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UMI
ADULT ESL LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES: CASE STUDIES OF PREFERRED LEARNING STYLES AND PERCEIVED CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN ACADEMIC LISTENING TASKS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fullfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Macel A. Braxton, B.A., M.S.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University 1999

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Charles R. Hancock, Advisor
Professor Keiko Samimy
Dr. Cora Miller
Professor Robert N. Bickel

Approved By

Advisor
College of Education

Charles R. Hancock
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Macel A. Braxton

1999
The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles had on the language learning strategies that English as a second language (ESL) students chose to use in an English as a second language (ESL) university classroom, specifically one dealing with academic listening. Academic listening prepares the ESL students for the skills that they will need to enter a university and to be able to retrieve the information from their professor's lectures and from their class discussions within the course work itself.

Qualitative methodologies were used to gather and analyze the data. Four ESL students served as individual case study subjects. Data were collected by classroom observations, three video taped observations as well as two private interviews with each of the four ESL case study subjects, one interview with the ESL teacher, an example page of students' note-taking skills from lectures, and informal discussions with two informants.
The qualitative findings suggested that cultural background and preferred learning styles influenced the language learning strategies used by the four ESL students when they performed academic listening tasks. Memorization, participation, native language, religion, and body language were perceived cultural variables which seemed to influence the language learning strategies used by the four ESL students. Thus, the ESL students improved their note-taking skills and were able to develop their listening comprehension skills due to these perceived cultural variables. The four ESL students relied on two learning style preferences (i.e., visual and auditory) because they provided a means for them to understand the listening tasks which they performed in their ESL academic listening class. These two learning style preferences seemed to influence their listening behaviors as well as aiding them in learning English. Memorization and guessing served as the main language learning strategies which aided the four ESL students in comprehending the lecture information when they took notes in their ESL academic listening class.

The ESL teacher's strategies were perceived as valuable in enhancing the ESL students' listening comprehension and aiding in their learning of English. The use of language
learning strategies appeared to produce a positive effect on ESL students' academic listening skills development and served as a means to aid them in acquiring academic English.
Dedicated to my parents:
Mabel W. Braxton and Robert N. Braxton
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VITA

May 20, 1954......Born - Charleston, West Virginia

1976.............B.A., Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia

1983.............M.S., California State University, Hayward Hayward, California

1977.............Spanish Teacher, Fremont Unified School District, Fremont, California

1978-1991........Spanish/Latin Teacher, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland, California

1981-1983........Bilingual Teacher, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland, California

1985-1989........Spanish/Latin Teacher, Mills College, Upward Bound Program, Oakland, California

1989-1991........ESL Teacher, Oakland Evening Adult School, Oakland, California

1991-1993........Administrator, Coordinator of Minority Students' Program Office, Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia

1993-1994........Spanish Instructor, Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia

1994-1996........Graduate Student, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1996-present......Assistant Professor/Spanish, Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia
FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

Specialization: Foreign/Second Language Education

Minor Fields: Spanish (Latin American Literature)
              English as a Second Language (ESL)
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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

There are many threads in the cross-cultural, multilingual view of language learning strategies and the focus on students' language learning strategies can empower teachers just as it empowers learners. (Oxford, 1996, p. 249)

Introduction

Second language learners use different learning strategies, specific actions and behaviors to help them learn, in part because of their general learning styles or overall approaches to learning, as well as, the environment in which they are learning. Learning strategies are normally conceived to be techniques which students use to comprehend, store, and remember new information and skills. What a student thinks and does in order to learn constitute both the observable and non-observable aspects of learning strategies.

In the foreign and second language class, unique factors may affect learning. For example, in order to comprehend a listening text in a foreign language, a student might be thinking, “Am I understanding this? Does it make sense?” (Chamot and Kupper, 1989). Using this type of
comprehension monitoring to identify areas of difficulty, the student may note either mentally or in written form words and expressions to be checked on later. The teacher may observe the note-taking strategy, but would only learn about this type of self-monitoring strategy by asking the students what they were thinking or doing while listening (Chamot and Kupper, 1989).

According to Chamot and Kupper (1989), effective language learners know how to employ appropriate strategies to reach their learning goals, whereas ineffective language learners are less expert in their strategy choice and implementation. Learning style is a complex concept which encompasses numerous aspects: cognitive style; patterns of attitudes and interests; a tendency to seek situations compatible with one's own learning patterns; and a tendency to utilize certain learning strategies and avoid others; and other components.

Language learning strategies are often conscious steps or behaviors applied to enhance acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and the utilization of new information. Research has focused on the relationship between learning strategy application and language proficiency, individual differences in the operation of learning strategies and the value of training about the usefulness of language learning
strategies. Language learning styles and strategies appear to be among the most important variables influencing second language performance, and they are therefore appropriate content for investigation.

Learning styles and language learning strategies are different. Language learning strategies are associated with various learning styles and thus are more malleable (Ehrman, 1996). Learning strategies, on the other hand, are the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information (Chamot and O’Malley, 1990). Learning styles are linked with personality and therefore may be more difficult to change (Ehrman, 1996). Learning style is the way in which an individual prefers to learn (Kolb, 1984). An individual’s learning style may involve a predisposition for adopting particular learning strategies (Guild and Gerger, 1985). These varying definitions reflect similar, but slightly different emphases.

Perhaps the most challenging aspects of learning styles are the relationships between learning style and cultural background. According to some theorists, the knowledge gained by students from their cultural background may support particular learning styles. Teachers may modify their methods, materials, or curricula based on cultural
factors, including learning styles (Chamot and O’Malley, 1990). For example, some aspects of Hispanic cultures support learning styles that rely on cooperation and interaction among learners. Knowing this predisposition, teachers may assign students work in groups on a frequent basis. Other theorists, however, resist efforts to generalize about culture and style, hypothesizing that it may result in discriminatory treatment or inappropriate rationales for student success or failure. For example, some teachers may assume, erroneously, that Hispanic students who are working together on class assignments are cheating, instead of working in their most preferred mode. This predisposition for cooperative work is probably not limited to Hispanic students. It may be that some students are more predisposed to cooperative learning.

In addition to studying general language learning strategies, preferred learning styles, and cultural background, investigators have also sought information from another area of research in second language acquisition, namely listening comprehension and the role it plays in second language acquisition. English as a second language continues to increase worldwide (Benson, 1989). Students may be studying overseas, in English-speaking countries, or at home, in countries where English is a second language and
is used as the medium of instruction. Benson (1989) further states that the lecture remains a major part of most university study and thus the ability to comprehend academic lectures (i.e., listening comprehension) is an important part of the necessary proficiency of tertiary level students, but it may present special challenges for students for whom English is a second language.

According to Long and Macián (1994), listening has a unique role in the second language acquisition process as both a medium and an objective of instruction. Long and Macián (1994) state that knowing how learners process oral input is essential to the planning of effective instruction and assessment. However, learner characteristics affecting listening comprehension have been studied less frequently than textual characteristics because of the complexities involved in eliciting research data. As listening is considered to be mainly a covert skill, researchers must design data elicitation techniques that provide an accurate representation of students' internal processing of listening texts. Commonly, the techniques of simultaneous introspection (think aloud) and immediate retrospection (immediate recall protocol) have been used in listening research, but as Faerch and Kasper (1987) have stressed, a combination of methods is necessary in order to achieve a
more complete understanding of learners’ declarative knowledge, their communication and learning processes, and the affective and social aspects that interact with the cognitive dimension.

Some studies of L2 listening research have focused on specific characteristics of listening texts and their effects on comprehension. For example, Glisan (1985) conducted a study of L2 listening in adult learners of Spanish which revealed that word order significantly affected comprehension of oral passages. It was found that the basic subject-verb-object (SVO) pattern, which occurred in both English and Spanish, was not only the easiest for L2 learners to comprehend, but the results indicated that learners may also utilize strategic processing to mentally convert other patterns (e.g., VSO, OVS) to the subject-verb-object (SVO) order. Glisan also found that the L2 learners were able to comprehend the longer sentences placed at the end of a reading passage.

With the advent of the proficiency movement of the 1980's, there came an awareness of the complex nature of listening and its importance as a communication skill also started. The 1986 Northeast Conference Reports presented a dual perspective on listening in two articles: Listening in the Native Language (Coakley and Wolvin, 1986) and Listening
in the Second Language (Joiner, 1986). Both articles reviewed the relevant research and highlighted similarities and differences in acquisition of listening skills in the native (L1) and second languages (L2). Listening is the cornerstone skill of second language acquisition and is an important topic within the second language research and instruction community (Long and Macián, 1994).

The primary goal of language teaching is to prepare learners to use the target language in real life. In order to comprehend and interact with native speakers in a wide variety of situations, ESL learners must have ample opportunities to listen to different speech patterns on culturally appropriate contexts (Long and Macián, 1994). Listening for the ESL student in a university academic setting has become a vital skill needed for learning English as a second language. A number of studies have been conducted investigating ESL students' comprehension of academic lectures in a university setting. One study conducted by Rost (1990), used listener summaries of lectures of ESL university students to identify processes in effective and less effective listeners.

One important aspect regarding listening at the higher education level in ESL classes is academic listening. In higher education in the U.S., students are typically
required to take notes in most of their classes. In an academic listening classroom for adults, ESL students, typically engage in activities based on knowing how to listen, which may affect their comprehension of the particular subject area. The academic college environment often requires that adult ESL students be prepared to take class notes either during lectures in university classrooms or other academic settings.

Chaudron, Cook, and Loschky (1988) and Dunkel (1988) conducted research on the impact note-taking had on non-native speakers' comprehension and recall of lecture content in English. A study by Courtney and Hale (1991) showed that English was the predominant language of note-taking used by the non-native English speakers, with some students taking notes in both English and their native language. It is possible that the effects of note-taking may differ for different non-native English speakers. As Dunkel and Davy (1989) noted, international students process aural information in English more slowly than native English speakers, and the two groups may also differ in note-taking experiences and habits. Students also vary both in their skill level and their preferred learning style for recording information from a lecture (Dunkel and Davy, 1989).
In summary, recent trends in immigration and foreign student enrollments place a growing demand on higher education for providing meaningful English as a second language instruction. A significant number of international students continue enrolling in U.S. universities, and some of these students are limited in their English-speaking skills (e.g., listening, writing, etc.), according to TOEFL scores and other indicators. These students are often challenged by being immersed in an English-only academic setting in which professors expect them to successfully matriculate as part of their academic college or graduate school majors.

A 1991 study of course sections at 164 two-year colleges nationwide revealed that ESL courses had grown from 30 percent of all foreign language courses offered in 1983 to 51 percent in 1991, and that the number of U.S. colleges offering ESL courses had grown from 26 percent in 1975 to 40 percent in 1991 (Ignash, 1992). Due to the variation of ESL students' needs and backgrounds, diverse types of ESL programs have been developed by universities and community colleges, as well as, with the type of programs devised shaped by local conditions. ESL programs normally include instruction in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar. Given the projections for continued
growth in ESL populations, many universities and community colleges, especially those in urban areas, are faced with the task of devising coherent programs and policies. Keeping abreast of national trends in immigration and foreign student enrollment are needed if universities and community colleges are to have programs and policies in place to anticipate new waves of incoming ESL students, rather than being overwhelmed by them (Ignash, 1992).

Language learning strategies and preferred learning styles may impact how second language learners learn. In addition, cultural background and listening have been found to be important factors in the language learning process for second language learners. Issues involving learning styles have been investigated during the past decade. Findings suggest the need for a harmonious relationship between the English language skill development process and an individual’s cultural background. Language researchers have also recognized the need to study how language learning strategies and preferred learning styles affect second language acquisition. However, few studies have investigated the variables of language learning strategies, preferred learning styles, cultural background, with a focus on academic listening. Further study of this topic is needed.
Statement of the Problem

The problem investigated in the present study was the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles had on the language learning strategies that English as a second language (ESL) students chose to use in an English as a second language (ESL) university classroom, specifically one dealing with academic listening. It is noteworthy that listening has been the language skill the least researched of the four fundamental language skill areas (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening), and few studies have linked academic listening to cultural background, learning styles, and adult student language learning strategies. This study was conducted to add to the growing body of professional literature on language learning strategies.

Research Questions

Researchers' varying interpretations of individual learning styles and learners' cultural background to date have left many questions unanswered. Which individual learner strategies are based on cultural background? How does cultural background affect learning a second language? Which individual learner factors have an impact on the selection of particular strategies? In what ways do these individual learner factors affect the students' ability to
learn a second language? What is the relationship between general learning strategies and specific skill development such as academic listening in second language programs such as ESL courses? These types of questions need to be researched.

However, the present study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent is it possible to identify language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students when they listen in English for academic purposes?

2. What perceived cultural variables seem to affect individual differences in language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students during listening tasks (e.g., academic note-taking)?

3. What preferred learning style variables are self-identified by adult college ESL students as those which most affect their formal classroom language learning, particularly their listening behaviors?

4. What should be the key components of a college ESL program which combines perceived cultural variables, learning strategies, and academic listening skill development?
5. What generic guidelines are warranted for college ESL programs?

Significance of Research

Due to the paucity of previous research on this topic and the need to establish baseline data, multiple-case studies utilizing a qualitative methodology were selected for use in this study.

The research questions are based on previous studies of language learning strategies with students learning English as a second language. O'Malley et al. (1985) focused on defining and classifying strategies used in second language acquisition and using retrospective interviews with high school students learning English as a second language. O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) focused on language skills and data collection procedures to study the ways in which individual strategies are used by high school students on a listening comprehension task. These two research studies did not investigate adult ESL students nor the perceived cultural influence and preferred learning style variables linked to language learning strategies. The present study has focused on these variables. Although the second study (O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper, 1989) focused on listening comprehension tasks, no direct linkage was made to
language learning strategies and the perceived cultural influence and preferred learning style variables.

Another study (LoCastro, 1990) examined learner strategies used by successful Japanese learners of English to develop their language skills in spite of the large class size found in their educational system. The LoCastro study did not focus on the influence of cultural background and preferred learning styles on language learning strategies used by adult ESL students in an academic setting.

A study by Gradman and Hanania (1991) investigated the relationship between the language achievement and the language learning strategies used by incoming ESL students in the Intensive English Program at Indiana University.

A fifth study (Kaylani, 1995) focused on the influence of gender and motivation on the language learning strategy use of successful and unsuccessful English language learners in Jordan.

The study by Bedell and Oxford (1996) examined fourteen existing studies which focused on the influence of culture on the choice of language learning strategies used by EFL/ESL language learners. The study did, however, focus on the influence of culture on the choice of language learning strategies used by ESL learners. They presented 50-item Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) frequency
data from a number of studies on a graph, indicating low to high frequencies. The main message found in the graph was that different cultural groups use particular kinds of strategies at different levels of frequency. It was also found that rote memorization and other forms of memorization were more prevalent among some Asian students than among students from other cultural backgrounds. Certain other cultures also appeared to encourage this strategy among learners.

Although the previously described studies may have focused on the influence of cultural background and listening tasks specifically linked to those language learning strategies used by adult ESL students, none of the studies focused on preferred learning styles, additionally, none addressed the combined variables investigated in the present study.

Significance of the Study

The major contribution of the present study was to provide further information about the phenomenon of language learning strategies used by non-native speaking students of English as a second language and the influence of their cultural background and preferred learning styles on listening task completion. It has been important to investigate the learner strategies of ESL students because
this research has provided baseline data for helping adult students to acquire listening proficiency, particularly that related to academic achievement. In addition, the results of this study may enhance second language educators’ knowledge of the strategies used by ESL students in an academic setting, specifically a university classroom by documenting, analyzing, and characterizing the influence of cultural background and preferred learning styles of adult ESL students.

Increased attention may be helpful in examining individual learner differences during the second language acquisition process. Although the process of acquiring a second language has been the subject of much research during the past few decades, several barriers to understanding learner strategies exist. It is clear that there may be various implications for second language acquisition in formal classroom settings. The aim of this study was to examine and analyze some characteristics of English as a second language (ESL) students, using a multiple-case study format. Four adult, college ESL students and the selection of learner strategies they typically utilized constituted the data base.

Information gained from this research may also enhance teacher education programs in both Foreign Language
Education and ESL. The study provided data that can help ESL teachers become aware of the strategies typically used by non-native speakers of English affected by the influence of cultural background and student preferred learning styles. Language instructors may also utilize the findings to improve their effectiveness by identifying and utilizing strategies to aid their students in acquiring academic English at the college level, particularly listening.

**Basic Assumptions**

The following assumptions were made in the present study.

1. It is assumed that a learner's culture/identity plays a role in learning a second language.
2. The adult ESL subjects responded honestly to the questionnaires and interviews utilized in the study.
3. As in first language development, the processes of speaking and listening in a second language are two interrelated and interdependent concepts, but it is possible to study them separately.
4. All students, including adults, have individual learning preferences that may affect their performance in academic learning situations. It is possible to identify these strategies by
surveying and interviewing students themselves about their dominant or preferred learning strategies and styles.

5. Language learners systematically utilize various learning strategies and to different degrees during their acquisition of a second or foreign language. Students will know and be able to disclose their learning strategies.

6. Both preservice and inservice L2 instructors need to know more about how students' cultural backgrounds and preferred learning strategies interact with each other when students are engaged in academic listening tasks in L2 college classrooms.

Definition of Terms:

The key terms used in this study were defined operationally as follows:

Case study - In qualitative research, a case study refers to an investigation of one subject in which the researcher focuses attention on identified variables, usually as they exist in a particular context. The term "case study" as used here refers to more than one subject and is therefore appropriately identified as a multiple case study approach.
Cultural background - Experiences relating to prior background knowledge, customs, origin, religion, attitudes, and beliefs which may influence a student's thinking pattern when learning a second language. According to Johnson (1982), in a study done with ESL readers, he found that prior cultural background knowledge had a significant effect on reading comprehension scores for a test passage relating to a familiar American custom. In a study involving listening comprehension, Markham and Latham (1987) found that ESL students' religious background influenced their comprehension of two passages dealing with Christian and Moslem prayer practices.

Culture - This is the context within which all individuals exist, think, feel, and relate to others; it is closely related to one's childhood through adolescent upbringing, and thus forms the basis of one's perceptions and behaviors. It is a complex concept that affects one's language learning.

ESL students - Refers to international students who learn English as a second language in a context where English is the predominant societal language (e.g., in a North American university).

Home country experiences - Cultural background experiences, in the context of this study. For the four
subjects (i.e., case studies) in the present study, home country experiences indicate their refined ways of thinking, talking, acting, manners, ideas, and customs relating to their native homeland. Used interchangeably in this study with culture, cultural, and cultural background.

**Informant** - This individual helps the researcher by the interpretive knowledge, sensitivity, and insights of insiders which the informant shares with selected native-speaking subjects of the study and thus aids in helping render interviews to be culturally authentic.

**L1** - An individual's first language; the language acquired at home. For some individuals, this may involve two or more languages learned and used simultaneously (e.g., bilingual homes in the U.S. where, for example, English and Spanish are both used on a daily basis).

**L2** - An individual's second language; the language(s) acquired after the first. For some individuals, this may involve two or more languages (e.g., English is an L2 for many adult international graduate students who enroll in U.S. universities for study towards a Master's degree or a doctorate).

**Language learning strategies** - Techniques that an individual uses to process incoming target language data in instructional situations; typical or systematic use, and an
optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language. The concept of language learning strategies consists of mental or behavioral activity related to some specific stage in the overall process of second language acquisition or language use. According to Ellis (1994), language learners may change their learning strategies as language learning progresses. Ellis (1994) stated that interviews were conducted by Wenden (1987) in which she asked learners to comment on specific learning activities. She had them first complete a 'Grid of daily activities' and then asked them to 'recreate' each activity by describing it. Wenden then asked more specific questions relating to the strategies they used to express themselves, to understand what was said to them, and to think in the L2.

**Learning strategies** - Techniques that an individual uses in order to accomplish specific learning objectives or tasks. Learning strategies differ from learning style in that the former are techniques, rather than traits and they are selected for a specific task. Often the strategies are so familiar to learners that they are given little thought; at other times much deliberation occurs before a learning strategy is selected for a specific learning task. Dunn and Dunn (1989) state that students may learn and retain what
they learn longer when taught through their perceptual strengths and in instructional environments responsive to how they learn. According to Oxford (1990), two of her learning strategies studies showed that the selection of appropriate strategies depended on the language learning task. For instance, teachers at the beginning level emphasized vocabulary development, which may lead to a fuller use of memorization techniques. Her studies showed that the close relationship between task and strategy was further supported through evidence provided by students' reactions, which became negative when a strategy was inappropriately chosen (i.e., using visualization for a reading passage that was not visually-oriented).

Learning style - A consistent pattern of behavior in learning, but with a certain range of individual variability; general approach used in learning a new language. According to Smith (1982), some students may find a lecture approach satisfying, while other students would opt for a programmed instruction approach to learning and demonstrating proficiency in various subject areas (e.g., foreign language). Renulli and Smith (1978), developed the Learning Styles Inventory which is a research-based instrument designed to guide teachers in planning learning experiences that take into account the learning style
performances of students within their classrooms. The instrument consists of 65 items that provide information about student attitude regarding different instructional approaches: lecture, drill and recitation, discussion, simulation, and programmed instruction. From the standpoint of behavior, learning style relates to a tendency to seek situations compatible with one's own learning patterns. When left to their own devices and if not encouraged by their environment to use certain learning strategies (specific behaviors), students may use learning strategies that reflect their basic learning styles (Ehrman, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Ehrman & Oxford, 1988, 1989, 1990; Lawrence, 1984).

**Listening comprehension** - The ability to understand what one hears in the target language, particularly in an academic college classroom setting.

**Listening tasks** - Tasks that adult university ESL students need to routinely perform that specifically require listening skills (e.g., listening to a college lecture and taking notes).

**Member checks** - The researcher’s efforts to use participants’ input in the study. It is a component of a qualitative methodology approach.
**Second language** - American English, in the context of this study. For the four subjects (i.e., case studies) in the present study, the first language is Arabic, Spanish, and Japanese.

**Target language** - The second language to be learned within a second language program. Used interchangeably in this study with ESL, L2, and second language.

**Triangulation** - The process of verifying the consistency of different data sources within the same method or different methods.

**Trustworthiness** - An assurance that the researcher's findings (i.e., the reported data) did, indeed, occur; includes the concepts of credibility and dependability, and can be accepted as correct.

**Delimitations**

Case study research is often the first kind of research to be undertaken in a new area of inquiry (Yin, 1984). It is possible that few or no generalizations emerge from such research, but case studies can be helpful in getting a first, subjective look at an area of interest and can serve as a basis for more focused investigations. Keeping this in mind, the following delimitations in the present study were:
1. The study concentrated on listening and may not be
generalizable to other areas of language study
(e.g., reading).
2. Since the study focused on a single ESL university
classroom, it may not be generalizable to any other
context.
3. This study concentrated on an academic ESL
university-level classroom setting where students
are expected to take notes during college lectures.
The students' level of proficiency in English
(except as represented by the students' enrollment
in college English as a second language classes)
and number of years of English study were not a
focus.

Limitations
The contextual constraints inherent in this kind of
classroom research has perhaps deterred investigators
because most approaches in this type of study have involved
narrowly conceived experimentation. Due to the nature of
the present study, the following limitations were:
1. The data collection phase of this study is limited
to a sixteen week period based on the semester
system of the host university.
2. It was necessary to create a detailed view of learners' language learning strategies and preferred learning styles used in an academic listening class. Data reduction was necessary in categorizing themes as well as reporting and interpreting the interview data.

3. The student population in the ESL academic listening class was small and thus limited the variety of students to be selected as case studies for research.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the background, objectives, significance of the study, and main research questions. The study explored the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles has on the language learning strategies that adult ESL students used in an academic ESL listening classroom at the university level. In Chapter II, related literature is reviewed to substantiate the need for and procedures used in the present study. Chapter III describes the methodology which includes the development of the instruments used. Chapter IV contains the results and discussion of the present study. Chapter V provides a summary of the study as well as conclusions and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the second language acquisition field comes the question of differential success which consists of a host of factors that have an influence on the second language acquisition process. These factors such as individual style, learning strategies, the learner’s age, the task, the context and possible cultural differences clearly have an impact on the success of the second language learner. (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991, p. 153)

Introduction

The present study is based on several earlier studies conducted in the area of foreign/second language education. The review of literature which follows considers relevant research and theory from the field of second language acquisition. The review of literature is divided into the following sections: current research and theory, qualitative research, language learning strategies research, learning styles research, cultural background studies, and listening comprehension studies and second language acquisition. Although no comparative studies linking language learning strategies to cultural background and preferred learning styles in an ESL academic listening class in a university using a qualitative methodology were found
in the literature search, the researcher did find studies which related to each of these areas independently.

**Current Research Theory**

Recently there has been a shift in attention from a focus on the product of listening (e.g., a score on a listening comprehension test) to an emphasis on determining the strategies that language learners use in various listening contexts. According to Anderson (1991), strategies are deliberate, cognitive steps that learners take to assist themselves in acquiring, storing, and retrieving new information and thus can be accessed. Learning strategies, the steps students take to improve their own learning, are very important to ultimate language performance. Many studies indicate that the frequency of use of language learning strategies directly relates to language performance, regardless of whether performance is measured as a course grade, a class test score, a standardized proficiency test score, a self-rating, or something else (Oxford and Burry, 1993). According to Oxford and Ehrman (1995), successful learners use an array of strategies, matching those strategies to their own learning style and personality and to the demands of the task (in the context of perceived cultural influences). Optimal learners find ways to tailor their strategy use to
their individual needs and requirements; they develop combinations of strategies that work for them (Oxford, 1990).

Cultural background, related to ethnicity or nationality, is a key factor in language learning strategy use (Bedell, 1993). Politzer (1983) found that Hispanics and Asians differed strongly in the kinds of strategies they used for language learning. Hispanics chose more social, interactive strategies, while Asians opted for greater rote memorization - often based on their previous school experiences as dictated by their cultures.

Ehrman and Oxford’s (1989) study revealed a linkage in the relationship between language learning strategy use and learning style. It is likely that a strong relationship exists between the individual’s use of learning strategies and the individual’s learning style; the former refers to specific behaviors and the latter to more general learning and problem-solving tendencies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989). Little research has been done focusing on the relationship between learning strategy use and learning style.

According to Keefe (1979b), learning style has important implications for learning and instruction. In exploring the differences that exist among second language
learners, researchers have focused on different aspects of cognitive learning style - an individual's preferred means of processing information. Within the cognitive domain, perceptual learning style emerges as a neglected, yet significant factor in second language acquisition. Reid's study (1987), however, is the first published research describing the perceptual learning style preferences of non-native speakers. Other theorists state that perceptual learning style has proved to have a direct impact on how much information is processed and retained, awareness and utilization of an individual's preferred perceptual learning style will lead to more effective learning (James and Galbraith, 1985).

