do you often speak?

G: Yes.

L: Ok, but unless he talks all the time, so you usually will participate, right? And sometimes you come to class you are well prepared, you did all the assignments and get some questions and sometimes you might not have enough time to prepare, on these two occasions, compared with A and B, if you want to participate or if you participate, under what condition do you participate more? Well prepared versus not well prepared.

G: Of course well prepared situation.

L: Why?

G: Because I have something to say in the class and if I don't prepare enough I usually keep quiet in the class just listening to the others work or speak.

L: Because you are not sure.

G: Right, I am not confident when I am not prepared, so that's why.

L: Do you often come to class prepared, well prepared?
G: That's really my goal to be prepared, sometimes time restriction, that's not allowed.

L: In what way do you think you can benefit from oral participation, if you talk, if you participate, what kind of benefit do you think you can get from participation?

L: Sometimes I feel like if I participate and speak up in the class, even though I am saying in a little bit wrong directions of the class topic, I correct myself if I speak up and find myself I was speaking wrong topic or the wrong subject matters at the time even though my professor agreed to me, but just like the self evaluation process when I speak to the professor to the class and talk to everybody, so that's kind of benefit to me correcting myself when I speak to the class knowing I was wrong in the preparation for my classes.

L: So, kind of self-check.

G: Right, self-check, self-evaluating.

L: Anything else you can see the benefit?

G: Um..., probably sometimes such as American students think the foreign students really cannot speak up in class, especially like the oriental people like us very quiet and just keep smiling to the professor and to the students and they think us we are just quiet, but we are not, because it's kind of degree of anxiety. If I say to the entire body of the classes, say, they really really understand what I'm saying, that was my concern in all the stage of my study career and well, if you keep repeating what your say several times again and again whether you don't have the confidence or whatever, you still have um... like attitude you have to speak up in the class and that's kind of the benefit to me in terms of the class participation, so...

L: So, you think you can, um, besides you can check whether what you think is correct or wrong?

G: And I also convinced the professors and students that...

L: That you can speak.

G: Right, and also positively participating in the class by speaking up.

L: Right, right. What is your primary concern in speaking up?

G: The pronunciation, and grammar and the sense of the, the... I would say, if I speak up to the class am I communicating well, that's my real concern, the communications, even though I speak up, I mean I'm speaking up to the class, but if they do not understand what I am saying it's useless to speak up, the communication problem is my primary concern.

L: Ok, what would you probably worry about if you have nothing to say in class?
G: I probably worry about...?

L: Yeah, what would you worry, say, if you go to class and say nothing while other people are talking a lot, do you feel kind of um... alienated or do you have any worry, what would you worry about?

G: My, um...I think I am just worrying a little because when I realized I was not participating this class or I did not understand this class, I think class is wrong for me and is changing my direction towards this class such as um... I would, say, change my goals towards this class, or probably I would drop the class and then retake another class instead of um...

L: So, you will question about what's wrong with certain class?

G: Yeah. I would think that this class is not really coherent to my research topic, and I do not have to listen to this class, and I should go ahead and change that.

L: Drop it or...

G: Right.

L: All right, good, and now let's concentrate on question-asking and answering. Under what circumstances do you prefer to ask questions?

G: Under what circumstances?

L: I mean, do you prefer to ask questions if you have any in class or after class?

G: I prefer after class, it's a little better for me because um..., sometimes I feel like I'm asking wrong and stupid questions in the middle of the class. If I don't know or do not really understand what is taught in class, I would wait until after class, and then I am going to the professor or the instructor asking what I really don't understand particularly, so I do not bother the whole class. In class, you know, they also need time to listen to the professors, so I do not want to disturb even if I have a question.

L: Ok, but do you still sometimes ask questions in class even though you prefer to ask after class?

G: Sure.

L: So sometimes you do ask questions in class. Could you recall in what kind of circumstances or under what kind of conditions do you ask questions in class?

G: The condition was, it seems to me, the whole class, I mean, the students in class do not understand what the professor's saying, so that somebody has to raise...
L: To speak up.

G: Yeah, to speak up and raise his or her hand and then have to ask him or her about why the entire students cannot understand or comprehend this time and I am feeling like I am an scapegoat and raise my hand, (laughing)...

L: Ok, so you will sometimes speak for others if there is a need to speak?

G: Right.