Among the many controversies associated with learning styles, perhaps the most challenging is the possible relationship between learning style and cultural background. According to some styles theorists, students from particular cultural backgrounds are more likely to exhibit particular learning styles. This knowledge is potentially valuable to teachers who may then modify their methods, materials, or curricula. Others, however, resist efforts to generalize about culture and style in such a manner, worrying that it may result in discriminatory treatment or excuses for student failure.
The complex nature of the issue was drawn sharply into focus in 1987, when a New York State Education Department report on high school dropouts in New York sparked a controversy over the report’s description of stylistic tendencies of African Americans. The report claimed that these styles included such characteristics as the “tendency to view things in their entirety and not in isolated parts...preference for inferential reasoning rather than deductive or inductive reasoning” and the “tendency to approximate space, number, and time instead of aiming for complete accuracy” (O’Neil, 1990).

Following several months of controversy over the accuracy and implications of the passage, the New York Board of Regents appointed a panel to study the issue; the panel’s report, issued in 1988, recommended that the regents “avoid the use of language and construction which is generalized to entire populations with no recognition of the amount of diversity within all groups of students” (O’Neil, 1990).

Even with such cautions, however, some worry that the potential for misuse of the learning style-culture connection is high. “If we begin to categorize ethnic groups in terms of style proclivities, it smacks of racism and discrimination,” says Helene Hodges, ASCD’s director of research and information (O’Neil, 1990). The matching of
styles of cultural groups that have suffered discrimination with teaching methods may also foster concern that "if you teach us that way...you’ll keep us in our place," says Lois LaShell, director of graduate education programs at Antioch University (O’Neil, 1990).

Pat Guild, coordinator of learning styles programs at Seattle Pacific University, argues that understanding the relationship between culture and style is a valuable tool for teachers. “It’s important for teachers to look at the relationship between culture and style,” she says. “Teachers are sick and tired of being told that, because they’re not black, they can’t teach black kids, or that if they’re not Asian, they can’t teach Asian kids” (O’Neil, 1990).

One reason the notion of learning style linked to culture is controversial is that it is sometimes assumed, incorrectly, that certain styles are more valuable than others. “Style in and of itself is neutral,” says Guild. “That differences are equally valuable is an attitudinal shift that hasn’t happened yet,” adds Bernice McCarthy, director of Excel, Inc. (O’Neil, 1990).

Since the 1970's, an emphasis on teaching languages for proficiency and language as a means of communication has given renewed importance to the receptive skills in language learning. Since then, the foreign language teaching field
set aside a response-oriented paradigm and adopted an input, or stimulus-oriented learning model, in which listening comprehension and delayed oral practice form the basis of instruction. Foreign language teachers are taught to have students delay oral practice and listen to the target language before they have students engage in other activities. Evidence now suggests that this way of teaching a language is productive if the field has so moved, if the listening skill is to be drawn upon so heavily during the teaching process, and if listening is essential to language acquisition. More attention needs to be paid to the skills needed for effective listening and to the nature of listening itself as an aspect of language acquisition.

Qualitative Research

The research presented in the following section focuses on qualitative research in primarily educational settings in order to apply the process and scope of this type of research to the present study.

Classroom research in ESL, second language acquisition, and bilingual education has drawn on a variety of research methodologies over the past decade (see Allwright, 1983; Chaudron, 1986, 1987; Gaies, 1983; Long, 1980; Mitchell, 1985). Recently, ethnographic methods have become more widely used in both educational and ESL research.
Ethnography has become a synonym to some researchers for qualitative research, so that any qualitative approach may be called ethnographic in whole or part, as long as it involves observation in non-laboratory settings. Some qualitative or 'naturalistic' studies are structured by coding schemes based on predetermined categories.

Qualitative research is an umbrella term for many kinds of research approaches and techniques, including ethnography, case studies, analytic induction, content analysis, semiotics, hermeneutics, life stories, and certain types of computer and statistical approaches (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Johnson (1992) states that case studies can inform one about the processes and strategies that individual L2 learners use to communicate and learn, how their own personalities, attitudes, and goals interact with the learning environment, and about the precise nature of their linguistic growth. She further states that as in research in second language acquisition and bilingual/multilingual language acquisition, the case is most often a person who is learning an additional language. Studies by Hakuta (1976, 1986) of a Japanese child learning English; by Schumann (1978) of a Spanish-speaking adult's language and acculturation; and by Wong Fillmore (1976) of five
children’s cognitive and social strategies in learning English are some examples. The researcher may examine only one case or may choose to study several cases and compare them (Johnson, 1992). The number of cases is always small, however, because the essence of the case-study approach is a careful and holistic look at particular cases. Data collection techniques that are most used in L2 case studies consist of naturalistic observations, elicitation methods including interviews and verbal reports, and the collection of written materials (Johnson, 1992).

According to Allwright (1983), perhaps the most important point to end with is that what unites classroom-centered researchers is precisely their concern for what happens in classrooms, their conviction that the classroom is the crucible, and thus the first place to look if we really want to understand how the learning process occurs in an ESL classroom. According to Gaies (1983), there are several advantages to non-quantitative research which can be advocated on the basis of the limitations of conventional external observation.

It can be documented that not much qualitative research has been done to date. This may be partly due to the influence of linguistics on the field of ESL. ESL theory is based on linguistics and linguistically-oriented research.
Educational research has made comparatively few contributions to the knowledge base. As William Norris noted in 1971:

...the contributions of pedagogy to second-language teaching seem to be ill-defined. ESL specialists turn to linguistics for information about language, to psycholinguistics for information about how language is learned, and extrapolate from both to explain how language is taught. There appears to be little systematic effort, however, to draw on pedagogical theories in shaping second language courses and second language teaching methods.

Since William Norris' statement made in 1971, concerning educational research, there has been a trend toward classroom research in the area of second language research. Ethnography has gained support as an approach to classroom research in education in general (e.g., Wilson 1977; Erickson 1981; Green & Wallat 1981), as well as in studies of language teaching and learning.

It has been suggested that the classroom is an intricate part of educational research, finding out what happens in the classroom for the purposes of language learning (Van Lier, 1988). Doughty and Pica (1986) did a qualitative study in Pennsylvania with college students of English as a second language. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991), in educational research, the shift of emphasis by concentrating on looking at what happens in the...
classroom has led researchers to realize the importance of situating oneself at the location of where one is conducting the study. 

Not everyone in the field of SL/FL education is in favor of moving in the direction of a more quantitative research methodological standard. There has been some indication of an increasing interest in qualitative methods. One doctoral dissertation that made partial use of qualitative methods was that of Mary Hui-Tze Wong (1979). She conducted a study of anxiety in the ESL classroom, using inventories to assess the students' ideas about their own anxiety level and to compare them with the teachers' perceptions of the students' anxiety levels. She also conducted a series of interviews with six of the students, and found the interviews to be a helpful tool to get the information she wanted. Merilu Mills Berkovitch's (1982) doctoral dissertation consisted of a study on the perceptions of students and teachers of how the tutorial system worked, where it did and did not intersect with classroom teaching, and how it fit in the ESL program as a whole. The methodology that she used was a qualitative one. Six instruments and techniques were used in this study which consisted of (e.g., observation, audiotaping, videotaping, interviewing, questionnaire, and introspection).
James Nobuyuki Fujita's (1984) doctoral dissertation employed qualitative methods. He did an ethnographic study of fourteen students enrolled in the Elementary Modern Japanese course at a university. Through ethnographic interviews, self-report data, and a listening strategy questionnaire, data was provided to determine successful and unsuccessful listening strategies utilized on a listening comprehension task in beginning college Japanese. Due to the utilization of qualitative methods, the relationship between self-confidence and performance was also reflected in the results of this study because Fujita found that self-confidence was considered one of the three major factors affecting the listening comprehension ability of successful students. Nathenson-Mejia (1987) did case studies of six Spanish-speaking students learning English as a second language in the elementary school. Through case studies, Nathenson-Mejia found examples of young children's abilities to manipulate two languages at the same time. The case study format, along with observations of the subjects in small groups, and in regular classrooms provided data about the language learning behaviors of several bilingual children.

The doctoral dissertation of Cynthia Miller Zeki (1995) was an ethnographic case study of five Chinese students
taking an advanced ESL composition course at a small midwestern university. She conducted this study to discover how Chinese students negotiate their writing tasks both inside and outside the ESL classroom. The methodology she used was a qualitative one. Six instruments and techniques were used in this study which consisted of (e.g., a questionnaire, classroom participant observations, collection, conference audiotaping, interviews, and collection of all student writing generated by the five students over the course of the semester).

In conclusion, qualitative research, as shown in the previous studies, has found its role to be an intricate part of various studies in SL/FL education. The qualitative researcher typically keeps a research journal with fieldnotes (i.e., classroom observation notes), conducts interviews transcribing tapes in which a coding system as well as themes or categories are developed, and secures a classroom site in order to observe the sampling population. The present study dealing with preferred learning styles, language learning strategies, cultural background, and listening comprehension can benefit from use of these aspects of a qualitative methodological approach.
Learning strategies have potential for enhancing the development of oral skills in English as a second language. Learning strategies are used by "good" language learners to assist them in gaining a command over required skills (e.g., Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978), and they are positively associated with language acquisition (Politzer and McGroarty, 1983). The strategies are applicable to a variety of language tasks (e.g., Bialystok 1979; O'Malley, Russo, and Chamot, 1983), and can be adapted to the language proficiencies of individual learners (Cohen and Aphek, 1980, 1981). Learning strategies for the most part have the potential to be taught with positive effects to learners unacquainted with their applications (Rubin and Thompson, 1982), and must be demonstrated in second language acquisition (Bialystok, 1979). Nevertheless, numerous efforts to teach learning strategy use in reading have been made (e.g., Dansereau, Wittrock, Marks, and Doctorow, 1975) and suggest that extensions to second language learning would be applicable in various SL classrooms.

Learning strategies are more specific than learning styles. Strategies are the particular behaviors that learners employ, usually intentionally, to enhance their understanding, storage, retrieval, and use of information.
Language learning strategies are behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable (Oxford, 1989). Rubin (1981, 1987) also identified strategies contributing to language learning success either directly - e.g., inductive inferencing, practice, memorization - or indirectly - e.g., creating practice opportunities, using production tricks. In the L2 field, examples include note-taking, seeking conversation partners, developing sensitivity toward the target culture, skimming, previewing, and guessing to understand what is read or heard.

Research supports utilization of L2 learning strategies and has shown that language learners often use strategies in a structured fashion. Some strategy findings are listed below:

*Use of appropriate language learning strategies often results in improved proficiency or achievement overall or in specific skill areas (e.g., Oxford et al., 1993; Thompson & Rubin, 1993).

*Successful language learners tend to select strategies that work together in a highly structured fashion, tailored to the requirements of the language task (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). These learners can easily explain the strategies they use and why they employ them (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

*Cognitive (e.g., translating, analyzing) and metacognitive (e.g., planning, organizing) strategies are often used together, supporting each other (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Combinations of strategies are often used more than single strategies.
*Certain strategies or clusters of strategies are linked to particular language skills or tasks. L2 listening comprehension uses strategies of elaboration, inferencing, selective attention, and self-monitoring, while reading comprehension uses strategies like reading aloud, guessing, deduction, and summarizing (Chamot & Kupper, 1989).

Oxford (1990) synthesized existing research on how certain factors influence the choice of strategies used among students learning a second language. Among the factors influencing the choice of L2 learning strategies used are cultural background and learning style, both of which are being included in this study. According to Oxford (1990), rote memorization and other forms of memorization were more prevalent among some Asian students than among students from other cultural backgrounds. Certain other cultures also appeared to encourage this strategy among learners. Oxford (1990), also found that learning style (i.e., one’s general approach to language learning) often determined the choice of L2 learning strategies. For example, analytic-style students preferred strategies such as contrastive analysis, rule-learning, and dissecting words and phrases, while global students used strategies to find meaning (e.g., guessing, scanning, predicting) and to converse without knowing all the words (e.g., paraphrasing sentences and gesturing).
Investigations of learning strategies in second language acquisition have identified the strategies used by effective language learners (e.g., Bialystok, 1979; Chamot et al., 1987; Chamot et al., 1987; Naiman et al., 1978; O'Malley et al., 1985; O'Malley et al., 1985; Rubin, 1975), and intervention studies in both first and second language contexts have sought to train students to use learning strategies to aid them in learning (e.g., Barnett, 1988; Cohen and Aphek, 1980; Holec, 1987; Hosenfeld et al., 1981; O'Malley et al., 1985; Wenden, 1987). Strategy identification studies have shown that some second and foreign language learners use a variety of metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective strategies for both receptive and productive tasks, while other second and foreign language learners not only use strategies less frequently, but have a smaller repertoire of strategies and often do not know which strategies to choose for the task (Oxford, 1989).

Henner-Stanchina (1982) reported how she taught listening comprehension to foreign students learning ESL in an American university. In a single-group, exploratory study, students were asked to listen to oral texts (e.g., radio commercials, talk-show interviews, and news
broadcasts). They first listened for global comprehension and then played short segments repeatedly for more specific comprehension. They transcribed the texts on paper and were allowed to make corrections as they were able to understand through repeated playbacks of the texts. The teacher then classified their errors as perceptive, semantic, and syntactic and provided feedback. She taught the students how to use inferencing (i.e., guessing) and self-correction of errors to improve students' listening comprehension.

Abraham and Vann (1987) studied the strategies of successful and unsuccessful college-age students trying to pass the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). They found that the successful student used a greater variety of strategies and matched his choice of strategy to the demands of the task. The students showed a belief that language learning requires attention to both function and form. They concluded that a combination of maturity in learning and intelligence disposed the successful student to take this approach to language learning.

In Chamot's study (1987), intermediate level students reported using metacognitive strategies more frequently than did beginning level students. They found that the students' degree of metalinguistic awareness indicated an ability to
compare their first language to their second, to transfer linguistic knowledge and to evaluate their degree of success in using the new language. The students were aware of paralinguistic factors, style, and register differences as well as the limitations of translation. Both beginning and intermediate level students favored repetition as the most frequently used strategy.

The UCLA Center for Language Education and Research (1987) undertook a descriptive study of one group of second language learners, adults learning English as a second language in the U.S., in order to contribute information specific to their situation and to generate data generally relevant to the study of a second language. This study compared university students and students in a community extension program who were enrolled in the same advanced-intermediate course and took the same end of course exam. Two groups of intermediate to advanced students served as subjects for this study. The University group included fifty-seven students from four different sections of the advanced intermediate English course (i.e., ESL). The Extension group included thirty-seven students from two different sections of the same advanced intermediate course. Analysis of background information showed that the two
groups were similar in terms of years of prior English study, amount of English spoken in the U.S. outside class, and number of other languages spoken.

The students from both groups filled out a background information form and two questionnaires, one regarding preferred second language learning strategies, and one pertaining to opinions about language study and the study of English. The Learning Strategy Questionnaire completed by eighty-six students, consisted of three self-report scales that assessed the frequency of strategy use in the second language classroom, in interaction with others outside class, and during individual study of the second language. The Opinion Questionnaire used a seven-point Likert scale (e.g., ranging from 7, 'strongly agree' to 1, 'strongly disagree', with 4 representing 'no opinion') with sixty-five items assessing four dimensions (determined by factor analysis) of attitudes towards second language learning. Eighty-six students completed this questionnaire. The end of course achievement was assessed by a two-part final exam. Part I was a sixty point multiple-choice exam which measured students' ability to detect errors in written work, their reading comprehension, and their listening comprehension. The other part of the final exam score was the students'
exam composition, worth forty points. Students also received final grades to indicate overall performance in the course.

The main conclusions were that while University and Extension students were comparable in their use of study strategies in the classroom, Extension students used significantly more strategies during individual study and also showed a tendency to make more frequent use of strategies during interaction outside class. Furthermore, they demonstrated more positive attitudes toward the study of English. However, their increased strategy use and generally more positive attitudes were not linked with higher achievement. The University students received significantly higher grades as well as higher scores on three of the four parts of the final exam, namely Writing Error Detection, Reading Comprehension, and Composition. There was no difference on Listening Comprehension.

Vogely (1990) conducted a survey study to investigate the strategies students perceive themselves to use while performing an authentic listening comprehension task and the relationship between their strategy use and listening ability. Eighty-three university students registered for first, second, third, and fourth semester Spanish
participated in two data gathering sessions. The native language of all of the subjects was English. The research was conducted over one semester.

The data-gathering sessions were conducted in the students' own classrooms during regular class time to minimalize the impact of the environment. In the first data-gathering session, the subjects were administered the listening comprehension section of the Spanish Advanced Placement Test (1984). In the second session, the subjects performed three recall tasks on three authentic programs presented on videotapes. For all three recall tasks, the subjects listened to the video segment only once; they were not allowed to take notes; and at the end of the segment they wrote down in English everything they could recall from the program. They also completed a Metacognitive Awareness Strategy Questionnaire (MASQ) in the second session.

The main conclusions were that all of the participants perceived themselves to be strategic listeners to some degree, but the effectiveness of their strategy use appeared to differ between semesters. The first-semester students perceived themselves to be the most strategic listeners and outperformed the second-semester students on all three recall tasks; followed by the combined third and fourth semester students, then by the second-semester students, who
perceived themselves to be the least strategic listeners of the three groups and consistently produced the lowest scores on the recall tasks.

Sanaqui (1992) conducted case studies of four adult English as a second language (ESL) learners' approaches to vocabulary learning. The sample consisted of two students at an advanced level of proficiency in English and two students at a beginning level of proficiency in English.

All subjects were asked to keep a daily written record of what they did over four weeks in order to learn vocabulary. In the following two weeks they were to keep records of vocabulary items that they were learning. Daily notes were collected from each individual at the end of each week and served as a starting point for individual interviews during which the subjects were asked to elaborate on the notes they had made. The researcher also examined and made records of materials that the subjects had referred to or made use of during the week (e.g., class notes, exercises in self-study guides, word lists, course materials, vocabulary notebook, and dictionaries). After six weeks, all information concerning each subject was summarized and those summaries were compiled in the form of a profile that outlined each subject's approach to the task of vocabulary learning.
The main findings were that the behaviors for vocabulary study reported over four weeks by three of the subjects were quite similar. They set criteria for selecting lexical items to be learned from all vocabulary items encountered in any given lesson or day. These three subjects devoted time to independent study and reported engaging in self-initiated learning tasks, such as writing a letter in English to a friend while making efforts to use several new words learned during the week. These three learners regularly reviewed their records of vocabulary items (e.g., posted word lists on walls in their apartments for review). Behaviors reported by these three learners contrasted with behaviors reported by the fourth subject. Her written and oral reports revealed that she spent little time on independent study and kept many fewer records of lexical items than did other subjects. She rarely reviewed or practiced using the few items she recorded.

Kaylani (1995) conducted a survey study to investigate the influence of gender on language learning strategy use. Two hundred and fifty-five high school seniors (twelfth grade) participated in this study. The native language of all of the subjects was Arabic. The main sample of two hundred and fifty-five students were given an Arabic
translation of Oxford's (1989) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to complete during the second week of their twelfth grade school year.

Second, this study looked at a subsample. Of each class that was surveyed with the SILL, the top five and bottom five students, as ranked by their eleventh grade end of year average in English, were chosen. These students were defined as successful and unsuccessful and were further surveyed with translated instruments for self-assessed proficiency, motivation, and motivational orientation. Third, additional data on strategy use were gathered from the successful/unsuccessful students through interviews. These interviews were based on strategy use protocol and self-perceived reasons for success or lack of it.

The main conclusions were that the female students used significantly more memory, cognitive compensation, and affective strategies than male students. It was also found that there was no significant difference in the use of social strategies between male and female students. The use of memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies was significantly higher for successful students than unsuccessful ones. Lastly, successful female students were found to use the strategies taught to them by their teachers.
Kandarakis (1996) conducted a survey study which examined ethnic minority students’ reported learning strategies and how they used them to accommodate their perceived learning styles in relation to their educational and occupational goals. One-hundred and twenty-nine (62 male, 57 female) Montreal born, grade eleven, students of ethnic origin, whose mother tongue and socio-cultural background was other than English or French, attending a comprehensive high school that offered instruction in English were surveyed. A questionnaire which was given to the ethnic minority students examined their perceived learning style in reference to cognitive style (processing, encoding, storing, and retrieving information); affective style (attention, motivation, personality); and physical style (perceptual modes, energy level, time preferences, and environment).

The main conclusions were that eighty-two percent of the students revealed a learning profile of field independence, seventy-seven percent had a low tolerance for experiences divergent from reality, eighty-nine percent used reflection; ninety-one percent claimed high task persistance, eighty-six percent reported high anxiety regarding difficult tasks, and eighty-one percent accepted personal responsibility for success and failure. A majority
felt that the teaching style of their teachers was not a match with their individual learning styles and a majority saw this as a reflection of cultural values. The results suggest that the apparent misalignment of teaching and learning styles and the absence of effective learning skills compromised optimal learning and the realization of aspirations by minority students.

Tamada (1996) conducted a survey study which investigated whether Japanese learners of a second language have the same learning strategies as other groups previously studied, and whether the experience of studying or living abroad affects learning strategy use. Subjects were twenty-four Japanese third-year college students, learners of English as a second language who were studying in England. All of them belonged to the Junior Year Abroad (JYA) program and were studying English.

A questionnaire was employed as the data collecting methodology. Oxford’s (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was adopted for this study. Students were asked to complete the questionnaire twice to compare their language learning strategies choices in the first and eighth week of the intensive English language course. Teachers in the Junior Year Abroad program were asked to answer the questionnaire as well. There were four
native English teachers who were working in the intensive English language course, and they had taught Japanese students English for ten weeks. Teachers were asked to complete a mixture of yes-no and open-ended questions about the relationship between teaching method and the Japanese students' language learning strategies choices. This questionnaire was handed out to them in the eighth week to find what happened to students' language learning strategies. Finally, in the questionnaire used in this study, all of the learners and teachers completed the questions and no missing data was collected.

The main findings were that some learning strategies were not used, which was attributed to: influence of English teachers in Japan; characteristics of the Japanese language; and level of English ability. Students tended not to use strategies not learned in Japan, and many had learned strategies from teachers in Japan. Learners' sex, integrative motivation, and instrumental motivation affected choice of strategies significantly, but major, personality, and proficiency did not. Experiences of both studying and living abroad also affected strategy choices significantly. In the questionnaire, three out of four teachers reported that there was a distinction between learning styles and language learning strategies. However, as to the change of
their language learning styles in the intensive English language course, their answers were not clear; “much harder to effect change, detect change” (one teacher), “it is difficult question to answer” (one teacher), and no answer (one teacher). Two teachers reported that they used a sort of communicative approach. Moreover, all four teachers mentioned the characteristics of JYA students’ LLS choices as “are used to teacher led activities” (two teachers), “dictionary dependent” (two teachers), and “note down frequently” (two teachers).

Kim and Eckermann (1997) conducted a case study which investigated the learning strategies and perceptions of second language learning of twelve students of advanced English as a second language at National Louis University in Illinois. All subjects were surveyed, and one (Sasha), an articulate and highly motivated Ukrainian student, was interviewed in depth as a case study.

Questionnaires were administered to the twelve ESL students as well as to the Ukrainian student (Sasha), so as to compare his answers concerning his perceptions and strategies when reading in a second language with the other second language students (ESL). Extensive interviews were held with the case study subject (Sasha). The twelve ESL students took the Reading Questionnaire (Jung, 1992).
Certain items were selected from the questionnaire which were felt to be appropriate for analysis and comparison. Answers on the questionnaire ranged from 1 (never) to 7 (always).

The main conclusions were that Sasha was not always typical of his peers. He was most different in ranking grammar rules and background knowledge as important, and gave a lower than average importance to correct pronunciation, spelling, and sharing ideas. He ranked his listening skills higher than other skills, while most ranked reading skills higher than listening or speaking. He valued vocabulary knowledge highly, avoided guessing, used translation frequently, and showed careful study habits. He read mostly to gain information, and less so to improve English skills and for entertainment.

In conclusion, the field of ESL has been undergoing changes and expansions for years. Changing concepts about the nature of second language learning and learners have influenced language pedagogy. Learning English, however, is not a facile process for learners. Research has shown that second language learning strategies are important for four reasons. First, learning strategies are related to language performance. Second, using learning strategies enables students to take responsibility for their own learning.
Third, learning strategies are teachable. Fourth, addressing learning strategies in their language programs gives teachers an understanding of how to teach their students by using certain strategies.

Learning Styles

According to Sample (1982), the term 'learning styles' emerged in the 1970's. In writing about learning styles Barbe and Milone (1981) stated that:

One of the most promising movements in contemporary education is the attention being given to student learning styles. The movement is based on the idea that students vary in their approach to learning, so... "no single instructional process provides optimal learning for all students" (Bracht, 1970, p.627).

Dunn (1980b) described learning style as "the manner in which many different elements from five basic stimuli affect a person's ability to absorb and retain" (p.1). She listed the five basic stimuli as environmental, emotional, psychological, physical, and sociological. Dunn (1980b) further stated that learning style is not the way you learn on a daily basis, but the way you are when you are really trying to learn something new. Learning style does not change from class to class (subject to subject).

Learning style may contain many elements and they are not usually either or extremes. A person either has or does not have the element in one's style, and the absence of one element does not necessarily imply the presence of an
opposite element (Sample, 1982). For example, you may not be an auditory learner and if you are not, then learning may occur through visual, tactile, or kinesthetic modes (Kirby, 1979). Satterly and Brimer (1977) analyzed a variety of definitions of learning styles and stated that all suggest that people behave in a typical way across a variety of tasks and that such personal consistencies remain comparatively stable over time. The work of the Dunn's eighteen elements and Renzulli and Smith's (1978) preferred instructional modes indicated much less consistency than implied by Satterly and Brimer. Smith (1976) stated that students' preferences may vary with the nature of the subject matter being studied and the personal dynamics of a particular teacher.

Several different paradigms for describing learning styles have evolved. Learning styles theory about how people learn has been known for at least twenty-five years (Lin & Shen, 1996). Yet, for the most part, college teachers still dispense information in the traditional lecture/exam method without regard for the differing learning styles of their students (Ault, 1986). However, college teaching and learning as an activity is undoubtedly one of the most complex in which human beings are purposefully engaged (Hunter, 1979).
Learning style is commonly described as cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment (Keefe, 1979). In the mid-to-late 1970's, learning styles were identified as 'a quality that persists though the content may change' (Fischer & Fischer, 1979). The Learning Style Inventory (LSI) was developed by Dunn, Dunn and Price (1975) which was a self-reporting questionnaire used to identify learning styles. Spiridakis (1981) lists the five categories of learning styles surveyed in the LSI:

1. Environmental elements: sound, light, temperature, design;
2. Emotional elements: motivation, persistence, responsibility, and need for structure;
3. Sociological elements: working alone; with peers;
4. Perceptual modalities: auditory, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic; and
5. Psychological preferences: field dependence/ independence, cooperative/competitive, reflective/impulsive.