L: By the way, what kind of personalities have you ever thought about yourself?

G: My personality?

L: I mean, you might be outgoing, outspoken, or just introverted a little bit?

G: I think I am a little bit between those.

L: Can I ask you what is your blood type?

G: "B".

L: Ok. Thank you. When you sometimes, just like you've mentioned, that sometimes you are afraid of asking silly questions in class so you prefer to ask after class, but in case you ask some silly questions and people laugh at you, how do you feel at that time?

G: Oh, well, sometimes I feel really bad but sometimes even though I do not know, I think some of them may not know that either. So I tell them that please don't laugh at me, I am just talking to myself, ha ha ha....

L: I see.

G: So...

L: So sometimes you feel embarrassed but sometimes you think it's natural, everyone will make such mistakes?

G: Sure, sure.

L: So, you don't think too bad about it.

G: No, I don't think so.

L: Good.

G: Asking about questions sometimes make you think of good answers, or have good answers from professors.

L: So you think it's not the big concern.
G: No.

L: Sometimes, I don't know, since you have been here for a long time, maybe recalling your earlier graduate days, sometimes you really wanted to ask a question or questions and yet you could not exactly express the idea in English, have you ever come across those situations?

G: In class?

L: Yeah, for instance, you really want to ask yet you feel what you ask is not exactly what you mean.

G: A lot of times.

L: Ok, so how did you feel like that?

G: I feel like I am stuck in between, like the professor and the student, and well, the kind of situation is really stressful to me, since I cannot say in my native language what I really want to say to professors, but in English sometimes it's kind of limited to express what I really want to express in the class, so, sometimes I really feel embarrassed because of the low communication skill.

L: Do you think that it usually becomes a negative factor to prohibit you from further talking, further speaking or it will become a positive factor to stimulate you for further try in participation?

G: Well, I always look at the bright side of the negative factors even though after I passed that kind of situation, I came back home, I thought about it what I was wrong in expressing my opinion in the time of the class, so I would reorganize myself, I mean, in terms of English, if I were in the kind of situation of how I could express my thought, okay, so I thought correctly, it's a kind of keep practicing job that I feel like that.

L: Ok, so you keep on practicing.

G: Right.

L: Ok, sometimes when you are in class, and you will have a lot of classmates who are very active in asking questions so what is your general attitude towards those who ask questions in class, what is your response if you hear someone ask a question, do you tend to think about the answer or do you tend to have the motivation to answer the question if he asks.

G: Sometimes I do want to respond to his or her questions, but sometimes I do not really have to respond because that's what I exactly already knew about his or her questions, just depending on the questions the students asked.

L: Ok, and say if the student asked a question to the professor and you know the answer or you sort of thought about this question, are you eager to share before
the professor speaks or you will rather wait until the professor finishes his answer, and then if there is any difference between yours and the professor's, you try to speak up.

G: I think this is really a key point, um... I wait until the professor's answer to the question, because I admire the traditional customs. It's like the student cannot respond before the professors respond, it's kind of like in general.

L: Is it the tradition or the culture in Korea?

G: Yeah, yeah. So, I'd rather not to respond until the professor finishes.

L: Even though you know the answer.

G: Right.

L: But if your answer is exactly what the professor answers then...

G: I just convinced myself.

L: OK, but if there is a disagreement, do you tend to ask at that time.

G: Yeah, after the professor's answer, sure.

L: Then you will try to ask again.

G: Of course.

L: Ok, good.

G: But after the whole, this kind of situation is settled down, then I participate after it again.

L: Do you like the idea of mentally going over the questions before you ask?

G: This is the usual step.

L: Ok, what is your usual step, can you describe a little bit?

G: Um...

L: If you have a question.

G: I have a question, for instance? I... organize my thought to the key point term, such as um..., how I put the key point to the most important term in terms of question, so I keep concentrating my terms on the key point professors asks, so that's the usual step before I ask.

L: Well, I'm most interested in knowing that when you ask a question, do you take time thinking of the way how to phrase your question or do you mentally go
over those phrases before you speak up or if you have any idea you think it's a good idea then you try to speak it up without preparation? What I mean is, do you have sort of a few minutes to ask silently then you ask orally?

G: Sometimes, that also depends on the situation, but it's like if I ask a technical problem to the professor, I have to organize myself and rearrange my whole questions like this is question No 1, this is question No 2 and final question, such as "bla, bla..." and then I ask him after I keep saying in my mind and keep repeating in my mind and then I ask him, but if it is like the real short question, such as, um..."when was the date and when was the deadline?", I just ask him or her without thinking.

L: So, for those short technical questions, you just ask very briefly and at random...

G: Right.

L: But for those that need some thought, and need some time organizing your thought, you would probably try hard to do it.

G: Yeah, that's like real communication between the professor and me and he will understand what I was asking about.

L: Very good, thank you. And I think we have covered half of them and the next question is about your American peers or your American classmates in class.

G: Ok.

L: Sometimes you take classes with a lot of native speakers or you might be the only one or one of the few non-native speakers among them, sometimes you might have courses with a lot of international students. Personally, do you have any preference to take courses with a lot of native speakers or with non-native speaker, do you have any preference?

G: No, not really.

L: Not really? Ok. Do you feel very comfortable in taking courses with native speakers as well as with non-native speakers, or with whom do you feel more comfortable in class?

G: Um... I would say I do not really have preference in those two situations.

L: I see, and your experience in Denver is similar to the experience here?

G: While recalling my first year in America, I thought sometimes the international students have less advantage than the American students have in terms of communication skill. I have taken classes with a lot of international students, but as far as the participation is concerned, I think it really doesn't matter whether the whole class is composed of the international students or the American students mainly because it depends on the professor's skill or his or
her organizational skill of the class. Sometimes the professors just give the lectures and then I think the attitude of the American students or the international students are the same, just receiving the information from the professor, but if students have to take the participation is kind of really different situation such as sometimes the American students have more benefit in terms of presenting their ideas or giving presentation to the class than the international students, so I really think it depends on the classes.

L: Ok, what kind of feelings do you think you would have if you could speak native language in class? Do you think you would be more active if you could speak Korean, or do you think there is no difference whether your could speak Korean or English? My point is, say, if you are taking this class and you are allowed to speak Korean or the instructor speaks Korean or everyone speaks Korean, do you feel you are at more advantageous position to speak up or do you think you would speak much more than what you are doing now?

G: No, I don't think so.

L: So language is not a big issue for you now?

G: I think the big issue is whether you are well prepared before you go to class or not.

L: Ok. Sometimes have you ever noticed that in your class, some native speakers seem to dominate the discussion, they speak a lot and they can talk about this and that even their relatives or their family situations in class, now what's your attitude towards this phenomenon? Do you think they talk too much off target or do you think they talk... you know just... how do you like their talking in class? Er...do you prefer not to talk too much off target, try to concentrate or focus on the topic? What is your feeling towards native speakers who speak a lot?

G: Too much in the class?

L: Yeah.

G: I think that this is not really my business, because the whole class is managed by the professor, so the professor can think these are out of point or out of subject, he or she can just stop the student not to speak too much, and give the chance to another student. But I do think if the native speakers speak a lot or too much in class, I think myself, um... why professors cannot stop him at this point.

L: So you think the instructor or the professor should have the responsibility or kind of moderating, managing the class tempo, do not encourage one individual to talk too much irrelevantly.

G: Right, right.

L: All right, good. Have you ever considered that what your American classmate
will think about you when you participate or when you do not participate, do you think they will ever judge you based upon your participation?

G: No.

L: They don't care, usually?

G: I think they will talk about me behind my back if I am not participating well throughout the quarter, but um..., I think it's just like the degree of participation matter, I think, well, sometimes I do think someone talk behind my back and think they are talking each other about...

L: Talking each other about you.

G: Right, or attitude about the international students in the class but um..., well, the kind of situation was like a little bit less to me in terms of the number happens.

L: So, you don't think it always happens?

G: No.

L: They don't care?

G: Sometimes I do not think they do care about my attendance or my participation.

L: Ok. Have you ever come across the situation where your American students tend to help you in-class?

G: In class?

L: Yeah. Do you feel supportive or helpful sometimes when you want to express something and yet the meaning cannot get across and so they came to help you, give you some phrases or rephrase something for you?

G: Sure. Yeah, sometimes the student next to me, he or she can not really listen too well about what I was talking, so he or she sometimes like rephrase or make some clarification for me to the professor, if I am not speaking in correct pronunciation or in a good context about the question, so he or she can really help or support me in the class. So I had experience with that a lot of times.