Reid’s 1987 study surveyed preferences for six of the learning styles listed by Dunn, Dunn, and Price. Preferences for six of the learning styles’ variables listed by Dunn, Dunn, and Price are used in the present study which include:
1. Modes of perception: auditory/visual/tactile/kinesthetic; and

2. Social preference: group/individual.

Much research in learning style has been done with students whose native language is English (Cavanaugh, 1981; Hodges, 1982; Stewart, 1981) and with students who learn English as a second language in the U.S. (Ballinger & Ballinger, 1982; Birckbichler & Ommaggio, 1978; Hosenfeld, 1979; Ramirez, 1986; Wong-Fillmore, 1976). Research with speakers of languages other than English has also shown that different modes of thinking (cognitive styles) characterize different cultures, and ESL learners with unique learning style characteristics may expend most of their time and effort just trying to adapt to a new learning situation (Reid, 1987). Research in second language learning before 1987 includes work on some areas of cognitive styles, affective styles, culture-specific modes of learning and cultural factors, and learning strategies (Reid, 1987).

Handscombe and others (1974) suggested that the teacher should individualize ESL instruction so that he/she can teach in the ways in which students learn. The teacher can find out about students' learning styles through observation, class discussions, individual talks with students, and assigned essays or questionnaires. Then,
ideally, the teacher will have some idea about the following aspects of their students' learning styles:

- Preference for learning alone, in small groups, and in large groups.
- Preference for observation vs. participation.
- Use of language analysis, rules, and explanations.
- Ear/eye preference.
- Preferences for immersion.
- Use of translation and rote learning.
- Use of visuals.

Because of his or her background, every student is unique and one factor in general which makes the student unique is his or her learning style.

Language learning styles are 'the general approaches - for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual - that students use in acquiring a new language' (Oxford & Lavine, 1992; p.38). These styles are 'the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior' (Cornett, 1983; p.9). 'Learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others' (Dunn & Griggs, 1988; p.3). Naturally, not everyone fits neatly into one or another of these categories to the exclusion of the other, parallel categories (e.g., visual vs. auditory or kinesthetic). However, most learners have
study preferences that style variables address and sometimes these preferences are even exclusive of other parallel possibilities.

As outlined by Ehrman and Oxford (1995), individual differences among language learners can be described on the basis of aptitude, age, sex, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, tolerance of ambiguity, risk-taking, language learning styles and language learning strategies. The Good Language Learner (GLL) profile, developed by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978), an early attempt to identify the characteristics and attributes of successful language learners based on classroom observation and personal interviews, incorporates these elements in a single profile.

Learning styles are internally based characteristics, often not perceived or used consciously, that are the basis for the intake and understanding of new information (Reid, 1995). Learning styles dictate an individual’s natural, habitual, and/or preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills, a way which persists regardless of teaching methods or content area (Kinsella, 1995). Rossi-Le (1995) pointed out that learning styles and learning strategies are logically linked, and an individual’s learning style preference influences the types
and forms of learning strategies employed. However, without an understanding of the learning styles concept and awareness of one’s own preferred learning style, this style-strategy connection is, by and largely, not utilized in language learning (Rossi-Le, 1995).

Reid (1987) created a survey to be used with ESL students in American universities. She surveyed 1,234 ESL students in U.S. colleges from ninety-eight countries who were native speakers of one of fifty-two different languages. She found several clear preferences among linguistic, cultural, and academic groups. Reid also demonstrated that the sensory preferences of students of English as a second language varied by national origin (e.g., people from Asian cultures were often highly visual). Her investigation of sensory learning style preferences found that Japanese students were the least auditory, with this result being significantly different from Arabic and Chinese students, who strongly liked auditory learning. Thai, Malay and Spanish students were also strongly auditory, though slightly less so than Arabic and Chinese students.

Most ESL students in Reid’s (1987) study strongly preferred kinesthetic (i.e., movement-based) learning, and the strongest in this area were Arabic, Spanish, Chinese,
Korean, and Thai students. Some cultural groups had multiple major perceptual learning style preferences. Spanish speakers were very definite in their sensory style choices, thus preferring kinesthetic and tactile as major learning styles, with visual and auditory as minor learning styles. Japanese students did not, as a group, indicate any single major perceptual/sensory learning style. Hispanics linked visual and auditory learning as minor style preferences, with kinesthetic and tactile as major style preferences. Reid noted in her study that ninety percent of traditional college classroom instruction is geared to the auditory learner, who is the minority among many language groups. She further stated that teachers might identify their students’ styles and try to teach to these styles. She suggested that learning styles may change according to the learning situation.

Eliason (1988) conducted a survey study to determine whether or not there were learning style characteristics particular to language learners in general. This study was a follow-up to Reid’s (1987) study which would address the issues of construct validity and reliability and examine the usefulness of translating assessment tools for learning styles of beginning language students.
A questionnaire was administered to three groups of students. The first group was American students enrolled in French as a Second Language programs in Paris. Thirty-one American students completed questionnaires. The second group was Japanese students enrolled in the Summer Intensive English Language and Orientation Program (SIELOP) at the University of Minnesota. There were twenty-two Japanese SIELOP students who completed the questionnaire. The third group was Japanese teachers of English participating in the University of Minnesota’s Japanese English Teachers’ (JET) program. There were twenty-one JET participants who completed the questionnaire. A self-report questionnaire similar to that designed by Reid, with questions representing the same four perceptual modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) as well as group vs. individual learning was administered to the three groups. The questionnaire was administered in the subjects’ first language. The questionnaire consisted of two pages containing twenty-five questions and an introductory page similar to Reid’s which requested background information from the subject as well as a general explanation about the questionnaire itself. The questionnaires were scored according to a scale developed by Reid and were not normed.
The main findings were that both Japanese groups were shown to be higher in auditory and kinesthetic preferences than the Americans, and lower in visual. The Japanese were higher in tactile preferences than the English speakers and group learning had the lowest preference means for both Japanese and Americans (with Americans having the lowest preference for group work). The Japanese did not as a group have any major learning style preference.

Ellis (1989) conducted case studies of the learning styles of two adult classroom learners of L2 German for twenty-two weeks. Both students were enrolled in a German course in an institution of higher education in London. Monique’s mother tongue was Creole, but she spoke French and English fluently. Simon was British and his mother tongue was Welsh, but he spoke English like a native speaker. Both subjects were nineteen years old.

Monique and Simon were in different classes, but they followed a very similar course of instruction for twelve hours per week. There was systematic observation of their classrooms. A variety of data collection instruments were used to gather information relating to the individual characteristics of the two learners and their levels of achievement. These instruments were as follows:
1. **A questionnaire.** The questionnaire contained a mixture of objective and open questions and was completed in the first week of the course;

2. **Cognitive style test.** The Group Embedded Figures test (Witkin et al., 1971) was administered to the two learners;

3. **Language aptitude test.** A total of four aptitude tests was administered: Part IV of the Modern Language Aptitude Test (Carroll & Sapon, 1959), a Finnish Memory Test (Skehan, 1982), and Parts V and VI of Pimsleur’s Language Aptitude Battery (Pimsleur, 1966);

4. **Attendance.** Records were kept of the subjects’ class attendance during the first twenty-two weeks of the course;

5. **Participation.** The subjects’ participation in classroom practice of sample lessons in German was measured during the first twenty-two weeks of the course;

6. **Word order acquisition.** The subjects were paired off with other learners in their instructional groups in order to perform an information gap task. This procedure was carried out after ten and twenty-two weeks of the study;

7. **Speech rate.** A measure of the subjects’ speech rate was derived from the oral narratives performed as part of the information gap task;

8. **Proficiency tests.** The subjects completed three proficiency tests (i.e., vocabulary, grammar, and cloze) after twenty-three weeks; and

9. **Diary studies.** Each subject was asked to keep a journal of their reactions to the course, their teachers, their fellow-students, and any other factors which they considered were having an effect on their language learning.
These instruments were designed to provide a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative account of the two learners' development and their responses to the learning task (Ellis, 1989).

The main conclusions were that the two learners did manifest identifiable styles of learning. One learner, Monique, was almost exclusively studially in her approach. The other, Simon, was more balanced, giving evidence of an ability to operate both studially and experientially. Both learners showed a positive affective orientation, which was reflected in a highly active approach to language learning. Monique's chosen learning style may not have been the style she was naturally suited to. The learning outcomes did reflect what the learners set out to learn.

Bauder and Milman (1989) conducted a survey study on learning and teaching styles in English as a Second Language. A total of four-hundred and twenty students, evenly distributed among male (221) and female (199) students participated in this study at the University of the Americas (UDLA) in Puebla, Mexico. All of the students were Mexican and Spanish was their native language. Twenty-eight UDLA ESL teachers (4 male, 24 female) also participated in this study.
Two forty-two item surveys, one for students and one for teachers were administered in the language department of the University of the Americas during the Spring semester, 1989. The first ten questions of each survey identified cultural, academic, and geographical variables. The remaining questions asked respondents to choose among behaviors relating to the styles they prefer when they learn or teach English. Face validity was established by asking colleagues to match the survey questions with the definitions of learning and teaching styles. The survey content evaluators also provided helpful suggestions concerning rephrasing questions to improve clarity.

The main conclusions were that auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning were all chosen by over seventy-five percent of the students. Tactile learning was also chosen by sixty-nine percent of the students. The students as a group showed considerable cognitive flexibility, but not all individual students exhibited this trait. Students did not show a preference for impulsive learning and competitive learning was the style given the least preference. Males indicated preferences for cooperative as well as competitive teaching; they also selected visual as a preferred teaching style. Female teachers selected cooperative teaching as the
most preferred teaching style (21 of 24). They also selected reflective and individual as teaching styles of choice.

Melton (1990) conducted a survey study to find out more about the learning style preferences of students in the People's Republic of China (PRC). This was a replication of a study done by Reid in 1987 of learning style preferences of ESL students in the U.S. This research study dealt with all Chinese speakers (ninety) as one group regardless of their countries of origin or their dialects. The questionnaire used in the study was the same as Reid's with the exception of the background information. This information was altered to make it more relevant to the group being studied. The added information asked the students for the number of years they had studied English, the number of semesters they had attended an English class taught by a native speaker of English and if they had ever been abroad and for how long. The questionnaire was translated into Chinese.

Six schools in the PRC volunteered to participate. Five schools actually returned the completed questionnaires, with three-hundred and thirty-one graduate and undergraduate students responding, in four different fields of learning. The questionnaires were distributed with instructions in
English to read before the students actually completed the forms. The Chinese questionnaires were distributed by Chinese teachers and the English questionnaires were distributed by American teachers to classes of equal levels. The completed questionnaires were collected and returned. The students' responses to the questionnaires and the background information were quantified and then preference means were calculated for each variable. These means were then statistically analyzed. An analysis of variance and multiple comparison of means were run.

The main conclusions were that statistical analyses indicated that language of the questionnaire did not influence the outcome; that sex of the respondent, level in college, years of English study, and number of semesters with a foreign teacher are all related to learning style differences; and that PRC students appear to have multiple major learning styles (i.e., this finding concurs with Reid's conclusion in her 1987 study).

Gradman and Hanania (1991) conducted a survey study to investigate which of a large number of variables (e.g., learning styles, etc.) in a student's language background would turn out to be important in second language learning. In this study the sample consisted of one-hundred and one ESL university students who were enrolled in regular seven-
week sessions of the Intensive English Program. The ESL students came from different national and first language backgrounds.

Through individual interviews with the ESL students, extensive information about their language learning background was obtained before they joined the program. On the basis of this information, forty-four questions pertaining to background factors that might influence language learning were prepared in a form of a questionnaire. After the completion of the questionnaires, the ESL students then participated in individual interviews which lasted about one hour. They were not tape recorded to avoid possible anxiety on the part of the students. The elicited information was then grouped and quantified. The coding procedure used yielded forty-four variables. These variables as well as the TOEFL scores and subscores formed the data for statistical analysis. Lastly, the students' observations on aspects of their language learning background were categorized and summarized.

The main conclusions were that out of a large number of background factors which must contribute to success in language learning, only a few stood out as particularly important. The most important factor was the extent of active exposure to the language through individual outside
reading. Other background factors that appeared to contribute to the success of students’ language proficiency included exposure to teachers who are native speakers of English, the use of English as a language of instruction, and participation in intensive English programs.

Lin and Shen (1996) conducted a survey study to investigate what college learners’ favorable learning styles were. One-thousand and fifty Taiwanese junior college students of English as a second language participated in this study. These students were in the first through third years of study. Questionnaires were mailed to seven junior colleges. From each school, three classes of students (about fifty students in each class) were randomly chosen from three different year levels to complete the questionnaire. Nine hundred and forty seven questionnaires were sent back to the researchers and there were nine hundred and nineteen valid ones. The rate of return was about ninety percent.

A questionnaire in Chinese consisting of forty-four items based on four learning style preferences (auditory, visual, kinesthetic/tactile, group/individual) was administered. In addition, the teachers’ teaching styles and relevant variables were surveyed from the students’ points of view. Responses were obtained on a five point
scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) no opinion, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. Scores were ranked from 1 to 5, with the higher score indicating higher agreement with the statement.

The main conclusions were that female students expressed more willingness to adopt more learning styles than males, and showed higher willingness to learn, learning achievement, and better teacher-student relationships. Second-year students had a better self-concept and teacher-student relationship than did third-year students. Learning willingness, achievement, and self-concept correlated better with earlier English language learning. Most students, even low achievers, had a good relationship with the teacher.

Rausch (1996) conducted a survey study investigating learning styles and learning strategies among Japanese university students whose majors were directly related to English. Data collection was undertaken by survey questionnaire, administered to three-hundred and sixty-five students, equal numbers enrolled in English language, English literature, and English linguistics classes at one national university and one private university. Respondents were primarily first year (44%) students and second year (40%) students, with twenty-two percent citing an academic major directly related to English.
The survey included questions about study outside class time, study using materials other than those specifically for class, use of a personalized approach to studying, self-monitoring of target language use, confidence in using the target language, and motivations for taking the English course. Respondents were also asked to assign attributes to each of four learning styles (i.e., heart, head, hands, free), indicating which they considered their own style to be, and assessing the importance to their own learning of sixteen general learning behaviors. The questionnaire used in the survey study was written in both English and Japanese. Surveys were coded to ensure anonymity.

The main conclusions were that these students did not show attributes of the idealized good language learner which suggested lack of personal involvement in the learning process. The students' ability to construct a four-group learning styles model was limited which suggested limited understanding of the learning style concept. Lastly, the students' accuracy in assessing their own learning style was weak. The dominant self-assessed learning style reported by the students was heart (36%), followed by hands (24%), head (15%), and free (13%).
In conclusion, many educators want to know if one learning style is 'better' than another or if they should teach students using only their favorite learning style. As stated in Van Lier (1988), there is literature on learning styles which classroom researchers can find specific guidance on what to look for in the identification of different styles, and also on how classroom methodologies and activities may favor certain styles over others. According to Hilliard (1989), educational dialog has given attention to the question of the importance and precise meaning of 'style' in teaching and learning, particularly for 'minority' groups. This may be utilized for the multicultural classroom where learners from different backgrounds may have different ways in which they can best do their learning. There has, however, been little opportunity for a rigorous and systematic scrutiny of applied pedagogy that incorporates insights from the style theorists. It is important to remember that teaching never causes learning, but rather it creates or fails to create the conditions in which learning can occur.

As stated by Hilliard (1989), style is learned and an aspect of culture—'group personality' which tells certain things about the nature of style. Style is a central tendency that is a characteristic of both individuals and
groups. Students' style is an aspect of the learning interaction in a second language classroom. ESL students have adversed needs because of differences in cultural background, age, and previous education. Even if the students in one class are all from the same language group, they inevitably have different learning styles and needs. The social needs, assumptions about the U.S. and about school, and the academic needs that are peculiar to each group also need to be taken into account.

Cultural Background

Culture and language are so frequently linked together. Zephir (1994) has suggested that the inseparability of language and culture has been recognized, and efforts to promote cross-cultural understanding have been encouraged by scholars such as Seyle (1984), Crawford-Lange and Lange (1984), and Lafayette (1988). Galloway (1992) has stated that it is one's culture that orchestrates the range of options for the why, what, when, where, how, and with whom of language in use.

In, C. Hancock's (1994) article on "Cultural Roots and Academic Achievement," Nobles has defined culture as "a human process representing the vast structure of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies, and practices peculiar to a
particular group of people and which provides them with a 
general design for living and patterns for interpreting 
reality” (Nobles, 1990). Escalante (1992), Collins and 
Tamarkin (1982), Brice-Heath (1989), and Haskins (1992) have 
all reported ways to bridge the gap between home and school 
by engaging students in culturally relevant learning. 
Villegas (1991) believed that teachers must be sensitive to 
the cultural characteristics of the learners and have skills 
needed to accommodate these characteristics in the 
classroom.

Hilliard (1989) has stated that definitions of culture 
differ widely, even among professionals such as 
anthropologists. Paulo Freire (1989), the gifted Brazilian 
educator, has defined 'culture' as anything that human 
beings make. Freire sought to make primary the distinction 
between what is 'nature' and what is 'culture' between what 
is made by humans and what is not. Hilliard (1989) has 
suggested that human groups share cultural patterns. 
Culture is what gives ethnicity its strength and meaning. 
Culture provides group members with a sense of belonging and 
with a preference for behaving in certain ways.

As defined by anthropologists or anthropological 
linguists, culture is “all learned behavior which is 
socially acquired” (Nida, 1954; p. 28), or, even more
tersely, culture is viewed as the manmade part of our environment (Herskovits, 1948). Culture is the social cement of all human relationships; it is the medium in which we move and breathe and have our being (Scovel, 1991; p.1). ‘Culture is a survival strategy’ (Bullivant, 1984).

‘Culture is the intangible symbols, rules, and values that people use to define themselves’ (Dimen-Schein, 1977).

Research by Yang (1992) suggests that culture clearly includes beliefs, perceptions, and values which affect language learning. Thus defined, all languages are proper subsets of all cultures, and since languages are a part of culture, is the reason why some people might perceive the two as indistinguishable.

Nida (1956) states that when learning a new language, one motivating factor the teacher can encourage is the student’s curiosity about the new culture. She suggests that many of the characteristics that are associated with the good learner are ones that indicate that the learner is accepting of and adjusting to the second culture, therefore helping a student adjust culturally should help his language acquisition. Nida (1956) further states that a student’s genuine interest in the new culture should increase his motivation in finding out about the new culture, making the student interested in listening, not just speaking. A
student who is sensitive to the people of the new culture will not only be interested in what they have to say, but he will also be sensitive to how language is perceived by them, and he will be motivated to correct his grammar and pronunciation because of this sensitivity (Nida, 1956).

Rivers (1968) states that in order for a student to have a complete understanding of the meaning of language, a strong bond between culture and language must be maintained. She also suggests that the differences in values and attitudes between cultures may be one of the main sources of problems in language learning. Kohls (1979) defines culture in the following way:

Culture = an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture refers to the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes - its customs, language, material artifacts and shared systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation.

Culture is conceptualized as a system, a total way of life. Stewart (1972) states that this concept is important because cultural values vary in degree of importance across cultures and certain values will have strong influence on the nature of the classroom experience, particularly an ESL class. He further states that students who have been raised in the American educational system have learned how to
compete academically in school. In some cultures, though, the desire to allow someone to save face is stronger than the desire to compete. For example, in Laotian and Vietnamese culture, the strong sense of affiliation with family and community can outweigh the desire to win at another's expense (Stewart, 1972). Latin American students, for example, are not used to being singled out for praise, so a competitive task in the classroom where there is one winner may make the Latin American student feel uncomfortable and may cause the student to be unwilling to participate in the exercise (Jaramillo, 1973).

Buchanan (1990) states that many times in the ESL classroom, students are put into groups and are expected to cooperate on a project. As with other cultural values, it cannot be assumed that other cultures feel the same way about the benefits of cooperation (Stewart, 1972). For instance, Latin Americans would not compromise their principles in order to cooperate on a task and achieve some group goal. Buchanan (1990) states that it has been noticed that Saudi Arabian students react similarly and will not cooperate on a group problem-solving project if they see the task as one which involves things that are considered negative in their society (e.g., using a deck of cards).
In ESL classes the teacher often wants to get information orally from individual class members. According to Buchanan (1990), one problem is that certain students will not participate unless called on directly. These students will not necessarily raise their hands when they have an answer they want to contribute. They may sit still and wait to be called on. It has often been noticed that people from Japan and Korea do not volunteer answers. She further states that the other problem with participation in the ESL classroom is when several students talk at once. In some educational systems in other countries, students are encouraged to be more assertive than students in the U.S. For instance, students from the Middle East sometimes behave in ways which Americans interpret as aggressive (Silverson, 1979). In class it is not uncommon for these students to try to answer every question, seemingly unaware of the value of giving other students a chance to speak.

In many ESL classes students are asked to work in groups. Buchanan (1990) states that some educational systems overseas do not use the concept of group work. They present material in a lecture format and students are expected to take notes and memorize the information. In some Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures there is a strong
emphasis on memorization and students have difficulty dealing with the creative activities that group work often involves (Silverson, 1979).

In the U.S. educational system students are encouraged to learn by doing and it is acceptable for more than the teacher's point of view to be expressed (Grove, 1978). In many countries, however, the teacher is seen as the keeper of wisdom which is imparted to the students through lectures. Students are not expected to question the teacher. In Portugal, for example, students are treated as if they were ignorant because the teacher is perceived as having the knowledge students need and students are not expected to be able to contribute anything to the lesson, but rather are expected to sit quietly taking down in their notes the wisdom of the teacher (Grove, 1978). In Saudi Arabia personal opinions are not sought and students are not expected to question what is being taught (Levine, 1982).

Adler (1975) states that culture is a cross-cultural learning experience and claimed that two types of learning occur. One is cultural awareness, an understanding that:

Each culture has its own internal coherence and logic. Each culture and its accompanying structures of norms, values, attitudes and beliefs are intertwined fabric and design that has an internal cohesion. No culture, therefore, is inherently better or worse than another,
since every culture is its own understandable system. Every culture is acceptable to itself on its own terms, since it works.

The second type of learning is an increased self awareness, the realization that 'all persons are, to some extent, products of the cultural frame of reference in which they have lived' (Adler, 1975). He further states that every culture provides a sense of identity with regulations on the individual's behavior and every culture is a frame of reference and orientation for the individual. Once an individual realizes that he himself is a cultural being, influenced by his own culture, he will be more accepting of the perceived culturally influenced behaviors, attitudes, and customs of others (Adler, 1975).

Stern (1975) states that the more students understand about the culture, the less mysterious and less threatening it will be in the learning of a language. A good second language learner 'cultivates positive attitudes towards the self as a language learner, towards the language and language learning in general, and towards the target language and its society and culture' (Stern, 1983). He further states that helping the student to understand and begin to enjoy his second culture is one way to help him achieve his goal of acquiring a second language. ESL classes which are designed to help students become more
aware of their new cultural environment and which encourage the students to learn more about the new culture will also facilitate the students' acquisition of the new language (Buchanan, 1990).

Exactly how culture influences learning is an issue which exists in second language acquisition research. The importance of culture is reflected in the concept of "situated cognition," which holds that the setting and the activity in which knowledge is developed are not separable from learning, nor are they neutral; they are an integral part of the learning (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Geertz, 1983; Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff & Lave, 1984; Suchman, 1987). As stated above, the activities and perceived cultural influences cannot be separated from what is learned in the foreign or second language classroom. Language learning is fully situated within a given cultural context.

Reid (1989) reported that the problem of communicating successfully in an academic classroom originates from the second language student's limited perception of what is expected from his university professors. She further states that they operate with a different set of cultural assumptions which are inappropriate for the expectations of
the U.S. academic audience. The expectations of second language teachers and their students may not always coincide.

Learning style research maintains that mothers' (i.e., primary caregiver's) child-rearing practices are primarily responsible for the learning styles children develop. Nieto (1992) has suggested that the values, attitudes, and behaviors taught at home are the basis for how children learn to learn. It is not clear, however, that it is as direct a process as this statement implies. There are vast differences among, for example, Mexican American learners; although a great many may indeed be classified as field sensitive, some will most certainly be field independent and many will fall somewhere between the two modes for particular learning. These differences may be due to social class, language spoken at home, number of years in the United States, and individual differences. Nieto (1992) has stated that among children from similar backgrounds or even from the same home, the differences are often striking. It is clear that child-rearing practices, although playing a part in determining a child's learning style, are by no means a sufficient explanation. Nieto (1992) has suggested that although culture is not the single determinant, and although many other influences intervene, culture often does
play a significant role in the learning styles unconsciously adopted by many participants in the culture. Wallace and Oxford (1992) felt that perceived cultural influences were a major contributor to the style differences.

Other examples of perceived cultural influences are found in interactional or communication styles. This area focuses on the way in which individuals interact with one another and the messages they may send, intentionally or not, in their communications. "Culture is the enduring influence of the social environment on our behavior including our interpersonal communication behaviors' (Andersen, 1987). The culture of an individual dictates interpersonal behavior through "control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call 'programs') - for the governing of behavior" (Geertz, 1973). Thus, the processes for the reception of ideas (e.g., listening) will understandably vary from culture to culture. Sapir (1949) best sums it up with his statement, "all cultural behavior is patterned," and if this is the case then there may be a pattern as to how ESL students take notes in an academic listening class.

Willet (1987) has suggested that the culturally shaped interaction patterns of language learners may influence the type of language input they receive, thus helping to explain
their learning styles and developmental language output. In her research, she found that two young children who were learning English, one Korean and one Brazilian, approached the task with very different strategies. In spite of these differences, both were able to understand English as language learners.

In contrast to language learning styles, language learning strategies are specific behaviors or techniques that students use, often consciously, to improve their own progress in internalizing, storing, retrieving and using the target language (Oxford, 1990a,b; Rigney, 1978). Conscious, 'tailored' use of these strategies is related to language achievement and proficiency (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Particular strategies are often chosen because they are compatible with a student's perceived culturally-influenced learning style (Oxford, 1990).

Only a small amount of research has been carried out regarding the relationship between cultural background and language learning strategies (Tamada, 1996). Politzer and McGroarty (1985) reported as a conclusion of their study that cultural background has a great deal to do with the type of language learning behavior likely to be used by students. O'Malley et al. (1985) also pointed out the difference between Hispanic and Asian students in their
strategy training in their study. Other studies such as Opper et al. (1990) who investigated study abroad programs and Watanabe (1990) who investigated staying abroad were both studies in relationship to language learning strategies used by students. Both studies showed that studying abroad as well as staying abroad might be important factors affecting learners' language learning strategies' choices and also cultural background influences played a significant role.

A key assumption here is that learning styles and learning strategies have a cultural component. Cole and Scribner's (1974) classic book showed that culture and thought patterns are linked. Variances in child-rearing practices and degrees of socialization within a culture tend to produce individuals with different styles of learning (Witkin, 1976; Ramirez & Castenada, 1974; L. Hansen, 1984; Ballard, 1985; Hansen-Strain, 1987). Merriam and Caffarella (1991; p.178) contended that to understand the effects of learning styles, one 'must consider the impact of the family, the educational system, and the culture on what we know and how we come to know it.' Other work has implied that culture has an influence on learning styles and strategies (e.g., Cole et al. (1971), Hall and Hall (1990), Holland and Quinn (1987), Gardner (1985), and Witkin
(1976)). Hofstede (1986) described differences in cognitive abilities which are described very similarly to what are called learning styles and strategies directly based on cultural needs and values (Scovel, 1994).

Often teachers view learning difficulties among culturally diverse students as problems inherent in the students themselves, rather than a lack of crosscultural or learning style understanding by the teacher (Cuban, 1989; Nuby, 1995). When teachers fail to recognize the cultural differences among learning styles, students react in negative ways to the instruction (Ortiz & Garcia, 1988). Conflicts occur when a student has a learning style that differs from the instructional style of the teacher, especially when the teacher does not understand the cultural and personal reasons for this difference (Cohen, 1969; Oxford, Ehrman & Lavine, 1991).

Many ESL students come from cultures where ambiguity is not accepted and where a closure-oriented style is encouraged. Harshbarger et al. (1988) noted that Korean students insist that the teacher be the authority figure and have no understanding as to why this does not occur. Japanese students often want rapid and constant correction, and do not feel comfortable with multiple correct answers. Harshbarger et al. (1988) has suggested that Arabic-speaking
students often see things in black/white, right/wrong terms and sometimes refuse to compromise; to these students, written texts take on an "always correct" aura, and the teacher who accepts more than one answer as right seems weak or ignorant.

Arabic-speaking students of ESL are typically gregarious, verbal, and interested in a whole-class, extroverted mode of instruction (e.g., Harshbarger et al., 1988; Willing, 1988). In comparison, according to Harshbarger et al. (1988), Japanese and Korean students are often quiet, shy, and reticent in ESL classrooms, indicating a reserve that is the hallmark of introverts. According to Hofstede (1986), Japanese and Korean groups have a traditional cultural focus on group membership, solidarity, and face-saving, and they deemphasize individualism. For this reason Japanese students tend to be reluctant to participate in speaking activities in ESL classrooms.

Schnell (1991) conducted a survey study of Chinese university students of English as a second language which investigated attitudes about the role of nonverbal communication in the communication process. Responses indicated a lack of understanding of nonverbal communication
processes. High and low context communication processes illustrated the effect of culture on the listening process in this study.

According to Dunn et al. (1993), a research-based, culturally sound understanding of learning styles helps enhance the learning of females and males, people from different ethnic groups, and individuals with different aptitudes. Pineda and Bowes (1993) showed that culturally responsive counselling, including discussions of culturally influenced learning styles, is essential for successful education. Dunn, Gamale, Jalali and Zenhausern (1990) found that cultural background strongly influences learning style preferences among elementary students, who included African Americans, Greek Americans, Chinese Americans and Mexican Americans. Dunn and Griggs (1990) summarized eight learning style studies of cultural and racial groups in the U.S., showing that teachers can increase student learning through teaching to students' perceived culturally-influenced learning styles.

Bean (1989) conducted a survey study to investigate the relationship between culture and field independent/dependent in Korean and Japanese adult students. This study was designed to test adult Koreans and Japanese studying in university and community ESL programs in Anchorage, Alaska.
Twenty classes of a total of one-hundred and fifty-seven adult ESL students were tested, including one-hundred and nine Koreans and forty-eight Japanese from age eighteen to seventy-four, of whom ninety-one were community students and sixty-six were university students.

The instruments chosen for this design were the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT), the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP), and the Basic English Skills Test (BEST). The Literacy Skills Section of the BEST was administered to one-hundred and two subjects. This test was given to all of the community ESL students who could read and write English, and to lower-level ESL students at two universities. The BEST Oral Interview Section was given to one-hundred and one subjects. This was a fifteen minute, one-on-one interview. It was administered to lower-level university students at only one university. The MTELP was taken by twenty-nine higher-level university students. The Aural MTELP was given to university students as a group. The GEFT was given to all one-hundred and fifty-seven subjects in the study as a measure of field independent/dependent, and data on other variables (e.g., culture, age, years of education, and years of U.S. residence) were recorded. Data were recorded and analyzed, using the
Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC) which was used to calculate frequencies, means, standard deviations, standard errors, and skewness.

Main conclusions were that more of the Koreans (72.5%) demonstrated field dependent than did the Japanese (20.8%). More of the community students (73.6%) were field dependent than were the university students (33.3%). More of those who had resided in the U.S. longer, primarily Korean immigrants, tended to be field dependent. Field independent correlated positively with English language ability and years of education. The large disparity between the Korean and Japanese mean on the GEFT suggested that the Koreans may have been reared in a traditional highly-structured, extended-family culture which did not provide the optimum situation to learn to select, analyze, and organize information and experience as efficiently as those reared in the more industrialized Japanese culture.

Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1991) conducted an ethnographic study with the National Language Resource Center (LARC) at San Diego State University in order to explore the effectiveness of ethnographic interviewing techniques in breaking down cultural barriers and facilitating communication between language students and target language speakers. Twenty-six students in a third-
semester university Spanish class participated in the study. Female students comprised two-thirds of the group. The majority of the students were native speakers of English. Students were asked to complete an attitude survey (Nocon, 1991). This survey recorded demographic data and elicited students' attitudes and feelings about the study of Spanish and Spanish-speaking people. Students answered the same questions in a postsurvey administered during the final exam session.

Students participated in perceptual experiments to identify the effects of cultural conditioning on their own perceptual lens, viewed live models and video examples of ethnographic interviews, and practiced the ethnographic technique of interactive listening in pairs. Once trained, students were asked to identify a native target language speaker to interview. Students were required to conduct two or three interviews with an individual during the semester. Students were required to begin their interviews in Spanish, but were told to switch to English when they became limited by their language proficiency. At the end of the term, students submitted typewritten reports and made brief oral presentations on their case studies to the class. At the
end of the semester, students responded to quantitative and qualitative items on the surveys that were attached to the final exam.

The main conclusions were that the quantitative and qualitative results indicated that the project enhanced student attitudes toward the study of Spanish as well as their understanding of their own culture and the culture of local Spanish speakers. Furthermore, by learning and conducting ethnographic interviews, students practiced formally the life skill of active listening, a skill that can improve communication and increase understanding. In the Spring of 1992, Robinson-Stuart and Nocon replicated the initial study in a first-semester university Spanish class with almost identical results. There were thirty-nine participants, all English-dominant, of whom approximately half were female. All but seven came from California, with twenty-one from Southern California.

Flowerdew and Miller (1992) conducted an ethnographic study to investigate the culture of L2 academic lectures. The study took place at City University of Hong Kong, one of the new universities in which seventy-five percent of the teaching staff was Chinese, with English as their second language, while twenty-five percent of the staff came from overseas. The students involved in this study were Hong
Kong Li Cantonese speakers at City University of Hong Kong. Ten native English speaking (NES) lecturers (British, U.S., Australian, and Canadian) - seven male and three female - from both scientific and nonscientific disciplines at City University of Hong Kong participated in this study. They were selected so as to provide a representative cross-section of NES lecturers in the institution.

The data for this study were collected over a three-year period. Prior to this study, a pilot study was conducted over a period of one semester with one lecturer. The data were collected in a range of ways:

1. Questionnaires and at least two in-depth interviews were administered to ten lecturers.
2. Reflective diaries kept by one class of forty students.
3. Fieldnotes and observation of lectures and students over the full three year period of the study.
4. Intensive discussion and observation on a daily basis with three lecturers during the three year period of study.
5. Written self-reports elicited from the students.
6. In-depth interviews administered to eighteen students during a lecture course.
7. Focus groups consisting of six to eight students.
8. Participant observation of sixteen lectures by the two researchers of this study.
9. Recordings and transcriptions of thirty-four lectures.
10. Other artifacts pertaining to lectures, such as textbooks, handouts, and student notes.

Two interviews were conducted to find out the lecturers' attitudes toward lecturing. Students' interviews were conducted focusing on perceptions, problems, and strategies of listening to an expatriate lecturer. All of the data used in this study constituted the theoretical framework for the notion of culture in second language lectures.

The main conclusions were that the lecturers wanted more participation from the students and wanted them to ask questions. Many lecturers expressed their frustration with students' lack of creative thinking. Students noted that some of the examples the lecturers used were unfamiliar to them and oriented too much to the U.K. A common complaint of students was the difficulty they found when lecturers based their examples on their experience outside Hong Kong. Eight of the ten lecturers said that their cultural awareness had been raised in regard to their students and understood that the cultural features of their lectures for academic listening made it difficult for the students to comprehend. The students' cultural background and learning styles had an influence on how the students took notes in the academic lecture courses.

Bedell (1993) conducted a survey study to investigate perceived cultural influences on the selection of language
learning strategies used. The subjects were three-hundred and fifty-three Chinese students taking English as a second language classes at six secondary and tertiary level institutions in three cities of the People's Republic of China. Subjects ranged in age from sixteen to thirty-nine and included two-hundred and twenty females and one-hundred and twenty-three males, plus ten who did not identify their sex.

A Chinese translation of the eighty item Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Version 5.1) was used for this study. This version was ordinarily used for native English speakers learning foreign languages, but it was chosen for this study because its length provided more data for learners of ESL and EFL. In addition to the SILL, a Chinese-Language Background Questionnaire was used whose purpose was to identify the learners' age, gender, major, years of English study, estimated (self-rated) proficiency, degree and type of motivation, and other factors that might influence strategy use. Data collection occurred under conditions of anonymity. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, factor analysis, analysis of variance, and a reliability assessment using Cronbach alpha (for internal consistency).
The main conclusions were that the eighty item SILL results showed a linear relationship between strategy use and proficiency. The fifty item SILL frequency data from a number of studies on a graph indicated low to high frequencies which showed that different cultural groups use particular kinds of strategies at different levels of frequency. Other findings were that guessing meanings is common among Chinese learners, both mainland and Taiwanese, but less common among Puerto Ricans, so it might be a perceived culturally-influenced strategy. Memory strategies were ranked lowest or second-lowest and social strategies were found to be generally unpopular among Chinese and Japanese subjects. There was evidence of high use of compensation and receptive functional strategies, while formal practice and affective strategies were uncommon.

In conclusion, as stated by C. Hancock (1994), culture does not 'cause' an individual to act or react in a certain prescribed manner, it shapes and guides his or her behavior. It also serves as a measuring stick for judging the correctness or appropriateness of a given action or reaction. Students bring a range of learning strategies and approaches; at the same time, cultural beliefs and presuppositions to the classroom. Garrott’s (1991) research on Chinese ESL students' attitudes toward learning and
teaching styles is an example of the kind of initial data needed in order to achieve the goals of understanding cultural differences and their possible effects on learning strategies and/or success in second language acquisition. Crosscultural understanding of language learning styles is crucial to success in language teaching and learning.

The previous studies showed that different cultural groups use certain kinds of language learning strategies and students' cultural background and learning styles may have an influence on how students take notes in academic lecture courses. The studies also showed that active listening could increase understanding of different cultures because culture may have an effect on listening processes. In summary, teachers could increase student learning through teaching to students' perceived culturally-influenced learning styles.

Listening (Second Language Acquisition)

The groundwork for the recognition of listening as a field of inquiry was laid primarily in the late 1940s by the pioneering works of the "fathers of listening," James Brown, Ralph Nichols, and Carl Weaver, although modern researchers have also studied listening. Even though, as Roberts points out, Rankin, in 1926, found listening to be the most frequently used mode of human communication, it was not
until the late 1940s that listening research studies were attempted and study committees established in educational settings.

Native speakers accept listening in their own language as second nature, yet comprehending the spoken form of a foreign language is a tedious task for the second language learner. More time is spent in listening than in any of the other language activities (Taylor, 1964). In 1949, research on listening in the elementary classroom led to the discovery that 57.5 percent of class-time was spent in listening. Previous research estimated that close to ninety percent of class-time in high schools and colleges was spent in listening (Taylor, 1964). Added to that was the listening students do outside of school through television, radio, movies, and music. Yet listening is probably the most neglected skill in second language teaching (Paulston & Bauder, 1976).

With so much time spent in listening, one would think that good listening habits would automatically develop. However, research tells us that a native speaker will only operate on a twenty-five percent level of efficiency during a ten-minute talk (DeHaven, 1979). Research further tells us that ESL students need to learn to listen effectively. Not only do they have to deal with the complex set of
problems which face any listener, but they also have to tackle a set of obstacles special to the second language learner.

From the mid-1950s to the late 1970s, researchers focused on pedagogical aspects of listening and on its assessment. The listening researchers focused mainly on comprehensive (listening for understanding) and critical listening (acceptance or rejection of messages). In 1979 the first professional society, the International Listening Association, was established for the advancement of listening. It brought together researchers from such varied fields as communication, psychology, counseling, education, political science, philosophy, business, law, and sociology.

J. Brown (1987) has stated that as much as listening is a foundation of formal education, it is also a foundation for language acquisition. What is referred to in the second language acquisition literature and neurolinguistic literature (e.g., Krashen, 1973; Lenneberg, 1967; Scovel, 1969) as the critical period and loss of brain plasticity or inability to learn a language with native-like proficiency appears to parallel the deterioration of our listening abilities. Schnell (1987) states that the learning of a new language involves considerable emphasis on the listening process.
Despite numerous research studies and efforts to win recognition for the field, consensus on a definition of listening has not been reached. Many researchers have resorted to adapting typical definitions of reading comprehension to the listening process. In 1971, Lundsteen defined listening as "the process by which spoken language is converted to meaning in the mind" (11; p.297). Listening is more than simply hearing or perceiving aural stimuli and more than comprehension, as was assumed in the 1950s.

In the last two decades, the communicative and proficiency-oriented approaches to language teaching have placed increased importance on listening as a methodological concern (e.g., Asher, 1977; Krashen, 1982; Omaggio, 1986; Postovsky, 1975). Language acquisition is based on what we hear and understand (e.g., decoding messages). As we acquire a language, our focus is on the meaning of the message used for communicative purposes. Underwood (1984) has suggested that the methods of language teaching which have emerged in the last decade, such as Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR), Gategno's Silent Way, Curran's Community Language Learning, Lozanov's Suggestopedia, Terrell's Natural Approach, and others, all share one common goal: communicative competence. For all these methods, the
priority of listening over speaking or the importance given to listening comprehension is a common denominator.

Dunkel (1986) indicated that this goal [i.e., the development of communicative competence and oral fluency] is achieved by putting the horse (e.g., listening comprehension) before the cart (e.g., oral production). In other words, the key to achieving proficiency in speaking is developing proficiency in listening comprehension (Belasco, 1981). The aforementioned quote is in direct reference to the researcher's study because the subjects will need to understand English spoken by the instructor in order to take lecture notes in the course. There is an interdependent relationship between speaking and listening due to the fact that the present study deals with an academic ESL listening course which involves taking notes.

Hartley and Davies (1978) remarked that "no investigator, to our knowledge, has commented on the differences (if any) between notes taken by students in different cultures." When asked about their note-taking practices, twenty-five percent of a sample of sixty-four University of Kiel students indicated that their note-taking practices varied according to the lecturer, the relevance of the subject matter, and their 'mood' (Hartley & Davies, 1978).
Only a small number of researchers have considered the special problems of foreign students in understanding lectures given in English. Specific variables associated with note-taking have been studied systematically (Carrier & Titus, 1979; Richards, 1979). Holes (1972) investigated the English language problems of overseas post-graduate students at the University of Birmingham. He found that many students' problems were caused by their being unaware of culture-bound knowledge, by their inability to interpret either the speaker's intonation or stress, and their ignorance of colloquial expressions and changes of register. He pointed out that speech had a lower level of redundancy for the foreign listener than for the native. Note-taking is a highly complex activity which simultaneously involves listening, writing, and to some degree, reading (Holes, 1972). Students must listen to the lecture, select and organize what they are going to record and perhaps modify what they have already written while attending to the constant flow of information.

Holes (1972) found in his study that the analyses of the handouts and independent notes revealed that many ESL students were not aware of the cues given by the lecturer to signal his key base words and had difficulty extracting them from the ongoing discourse. Due to their preferred learning
styles, a few attempted to write down everything said. When the ESL students did try to record the important points, they made no use of standard abbreviations or any form of shorthand and, thus, had difficulty limiting themselves to information-carrying words. In almost half of the cases where independent notes were made, layout was poor and relationships between items of information were not clearly indicated. As a result, students were left with an incomplete and misleading summary of the lecture.

A study by Courtney and Hale (1991) showed that English was the predominant language of note-taking used by the non-native English speakers, with some students taking notes in both English and their native language. Except for investigations carried out by Chaudron, Cook, and Loschky (1988) and Dunkel (1988), little empirical research has been conducted concerning the impact of note-taking on the comprehension and recall of lecture information in English by non-native speakers. Flowerdew and Miller (1992), however, did conduct an ethnographic study in which they collected data for over a three-year period, in order to investigate the culture of L2 academic lectures. Mishra, Ferguson, and King (1985) found in their study that native speakers recalled significantly more of the concept and detailed information presented in the lecture than did the
non-native speakers which provided some support for the notion that cognitive competition among languages (the international students' first and second languages) interferes with academic discourse processing for non-native speakers of English.

The study by Dunkel, Mishra, and Berlinger (1985) addressed an area in which relatively little research had been conducted; the impact of the process of listening and note-taking on lecture learning by non-native English speakers. Findings of the study suggested that learning lecture information and listening skills involve far more than note-taking for both American and international college students. They also found that it may involve their short-term memory ability, listening skills, and language proficiency as well as possibly a host of other individual differences not yet examined (e.g., learning style preferences, culture, cognitive style, etc.). This investigation has produced some evidence that analysis of individual differences should be considered an important component of future-information processing in students' first and second languages.

Listening is a critical element in the competent language performance of adult second language learners, whether they are communicating at school, at work, or in the
community (Van Duzer, 1997). Listening remains one of the least understood processes in language learning despite the recognition of the critical role it plays both in communication and in language acquisition (Morley, 1991). As language teaching has moved toward comprehension-based approaches, listening to learn has become an important element in the adult English as a second language (ESL) classroom (Lund, 1990).

Listening is a demanding process, not only because of the complexity of the process itself, but also due to factors that characterize the listener, the speaker, the content of the message, and any visual support that accompanies the message (Brown & Yule, 1983). Although once labeled a passive skill, listening is an active process of selecting and interpreting information from auditory and visual clues (Richards, 1983; Rubin, 1995). When listening tasks are being selected in adult ESL classes, the following guidelines which may be utilized have been adapted from a variety of sources including Brod (1996), Brown (1994), Dunkel (1991), Mendelsohn (1994), Morley (1991), Peterson (1991), Richards (1983), and Rost (1991):

1. Listening should be relevant.
2. Material should be authentic.
3. Opportunities to develop both top-down and bottom-up processing skills should be offered.
4. The development of listening strategies should be encouraged.

5. Activities should teach, not test.

According to Vanasco (1994), there is an increasing conviction among ESL teachers that listening comprehension is pivotal in the acquisition of a second language and they have begun to stress ESL students' listening ability as the major factor influencing their success in the learning of other areas. Long (1985) points out that theories of second language acquisition, such as the Information Processing Model (McLaughlin, Rossman, and McLeod, 1983), Monitor Model (Krashen, 1977), The Intake Model (Chaudron, 1985), The Interaction Model (Hatch, 1983), all emphasize the key role that listening plays in a learner's second/foreign language development, particularly at the beginning stages of language development. Byrnes (1984) and Dunkel (1986) have also done research studies of child language acquisition that suggest the pivotal role which listening comprehension plays in native language development.

As Morley (1990) points out, listening has been a skill traditionally neglected in language instruction, and the first 'modern-day concerns' about this area did not appear until the mid-1960's. Until the 1980's, much of the language teaching field took listening for granted, according to Morley (1991), who attributes the trivial
treatment listening has received from L2 practitioners to the 'elusiveness' of our listening awareness. She further states that listening is anything but a passive activity and it should not be dismissed in a casual manner and underestimated in second and foreign language curricula.

Listening is the language skill used most in daily communication -- twice as much time as speaking, four times as much as reading, and five times as much as writing (Weaver, 1972; Rivers, 1981). Listening is far from being a passive skill of receiving information and is in fact a language act in real-world communication, in which the listener is actively involved in either two-way interactive communication or one-way reactive communication (Morley, 1990).

What makes listening difficult is that it is not only a linguistic skill, but also 'a cognitive and social skill' (Rost, 1990). He further states that the development of listening ability involves the balanced enactment of linguistic, ideational, and interpersonal domains of language. Rost (1990) suggests that the L2 listener must perform the following inferential processes while listening:

1. Estimating the sense of lexical references.
2. Constructing propositional meaning through supplying case-relational links.
3. Assigning a 'base (conceptual) meaning' in the discourse.

4. Assigning underlying links in the discourse.

5. Assuming a plausible intention for the speaker's utterances.

Faerch and Kasper (1986), discussed factors of a psycholinguistic/sociolinguistic nature that impact comprehension, including L2 listener's:

a. Knowledge of the L2 linguistic code.

b. Degree of sociocultural competence (i.e., their degree of familiarity with the sociocultural content of the message conveyed by the speaker).

c. Strategic competence (i.e., their ability to guess meanings of unfamiliar terms heard and to use verbal and nonverbal strategies to compensate for gaps in their knowledge of the linguistic code).

With regard to the precise functional effect of discourse markers on L2 listeners' comprehension of academic discourse, Chaudron and Richards (1986) empirically demonstrated that a speaker's use of discourse signals facilitates comprehension of lecture information. More specifically, they found that lecturers who included clearly signaled macromarkers (e.g., "What I'm going to talk about today"; "you probably know something about already") made the task of understanding a lecture easier for the L2 listener. Anderson and Lynch (1988) noted the factors influencing the ease or difficulty of these tasks for the L2
listener are a function of the type of language heard, the context in which listening occurs, and the task or purpose of the listening.

Wolvin and Coakley (1988) mention the influence of culture and self-concept on the listener’s participation in the communication process. They note that a listener’s culture essentially serves to define who he or she is and how he or she will communicate through his or her perceptual filter. L2 listeners can also suffer the effect of a negative listening self-concept if they feel inadequate to the task of understanding the English spoken by native speakers, and this lack of confidence may influence their listening in adverse ways (Preiss and Wheeless, 1989). They further state that the fear of misinterpreting inadequately processing and/or not being able to adjust psychologically to messages sent by others plays a meaningful role in suppressing comprehension of a message delivered in the listener’s native language and in his or her second/foreign language as well.

Oxford (1990) also speculates the importance of the L2 listener’s ability to employ the following:

1. Cognitive strategies that involve deductive reasoning and compensation strategies (e.g., guessing intelligently about the meaning of what is heard).
2. Indirect strategies of a metacognitive nature (e.g., delaying speech production to focus on listening).

3. Affective type (e.g., getting the general meaning without knowing every word).

4. Social character (e.g., asking for clarification or repetition of what was heard).

Murphy (1991) states that listening instruction should play an important role in oral communication curricula because ESL university students are expected to enroll in lecture-centered courses during their earliest experiences within mainstream classrooms. Lecture-centered teaching in mainstream classrooms requires that ESL university students function effectively as listeners from the very beginning of their academic careers. Within most classroom settings, listening serves as a primary channel for learning (Murphy, 1991). Since little attention has been given to the students' listening abilities in other academic preparatory courses, listening and connections between listening, speaking, and pronunciation emerge as central components of ESL oral communication (Chamot, 1987).

It has been acknowledged by some researchers that listeners use strategies for listening (Mendelsohn, 1984; Wipf, 1984). At least two separate research studies confirmed that effective L2 listeners make better use of inferencing, self-monitoring, and elaboration strategies.
than do less effective L2 listeners (Murphy, 1987; O’Malley, Chamot, and Kupper, 1989). Murphy (1989) proposed a series of macrolevel strategic questions for L2 listeners to attend to while listening to academic lectures. He further stated that practice in implementing these questions is intended to help develop the metacognitive skills of L2 listeners.

Ferris and Tagg (1996) stated that academic listening tasks pose formidable challenges for L2 students, even those highly proficient in English. They further stated that in their survey study of specific listening and speaking tasks required by college and university instructors at four institutions, they found the following:

1. Professors’ expectations and requirements for their students’ listening and speaking skills vary considerably across academic discipline, institution, and class type (e.g., graduate, upper division, or lower division); and

2. Although lecture comprehension and note-taking are still very important, today’s professors also require a variety of tasks, including graded collaborative assignments, informal presentations on case studies or course readings, and on-the-spot recitations on laboratory projects.

Ostler (1980) found that her subjects felt much more proficient at everyday listening and conversation (e.g., with friends, store clerks) than with listening and speaking tasks in their classes. She further found that ESL students at a large private university thought that taking notes, asking questions, and participating in discussions were most
important for their academic endeavors. An ethnographic study by Mason (1995) found that graduate ESL students at a private university felt that academic listening/speaking tasks were growing more complex and required more than the traditional note-taking and formal speaking skills. Mason (1995) claimed that even students with TOEFL scores high enough for admission to most U.S. university programs may not be linguistically proficient enough for the academic listening tasks confronting them.

Flowerdew (1995) noted that academic listening has its own distinct characteristics and demands placed upon listeners, as compared with conversational listening:

1. Type of background knowledge required.
2. Ability to distinguish between what is relevant and what is not relevant.
3. Application of the turn-taking conventions.
4. Amount of implied meaning or number of indirect speech acts.
5. Ability to concentrate on and understand long sketches of talk without the opportunity of engaging in the facilitating functions of interactive discourse.
7. Ability to integrate the incoming message with information derived from other media (e.g., textbook, handouts, overhead, chalkboard); (pp.11-12).
He further found in his study three points which can be made regarding academic listening:

1. ESL teachers should simulate free-form classroom lecture-discussions for their students and analyze videotaped classroom interactions with their students so that ESL students can be better prepared for the realities of the U.S. college/university classroom.

2. ESL teachers should be more involved in training subject-matter lecturers, not just ESL students.

3. Such training would make subject-matter instructors become more aware of the issues facing L2 students in academic listening comprehension and would give them some strategies to help their students respond effectively to the demands placed upon them.

The present study deals with an ESL academic listening class in a university where students perform specific listening tasks. The listening tasks consisted of the students listening to a song, a taped lecture, or a lecture given by the ESL instructor. All listening tasks were presented in English. The purpose of the tasks were to increase the students’ ability to understand the language as it was spoken by the native speakers of English as well as to improve their note-taking skills.

Schnell (1987) conducted a survey study of the role of listening in communication. Twenty university students of English as a second language in China participated in this study. A written survey of six questions was administered to an English class of twenty students. These students were
freshmen in the teacher preparation program at Northern Jiaotong University. They were requested to respond to six statements (SA - strongly agree, A - agree, N - neutral, D - disagree, or SD - strongly disagree). The purpose of the survey was to study their perceptions of the role of listening in the communication process.