L: Ok, so you feel that helpful, yes?

G: Yeah. Sometimes when I hear my American students or classmates rephrase my question, I think I can learn something from him or her.

L: Ok, very good. Let's focus on our last question on this interview about the instructors. As you mentioned, it really depends on some instructors -- whether they encourage you to speak, and create good atmosphere which is interactive in
nature, some professors tend to talk all the time and lecture all the time.
Personally, what kind of instructors do you like better?

G: I prefer the instructors who give us a lot of chances to speak up and give us a lot of chances to ask questions in the middle of his or her lectures, so I really like two-way communication, two-way straight in terms of communication, but sometimes I feel really bad when I had the professor who just gave us the lecture and even did not allow us to raise questions in the middle of the class until the class was finished or class was over, so the professor do not want to be disturbed by the students' questions in the middle of the class, it's kind of awful to me, but I had one professor who really like an authoritative figure who does not allow students to raise their hands in the middle of the lecture. He kept going on with his lectures. Well, I personally felt he was really bad in terms of the communication, this professor cannot have the feedback from the students until the class is over, so it's like, um...holds back the feedback.

L: So it's not interactive in class, and thus you personally do not like those...

G: Personally?

L: Yeah.

G: No.

L: Ok. Do you think sometimes the lecture is good if the teacher can give you more information? How do you like that?

G: Information is okay, but information can be achieved by reading a book and doing research, anything else rather than lectures. Um... what I really felt is that the two-way communication is a lot helpful in the class situation to learn.

L: Ok, very good. So you personally do not like lecture all the time.

G: No, not really.

L: Ok. Was there any occasion on which you could not follow instructor in class?

G: Yes.

L: And what would you do to make up for it?

G: Well, I asked her (professor) to repeat the process or the procedure she studied at the starting point.

L: You mean in class?

G: Because I thought I was not the only one unable to understand her procedure or process, so I had to speak up, or somebody had to in this kind of situation.
L: Do you also tend to read or think about checking notes with your classmates after class, sometimes?

G: Reading...?

L: I mean if you cannot follow the instructor, and you might go back to re-read the book or to check the notes with some of your classmates, do you often do that?

G: Checking notes? Yes, yes, if I miss some parts of the lecture, I would check with my colleagues and if they do not get the right idea even in their lecture notes, I just go to the professor to have the right feedback from him or her, so making sure everything is clear.

L: What is your major concern in your talking or interacting with your instructor?

G: The communication problem is what you are asking?

L: Yeah.

G: The real..., my concern is how the degree of accuracy, and say, how I maturely ask him or her my question, so he or she can really accurately understand what I am asking, so accuracy, I mean the degree of accuracy is my real concern in communication.

L: What kind of advice could you give to those who just came to the United States to pursue their high degree in terms of participation?

G: In Master or PhD level?

L: Whatever graduate level. Say, a lot of Asian students, when they first came to this university, they are always overwhelmed or they could not talk freely. In order to help them talk, what kind of advice do you think you can give them?

G: Based on my experience?

L: Yes.

G: Um, based on my experience, I would ask newcomers to change their attitude, even though they are overwhelmed by these American students in class, but it's like the changing attitude problem. I was really passive when I came to the United States at the first time, I really hardly spoke in class or to professors, but I paid my tuition even though I could not understand what I was taking my lectures for, the waste of money right now (laugh), so I changed my attitude. This is all my job to ask to communicate, they, the professors do not communicate to me until I contacted them, so I changed my attitude after I spent like three months or five months in the United States.

L: So you changed the entire attitude then?
G: Even though I am not communicating well to the American students or the professors, still I think I am improving my communication skill through the mistakes.

L: Very good, thank you. I think we might stop here.
Interview III: Structured

L: Today I have another set of short questions on the same topic to ask you. Some of them, however, you have already answered. Let me go over them quickly and you can give me very brief answers, preferably with some reasons either your answer is yes or no. Okay?

G: Ok.

L: The first one is that do you participate in classroom discussion actively or inactively or just neutral, and why, why do you participate the way you do in class?

G: Actively, I believe. Because active participation give me some kind of feedback from the class even though I was wrong with the topics or subject matters, so active participation give the students impact or more feedbacks, more information out of the class.

L: Second, do you like to guess an answer to a question raised in class and then speak it up?

G: Guess or...?