The main conclusions were that the survey responses indicated a lack of understanding of the role of listening. Other findings were that students believed they had a good understanding of English vocabulary, but had problems with understanding the speaker's main ideas. Sixty-five percent agreed (or strongly agreed) with this statement compared with twenty-five percent who disagreed with this statement. Only ten percent of students felt there was no difference between hearing and listening. Lastly, only forty percent of students agreed that listener feedback affects the speaker's message. The survey results did not reveal a major void in student understanding of the role of listening in human interaction, but a need for greater emphasis on development of listening skills, particularly on the effect of cultural factors and of high and low context on interaction. Thus, awareness of influences on the listening
process can have direct benefits for the Chinese student (high context) learning English (low context) as a second language.

Benson (1989) conducted an ethnographic study that investigated an ESL student's academic listening experience during one academic course at a U.S. university. One male Arabic ESL student at a U.S. university participated in the study. Having successfully entered the university following a period of ESL instruction, the Arabic student (Hamad) became a master's candidate in public administration.

In the first stage of the study, Hamad was approached by the researcher who had taught him in a preuniversity ESL program, and was asked by him to participate in a case study research project. Hamad's public administration class contained eleven foreign and twelve U.S. students. The case study research project lasted for one semester (i.e., sixteen weeks). Primary material was gathered by participant observation and key-informant interviews with both the teacher and Hamad. Secondary sources were also examined by the researcher, such as, the teacher's class outline and lecture notes as well as Hamad's written work (e.g., book report, term paper, and class notes). In addition, Hamad showed the researcher his texts when he had finished with them. This project set up a working
relationship between researcher and subject as well as establishing a learning profile for Hamad that would be the basis for further work on his learning.

The main conclusions were drawn from examination of Hamad's notebooks, together with interviews and recordings of lectures which revealed that Hamad often collected attitudinal rather than factual data from his listening. Listening was not his preferred way to learn and only one of the eleven foreign students in the class thought of listening in that way. Asking questions was difficult for Hamad as well as answering general ones which was seen by the researcher to be cultural based. In regard to Hamad's note-taking, he primarily recorded 'main' points at the expense of 'subsidiary' ones and classroom interaction was largely disregarded by him in his note-taking. Lastly, a Saudi Arabian viewpoint was evident in his notes and testability was a major consideration.

Dunkel and Davy (1989) conducted a survey study to determine whether cultural differences exist between the perceptions of American and British students regarding the value and practice of note-taking. A total of one-hundred and sixty-four students enrolled at The Pennsylvania State University took part in the study. One-hundred and ten international students whose second language was English
completed survey questionnaires, along with fifty-four American students whose first language was English. The international student sample included speakers of Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Spanish, and Arabic. There were seventy-eight international graduate students and eight international undergraduates. There were eleven American graduate students and nineteen undergraduates.

A twenty-four item questionnaire was administered. This questionnaire was closely patterned after the one administered by Hartley and Davies (1978) to British and American students. A few of Hartley and Davies' original twelve yes-no questions were slightly reworded, and eight additional yes-no questions were added to probe the attitudes of non-native speakers of English about note-taking in English. Hartley and Davies' four open-ended questions were also slightly modified to elicit more information concerning student attitudes toward note-taking, techniques used during note-taking, and prior training in note-taking. The questionnaire was distributed to American and international students within the first three weeks of enrolling in courses taught in the Department of Speech Communication at The Pennsylvania State University.
Participating students were asked to complete the questionnaire at home and return it to their instructors at the next class meeting.

The main conclusions were that the results of the quantitative analysis revealed that among American and international students few statistically significant differences existed in the students’ basic perception concerning the utility of note-taking and the tactics used during note-taking; however, it did appear that the international students experienced difficulty in taking notes in English as evidenced by (1) their assertion that American lectures did not allow them enough time to take notes in English, and (2) their reported desire to have 'better note-taking skills' than they presently had (91.3% of the international respondents expressed a desire to possess improved skills while only 58.5% of the American sample wished for better skills). The qualitative analysis results revealed that thirty international students and twenty-one American students reported that they considered note-taking an important mnemonic device. The American students reported note-taking as a memory aid since their culture is more written oriented than spoken oriented. Bilingual note-taking did not appear to be a preferred lecture encoding strategy for the students surveyed.
American students expressed a preference for taking notes on lecture material which was visually displayed on an overhead transparency. Lastly, nine international students and six American students reported that they took notes on lecture content which seemed relevant for exams.

Adamson (1990) conducted case studies investigating ESL students' use of academic skills in content courses. The subjects of this study were fifteen ESL students. There were ten college students, four high school students, and one intermediate school student who were enrolled in content courses with native English speakers.

The case studies were made by the researcher and his graduate students in an applied linguistic course using the method of participant observation. The researchers contacted their subjects by approaching a content area teacher and offering to tutor an ESL student in his or her class. The tutoring sessions made up a total of at least ten hours per subject over six to ten weeks. These sessions were recorded on audiotape. In addition, fieldnotes were taken describing the setting of the tutoring sessions, the researchers' subjective reactions, etc. The researchers also observed their subjects in content classes, interviewed their teachers, and analyzed copies of their notebooks, workbooks, quizzes, papers, and other documents. The
fifteen case studies, tutoring session transcripts, fieldnotes, documents, and other data were then analyzed by the researcher who identified and coded six frequently mentioned areas of interest: note-taking, reading and dictionary use, oral participation, organization, copying, and memorization. The coded portions of the documents were photocopied and assembled into six notebooks, one for each area of interest. By examining the notebooks, it was possible to compare the subjects' notes, tests, and papers as well as the researchers' observations about their study strategies in each of the areas of interest, and to pick out common strategies, strengths, and weaknesses.

The main findings were that three main points emerged from the case studies. First, the students dealt with assignments in content courses in very diverse ways. Second, some of the students' strategies were more effective than others. For example, Duc had trouble taking notes because he insisted on trying to figure out the meaning of every unknown word from context and therefore missed some important information. Fati tried to write down everything the professor said whether she understood it or not. Three of the students, Lucy, Ahmad, and Joe took few notes because they believed that they could rely on the textbook. Third, when the students did not have the time, the academic
skills, or the background knowledge to do an assignment with understanding, they sometimes adopted coping strategies such as copying and memorization which were cultural based strategies.

Olsen and Huckin (1990) conducted an exploratory study to investigate problems that nonnative speakers of English experience in understanding academic lectures. The subjects for this exploratory study were fourteen nonnative speakers of English, including ten graduate students and four undergraduates from nine different countries and eight different fields of engineering, plus physics. To provide a sample lecture for their subjects, the researchers chose a sixteen minute videotaped lecture segment on fracture mechanics from a first year graduate course in Mechanical Engineering. The sample lecture was authentic (i.e., was a real class lecture), had a level of subject matter understandable to non-majors, was comprehensible out of context, and was well-organized, clear, and coherent.

All subjects were instructed to listen or watch for main ideas and to take notes as they would in a regular lecture situation. They were then asked to explain what the lecturer had said as if they were telling a friend who had missed the lecture, but who needed the lecture material to prepare for a test. In this task, they were allowed to use
their notes and to take as much time as they needed. These immediate-recall summaries were tape-recorded, and several subjects also participated in follow-up interviews. The summaries were then transcribed and analyzed for completeness and accuracy. Evaluation of each subject's transcript was done qualitatively by the two researchers after extensive review of the videotape and a lengthy interview with the lecturer. Before interviewing the lecturer, the two researchers did an independent analysis of the structure and content of the lecture. Their analysis agreed with the summary of main points later provided by the lecturer.

The main conclusions were that although the lecture was clearly structured around several main points, most of the students failed to grasp these points. Three of the subjects failed due to inadequate English as evidenced by the fact that they produced short summaries with many grammatical errors. Six of the subjects failed despite adequate English as indicated by the fact that they produced relatively long, fluent, and coherent summaries and felt they had understood the lecture segment. Four of the subjects generally succeeded, and one completely succeeded (i.e., a Chinese student who had studied English for fourteen years in his home country, but had been in the U.S.
for only three months). Lastly, in terms of listening strategies; the successful students used a 'point-driven' strategy while the unsuccessful students used an 'information-driven' strategy.

Clerehan (1994) conducted an ethnographic study to identify the relationship between the content of L1 and L2 student notes and the principal elements of the lecture. The investigation was based on the identification of the different levels of the lecture discourse in order to see how much of the overall structure students were noting down. The subjects of this study were L1 and L2 undergraduate Business students at Monash University in Australia. The lecture investigated was a law lecture which was selected due to a large number of international students who were studying the subject.

In the third week of the first semester 1992, a fifty minute Commercial Law lecture delivered to approximately two-hundred Business students was videotaped and later transcribed. Before the lecture it was explained to the students that some research was being undertaken to examine lecturing and student note-taking and they were requested to hand in their notes to be photocopied at the conclusion of the lecture. They were told that they could collect their notes later that day. They were asked to provide
information about whether or not they were international students and, if they were, to specify first language, country of origin and length of time in Australia. Twenty-nine sets of notes were submitted: twenty-one from international students and eight from native English-speaking Australian students, including one student born in India who had spent nine years in Australia. The international group were all from the Asia-Pacific region. Of the twenty-one, one Singaporean and one Indian claimed English as their first language and one Sri Lankan claimed to be bilingual English/Sinhala. L1 and L2 students' notes were examined to see how much of the discourse structure, in the form of the hierarchically ordered topics, they had incorporated into their notes.

The main conclusions were that the differences between L1 and L2 notetakers in this one lecture were found to be in the students' recording of the hierarchical structure of the lecture, where both local and international L1 students consistently recorded ninety-nine to one-hundred percent of the principal elements. In the L2 groups, on the other hand, there was an average of nineteen percent omission of major headings, thirty-four percent of sub-headings, and
forty percent of legal cases. It was possible that the L2 students did not note the hierarchical structure because they were not looking for it.

Katchen (1994) conducted an ethnographic study to examine the English listening journals of ESL students. The subjects in this study consisted of twenty-three Taiwanese university students learning English. The students were required to listen to at least one program in English each week and write at least one page about it. Each journal had two parts: (1) a summary of what the student listened to and (2) comments about his/her own listening ability with regard to the program, including what he/she learned.

The listening journals for this study were collected as part of the required activities for the course Advanced Listening offered in Fall semester 1994. The class was made up of twenty-three English majors (i.e., four in their fourth year, nineteen in their third year). Ability levels of students ranged from among the top five to among the lowest five (e.g., of groups of approximately forty students for each year) in university grade point average. Journals were collected during class time on Friday mornings and returned the following Friday, when another set was collected. During the course of each week, the teacher read each journal, wrote a reply and/or comments, and made a copy
of the journal entry. Journals were collected ten times
during the semester. The commentary portions of the midterm
assignment and final assignment were also included, bringing
the total number of entries per student up to twelve.

The main conclusions were that students found that
clear pronunciation and speech was important to their
comprehension and rate of speech was also a factor. New
vocabulary, slang and idioms posed a particular problem for
students. Some students speculated that perceived cultural
differences might have accounted for their misunderstanding
of some of the television programs. Students also noticed
that an unfamiliar accent and unusual voice quality used to
create a special effect made comprehension more difficult.
Lastly, a number of students discovered that repeated
listening improved their comprehension and in some cases,
they could decipher meaning more easily by watching
speakers' mouths.

In conclusion, research has shown that listening
ability emerges as an important component in the process of
foreign/second language acquisition. An examination of the
literature on listening reveals it to be central to all
learning, and regards it to be a primary activity in
university classrooms. Lectures and note-taking are of
major importance in U.S. university classrooms. ESL
university students must be able to comprehend lectures given in English and possess good note-taking skills in order to be successful in their academic classes. It is interesting to note that listening was the neglected skill area until the last decade, and now there are more studies focused on listening and its effect on learning a second language.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the related literature for this study. As reflected in the literature review, some ambiguities about learner strategies still exist, and the need for further study is supported. On the whole, research on second language learner strategies is still in its infancy. Questions concerning the learning process and strategies still remain unanswered. The current study is an attempt to further examine effects of preferred learning styles and cultural background on the selection of language learning strategies by adult ESL learners in the area of listening for academic purposes (e.g., note-taking). There is still lack of current research which cohesively addresses each of these areas.

In Chapter III, the research methodology for this study is described. The design for the study is qualitative research using case studies methodology. The primary
approach to data collection and data analysis are described. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to describe the particular methodology used in the present study.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Individual differences' research studies should employ a naturalistic methodology because such studies can shed light on the individuality of single learners and can also show the dynamic nature of the interaction between the more malleable aspects of individual difference (e.g., preferred learning styles and language learning strategies) and learners' learning experiences. (Ellis, 1994, p. 524)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the professional literature relevant to the study was reviewed. In this chapter, the methodology used in the present study is described. The chapter outlines the procedures used in collecting data, selecting subjects for the case studies, and data analysis. The chapter is organized in the following manner: restatement of the main research questions, time line, the research design, research methods, and trustworthiness.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles may have on the language learning strategies that
adult ESL students tend to use in a university classroom, with emphasis on academic listening in an English as a second language context.

Handscombe et al. (1974) suggested that the manner in which teaching and learning styles are conceptualized in an ESL classroom may influence the manner in which they are utilized. Viewing the foreign and second language classroom as an active communicative setting had implications for what events were observed, how they were observed, and how the resulting data were analyzed (Evertson & Green, 1986). In the present study, classroom observations were used along with a multiple case study format to gain both the broad picture of an ESL university classroom environment as well as a knowledge of each subject’s principal strategies for language learning, particularly academic listening. The purpose of the chapter is to describe the specific methodology used in this study.

**RESEARCH TIMELINE**

In August, 1996 the researcher’s proposal was presented to the director and teachers of the Center for International Programs at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. It was approved as a research project at Marshall University after having been approved by the dissertation committee at The Ohio State University. Classes began the
fourth of September and continued through December, until the Christmas holiday break. Classes lasted sixteen weeks for the academic semester. The parameters of the study approved by both OSU faculty and participating Marshall University staff, and the selection of the particular class to be studied were determined in September, 1996 during the first week of the fall semester. During this month, identification of subjects was also completed.

Students were given two questionnaires to complete (copies in appendices C and D). Ehrman’s (1996) Motivation and Strategies Questionnaire (i.e., Personal Learning Techniques) was adopted for the present study (see appendix D). In addition, Prokop’s (1989) The Second Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire was adopted and modified for the present study (see appendix C). Ehrman’s (1996) MSQ was adopted because it contained specific items that in fact directly addressed preferred learning styles. It also provided a list of classroom learning activities that may prove useful in working with students having difficulties (e.g., second language learners). A number of the activities corresponded with learning style.

Prokop’s (1989) SLLSQ was adopted because it included strategies frequently discussed in the professional literature and may be considered to be representative of the
strategies employed by students on a broad spectrum of learning situations at the college and university level. The SLLSQ was modified to add a listening tasks section due to the focus of the present study. As far as the researcher reviewed the literature about language learning strategies and preferred learning styles, the amount of information contained in both questionnaires was more than adequate for the present study. A quantitative assessment of both questionnaires was completed during the final week in September.

Throughout the months of October, November, and December, the researcher observed the ESL academic listening classroom, took fieldnotes in a journal, and videotaped as well as audiotaped the class. The academic listening class was videotaped a total of three times during the sixteen week semester. The researcher focused the videotaping only on the four case study subjects. Subjects in the academic listening class met for fifty minutes three days a week (i.e., Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays). The class was audiotaped every class session throughout the semester.

Interviews with subjects were held during this time period until the fall semester ended in December. The semi-structured interview format was used in the present study. When researchers want more specific information, they use a
semi-structured format (Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, 1990). The interviewer introduced the topic, then guided the discussion by asking specific questions. Four private interviews were held with each subject (see appendix M for a sample transcription). Each case study subject participated in two interviews. The first interview lasted approximately one hour and ten minutes and the second interview lasted about thirty-five minutes. The four case study subjects provided data in the interviews to answer the research questions regarding the influence of preferred learning styles and cultural background on language learning strategies used in a university ESL academic listening class. A sample transcription of one case study subject can be found in Appendix M.

The procedure of conducting individual interviews was time consuming (e.g., the subjects' first interview lasted about one hour and ten minutes). This procedure had at least two advantages over completing a questionnaire by the students:

1. An oral interview would help avoid possible interference from student difficulty with reading or writing skills; and

2. Interaction with the students would improve the chances that information elicited is accurate and complete.
The interviews were conducted in a friendly, informal atmosphere. Since the researcher was not a teacher in the ESL program, her involvement eliminated one possible source of anxiety (e.g., that background information might adversely affect the students' standings or their grades). The four case study subjects, who were told the purpose of the interview, seemed to enjoy talking about themselves and regarded the occasion as an opportunity to get conversation practice in the target language.

From February through March, the researcher continued to review and analyze the data. Interviews were suspended at the end of the third week in March. The fourth week in March was devoted to the final assessments. The final assessments included:

1. Reviewing notes from an informal meeting held with the teacher to discuss the four case study subjects and her perception of their academic performance and improvement in English in her class,

2. Reviewing notes from an informal meeting held with both informants to discuss their perception of the two case study subjects' understanding of the interview questions,

3. Reviewing the class notes taken by the four case study subjects to see what data could be used in the final data analysis, and

4. Previewing the three videotaped class sessions which focused on only the four case study subjects to aid in the answering of the research questions.
Data analyses were conducted throughout the study and into April and May, with an initial draft of the data analysis completed at the end of May, 1997.

**DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The use of qualitative procedures in the study were selected because of a need to describe what happens in a second language learning classroom, particularly an ESL academic listening classroom at a university, in keeping with the overall purpose of the study. The description of what has been called the culture of the classroom may give insight into the reasons behind teacher and student strategy behaviors. In McDermott’s (1977) words:

> Ethnographic study of classroom hopefully will allow us to look carefully at what we, as teachers, do unconsciously to our students when we simply try to make sense and hold them accountable to our way of making sense. (p.164).

The descriptive data revealed in this qualitative research study may also reveal the meanings and processes within ESL classroom environments. According to Bogden and Biklin (1984), understanding the meaning and process is crucial in understanding human behavior. As McDermott (1977) explained, teachers teach according to their own personal perspectives, and students react according to their personal
perspectives as well. Qualitative research may reveal some of the differences between the two as they occur in a particular academic adult ESL setting.

Qualitative research relies on non-numerical data to describe and understand human experience (Creswell, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Qualitative traditions have emerged from such fields as anthropology, philosophy, sociology, and psychology (Patton, 1990). Qualitative inquiry relies on assumptions which distinguish it from quantitative inquiry (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Among these assumptions is a focus among qualitative researchers on descriptions, processes (not products), natural settings, the emic construction of personal meanings, data collection via human researchers, and inductive theory building within a discipline. Because of the personal and possibly intrusive nature of interviewing, ethical issues, such as reciprocity, confidentiality, and informed consent, guide the qualitative researcher (Patton, 1990). The present research was conducted with a sensitivity to these types of factors.
CASE STUDIES

Case studies are a way of examining particular variables within a given situation. Sanders (1985) indicated that a cyclical process may ensue. Investigating particular events often leads to a more general comprehension of the situation. This, in turn, leads back to studying particular events for confirmation, thereby resulting increased general understanding of certain phenomena. Donmoyer (1987) has written that case studies "add depth and dimension to theoretical constructs which are, by definition, general and abstract" (p.14).

According to Patton (1990), the purpose of classifying qualitative data for content analysis is to facilitate the search for patterns and themes within a particular setting or across cases. The case study approach to qualitative analysis is a specific way of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data. The purpose is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. Case analysis involves organizing the data by specific cases for in-depth study. Case data consist of all the information one has about each case (Patton, 1990). Certain kinds of research questions, however, fit case analysis, which was used in this study. Each case analysis
in the present study included interview and observational
data which were reviewed through systematic coordination
with the research questions under study.

The process of constructing the case studies in this
study involved three steps:

1. Assembling the raw case data
2. Constructing a case record, and
3. Writing a case study narrative.

The researcher first had to assemble all the information
collected about each of the four case studies' subjects.
Incidentally four case study subjects were selected because
the researcher wanted to have a fair representation of the
total population of students in the academic listening
class. This class consisted of both male and female
students from the countries of Colombia, Japan, and the
United Arab Emirates. Although gender did not play an
important role in the researcher's study, the researcher
did, however, select two male and two female subjects from
the total population of students in the class. These
particular four students were also selected due to the fact
that they stood out from the rest of the students in the
class because they appeared to be extremely interested in
the researcher's study when she introduced herself and
briefly explained the study to the class.

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The researcher then had to condense all of the raw case data by organizing, classifying, and editing everything into a manageable package. Last, the researcher wrote a case study narrative for each subject in the study which presented a descriptive picture and holistic portrayal of that individual. The case data for each student in the study included:

1. Observation comments of selected students from the three hours per week class sessions.

2. Two private interviews with each of the four case study students in which the first interview lasted one hour and ten minutes and the second interview lasted thirty-five minutes.

3. One interview with the course teacher which lasted one hour and ten minutes.

4. An example page of students' note-taking skills from lectures given by teacher and tape-recorder.

5. Informal discussions with both informants.

6. Three video taped observations of four ESL case study subjects on three different class sessions.

There were two female informants selected for the present study. One of the informants was Lebanese, but she spoke Arabic as well as her native language. The other informant was Japanese. When the researcher began the study, she spoke to the Director of the Center for International Programs and asked him if he knew of anyone who spoke Arabic and Japanese. The director then introduced the researcher to the two women who both worked in the Center for
International Programs. Both women agreed to be informants and were enthusiastic about being asked to participate in the study because they wanted the researcher to receive an 'honest description' of her case study subjects.

Five research questions guided the process of observation and subsequent analysis of data:

1. To what extent is it possible to identify language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students when they listen in English for academic purposes?

2. What perceived cultural variables seem to affect individual differences in language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students during listening tasks e.g., academic note-taking)?

3. What preferred learning style variables are self-identified by adult college ESL students as those which most affect their formal classroom language learning, particularly their listening behaviors?

4. What should be the key components of a college ESL program which combines perceived cultural variables, learning strategies, and academic listening skill development?

5. What generic guidelines are warranted for college ESL programs?
Any approach to research naturally provides only one representation of the phenomenon under study. As Evertson and Green (1986) asserted, "the representation of the phenomenon under study is mediated by the tool used as well as by the representational process. Therefore, the representation or description obtained is dependent on the instrument used to record the observation and the way in which data were collected" (p.156). In other words, "truth" can never be known, because reality cannot be directly apprehended (Fassnacht, 1982). For this reason, only a partial or confined representation of life in the ESL listening classroom could ever be obtained (e.g., Erickson, 1986; Shulman, 1986). This caveat notwithstanding, the attempt in the present study was "to collect sufficient and appropriate evidence to ensure that the description is as accurate as possible given the representational process used" (Evertson & Green, 1986, pp. 165-166).

The first step in the design involved the identification of the purpose of the study, the basic conceptualization of the research process, and the writing of the specific research questions that guided the study. It was during this first step in the design of the study that the researcher selected Marshall University’s adult ESL academic listening class for the proposed study. The
selection was based on the researcher’s desire to investigate the least researched language skill (e.g., listening). Survey research on academic skills that ESL students need to function effectively at English-speaking universities has, for the most part, focused extensively on reading and writing skills (Ferris and Tagg, 1996). ESL students have great difficulty with class participation, asking and responding to questions, and general listening comprehension. The researcher wanted to look beyond reading and writing skills to see what a university instructor actually required of her ESL students with regard to academic listening and which of these tasks are most problematic for ESL students in an academic listening class. In the present study, therefore, the researcher’s goal was to make a connection between ESL adult students’ language learning strategies and the influence of their preferred learning styles and cultural background in a university ESL academic listening classroom.

**Gaining Access**

Bogdan (1982) states that “the first problem to face in fieldwork is getting permission to conduct your study” (p. 120). The second step of the design involved gaining access into the specific ESL classroom in which the study was to take place. The major purpose of the gaining access step of
the study was to establish a social contact with the people who were directly involved in the study. More importantly, this second step caused the establishment and maintenance of a rapport with the teacher and students in the class. Building a sense of trust among the individuals concerned with the present study was absolutely necessary to alleviate any possible sources of misunderstanding, embarrassment, and harm that would have an adverse effect on the study, or on the participants in the study (e.g., Erickson, 1986; Erickson & Wilson, 1982).

Once the study was conceptualized and proposed, although a suitable site for conducting the study had already been located, the researcher then approached one of the teachers and asked if she would allow the study to take place during her Academic Listening class. The teacher was told of the study, its goals, and research methodology, which was to include observations and interviews with both students and the instructor.

After the teacher received permission from her supervisor, the researcher then held a meeting with the director and teacher of the class to be studied at the Center for International Programs at Marshall University. The researcher was then told by the teacher that she had to ask each one of her students for permission before the
researcher could enter the classroom as a participant-observer. The students all agreed that the researcher could observe the class. Consent forms were then given to the teacher, informants, and students (see appendices E, H, and J) to sign before the researcher could begin her study. The consent forms were all signed and approved by all parties involved in the study. The fact that the researcher taught at Marshall University was a facilitating factor in gaining entry.

On the first day of observation, the researcher was introduced by the teacher to the students. The teacher informed the class that the researcher was in the class making observations in order to gain an understanding of how the students learned English. At that time, the teacher asked the researcher to inform the students of the specific purpose of her presence in the class. The project was described in general terms (see appendix A for a summary of what was told to the student participants at this point).

RESEARCH METHODS

Data Collection

Identification of Subjects: The enrollment fluctuated in the ESL program due to the sponsorship of the United Arab Emirates (i.e., UAE) Embassy. It was possible that the
majority population might change due to marketing techniques of the Director of the Center for International Programs, and also depended on which Embassy decided to sponsor their students. The population of students in the program typically consisted of fifty students with a breakdown of seventy-five percent Arabic students (i.e., Saudi Arabia and Kuwait), and twenty-five percent of other students (i.e., various other countries). These other students typically came from Russia, Turkey, Portugal, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, China, Colombia, Angola, Mexico, Spain, and Brazil. The program consisted of a diversified population. The program operated on a semester basis. Classes were for sixteen weeks per semester. All students were studying English as a second language as well as taking classes in other discipline areas.

The class selected for the study was an academic listening (i.e., academic lectures/note-taking) class for college adult ESL students. Classes normally consisted of ten to fifteen students in each class. The physical layout of the classroom was usually six rows of desks with an ample amount of space between each desk. The students were allowed to sit anywhere. Most of the students changed their seats periodically (i.e., at least three times per week). The teacher had a mini lecturn on top of a table at the
front of the room with a black board behind. Students remained in the classroom for approximately fifty minutes three days a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays).

From the class that was observed, the researcher noticed that the teacher followed a patterned format each day. Students listened to academic lectures (i.e., given by teacher or tape recorder), took notes from lectures, and organized the information from notes for study. Some social-oriented listening and simulated lectures were used to provide students with practice in developing listening skills. In addition to daily in-class listening activities, students also attended the language lab in order to listen to a variety of other ESL listening selections to improve their pronunciation and listening skills. On four occasions during the semester, the students were dismissed from their regular classes in order to sit in on a lecture of another university class and were required to report back to the class on their experience.