L: Try to make a guess, or when someone asks the question, do you tend to guess what the answer is and then try to give the answer to check whether this is correct or not?

G: Sometimes, yeah, I tried to organize my answer and guess my answer in my brain until I think this is like 80% all right, then I speak up, if this is like half and half chance, half is wrong half is right, I would rather keep silent.

L: Ok, do you prefer to keep practice silently before you speak up in class?

G: Silently for ...?

L: Do you, um... if you have a question, do you practice silently before you really speak up?

G: Sometimes I do, but sometimes I don't, sometimes I don't, because I have to keep practicing the pronunciation even before I asked the question, sometimes I say, murmur.

L: Murmuring.

G: Yeah.

L: Are you afraid of making mistakes in class participation?

G: Yes, I do.
L: Why?

G: Because sometimes I do not want my American classmates think of me as bothersome in the class and I am bothering the class, because I am creating the delayed communications between class and me, it's kind of like the time matter when I am afraid of asking questions.

L: In small group discussions, do you feel more comfortable to talk with American peers or to talk with other international students?

G: More, I would say more.

L: You feel more similar?

G: Yes.

L: Ok, so it seems to me you do not feel the difference whether you are with Americans or you are with non-Americans?

G: A little bit difference in terms of the language context which American students usually refer to vs. international students usually refer to. I think international students usually speak directly and vividly, so it's like the time is not required too much to understand what the international student speak to me. But the American students, say, like, slangs, like an awkward word, so it's like more time-consuming job to understand. But still, I feel like I am still learning from the American students from this situation. So I did not feel uncomfortable with American students in small groups.

L: Do you feel very much relaxed in classroom participation?

G: No.

L: Why not?

G: There is a certain degree of anxiety still when I participate in the class. I don't know why, but I do have the anxiety on that.

L: Do you tend to ask questions whenever you feel like it sometimes?

G: Yes.

L: But you've told me earlier that you prefer to ask questions personally.

G: Oh, if the teacher or the lecturer is okay for us to ask questions in class, then I will ask.

L: So it depends on teachers' expectation?

G: Right.
L: Are you nervous when you know that you are going to be called upon to answer a question?

G: You mean you call me to...?

L: Yeah, if I were the professor, would you be nervous if you knew that I expected an answer to my question from you?

G: If I do not know the answer exactly, I will be nervous.

L: But if you knew the answer?

G: I would feel very comfortable.

L: Do you feel you were sometimes frustrated if you could not follow the instructor in class?

G: Frustration?

L: Yeah.

G: If I don't follow the instructions?

L: Yeah.

G: [Thinking] Yes.

L: And what kind of remedy do you have to come up with?

G: Sometimes I go to the professor for one-to-one tutorial, so I can get more comprehensive idea from him or her.

L: Do you prefer to keep silent in class as long as you understand the instruction?

G: You mean like I...

L: If you can follow the instructor very well, do you think you will feel comfortable not to participate?

G: No. I feel uncomfortable when I knew exactly what the topic is or what the subject matter is in class, and I would feel more comfortable if I can show my understanding to him or her in class.

L: Do you sometimes think if you talk too much, you will have a negative impression on others as showing off?

G: Umm... I used to consider the show-off situation. Sometimes, it's like you are showing that you have a lot more money than others. I hate that, and I would
rather be silent.

L: You don't want to impress people negatively?

G: Right, right. I just want to say what I have to say.

L: So you won't talk at random?

G: No.

L: Good. What do you care most about your classroom participation, your errors in pronunciation and grammar in sentences, or the meaning in your sentences?

G: I think the meaning of the sentences is my primary concern.

L: Why?

G: Even though I pronounce correctly, and I make a good grammatical sentence, if the meaning of the question is not clear to professors, it's nothing I guess. I am not communicating well in that situation. The communication is not accomplished.

L: What is your frequently-used strategies in classroom participation?

G: Strategy?

L: Yeah. What I mean is that in classroom situation, sometimes you raise your hand, sometimes you show your eagerness to speak, or sometimes you try to lower your head signaling that you are unable to or unwilling to participate the discussion to answer a question.

G: I always raise my hand to have the chance to speak up.

L: Okay. The last question which I need you to elaborate a little bit more is that: What is considered the proper behavior in your own culture, in Korean culture, in terms of classroom participation? What is the desirable behavior for students in class?

G: In terms of participation?

L: Hm..

G: In the college level?

L: Yes, or graduate level.

G: Well, um, I should say, um.. I just say the fact, right?

L: Yeah.
G: The traditional, or accustomed fact?

L: As you like.

G: To be silent is the adequate manner for students in class. That's one of the factors. If the professor asks a question to a particular student, um... and then other students even though they know the answer or raise their hands, they still cannot answer the question (because they are not asked to answer the question even if they want to answer) unless the professor wants them to do so. I think the main behavior of Korean students is to keep silent.

L: Hm. So keep silent in class is regarded as the proper behavior in class for students in Korea?

G: Right.

L: If some students talk off the top of their heads without asking the permission or raising their hands, would it be regarded as improper?

G: I would regard him or her as improper manner. Actually, it depends on the professor. If the professor expects some spontaneous answer, then students can try their answers without having to raise their hands. But if the professor wants a very long answer, he or she usually prefers students to raise their hands.

L: I see. Do you also carry over this type of concept or behavior here since a lot of people talk here without raising their hands? Do you think it's acceptable?

G: Well, that depends on the situation. But most of the college environment, I mean, college classroom environment, I would still hope we raise our hands. I think having our chances is fair situation. As you know, some students always like to speak too much, and excessively, and some students even know the answer, but keep silent. If the raising hands is the issue of giving and having a chance, then I think it will be fair to all the students in class.

L: Good. I think I have finished all the questions. Do you want to add something in relation to classroom participation?

G: Umm. In terms of newcomers, I mean like people who have just started their new programs both at college or graduate levels, I really want to encourage them to change attitude. Based on my experience, I spent useless time when I came to the United States. I mean I spent unnecessary time to be quiet. So I really encourage people who are attending the school in the first year.

L: Hmm. When you say changing attitude, could you please explain a little bit detail?

G: Well, that's hard to answer, but...um...., you speak to yourself, you are not supposed to act passively> You have to be a real American student. See the American students, they are really active. They have very active college life, and follow that, not imitate that, um....just follow what they do in class.
L: So do you mean that the proper behavior is not to do what is appropriate in your own culture, such as keeping silent in class all the time, but to adapt yourself to the American culture?

G: Right. Don't compare your standard to American standard.

L: Very good point. Anything else?

G: (Smiling) That's my points.

L: Thank you very much.

G: You're welcome.
APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE REVIEW
RETURN TWO (2) COPIES OF THE TYPED APPLICATION (including original signatures) TO: Office of Research Ethics, Room 106, Research Foundation Building, 1945 Kenny Road, Campus. (ATTACH A BRIEF ABSTRACT DESCRIBING THE RESEARCH ACTIVITY IN NON-TECHNICAL LANGUAGE.)

Principal Investigator: Mommae Keiko X (Must be OSU Faculty) [TYPE NAME] Last, First, Init. [Signature]
Academic Title: Associate Professor Phone No. 702-2241
Department: Educational Studies Department No. 1240
Campus Address: 249 Arps Hall Room Number - Building 1945 N. High Street
Co-Investigator(s): Liu Jun [TYPE NAME] Last, First Init. [Signature]

Protocol Title: Perceptions of selected international graduate students towards oral classroom participation in their academic content courses in American universities

Yes No (Please respond to each item - A through F)

A. The ONLY involvement of human subjects in the proposed research activity will be in one or more of the exemption categories as described in the appendix of "Human Subjects Program Guidelines."

B. The proposed research activity will involve minors (under the age of 18.)

C. The proposed research activity will involve pregnant women and/or individuals involuntarily confined or detained in penal institutions.

D. The proposed research activity will involve human in vitro fertilisation.

E. The proposed research activity will involve an element of deception.

F. The proposed research activity will expose or harass beyond levels encountered in daily life.

Source of Funding for Proposed Research: (Check A or B.)
A. GUSPE: Sponsor ________ RF Proposal/Project No. ________
B. Other (Identify) ________

Office Use: EXEMPTION STATE
APPROVED DISAPPROVED
MAR 16 1995
** Principal Investigator must submit a protocol to the appropriate Human Subjects Review Committee


400


Han, P. E. (1975). A study of goals and problems of foreign graduate students from the Far East at the University of Southern California. PhD Dissertation, University of Southern California, 1975.


411


412