The academic listening class was selected by the researcher due to her interest in the area of listening in a second language learning classroom context. Marshall University was selected because the researcher is a faculty member there in another department, and would have access to the school and its students as subjects. Two primary
techniques of data collection were "interview" and "observation." This section illustrates how these techniques were utilized in the study. During this part of the study, the researcher began gathering raw data. The researcher observed the ESL classroom three hours per week. The researcher kept a journal in which fieldnotes were taken at each class meeting. The researcher observed and took fieldnotes for eight weeks in the course of the semester. The researcher video taped and audio taped both the class sessions and interviews (see appendices K and M for transcribed samples of these materials).

The researcher also interviewed the teacher once and the four students were interviewed twice and selected as case study subjects from the ESL academic listening class. The four students were selected after careful and close observation of all students in the class. These students seemed to stand out from the rest of the class because they always participated in the class activities and paid careful attention to the teacher. The students were enthusiastic about the researcher's presence in their class and came to her after class and asked questions. Also while observing, researchers may be pulled aside by future interviewees who at that moment want to teach the stranger what is happening (Emerson, 1988). The students determined who would be
selected to participate in the case studies. The selection process came about from the researcher's observation of all the students in the academic listening class for two consecutive weeks. Four students were selected to participate as the case studies' subjects after being observed for two weeks in the ESL classroom. After close observation and careful consideration, the researcher approached the four students and talked to each one of them individually concerning the academic listening class and their interests in being at Marshall University. The four students were easy to select because they questioned the researcher about her project and why she chose their class to observe. Two out of the four students were Hispanic and after hearing from the teacher that the researcher taught Spanish at Marshall University peaked their interest in finding out more about the researcher and her project. Sharing a language is a powerful way of crossing the boundary between insiders and outsiders (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). The other two students, one Arabic and the other Japanese wanted to participate in the research study because they felt it would help them to improve their English. The four students selected as case studies' subjects were from varied cultural backgrounds. There were two female and two male subjects. One female subject was a native Spanish
speaker from Colombia and the other was a native Japanese
speaker from Japan. One male subject was a native Spanish
speaker from Colombia and the other was a native Arabic
speaker from the United Arab Emirates.

They were also selected on the basis of how they
answered the questions on two questionnaires (i.e., Second
Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire and Preferred
Learning Styles Questionnaire) which were distributed to the
entire ESL class the second week in September, 1996. The
two questionnaires used in the present study were designed
to collect data in three areas: learning strategies,
listening tasks, and preferred learning styles. For the
purposes of this study, Prokop's Second Language Learning
Strategies Questionnaire was adopted and modified into two
parts: learning strategies and listening tasks; Erhman's
Preferred Learning Styles Questionnaire, however, was
adopted in its entirety. Appendices C and D contain the
complete questionnaires.

The Second Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire
(see appendix C) used by Manfred Prokop (1989) was used in
this study to investigate the study habits, techniques, and
ways of thinking which ESL students employ in the study of
English as a Second Language. The Preferred Learning Styles
Questionnaire (see appendix D) used by Madeline Ehrman
(1996) was also used in this study to investigate the various approaches ESL students use to help them in the learning process.

The two questionnaires were separately distributed to the students on two different days (i.e., class sessions). One questionnaire (i.e., Second Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire) was given to the students the last ten minutes of class on one day and the other questionnaire (i.e., Preferred Learning Styles Questionnaire) was also handed out to the students the last ten minutes of class two days later.

The researcher explained to the students (i.e., subjects) the importance of giving an honest description of themselves when answering the questions in the questionnaires and that the findings from the questionnaires would not be used against them in any way. The instructions for both questionnaires were discussed in detail and sample questions were given. The teacher explained to the researcher before the questionnaires were to be completed, that she felt the students would respond better if she were to give a more detailed explanation about completion of the questionnaires since the students were limited in their English skills and more familiar with her style of explaining information.
Since the teacher felt comfortable in distributing and explaining the questionnaires to the students, the researcher reviewed both questionnaires with the teacher before they were distributed to the students. The teacher also read each question aloud to the students, asking them if they all understood and had any questions. After this process was completed, the students then took the remainder of the time to complete the questionnaires. The students actually used approximately fifteen minutes of remaining class time to complete each of the questionnaires (i.e., each questionnaire was completed on different days). All questions on the questionnaires were answered by all the students.

Private interviews were subsequently set up at the convenience of the teacher and students. Each subject (i.e., student in the study) was interviewed individually for approximately thirty-five minutes. The teacher's interview also lasted approximately thirty-five minutes. The sessions were audio taped. Both the fieldnotes and the interviews provided the raw observational records that the researcher subsequently used to analyze the data and draw conclusions to answer the major research questions (see
appendices F, G, I, and K for sample materials). The present study relied on both observations and interviews for data.

Inquiry Through Interview

The interview is generally understood as a purposeful conversation between two or more individuals, used for gathering descriptive information, in the interviewee's own words, about a person's opinions, attitudes, or behaviors (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). Depending on research aims, the amount of structure in an interview may vary. According to qualitative research standards, when a subject is not able to "tell his or her story personally in his or her own words, the interview falls out of the qualitative range," (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 97).

Interviewing allows access to a wide variety of information quickly, with the possibility of follow-up and clarification (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Semi-structured or open-ended standardized interviews, in particular, allow for acquiring "comparable data across subjects," (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 97). The interviewing protocol developed for the present study began with basic background information (i.e., country of origin, length of U.S. stay, university experience, and major), and then focuses on open-
ended questions about students' preferred learning styles, perceived cultural influences, and listening tasks regarding learning strategies used in an ESL academic listening class. These questions were divided into four categories: listening tasks, learning strategies, preferred learning styles, and culture. Patton’s (1990) content, wording, and question form guidelines were considered in developing the semi-structured interview protocol. Appendices F, G, and I contain the semi-structured interview questions used in the present study.

Patton (1990) has presented a menu of interview techniques that the qualitative researcher might employ in data collection efforts (p.280). As research objectives were yet to be finalized, the researcher recognized that she needed to use the information gathered from the interviews to help define the major directions of the study if the qualitative approach were to be followed. While the experimental researcher imposes a particular design upon a project, the researcher also determined how much time would be granted for the interview and where it would be held. Since negotiations of access to site were obviously initiated by the researcher, subjects and time allotment were also determined by the researcher.
The researcher conducted two types of interview processes. The first were formal interviews which refer to interviews that are scheduled on or off site (i.e., an appointment is arranged at an identified period of time). They are considered 'formal' since the respondents are likely to perceive they are being interviewed. The second were informal interviews which refer to conversational exchanges that are not scheduled (i.e., they just 'happened'). An opportunity may arise and a conversation may take place specific to the study. More importantly, the persons being talked with (i.e., 'the interviewed') are not likely to perceive that they are being interviewed. Data was collected and subsequently analyzed for both types of interviews for each subject.

In the course of the study, the researcher selected two informants. One of the informants was an adult Lebanese female and the other informant was an adult Japanese female. The adult Lebanese female spoke English and Arabic. She worked as an advisor in the ESL department. The adult Japanese female spoke English and Japanese. She was a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Modern Languages. Since the researcher spoke Spanish, an informant was not needed for the two subjects whose native language was Spanish.
Anthropological and sociological ethnographers often develop a close working relationship with a member of the researched group. This person is, in ethnographic terms, an 'informant.' The informant plays a variety of roles, limited only by researcher imagination and informant willingness and capability, such as making introductions, alerting the researcher about unexplored data sources, and helping to develop theories grounded in the data.

The researcher checked and discussed the transcriptions with the informants to clear up uncertainties and to encourage greater reliability in the present study. The researcher, therefore, used the informants to determine if the students felt comfortable talking in the presence of the informant, and hence might be more open and/or thorough in their responses. Another reason for using native-language informants was that they served as a source of knowledge for that culture, especially in terms of the educational backgrounds and experiences of the subjects.

Inquiry Through Observation

According to Patton, direct participation and observation (i.e., watching a social situation or a phenomenon of interest) is probably the best of the research methods available to the qualitative researcher (1990, p. 25).
Data Analysis

Data Coding

Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so you can make sense of what you have earned. To do so, you must categorize, synthesize, search for patterns, and interpret the data you have collected (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 127).

Data analysis is the final stage of listening to hear the meaning of what is said (cf. Antaki, 1988; Antaki & Leudar, 1992; Charmaz, 1983; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Munby, 1993; Riessman, 1993; Spradley, 1979; Strauss, 1987; West, 1990).

Coding qualitative data enables the researcher to recognize and recontextualize data, allowing a fresh view of what is there. The coding thus links all those data fragments to a particular idea or concept. As Seidel and Kelle (1995, p. 52) note, “codes represent the decisive link between the original ‘raw data,’ that is, the textual material such as interview transcripts or fieldnotes, on the one hand and the researcher’s theoretical concepts on the other.” Codes, data categories, and concepts are thus related closely to one another. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that coding constitutes the “stuff of analysis” (p. 56), allowing one to “differentiate and combine the data you have retrieved and the reflections you make about this information” (p. 56).
Coding is the mechanics of a subtle process of having ideas and using concepts about the data. It can be viewed as nothing more than a preparation for this process which is based on a careful inspection and analysis of raw data (that is segments of text) and on their comparison for the sake of identifying patterns and structure (Seidel & Kelle, 1995, p. 58). Tesch (1990) suggests that the first step of sorting consists of tagging text segments with information about the category of the organizing system into which it belongs (or several categories if the segment is relevant to more than one). Many researchers call this process "coding" (p. 121).

Tesch regards coding as a means of providing new contexts for viewing and analyzing data. Strauss (1987) stated that coding is about breaking the data apart in analytically relevant ways in order to lead toward further questions about the data. Dey (1993) suggested that once data are displayed in a coded form, the categories can be retrieved, split into subcategories, spliced, and linked together. Delamont (1992) suggests that one should be looking for patterns, themes, and regularities as well as contrasts, paradoxes, and irregularities. One then can move toward generalizing and theorizing from the data.
Miles and Huberman (1984) stated that data reduction is "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data that appears in the written-up field notes" (p. 21). The interviews in this study were audio taped and the tapes were transcribed. The transcriptions of the interviews were coded. The codes were used to describe and explain the responses of the subjects. These codes were developed heuristically and reflected the content of the interviews. They were derived from the subjects' responses to questions asked in the interview. The codes later were referred to as groups. Each group, or code, contained several issues or themes.

Analysis strategies may vary depending on the purpose of the study and the types of data collected. Johnson (1992) stated that often the general approach to data analysis in a case study is to examine the data for meaningful themes, issues, or variables, to discover how these are patterned, and to attempt to explain the patterns. As the researcher continued in the present study with the data analysis, these themes and concepts were weaved into a broader explanation of theoretical or practical import to guide the final report (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).
During this process in the present study, the researcher organized and analyzed the data. As the analysis of the data progressed, new insights and understandings were revealed about what was occurring in the ESL classroom as well as in the individual case studies. As new insights and understandings were gained, existing research questions and methodologies were further refined.

Throughout the present study, the researcher took fieldnotes during each observation, writing down, for example, patterns that seemed to be emerging, class discussions pertaining to cultural background influences, learning styles, and so forth. The researcher's fieldnotes during each observation were as concrete as possible. Patton (1980) provides examples of inappropriate and appropriate levels of description. One of his examples is adapted as follows:

(a) The student was quite uneasy waiting for the placement interview.

This is contrasted with the following:

(b) At first the student sat very stiffly on the chair. She picked up a magazine and let the pages flutter through her fingers very quickly without looking at any of the pages. She set the magazine down, looked at her watch, pulled her skirt down, and picked up the magazine again. This time she didn't look at the magazine [and so on], (p. 161).
A sample of the researcher's fieldnotes during one class session which includes the four case studies' subjects can be found in Appendix K.

At the end of each observation, the researcher entered the fieldnotes into a word processor and saved the notes on a computer disk. As interviews were conducted, the researcher transcribed predetermined segments of the tapes and entered these transcriptions into a word processor, saving them on a computer disk. The researcher transcribed the tape-recorded interviews, checking transcriptions for accuracy, and conducting a content analysis of the interview data across subjects. Content analysis consists of descriptive data reduction, that is identification, coding, and categorization of significant patterns of response across ESL case studies' subjects (Patton, 1990). The semi-structured interview questions served as the analytical framework for this content analysis, and was applied to the interviews. Sample questions are included in Appendices F, G, and I.

The researcher then reviewed both the videotapes and the audiotapes in search of patterns of subject behavior for data analysis. Reviewing data, reducing it into categories, and displaying it is critical in this type of study. The
next step for the researcher was to then review the following five research questions for the present study:

1. To what extent is it possible to identify language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students when they listen in English for academic purposes?

2. What perceived cultural variables seem to affect individual differences in language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students during listening tasks (e.g., academic note-taking)?

3. What preferred learning style variables are self-identified by adult college ESL students as those which most affect their formal classroom language learning, particularly their listening behaviors?

4. What should be the key components of a college ESL program which combines perceived cultural variables, learning strategies, and academic listening skill development?

5. What generic guidelines are warranted for college ESL programs?
The study began with one ESL classroom as 'context' and included four case studies (i.e., students were 'cases'). Keeping this in mind, as the nature of the study was uncovered, the basic issue of trustworthiness emerged. Verification of this qualitative analysis was addressed through the issues of trustworthiness and authenticity (Creswell, 1994). First, the triangulation of interview and questionnaire data enhanced generalizability of the data, and, therefore, the trustworthiness of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Patton, 1990). Second, the limitations of the data collection procedures were recognized, in that time spent interviewing and building relationships with interviewees was limited (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Third, the audiotapes and computer transcriptions of each interview have been preserved as an indication of authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Samples of the latter are included in Appendix M.

Due to the nature of the present study, the researcher explained to the subjects the importance of giving an honest description of themselves when completing the questionnaires and during interviews. The subjects stated that they felt secure when they understood that the study findings would not be used against them in any way. Assurances of
confidentiality, some interaction on the researcher's part with the subjects before they completed the questionnaires, and exploration of surprising or inconsistent findings in a feedback interview all helped minimize 'response bias' (i.e., the wish to appear in ways that the person thinks are socially approved). Lincoln and Guba (1989) have argued that "trustworthiness" includes the concepts of credibility and dependability. Acknowledging that interpretation of data may take on multiple meanings, what does the researcher do to assure credibility and dependability? In the present study, the researcher employed member checks as well as triangulation.

In ensuring internal validity, the following strategies were employed:

1. **Triangulation of data** - Data was collected through multiple sources to include interviews and observations;

2. **Member checking** - The informants served as a check throughout the analysis process. An ongoing dialogue regarding the researcher's interpretations of the informants' reality and meanings ensured the truth value of the data;
3. **Long term observations at the research site** - Regular observations of subjects (i.e., case studies) occurred on-site over a four month period of time; and

4. **Participatory modes of research** - The informants were involved in both the interviewing process as well as interpreting their knowledge of that particular culture to the researcher.

Member checks generally refer to the researcher’s efforts to involve participants’ (e.g., interviewees’) input in the study. The researcher conducted a member check twice with the teacher in order to assess what her perceptions were regarding questions asked in interviews about her students and compared the perceptions to those of the researcher. The researcher used this same process with the students. Guba (1981) referred to this process as the most important action inquirers take in terms of establishing credibility.

Another element of trustworthiness involves assuring that the researcher did not invent the data (i.e., that what was reported did, indeed, occur). Guba and Lincoln (1989) referred to this as “confirmability” (p.240). Specific to confirmability, the researcher transcribed the interviews soon after they were completed, and had both audio tapes and
computer disks available for verification. The researcher also kept a 'reflexive journal' to track the events and insights that occurred during the process of data collection and analysis (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Bogdan and Biklen, 1990, Lincoln & Guba, 1985). See Appendix N for sample of reflexive journal.

Another credibility check that contributes to verification and validation of qualitative analysis is "triangulation" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). Triangulation generally refers to the process of checking out the consistency of different data sources within the same method or different methods. For example, the researcher read the transcriptions and notes to determine if certain themes or perspectives were repeated in more than one individual during interviews or observations. The researcher is generally the individual who performs this task. Using multiple perspectives to cross-check and interpret the data is what Patton refers to as 'perspectives triangulation' (1990, p. 464). The present study was guided by and conducted under the conditions described above.

Conclusion

The data analysis described in the present study allowed the five research questions posed to be answered. It was assumed that if culture (i.e., home country
experiences) and preferred learning styles influence language learning strategies that adult ESL students use in an academic ESL listening classroom, significant insights gained could enhance ESL students’ abilities to learn English as a second language. These insights could benefit second language teachers and professionals concerned with helping ESL students to be successful in learning English as a second language. The next chapter describes analyses and discussion of data related to the main research questions of the present study.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Once upon a time, the Lone Ethnographer rode off into the sunset in search of his "native." After undergoing a series of trials, he encountered the object of his quest in a distant land. There he underwent his rite of passage by enduring the ultimate ordeal of "fieldwork." After collecting "the data," the Lone Ethnographer returned home and wrote a "true" account of "the culture." (Rosaldo, 1989, p. 45)

Introduction

Although Rosaldo’s words in Culture and Truth, his anthropological novel, were those of an anthropologist who went to a foreign setting to study the customs and habits of another society and culture, the researcher found herself able to relate to the words when reading the above passage in terms of her study. When the researcher began her study she was under the assumption that she already knew about the Hispanic culture and only knew a little about the Japanese and Arabic cultures. In her interactions and interviews with representatives of the three different cultures, the researcher found both similarities and differences among these cultures. As Rosaldo (1987) stated, ethnographers should "aspire to describe other cultures in ways that render them familiar" (p. 91).
The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles had on the language learning strategies that English as a second language (ESL) students reported to have used in an English as a second language (ESL) university classroom, specifically in a class dealing with academic listening. In the present study, classroom observations were used along with a multiple case study format as well as interview questions to gain both the broad picture of an ESL university classroom environment and also to gain knowledge of each subject's principal strategies for language learning, particularly academic listening. A descriptive statistics chart is included in Appendix 0 which is the reproduction of the outcome of the two questionnaires (i.e., Second Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire and Preferred Learning Styles Questionnaire) completed by all ESL students in the ESL academic listening class at the beginning of the Fall semester, 1996. This reproduction expanded variable names to make them more descriptive which includes the frequencies, means and deviations of variables. The purpose of the chapter is to report the results of the study and discuss findings in relation to the research questions.
The initial research questions sought an understanding of what learning styles are identified by non-native students of English, identifying language learning strategies used by those same students and perceived cultural variables that seem to affect individual differences in language learning strategies used by those students in a university ESL academic listening classroom setting. It was necessary, therefore, to analyze the myriad interview transcriptions in order to extract those variables (i.e., cultural, learning styles, and learning strategies) in connection with academic listening tasks. The study sought to discover the process the students went through in learning to understand English when listening for academic purposes.

During the course of the researcher's observations, the students worked mainly individually rather than in groups in the course. The students took notes as they listened to either taped lectures, their course lectures, or music. They listened to both the teacher and a voice on tape so they could hear a variety of accents. During the listening activities, the students listened to spoken English and were also required to react in some way to the English they had heard, ostensibly to demonstrate comprehension. The teacher, for example, required students to fill in words in
complete sentences in their workbooks. When students listened to the tape, the teacher had them respond to questions about what they had heard. The students also took a comprehensive review test on material covered after each lesson. The students were also required to watch one movie during the semester and to take notes about the movie. In addition, the students also expressed in their opinion what they thought about the movie (e.g., good or bad).

Through the interview, however, the researcher discovered pertinent information for the study. The findings in the interviews indicated that two out of the four case study subjects approached listening in an analytical way, memorizing vocabulary and phrases which resulted in much of their speech being formulaic. It was also discovered that for three of the four case study subjects, their learning style was mainly cultural, meaning that it was based on their home country experiences in which they depended on memorization, reasoning that it would help them to be able to use English immediately. All four case study subjects reported individual learning to be beneficial. In group participation activities, not all students in the group participated.

In addition, the findings in the interview with the teacher revealed that learning English was difficult for the
four ESL case study subjects because English has many colloquial expressions and slang. The teacher reported that she gave one note-taking assignment per week. In the first assignment, the students listened for general information in a taped lecture and in the second assignment the students listened for details from the teacher's lecture. The teacher gave feedback on students' weaknesses to help students improve their listening skills in taking class notes. The teacher used a self-monitoring technique for the students which incorporated a top-down approach. The teacher explained that she used this approach because she wanted the students to look at the 'big picture' which was improving their listening comprehension skills in general and any problems that the students encountered in understanding English would eventually work themselves out.

Strategies used by the teacher were visual clues (e.g., drawing a triangle) in which three main points were to be remembered when the students took notes on a particular listening task. They would draw a triangle in their notes to help them to remember three main points from the lecture. Another strategy taught to the students was for them to listen the first time for general information and the second time they listened for details. The teacher referred to this approach as comprehensible input, referring to Stephen
Krashen's work. She also stated that it was easier for the students to understand her lectures rather than a taped lecture or listening to a song in English because the speaker on the tape or the singer's voice were not as clear to the students as her voice. The teacher further stated that the taped lecture and song were more artificial and less authentic than her voice and thus, the students were able to better understand the teacher's lecture.

The findings of the study were based on both the observations and two interviews held with the four case study subjects. Neither of these two methods required manipulating the actual classroom learning situations. Since the four ESL case study subjects interviewed were from three different countries, the researcher was able to collect information about their learning strategies, preferred learning styles, and perceived cultural influence related to listening tasks performed in their ESL academic listening class. The researcher was also able to gain valuable insights into these four case study subjects based on their ESL academic listening teacher's perception of them provided in an interview.

Results

Interviews 1 and 2 provided the results of the study through common themes or issues. The five main issues
addressed in Interview I were: 1) background information (21 questions); 2) listening tasks (10 questions); 3) language learning strategies (8 questions); 4) preferred learning styles (6 questions); and 5) culture (6 questions). Interview 2 provided a synthesis of the above questions asked so that the researcher could focus on the specific themes and revisit the four main issues of the present study (e.g., language learning strategies, preferred learning styles, cultural background, and listening tasks). Both sets of student interview questions are included in Appendices F and G.

The teacher’s interview consisted of thirty-one questions which pertained to each of the four ESL case study subjects. This interview provided her perception of each of the four ESL case study subjects as it related to the four main issues of the present study (i.e., language learning strategies, preferred learning styles, cultural background, and academic listening). The teacher’s interview questions are included in Appendix I.

**FIRST INTERVIEW**

**Background Information**

The four ESL case study subjects were asked to respond to several questions which focused on their background. For example, the students were asked how long they had been
speaking English, did they find English to be a difficult language to learn, and how was English viewed in their country. They were also asked to tell about themselves as language learners as well as what language skill they viewed to be their best. From these questions, the ESL students revealed the importance of learning English as related to language, culture, and communication. Background information on each of the four ESL case study subjects follows.

Isabel

Isabel was from Colombia and reported that she had decided to attend this particular university because there were not many native speakers of Spanish. Living in an area populated with few Hispanics was important to her because she knew if she lived in a location with a high population of Hispanics, as was previously the case when she lived in Florida, then she would tend to speak Spanish and might not learn English. The limited number of Hispanics was the deciding factor in helping her to select this university. Isabel reported that she began to speak English when she was eight years old and felt that it was difficult to learn because it is spoken in a different word order from Spanish.
She viewed English as important language to know because English was deemed to be a significant language to learn in Colombia.

When asked how she perceived herself as a language learner, Isabel responded in the following manner:

I can understand the pictures. Uh, okay I feel different from the rest of my classmates because I don't know why they aren't really interested in learning. I don't know if it's the culture. I'm really desperate to learn English.

Isabel reported that her best language skill (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in English was listening. She described her skill this way:

I think it's listening because I understand everything. I understand very well the listening. But, to express it I feel is very hard. I cannot understand everything.

In relation to all of the following data given on Felipe, similar data exists for the other ESL students, but was not added as a time-saving device. Due to space constraints, only one student (e.g., Felipe) was chosen as representative of all.

**Felipe**

Felipe was from Colombia and was attending this university as an international student studying English. He had only been in West Virginia for two months when he first enrolled in the ESL academic listening class, although this was his third time in the United States. It was considered a
privilege for him to be given the opportunity to study in the United States because it is expensive. He had visited Miami, Florida as a child. He had taken an English course for one month in Boston, Massachusetts three years before entering this university. Felipe began to speak English in high school and reported feeling that English was difficult for him to speak because he thinks in Spanish and then tries to translate into English. He also stated that the grammar is different because the words don’t follow one strict order as in Spanish. Felipe reported that English is viewed as one of the most important world languages in Colombia and that Colombians believed that it makes a difference as to whether you get a good job and salary in Colombia.

He also reported that he loved English and felt fortunate that he was able to watch the Discovery channel, Cinemax, HBO, and other channels which provided movies in English. Felipe stated that the Discovery channel was nice because the native speakers of English spoke very slow and had good pronunciation which he was able to understand.

Felipe was asked if he found English to be a difficult language to learn and he responded in this way:

No. This is ambiguous answer because yes, but no. Yes, because when you think about the grammar composition and try to speak with grammar and composition you cannot do that. This is kind of difficult because I think in Spanish and try and
translate when I am speaking and grammar is different. But, it’s easier than Spanish. Definitely easier than Spanish.

Felipe responded in the following manner when asked which language skill he would like to improve:

Listening and speaking. I need listen first. If I can’t listen and if I can’t speak than the other won’t come.

When Felipe was asked how he viewed himself as a language learner, he responded as follows:

I need more work. I think here I can improve my English and I must use English everyday.

Felipe stated that his best language skill in English was speaking and described it this way:

Well, I think it’s easier for me to speak in English. I think this because in my class I speak more than Arabic guys or Japanese girls. But, I think it is easier for me than reading.

Yuki

Yuki was from Japan and chose this particular university because her aunt lives in the same city where the university is located. This was her first time living in the United States. Yuki began speaking English at the age of thirteen and has now been studying it for eight years. She said that English was a difficult language for her to learn but that it is viewed as an important language to know in Japan.
Yuki responded as follows when asked how she perceived herself as a language learner:

English is very deep for me. I have to study a lot and for a long time. I want to learn English better and improve in my speaking.

When asked what language skill in English she viewed to be her strongest, Yuki reported:

Listening is my best language skill. My listening is improving because I couldn’t understand the news in English in my country, but I can here. I want to continue to improve my listening.

Adnan

Adnan was from the United Arab Emirates and came to this particular university to learn English. This was his first time living in the United States. Adnan began speaking English at the age of nineteen. He is an older student because he is an officer in the military in his country. He was sent here to improve his English so he could communicate better with American military men. Adnan said that English was a difficult language for him to learn in high school, but reported that he understood it much better now. He further stated that English was very important in his country because it is an international language.

Adnan was asked how he perceived himself as a language learner and he responded in this manner:
I like English, even though it was a difficult language to learn at first, but now I feel that I’m doing good in my academic listening class. I communicate well with a lot of people.

Adnan stated that his best language skill in English was speaking and described it this way:

Speaking is the best language skill for me because I understand when people speak English to me. I retain the information when someone speaks to me in English because this is the way to learn.

Discussion

The purpose of the interview portion of the present study on the background information of each of the four ESL case study subjects was to illustrate qualitatively how these ESL students derived at studying English, specifically academic listening, at an American university. The purpose of the discussion which follows is to present differences and similarities between the four ESL case study subjects in relation to language, culture (i.e., home country experiences), and communication.

The ages varied as to when the four ESL students began learning how to speak English. Even the two students from the same country, Colombia, learned English at different ages. All four students agreed that they found English to be a difficult language to learn and their countries viewed English as an international language which was important to learn.
In response to how each of the students perceived themselves as language learners, the answers varied. Isabel reported that she was interested in learning English and was a higher achiever than the rest of her classmates. Felipe reported that he needed to work longer and harder in learning English. Yuki reported that English was a complicated language for her to learn and that she wanted to improve in her speaking skills. Adnan reported that he has seen improvement in his learning of English and that he communicated well with other people who spoke English.

Two language skills were viewed by all four students to be their best. Isabel and Yuki reported that listening was their best language skill because they were able to understand English better when it was spoken by native speakers of English. Felipe and Adnan reported that speaking was their best language skill. Speaking English was easier for Felipe and understanding spoken English was easier for Adnan.

The variations in the background information of these four ESL students have been presented through interview data which provided an insider’s view of the problems, concerns, and perceptions associated with language, culture (i.e., home country experiences), and communication. The following section describes the areas treated in the interviews; they
were: listening tasks, learning strategies, preferred learning styles, and cultural background.

**Listening Tasks**

Several questions relating to listening tasks performed both inside and outside of their ESL academic listening class were asked of four ESL case study subjects to give a response. From these specific questions, these ESL students revealed the importance of learning English as related to listening tasks performed in their ESL academic listening classroom.

**Isabel’s Views of Listening Tasks**

Isabel reported that she saw an improvement in listening since the first day of the ESL academic listening class. She also stated that she had no problems in performing listening tasks. For example, she had a typical response when she did not understand someone speaking English:

> I ask the person to please repeat when I don’t understand him in English, especially if the person looks friendly.

Isabel reported feeling comfortable asking the ESL teacher questions in class when she did not understand something. She also reported feeling that if the teacher gave more examples then it would help her to take better notes. Isabel stated that it was easier for her to
understand her teacher lecturing than a taped-lecture.

Isabel admitted that when she listened to Spanish that she tried to translate it into English. When listening to a native speaker of English, Isabel reported:

I try to listen carefully to English being spoken, but I translate it into Spanish in my mind all the time, except for some words I memorize for example, Hi, how are you?

Isabel reported that she tried to improve her listening by going to the movies, the museum, watching television, and using the computer to learn new words in English.

**Felipe's Views of Listening Tasks**

Felipe reported that he saw improvement in listening because when he first entered the ESL academic listening class, he only knew twenty words in English. He also stated that he had memorized answers to basic questions asked to him in English. He reported being able to communicate his ideas better. When Felipe did not understand someone speaking English to him, he stated:

I have problems with people asking questions because it’s difficult to understand in English. I try to guess words that I don’t know or understand.

In class Felipe reported feeling uncomfortable raising his hand. He reported that he would look in his book for examples when he listened to some words that he did not understand. Felipe also stated that it was easier for him to learn from the teacher’s lectures than from a taped
lecture. When listening to a native speaker of English, Felipe reported:

It is sometimes hard for me to understand English spoken by other native speakers of English. I have to pay attention carefully to native speakers to understand clearly everything they say. Sometimes after talking about any American topic, after one hour, I have a headache because I try to pay more attention so I don’t make any mistakes.

Felipe reported feeling that watching news on television was a good listening task for him to perform in order to improve his listening skills. He also stated that he practiced translating Spanish into English sometimes when he told jokes or listened to songs.

Felipe reported feeling that the ESL academic listening class was one of his best classes. He stated that it was a very important class because when he first went to the class, it was difficult for him to understand. Felipe further reported that he paid special attention in this class because he needed to improve his listening skills. He also reported feeling that the class was easier because he was showing improvement in taking lecture notes in the listening classroom. When asked if he liked listening to the songs and music in English once a week, Felipe reported:

Yes, but sometimes in music I prefer to listen to the rhythm rather than the words. This is a personality. Other people loves to sing it, I prefer to follow the rhythm. And, sometimes I pay attention more to the rhythm of the music than the words.
Felipe also reported feeling that he interacted well with his other classmates in the ESL academic listening class and that he liked all of his classmates. He stated that he did not study with his classmates in the listening class because he basically studied alone. Felipe further stated that he usually tried to speak English with other people outside of his ESL academic listening class.

**Yuki’s Views of Listening Tasks**

Yuki reported feeling that her listening had improved because she said that she was able to understand important information in the ESL academic listening class. She also reported that she saw an improvement in her listening due to watching television and listening to the radio. Yuki’s typical response when she does not understand something in class in English is:

*When I don’t understand something in ESL class, I ask the teacher. I write down the words I don’t know the meaning of or I check a dictionary.*

Yuki reported feeling uncomfortable asking a question in her ESL academic listening class because she became very nervous. She reported that the teacher’s lecture was easier to take notes from than the taped lecture because the tape was not clear. Yuki reported that she preferred to watch television than to listen to the radio because television was visual and she could understand it better. She stated
that she was a visual learner because she liked seeing things when she was learning something.

When Yuki listened to a native speaker of English, she reported:

I have to concentrate to understand a native speaker of English because it is so hard. When a native speaker speaks to me in English, I watch the person very carefully.

Yuki also stated that whenever she talked to a Japanese person, she would translate from Japanese to English because it helped her to improve her English.

**Adnan’s Views of Listening Tasks**

Adnan saw an improvement in listening in his ESL academic listening class because he could understand the teacher and he felt that he was doing well in this class. If Adnan did not understand something in class in English he reported:

When I don’t understand something in listening class, I ask the teacher about it and tell her that I don’t understand. I feel comfortable asking my teacher a question when I don’t understand.

Adnan stated that he never asked questions in English class in his country. He reported that he would ask the teacher after class and when he was at home, he would use a dictionary. Adnan stated that he needed more time in class in order to take better notes and that he always reviewed the notes that he took in class at home. He stated that
listening to the teacher's lecture was easier for him to understand than listening to a taped lecture. He also stated that the tape for him sounded different and it was difficult to understand. Adnan reported that he performed different listening tasks outside of class which consisted of listening to music in English at home. He reported that when he did this activity, he would try to learn more words. He also reported that he watched movies and tried to understand the words to the movie in English.

When Adnan listened to a native speaker in English, he reported:

When I hold a conversation with a native speaker of English, I listen very carefully because they speak too fast and use strange words that are difficult for me to understand.

Adnan further stated that sometimes he had a tendency to translate his native language (i.e., Arabic) into English.

Discussion

In order to understand how ESL students took notes in English from the teacher's lectures, a taped lecture or listening to a song, the four ESL case study subjects gave a description of their methods used when they were interviewed by the researcher. The discussion which follows reveals the reported responses from the interview of each student focusing on the listening tasks performed in their ESL academic listening class.
All four ESL case study students responded positively and saw improvement in listening since the first day of class. These students also had a typical response to how they handled the situation when they did not understand a native English speaker. Only one out of the four ESL case study students reported feeling comfortable asking the ESL teacher questions in class when she didn't understand something.

The four ESL students also agreed that it was easier to understand their ESL teacher's lectures in English than a taped lecture. All four ESL students agreed that it was sometimes difficult for them to understand a native English speaker and they had to listen carefully and pay attention to the English speaker's pronunciation of words in order to understand clearly what they were saying in the conversation. The four ESL students also tried to improve their listening skills in English by watching television, listening to the radio, and going to the movies.

The four ESL students presented their perceptions of their listening skills development through interview data. The ESL students provided feedback which consisted of an insider's view of how English can be learned through
listening comprehension. The ESL students gave positive responses as to how they might improve their listening comprehension skills.

**Learning Strategies**

The interview data pertaining to learning strategies used by four ESL students revealed their perceptions of the importance of learning English as related to the language learning strategies they used when taking lecture notes in their ESL academic listening class. The four ESL students had not recognized using learning strategies until they were asked about them in the interviews. The reported learning strategies used by the four ESL students follows.

**Isabel’s Uses of Learning Strategies**

The one strategy that Isabel reported using the most in her ESL academic listening class was to apply or use the words that the teacher gave her to learn. She also stated that she tried to understand the purpose of the lecture when she took notes in class. When asked if she had a good visual memory, Isabel reported:

> I am a visual learner and I use drawings to help me memorize difficult terms.

Isabel stated that in her own country she felt uncomfortable when she made a mistake in her class, but she feels comfortable when she makes a mistake in her ESL academic listening class because all of the rest of the
students in the class are on the same level. She further stated that when you make a mistake in her country it may not be because you don't understand something, but because you have the wrong answer. When Isabel was asked how she learned best, for example, by memorization, etc., she reported:

I write down something many times and try to memorize it and write it in big letters.

Isabel reported that she was not easily distracted from completing her homework assignments in English because she is really conscientious about learning English. When Isabel is trying to remember information for her ESL class, she stated that she translated the information into Spanish. She reported that she listened in both Spanish and English trying to understand in which cases you would use the specific rules in either language.

Felipe's Uses of Learning Strategies

The main strategy that Felipe reported using in his ESL academic listening class was to pay attention and try to write some words down that he did not understand. He also reported that he looked in the dictionary for those particular words he was unfamiliar in hearing. He further stated that he listened a lot and tried to learn a large
quantity of words and admitted that taking notes was helpful. Felipe was asked if he had a good visual memory and he reported:

I have a good visual memory, but my problem is sometimes when I try to use the forms of words which I learned in class, I feel confused because I have in my mind other ways to say something. Maybe it is the wrong way, but I think it's correct.

Felipe stated that he tried to learn English from only native speakers of English and not the international students. Felipe reported that sometimes it bothered him when he would make a mistake in front of the other students in the ESL academic listening class. He further stated that it made him feel bad when he made a mistake in reading aloud or expressing himself in English.

When Felipe was also asked how he learned best, he reported:

I review my lecture notes from the listening class. I have increased about fifty-percent in taking notes than when the course first began. I learn better by writing down everything.

Felipe further stated that in Colombia he learned to memorize and he did not have to create his own questions and answers because he had to follow the text book. He reported having a tendency to learn the same way in his ESL academic listening class. Felipe stated that he did not become easily distracted from his work in his ESL academic
listening class when doing his assignments in English because Spanish and English were closely related.

Felipe was asked what he usually did when he did not understand something in English and he reported:

First, I try to guess, cause I can get some words at least one or two that I try to guess. If I don’t understand then I ask Emily or I try to look for example in my book. But, I ask the best way uh Emily, I don’t understand, could you repeat?

He further stated that he did not feel uncomfortable raising his hand in class and asking the teacher a question when he did not understand something in the ESL academic listening class.

Felipe was also asked what he thought his teacher could do to help him in improving his listening and he reported:

Maybe read because I think sometimes she reads too much. And, some lectures are very long. She can divide, for example, in shorts. For example, she feels the one part this is confusing she try to stop. For example, like she play a tape and she stops the tape sometimes to review and part of this is a good way. But maybe she try to invite other people to read in class because I custom to hear her reading.

He further stated that it would be good for the ESL teacher to invite other native speakers of English to come to his ESL academic listening class to give a lecture. Felipe also stated that he sometimes was unable to understand other native speakers of English. Felipe was
asked what he felt was his specific strategy that he used when he was trying to learn English and he reported:

I think guessing. Sometimes when other people ask me something I try to guess. Say maybe he asked about my country. I start to speak about my country maybe it is not the specific question and maybe it is related to the question. I told him about my country and maybe he repeat the question, more specifically this time. But, this is my strategy to listen, guessing.

He further stated that most of the time he guesses at what the person is saying to him and this is a principal problem. He reported not always being certain of what the person might be saying to him so he relies on guessing as his strategy.

**Yuki’s Uses of Learning Strategies**

One strategy that Yuki reported using in her ESL academic listening class was to try to think in English. She also reported being able to understand English better when she participated in group work with the other students. When asked if she had a good visual memory, Yuki reported:

I have a good visual memory because I think about the topic given in listening class and I imagine it and it helps me to understand by thinking of it visually in my mind.

Yuki stated that it did not bother her when she made mistakes in class in front of her peers. Yuki reported that she had her own way of taking notes and the teacher gave
general strategies which sometimes were not easy for her to understand. When Yuki was asked how she learned best, she reported:

I learn best in listening class by writing down information because it’s easy to remember when I write it down.

Yuki admitted that she was easily distracted when she did her homework in English for the ESL academic listening class.

**Adnan’s Uses of Learning Strategies**

The one strategy that Adnan reported that he used the most in his ESL academic listening class was memorization and that he placed emphasis on listening. He also stated that he tried to memorize his lecture notes and listen to the lecture at the same time. When asked if he had a good visual memory, Adnan reported:

Yeah, actually I do. When I look at something I cannot forget it. I try to repeat the words to myself and it becomes easy for me to remember.

Adnan stated that he felt comfortable when he made a mistake in front of his classmates because you have to make mistakes in order to learn. Adnan reported that he accepted the advice that his ESL teacher gave to him concerning his quizzes, tests, homework assignments, and lecture notes because he was a student in her class. He further reported that this was the way a successful student learns.
When Adnan was also asked how he learned best, he reported:

I feel very good and comfortable with listening. When I listen to something, I feel more comfortable even though sometimes I do memorize. Listening works good for me.

He further stated that in his country in English class he performed very similar listening activities and that emphasis was placed on memorization. Adnan admitted that he was never easily distracted from his homework assignments in English for the ESL academic listening class.

Discussion

The reported interview data on language learning strategies used by the four ESL students showed use of various strategies. The strategies used related to lecture notes taken by the students when performing specific listening tasks in the ESL classroom. The following discussion gives a description of those strategies used by the four ESL students in order to enhance their listening skills' performance.

The answers varied as to the language learning strategies used by the four students in their ESL academic listening class. Isabel used the strategy of applying the vocabulary words she had to learn in English. Felipe’s main strategy was to pay attention to the vocabulary words and write down the words that he did not understand. Yuki used
the strategy of trying to think in English and the one strategy which Adnan used the most was memorization in his ESL academic listening class.

All four ESL students agreed that they had a good visual memory, although two out of the four students were auditory learners. Two out of the four ESL students reported that they felt uncomfortable whenever they made a mistake in English in front of their classmates. One out of the four ESL students admitted that she was easily distracted from completing her homework assignments in English.

In response to how each of the four ESL students perceived themselves to learn best, the answers varied. Isabel reported that she learned best by memorizing her lecture notes and writing them down several times. Felipe reported that he learned best by writing down everything from the lectures. Yuki reported that she learned best by writing down what she perceived as the important information. Adnan reported that he learned best by listening carefully to the lectures as well as memorizing information.

The factors which generated those language learning strategies used by the four ESL students were self-reported. The students' perceptions of their strategy use gave a
clearer picture of what actually happened in the ESL academic listening classroom when the students were performing specific listening tasks.

**Preferred Learning Styles**

The preferred learning styles used by the four ESL students in the ESL academic listening class generated various responses. The focus of the specific questions asked pertaining to learning style preferences was the influence of those preferences on language learning strategies used by the four ESL students when they performed listening tasks. All four students reported what they perceived to be their preferred learning styles.

**Isabel's Preferred Learning Styles**

Isabel reported that she took more notes at the end of the semester than she did at the beginning because she understood the details more and was able to select the main idea of the lecture. She stated that she saw the 'big picture' when previously she only was able to understand 'bits and pieces.' When asked what her preference was when taking notes from the teacher's lecture, Isabel reported:

> When taking notes, I prefer to write down the main idea, subtitles, key points, and principle words.

Isabel also reported that she used the same approach when taking notes in Spanish and preferred using a mixture of approaches to learning English. She reported that she would
listen and gave her undivided attention in class when the
teacher lectured and sometimes memorized the specific
lesson.

Isabel was also asked her preference for taking notes
during a taped lecture and she reported:

When I listen to a taped lecture, I try to abbreviate
some words and use signs that I learned in Spanish. I
draw symbols to help me to understand.

Isabel reported that she preferred her teacher to read
directions to a lesson or test aloud because she was able to
understand her teacher. Isabel added that she read fast in
Spanish and also in English because she memorized the
directions for each chapter of the book because they were
similar to one another. Isabel reported that she was better
able to remember the information if she wrote it down
because she was a visual learner.

**Felipe’s Preferred Learning Styles**

Felipe reported that he increased his note-taking
throughout the semester and at the end of the sixteen weeks,
he saw an improvement. He reported feeling that he was
taking notes correctly because he wrote so much. At the
beginning of the class, Felipe reported feeling that it was
difficult, but at the end, the ESL academic listening class
was his favorite. When asked what his preference was when
taking notes from the teacher’s lecture, Felipe reported:
My preferred learning style in English is the same in Spanish where I only write down the clue words. I use many arrows and take many notes. I only write words using arrows and not long sentences when I take notes.

Felipe reported that he preferred for native speakers of English to repeat the question a second time in the same manner and not to change the word order of the question because it was very confusing to him. Felipe was also asked his preference for taking notes during a taped lecture and he reported:

When listening to a taped lecture, I pay special attention to the speaker’s pronunciation of the words because I think it is difficult to understand. I then use brackets or arrows to point to important words to remember.

Felipe reported that he preferred his ESL academic listening teacher to read the directions to a lesson or test aloud because he could understand her pronunciation of the words. Felipe reported that he was able to recall better if he wrote information down because it would then be recorded in his brain. In his mind, he remembered many words that his teacher had spoken and also written on the board.

Felipe was asked what his preferred style was that he used in learning English and he reported:

Listening, pronunciation. Where I work this is my style. For example, I pay special attention to the teacher pronounce the word, cause I think this is most difficult, but it’s most important too. English is difficult if you don’t pronounce very good. This is very difficult, but I try to say mountains like people say here.
Felipe reported that as the native speaker of English speaks to him, he listens to every word that they say. He also reported that he listens to the pronunciation of each word spoken by the English speaker.

Felipe was asked rather he preferred the ESL teacher to write the vocabulary words on the board or for her to recite them aloud and he reported:

No. I prefer to write and first look for the English dictionary, for example. But, I prefer to write. Some uh I have a book, notebook, with all, not all, but almost all of words that I learn that is new for me. And, I write in it, but no I prefer listening and write what kind of words I don’t understand and looking for the dictionary.

He also reported that he knew that his listening skill was the weakest skill he had in English and he was trying to improve his listening comprehension skills. He further stated that he used listening more than speaking or writing in English and he preferred to sharpen his hearing when he listened to a native speaker of English.

Yuki’s Preferred Learning Styles

Yuki reported that she took a lot of notes in her academic listening class because it helped her to write down everything. She reported feeling that she should write down whatever the teacher said in her lecture because it was important. When asked what her preference was when taking notes from the teacher’s lecture, Yuki reported:
I use marks like underlining the important words. My preferred style is to underline information when taking notes from teacher’s lecture.

Yuki stated that her ESL class in Japan was different from her ESL class at this university. Yuki was also asked what her preference was for taking notes during a taped lecture and she reported:

I also underline important words when I listen to a taped lecture, but it is more difficult to understand than the teacher’s lecture.

Yuki stated that she only felt comfortable asking someone to repeat something once when she had a problem understanding them in English. She reported that she would not ask them to repeat again and again because she felt that they would become frustrated.

Yuki reported that she preferred sometimes to read the directions for a particular listening task rather than the teacher reading the directions although she stated that her teacher gave clearer directions. She also stated that she preferred for her teacher to interact and give explanations when she read the directions to the class. Yuki reported that she was able to remember information better if she wrote it down and it helped her to understand what she was trying to learn because she was a visual learner.
Adnan's Preferred Learning Styles

Adnan reported that he took more notes at the end of the semester than he did at the beginning because he understood the teacher. He reported that he tried to cover everything in his notes and he translated the information that was easier for him to understand in English. When asked what his preference was when taking notes from the teacher's lecture, Adnan reported:

My preference is to write down the main idea when I take notes from the teacher's lecture. I then take this main idea and memorize it.

When Adnan tried to understand what a native speaker of English is saying to him, he reported that he looked at how the person moves his hands because it is difficult for him to understand the person when he speaks English to him. He also stated that he relies on that person's body language in order to understand the conversation. Adnan reported that he also translates the conversation in English to Arabic so he can communicate better with that person.

Adnan was also asked his preference for taking notes during a taped lecture and he reported:

Actually, when the taping starts, I listen for the main idea, then I listen sentence by sentence. I try to put the sentences in order step by step so that I can understand the whole story. I number the sentences in order, starting with the main idea.
Adnan reported that he preferred that his teacher read the directions for a particular listening task because some of the words were sometimes difficult for him to understand. He further stated that it helped him to look at her body movements when she read the directions and then he could understand the information better. Adnan reported that he was able to recall information better if he wrote it down because he would then memorize his notes.

**Discussion**

The discussion which follows presents self-reported data by the four ESL students regarding their note-taking preferences in the ESL academic listening class. The learning style preferences varied among the four ESL students depending on the listening task performed. The aim of this section is to present information regarding preferred learning style influences on language learning strategies used by the four ESL students.

All four ESL students reported that they took more notes at the end of the semester than they did at the beginning because they better understood the vocabulary words and lecture information. The learning style preferences in taking notes during the teacher’s lectures varied among the four ESL students. Isabel reported that she preferred to write down main ideas and principal words.
Felipe reported that his preference was to write down the clue words and to use arrows when he took notes. Yuki reported that she preferred to underline the important words when taking notes. Adnan reported that his preference was to write down the main idea and then memorize it.

In response to their preferences for taking notes during a taped lecture, the answers varied. Isabel reported that her preference was to abbreviate words and use symbols to help her to understand the taped lecture. Felipe reported that he preferred to use brackets or arrows to point to important words so that he could remember them. Yuki reported that her preference was to underline the important words to help her understand and remember them. Adnan reported that he preferred to listen first for the main idea and then try to put the sentences in numerical order to understand the information.

Three out of the four ESL students preferred their ESL teacher to read the directions for a particular listening task or test aloud. Two out of the four ESL students reported that they were auditory learners and two reported that they were visual learners. All four ESL students preferred taking notes from the ESL teacher's lectures, rather than from a taped lecture because it was more difficult for them to understand English in a taped lecture.
All four ESL students reported that they were able to remember information better when they wrote it down.

The four ESL students provided information as to how they preferred to learn English through their various note-taking strategies. The learning style preferences varied among the ESL students. They also reported how their learning style preferences influenced the language learning strategies used when taking lecture notes.

Cultural Background

The four ESL students interviewed revealed their perceptions of cultural background influences on how they took lecture notes in their ESL academic listening class. Through the interview data, these ESL students reported their feelings on the American system of learning English and how it differed from their home country system. They also reported their previous home country experiences as related to how they understood English.

Isabel's Cultural Background

Isabel reported that her country, Colombia, has been influenced by the United States. In classrooms in her country, she reported that she was allowed to ask the teacher questions as she can in her ESL academic listening class here in the U.S. Isabel reported that she relied heavily on Spanish when she was learning English in
Colombia, but she is unable to rely on Spanish in her current classes at the university. When Isabel was asked if her educational training in Colombia influenced the way she learned in her ESL academic listening class, she reported:

When I started learning English in my country, I just memorized everything and I think it's a mistake because when you try to apply the English in real life, you are not able to do it. One problem in learning English in my country was that you speak Spanish most of the time in class and very little English. Learning English was useful in my country.

Isabel stated that in her English class in Colombia they worked in groups like they do in her ESL academic listening class.

Isabel was also asked how different or similar the English class in Colombia was from the ESL academic listening class at the university and she reported:

The English class in my country was very participatory. It's like in my country everybody wants you to participate because they want to learn to speak English and to learn different things. It's a challenge. Here at this university the students participate because they feel pressured to do so by the teacher.

Felipe's Cultural Background

Felipe reported having had a problem adjusting to the ESL academic listening class because he was used to the teacher speaking Spanish and English in his English class in Colombia, but in his ESL class at the university, the teacher only speaks English. He also stated that the English teacher in his country would use more words to
explain something than his ESL academic listening teacher. When Felipe was asked if his educational training in Colombia influenced the way he learned in his ESL academic listening class, he reported:

Yes, I brought many customs to my ESL academic listening class from my country. When we speak in my country in Spanish, for example, we use 'that' or 'what' which means the word 'que' in Spanish. It means location and I try to speak in English like I do in Spanish when I use the word 'que' (e.g., that or what). This confuses many people and they do not understand me.

Felipe stated that since he had been speaking Spanish longer than English, it became difficult at times for him because he would transfer Spanish into English and vice versa. Felipe was also asked how different or similar the English class was in Colombia from the ESL academic listening class at the university and he reported:

In my country, we had to make up questions in the English class, but here in the ESL academic listening class, I don't have to make up any questions. I do, however, need to understand the question. I also need to understand how the other people ask and answer questions in English.

Felipe reported that in his country he learned to memorize the same kind of sentences and answer questions with the same kind of answers. He further reported that if he did not select questions as the book suggested, then his answers were considered to be incorrect. Felipe was asked
what main part of his culture from Columbia seemed to affect the type of strategy that he used in his listening class to learn English and he reported:

Maybe the big problem is I expect in listening that you or my teacher talk like in Spanish, but you she thinks in Spanish, but she translates English, you know.

Felipe further stated that Spanish speakers try to say everything and English speakers give instructions when they speak. When asked if the people in his country deemed respect to be very important, Felipe reported:

Yes, yes. And, for example, I try to talk like in Spanish because we explain everything. We try to I think because Spanish is richest in words than English.

He further reported that one of the main problems he encounters in his ESL academic listening class is the fact that he expected his ESL teacher to talk as people do in Spanish. Felipe stated that he expected his teacher to give more explanations and to use more words as his English teacher did in his country. He reported using a lot of words in English as he did in Spanish when he spoke to native speakers of English which made it difficult for him to be understood in English.

Yuki’s Cultural Background

Yuki reported not finding learning English to be important when she was in Japan, but now that she is studying English at a university, she deems it to be an
important language to learn. In order to survive in the United States, she reported that you had to know English because you have to listen to the news or listen to music and everything is in English. When Yuki was asked if her educational training in Japan influenced the way she learned in her ESL academic listening class, she reported:

In Japan, we are not inclined to speak up in the class. I don't feel comfortable talking in class or even asking about something that I don't understand. I wait after the class is finished and then I ask the teacher personally. As a Japanese person, we are shy in class and kind of afraid of making a mistake. We try to keep the harmony because in Japan the teacher lectures and we listen. We don't have the opportunity to say our opinion in class.

Yuki further stated that in her English class in Japan, it was easier for her to ask a question, but very difficult to say her opinion about something in class. She also stated that the Japanese are very aware of what other people think and if you make a mistake, than maybe other people will think you are stupid.

Yuki was also asked how different or similar the English class in Japan was from the ESL academic listening class at the university and she reported:

The English class in Japan did not do group work, so sometimes I feel uncomfortable in a group in my ESL academic listening class. In Japan, the main focus in English class was grammar translation, not listening. We did not take notes in our English class as we do here at this university.
Adnan’s Cultural Background

In the English classroom in Adnan’s country, when he listened to the teacher, he reported watching her body language because it helped him to understand the information she was teaching. In his culture, he reported that they use their hands to gesture because it helps them to understand when they are conversing with one another. When Adnan was asked if his educational training in the United Arab Emirates influenced the way he learned in his ESL academic listening class, he reported:

In my classes in the UAE, the emphasis was placed on memorization. The first thing we have to learn is to memorize our Holy Book, the Koran. Memorizing is the way of teaching in my country for all of our subjects that we learn, even English. Listening is very important to me because I need to learn to speak the language. When I am learning English in my class here, I want to memorize everything I hear because I am used to this format of learning in my country.

Adnan stated that in his country he never did group work in his classes like he does in his ESL academic listening class. He also reported that students worked independently in his classes in the UAE and rarely as a group. Adnan was also asked how different or similar the English class in the United Arab Emirates was from the ESL academic listening class at the university and he reported:

In the English class in the UAE, I did not ask the teacher questions as I can here in my ESL class. In my country, I accepted whatever the teacher said and I only asked a question rarely if I didn’t understand
something. It is impolite in my country to ask the teacher a question and it is a sign of disrespect to the teacher. If I show that I misunderstood the teacher by asking a question, then I am showing disrespect.

**Discussion**

For the four ESL case study subjects, the differences in educational background which characterized their cultural background influences (i.e., home country experiences) on language learning strategies used in the ESL classroom were both positive and negative. While the four ESL students struggled with the differences in the English class format, they also seemed to perceive the American system as easier for them when compared to their home country system. One main characteristic found in all four ESL students was the fact that they respected their ESL teacher in their academic listening class.

All four ESL students agreed that their country rated English as an important language to know because it is considered an international language in their countries. The English classroom setting varied in each of the four ESL students’ countries with respect to required note-taking. Two out of the four ESL students reported that they did not work in groups in their English class in their native homeland. All four ESL students agreed that it was a
problem at first for them to adjust to the ESL academic listening class because it was quite different from the English class in their countries.

In response to whether their educational training in their native homeland influenced the way they learned in their ESL academic listening class, the answers varied. Isabel reported that when she began to learn English in Colombia, she memorized everything in English. Felipe reported that he had problems with the word “what” in English because in Colombia “what” has different meanings in Spanish and it is very confusing. Yuki reported that in Japan students do not speak up or give their opinion in class. Adnan reported that in his classes in the UAE, emphasis was placed on memorization.

Two out of the four ESL students reported that the English class in their country was very participatory. One of the four ESL students reported that the main focus of the English class in her country was grammar translation, not listening. One out of the four ESL students reported that it was considered impolite and a sign of disrespect in his country to ask the teacher a question in his English class.

The reported findings on the influence of cultural background (i.e., home country experiences) on language learning strategies used by the four ESL students appeared
to account for how the students took lecture notes when performing listening tasks. The four ESL students made certain adjustments in order to develop their listening comprehension skills. The ESL students also had varied cultural backgrounds.

Summary

In this section, the researcher has identified the four ESL case study subjects as individuals, to present how their preferred learning styles and cultural background influences (i.e., home country experiences) the language learning strategies they use when performing specific listening tasks (e.g., listening to music, a taped lecture or the ESL teacher's lectures) in their ESL academic listening class.

Isabel is a mature student who views academic listening as an important tool in learning English and wants to be successful because she does over the amount of work required in her class in order to improve her English listening skills. Felipe is a social and out-going student whose sense of humor and pleasant attitude are displayed in his ESL academic listening class which enhances his ability to listen to English and become academically successful.

Yuki is a gentle and humble student whose personality is reflected in her ability to listen in her ESL academic listening class which is transferred outside the classroom.
when she interacts with other ESL students. Adnan is a take-charge type of student who has a strong-willed and dominant personality which affects his listening because he likes to evaluate and think about the specific listening task required of him in his ESL class before he decides to comply with the assignment the teacher has given him to complete.

The researcher has discussed throughout her present study that the histories and personalities (e.g., cultural background) as well as their own individual learning style preferences impact how these students listen, how much they listen, what they choose to listen to, and even their satisfaction in listening to English as a second language. The researcher has found that the range of individual differences and similarities must mean that there is no single method for nurturing creativity; ideally the experiences that ESL teachers provide for the ESL students should be tailor-made, if not for individual students, at least for different types of students. Even though in the beginning there were differences between the four ESL case study subjects' learning results in English as related to their note-taking skills in their ESL academic listening class, the final results showed that each student had achieved similar results.
Discussion of Table 4.1

The initial coding of the interview transcriptions represented groups of issues or themes. Each group contained a range of subject responses. The range of responses became the various themes. The themes were derived from varying levels of inference of the subjects' responses. Table 4.1 was developed from each interview question asked to the four ESL case study subjects in the initial or first interview. Each theme in Table 4.1 had a direct influence as to how each of the four ESL case study subjects perceived their learning of English in the ESL academic listening class. All forty themes in Table 4.1 related to language learning strategies used by the four ESL case study subjects, preferred learning styles, cultural background, and listening tasks performed in their ESL academic listening class. In Table 4.1 each of these themes were explored and then the second interview was designed to examine these forty preliminary themes. All forty themes aided the researcher in condensing the information into the specific questions for the second interview which were relevant to the present study. Each theme in Table 4.1 focused on the pertinent questions to ask each interviewee in order to deduce the information which was needed to
answer the research questions. A complete list of themes or issues is listed in Table 4.1 below:

1. Age which English instruction began
2. Student perceptions about ESL class
3. Difficulties with English
4. Length of time in United States
5. Reason for attending Marshall University
6. Perception of English in native homeland
7. Best language skill
8. Improvement in language skill
9. Perceptions of ESL academic listening class
10. Improvement in note-taking skills
11. Interaction and communication between one another in an ESL classroom setting
12. Perceptions about working in groups in ESL classroom
13. Studying English with other classmates
14. Practice speaking English in an environment other than the classroom
15. Perceptions of feedback given in ESL class
16. Perceptions of English as a likeable or unlikeable language
17. Improvement in listening
18. Problems experienced when listening

(continued)

Table 4.1 Issues or Themes

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Table 4.1 continued

19. Typical response used when English is not understood
20. Asking questions in ESL class
21. Perceptions of a taped lecture vs. teacher's lecture
22. Listening to music in English
23. Listening tasks performed outside of classroom to improve listening
24. Perceptions of listening when holding a conversation with a native speaker
25. Translating into English when listening to native language
26. Strategies for learning English
27. Strategies for listening to a lecture or taking notes
28. Small group discussions and conversations
29. Review of notes taken in ESL class
30. Visual memory
31. Easily distracted when learning English
32. Preferred learning style used when learning English
33. Amount of note-taking when listening to a lecture
34. Preferred style of note-taking when listening to a taped lecture
35. Preferred style of note-taking when listening to teacher's lecture
36. Preference to listen or read directions in class when performing a listening task

(continued)
Table 4.1 continued

37. Perception of listening in the language classroom in native homeland
38. Influence of educational training in native homeland on learning skills in ESL class
39. Perception of listening tasks performed in ESL class
40. Frequent use of writing skills used during lectures

Teacher’s Perception of Each Individual ESL Case Study Subject

The teacher of the ESL academic listening class participated in an interview and was asked the same specific questions about each of the four case study subjects. The four main issues which contributed to the student profiles were language learning strategies, preferred learning styles, cultural background, and listening tasks. The profile provides the teacher’s perception of each student regarding the main issues addressed above.

The teacher admitted that she knew the most about the Japanese female case study student because she had lived in Japan for three years and China for two and a half years. She was more culturally aware of Japanese and Chinese customs and less aware of Hispanic customs and culture. She knew less about the two Columbian case study students because she had never studied their native language of Spanish. She was more familiar, of course, with the Arabic
culture. She attempted to give her own perception of how she perceived these four students learning English as a second language in her ESL academic listening class. The summary profile of each student follows.

**Isabel’s Profile**

1. On task/able to do the work
2. High level/least improved
3. Has integrated ESL teacher’s strategies for taking notes
4. Takes clearer and more detailed notes
5. Academically and professionally motivated
6. Native language (i.e., Spanish) is similar to English
7. Works well with all groups of other ESL students except for UAE students
8. Mixes well with others outside of her own cultural group
9. Listens to ESL teacher and follows teacher’s directions well in class
10. Creates own ideas occasionally
11. Cooperative learner
12. Note-taking strategies employed - puts main listening points on left side of paper and details on right side of paper

The teacher reported her perception of Isabel in the following overall summary. Isabel chose to do other
listening tasks outside of the classroom and she enjoys doing homework assignments. Isabel's preferred learning style is a combination of self-learn and self-taught. Her approach to learning English is to listen to what the teacher says and do what the teacher tells her to do. She leaves it up to the teacher to guide her in learning the language. Regarding Isabel's perceived cultural influence, she is an interactive type of person because listening and speaking is important in her culture. There is an influence of the Spanish language because it has similarities to the English language. There is emotion and feeling in the Hispanic culture. The teacher stated the following:

I try to appeal to Isabel’s feelings to motivate her to listen which would be influential in her learning to listen better. I also attempt to utilize her perceived cultural influence to aid her in learning to listen, using it as a motivation or a step to improve her listening.

**Felipe's Profile**

1. Good listening skills/does group learning best
2. Good progress in English
3. Has integrated ESL teacher’s strategies for taking notes
4. Takes clearer and more detailed notes
5. Academically and business motivated
6. Native language (i.e., Spanish) is similar to English

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7. Works well in a group situation
8. Mixes well with others outside of his own cultural group
9. More social and interactive with other students
10. Cooperative learner
11. Note-taking strategies employed - puts main listening points on left side of paper and details on right side of paper
12. Wants to learn English well to use it for working with joint ventures and international business opportunities when he returns to his country

The teacher reported her perception of Felipe in the following overall summary. Felipe chose to do other listening tasks outside of the classroom and he enjoys completing his homework assignments. Felipe's preferred learning style is a combination of self-learn and self-taught. His approach to listening is to do all of the activities which the teacher assigns and to do the best he can. He is interactive and talkative in class. In reference to Felipe's perceived cultural influence, he finds that listening and speaking are important to him because these two skills are emphasized in his culture. His own language influences him because there are similarities between Spanish and English. There is emotion and feeling in the Hispanic culture. The teacher stated the following:
I try to appeal to Felipe's feelings to motivate him to listen which would be influential in him learning to listen better. I also attempt to utilize his perceived cultural influence to aid him in learning to listen, using it as a motivation or a step to improve his listening.

Yuki's Profile

1. Individual learner/one on one
2. Good progress in English
3. Has integrated ESL teacher's strategies for taking notes
4. Takes clearer and more detailed notes
5. Interested in improving English skills
6. Motivated to get a better job only if she can speak and understand English
7. Difference between Japanese and English languages makes her have least linguistic ability
8. Doesn't talk much in class
9. Doesn't participate well in groups
10. A loner - only interacts with own cultural group
11. Asian cultural background - do exactly what teacher tells her to do
12. Note-taking strategies employed - puts main listening points on left side of paper and details on right side of paper

The teacher reported her perception of Yuki in the following overall summary. Yuki does her homework assignments because it is culturally based to do whatever
the teacher tells the student to do. Yuki's preferred learning style is to depend on the teacher to make the assignments clear to her and to trust the teacher. She feels that if she obeys the teacher then she will be successful. In regards to Yuki's perceived cultural influence, the educational system in her country taught her not to talk in class and not to interact a lot with her peers or teachers. In her country it would be considered disrespectful to behave in such a manner. Listening is important to her for comprehension. The educational system in Japan deals more with reading and writing rather than speaking and listening. Yuki has a respect for taking notes because in her country you must write down everything the teacher says. Taking notes is related to listening. Another perceived cultural influence is that academics are emphasized in Japan and can make or break your entire career. It is extremely important to listen and to show respect when someone is talking in her culture because politeness is emphasized in her culture. The teacher stated the following:

I understand Yuki the best because I have lived in her country. I try to work on getting her to be motivated to listen and to concentrate in class. I also try to help her to engage in group work because she is not an outgoing person.
Adnan’s Profile

1. Motivated to learn to listen in English
2. Good progress in English
3. Has his own preference for taking notes
4. Doesn’t employ ESL teacher’s strategies for taking notes
5. Unmotivated to enter university to study in a particular field
6. Purpose at university is to improve English in order to communicate with American military
7. Has a natural linguistic ability
8. Works well in groups and likes to take charge due to military background
9. A loner - only interacts with own cultural group
10. Learns only if teacher’s ideas are the same as his own
11. Very independent and strong-willed
12. Only takes notes that he deems important to write down

The teacher reported her perception of Adnan in the following overall summary. Adnan’s preferred learning style is an independent learner. He has his own ideas about what and how he should learn. He did not need the teacher’s input to tell him how he should learn. If Adnan did not agree with the teacher’s point of view, then he won’t
cooperate in the classroom. He chose for himself what
listening tasks he should do outside of the classroom.
Regarding Adnan’s perceived cultural influence, he is
somewhat stereotypical of Arabs in which he has an attitude
of ‘knows it all.’ As Adnan is an Arab male, he tends to be
an ‘in charge’ kind of person. This type of attitude
affects his listening in class because he likes to evaluate
and think about things before he actually performs the task.
He may or may not comply with the teacher if it doesn’t fit
his reasoning for doing it. He has a strong-willed attitude
and does not come from a college-bound society like Japan.
Academics do not play as important a role in his country as
they do in Japan, for example. In the United Arab Emirates
(UAE), receiving good grades and academics are not that
important. Religion is extremely important and the main
influence in his country is learning to memorize the Koran.
The Arab culture does not place a lot of emphasis on
listening because speaking is emphasized more. The teacher
stated the following:

I think that Adnan and I have good interaction and get
along well. I try to encourage him to develop good
listening skills because in his culture they exert a
high level of concentration when conversing with
others.
Teaching Methods of ESL Academic Listening Teacher

The ESL academic listening teacher was also asked some questions about her own teaching methods which consisted of the following:

1) Some problems that she may be experiencing in teaching these specific four students in the ESL academic listening class.

2) What her preferred style of teaching is in the ESL academic listening class.

3) Does she feel that she gives the four students enough feedback?

4) How does she see herself as being able to help them be successful in her class?

5) Does their perceived cultural influence aid or hinder them in learning English in the ESL academic listening class?

The ESL teacher responded to each of the above questions in the following manner:

In response to Question #1 she stated that there are a couple of problems.

One problem is that listening is the most difficult area to evaluate because you cannot possibly tell how much that person is actually grasping even though they are not writing it down. The only thing you can do really is to evaluate the students’ comprehension through written questions and that depends on the vocabulary itself. Another problem is developing concentration. Listening, even for native speakers of English is difficult if you don’t concentrate when listening to a professor’s forty-five minute lecture. This is a motivational factor and I really have to work hard to get them motivated to concentrate and write notes. That’s a tough one.
In response to Question #2 she stated what she saw as her preferred style of teaching.

I tend to be an organized type person. I see my main job as an academic listening teacher as giving the students strategies to help them to improve their listening. The strategies that I am talking about are strategies in how to take notes and to listen more. I also try to provide the proper environment for them to listen. My approach I think would be organized, hopefully varied, creative, and also, visual. I use as many visual aids as I can to improve their motivation for listening.

In response to Question #3 she stated how she felt about her feedback as a teacher.

Well, I don’t tend to give a lot of feedback if they are doing okay. I will write good job on their quizzes or notes and if there’s a specific problem, then I write on the notes that they need to concentrate or write more. I use a self-monitoring technique which reminds them periodically of where they started and how they are doing at the present time. It helps them to see how they are improving. I try to encourage them as much as possible. Since listening is so difficult to evaluate, I cannot tell the students that they didn’t listen because they may have been distracted, just didn’t write something down or maybe they didn’t understand the word.

In response to Question #4 she stated how she saw herself in terms of being able to help her students become successful in her class.

I see myself as a strategy provider. I see myself as a motivator to get them to realize how important it is to develop their listening skills. I also see myself as a source of feedback in which I can say, okay, you did good on this one or you were weak on this one. Listening cannot be achieved in fifty minutes classes per week because it has to be what they take from my class and use outside that really helps them.
In response to Question #5 she stated what role the students' perceived cultural influence plays in them learning English.

There's going to be a perceived cultural influence and that depends entirely on how the teacher and student can take advantage of that influence, rather than seeing it as a disadvantage or hindrance. You can use the perceived cultural influence as motivation or as a step to improve their listening then that's like a little key that opens a door to aid them in learning English.

Research Findings

This section provides pertinent information from the second interview. The purpose of the second interview was to receive definitive answers to four basic questions which were the four main issues or themes of the present study. The first interview only 'scratched the surface' and the second interview provided the definitive answers to the research questions which the researcher needed to answer in her present study.

The following interview questions were developed and refined during the first interview and were used for the second interview:

1. When performing listening tasks in the English classes that you took in your country, what strategies did you use?

2. When performing listening tasks in the English classes that you take here at Marshall University, what strategies do you use?
3. How does your learning style preference affect your listening tasks when learning English?

4. What main part of your cultural background seems to affect the language learning strategies you use during listening tasks in your academic listening class?

5. What is the main strategy that you use when you listen to English in your academic listening class?

6. How proficient do you perceive yourself to be in performing various listening tasks in English in your academic listening class? (proficient meaning to what degree one knows the language)

The major research questions for the present study, repeated from Chapter 1, were as follows:

1. To what extent is it possible to identify language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students when they listen to English for academic purposes?

2. What perceived cultural variables seem to affect individual differences in language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students during listening tasks (e.g., academic note-taking)?

3. What preferred learning style variables are self-identified by adult college ESL students as those which most affect their formal classroom language learning, particularly their listening behaviors?

4. What should be the key components of a college ESL program which combines perceived cultural variables, learning strategies, and academic listening skill development?

5. What generic guidelines are warranted for college ESL programs?

The first research question which asked to what extent is it possible to identify language learning strategies used
by adult college ESL students when they listen to English for academic purposes, the researcher found that, although the language learning strategies used by the four ESL case study subjects varied, it was possible to identify them based on an analysis of qualitative data. For example, Isabel reported that the language learning strategies that she used in the ESL academic listening class was memorization, utilization, and guessing. She reported trying to remember the vocabulary words, for example, in order to be able to use them in the correct context subsequently when she held a conversation with a native speaker of English. Isabel’s other dominant language learning strategy used was guessing. She tended to examine the words in English and if they looked or sounded similar to Spanish terms, then she would guess at the meaning of the words. It appeared that the majority of the time this strategy worked for Isabel because of the similarities between Spanish and English phonology and lexicon. Isabel knew that the origin of the root words for these two languages was Latin. Felipe, on the other hand, also reported that the language learning strategy that he frequently used in the ESL academic listening class was guessing. He tried to guess what people were saying to him whenever he did not understand a statement or a question.
addressed to him. Yuki reported that the language learning strategy that she used most in the ESL academic listening class was writing. In other words, Yuki tried to write down most words that she heard during the lecture and when she came across unfamiliar words, she would then write those words down in Japanese according to how they sounded to her. Adnan reported that the language learning strategy that he used the most in the ESL academic listening class was memorization. He tended to listen to each sentence during the lecture and divide the lecture into parts as he memorized, beginning with the main idea of the lecture topic and progressing through the supporting details. In the case of all four students, it was found that they identified for themselves and used personalized self-help survival strategies.

The teacher also reported that all four of the ESL case study subjects had implemented a specific learning strategy, specifically for taking lecture notes. Isabel and Felipe used the strategy of putting the main listening points on the left side of their papers and the details on the right side of their paper. Adnan wrote down the main point of the lecture. Yuki attempted to write down practically everything said during the lecture and was able to repeat it almost verbatim on a quiz.
In answering research question one, it must be kept in mind that the present study is dealing with individual cases which may or may not be representative of other students of the studied cultures. All four ESL case study subjects showed an improvement in taking notes during the teacher's lecture at the end of the sixteen week semester. The four ESL case study subjects reported having difficulty listening to a taped lecture due to the clarity of the speaker, but they still showed improvement in taking notes at the end of the semester. When listening to a music tape, all four ESL case study subjects reported doing well when taking notes because they reported liking that particular listening task.

The four ESL case study subjects were only able to identify one language learning strategy used in their academic listening class. They all reported using their same language learning strategy for all of their listening tasks performed in their ESL academic listening class. All four ESL case study subjects attempted to comprehend the entire lecture whether it was taped or given by the teacher; that is, they tended to focus on main ideas. They all seemed to be active participants because they prepared themselves before their listening tasks by relaxing, blocking out extraneous noises, and concentrating on either the teacher or the taped lecture. All four ESL case study
subjects saw the listening tasks in the ESL academic listening class as a means to an end -- to understand a foreigner speaking English either directly or indirectly to them.

This part of the present study was an attempt to determine if students could describe what strategies they used in order to comprehend aural stimuli. The second interview showed that language learning strategies of college ESL students can be solicited in structured interviews. The refined questions in the second interview did verify the reliability of the students' language learning identified strategies.

The four ESL case study subjects perceived themselves as having improved in note-taking at the end of the semester in their ESL academic listening class as a result of the particular language learning strategy that they each employed. It should be remembered that the four subjects were all enrolled in a regular ESL academic listening course at an American university at the time of this study. Successful reading and listening strategies involved such things as having a positive self-concept as a reader or listener, the ability to determine the meaning of a passage by selecting what is important from sentences and being able to follow the train of thought, the willingness to guess the
meanings of unknown word or phrase, and the capability of supplying tentative meanings of uncomprehended information during listening tasks in a college or university setting.

The listening tasks varied for the four ESL case study subjects in their English classes in their country. This did not affect the language learning strategies used and how they took notes in their ESL academic listening class in the United States because they apparently transferred strategies from their previous education into their ESL college listening class. The listening tasks in their English classes in Colombia for Isabel and Felipe consisted mainly of listening to American music and watching documentaries on television. The English class in Japan for Yuki consisted mainly of using tapes to listen to while taking notes in classroom contexts. In the United Arab Emirates, Adnan did not take notes in his English class, but instead he listened to the teacher’s lectures and tried to memorize information.

**Discussion of Research Question One**

The above findings corroborate the language learning strategy research of Oxford (1992, 1993c) and Oxford and Crookall (1989), which showed that:

(1) Strategies are used by students at all instructional levels;
(2) More proficient learners tend to use strategies in a more task-related, more learning-style-specific, and more organized way than less proficient learners;

(3) Strategy use is associated with motivation, ethnicity, learning style, and other variables;

(4) Strategies can be taught through well-designed learning strategy instruction; and

(5) Both students and teachers can become more aware of the potential of language learning strategies.

Language learning strategies related to gender and personality were not investigated in this study; nevertheless, the data pointed to possible influences on both learning style preferences and cultural background of language learning strategies reported by the four ESL case study students in the present study. The topic of gender and personality influences needs to be researched in future studies.

Through the interview data, these four ESL case study subjects have provided an insider’s view of language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students when they listen to English for academic purposes (e.g., note-taking). Their responses demonstrated the importance of language learning strategies in relation to listening tasks performed in an ESL academic listening class.

The second research question which investigated what perceived cultural variables seem to affect individual
differences in language learning strategies used by adult college ESL students during listening tasks (e.g., academic note-taking), the researcher found that the cultural background of the four ESL case study subjects varied and seemed to influence how they took notes in their ESL academic listening class. Further study would be needed to confirm this tentative finding.

One perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Isabel in her ESL academic listening class was participation. In Colombia, the students participated by asking questions and talking in their English class. They were active in their classes. This perceived cultural variable seemed to affect Isabel in her ESL academic listening class because she asked the ESL teacher questions and would be one of the first students to raise her hand in class to answer a question. She reported being an active student in classes in English back home in Colombia.

Another perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Isabel appeared to be her technique of picking out new words that were unfamiliar to her during the lecture and applying them to real life situations in order to be able to function outside of the ESL academic listening class. She reported
emphasizing knowing the meaning of the words and how to use them as well as trying to remember certain vocabulary words which she could use in the future.

The last perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy typically used by Isabel in her ESL academic listening class was relying on her native language, Spanish. Isabel reported a tendency to translate English into Spanish in order to be able to understand native speakers when she listened to a taped lecture or a song in English. She stated that her habit of translating Spanish to English was mechanical and natural for her and she was unaware of doing it. She also reported that if she was familiar with certain words in English, then she did not translate from Spanish to English, but if she was unfamiliar with the words, then she would tend to translate those words from Spanish to English.

Felipe reported that the language learning strategy which he used in Colombia when taking notes in his English class affected how he took lecture notes in his ESL academic listening class. In Colombia, he reported that when he took lecture notes in his English class, his teacher spoke Spanish when lecturing but would translate the lecture into English. He reported expecting the teacher in his ESL academic listening class to lecture the same way as his
teacher did in Colombia. When he took notes in his ESL
academic listening class, he stated that he only wrote short
sentences because that was what the lecture consisted of
from his teacher. In his country, however, he reported that
when he took lecture notes in his English class, the
sentences consisted of many words because in Spanish all the
words agree with each other which makes the sentences
longer. Felipe reported that his language learning strategy
for taking lecture notes in his ESL academic listening class
was to write everything down and give explanations because
this was how he took notes in Colombia.

Another perceived cultural variable which seemed to
affect the language learning strategy used by Felipe in his
ESL academic listening class was memorization. In Colombia,
Felipe reported learning to memorize specific kinds of
sentences and answer questions with specific answers when
performing listening tasks in his English class. He
reported that the listening tasks in his country consisted
of listening to American music and watching documentaries on
television. He stated that he had to then take notes as
well as create his own questions pertaining to these two
activities. Felipe reported that he did not have to create
questions from his written lecture notes in his ESL academic
listening class, although he had a tendency at times to
follow the same format because he had used it for such a long time in his country. He also reported that he would memorize his lecture notes and questions asked by his ESL teacher as he had done previously in his English class in Colombia.

Another perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Felipe was his habit of using many articles in English when taking lecture notes because in Spanish many articles are used in both written and oral communication. Felipe reported that his thought patterns were in Spanish which in turn influenced his thinking in English. One major word that he reported having a problem with in English was 'what' because in Spanish 'what' means 'que' (e.g., referring to location) and has a variation of meanings in Spanish. Whenever the word 'what' appeared in his lecture notes posed a problem for Felipe. He reported that he had to ask the teacher for a direct translation in order for him to understand the context in which this word was being used.

The last perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Felipe in his ESL academic listening class was his own native language of Spanish. Felipe reported that he had a tendency to translate English into Spanish when he listened to a taped
lecture or a song in English in order for him to be able to understand the native speakers. He further stated that it was difficult for him not to make this transference because he had been listening to Spanish being spoken longer than English and at times Felipe was unaware of doing it.

Yuki reported that the language learning strategy which she used in Japan when taking notes in her English class affected how she took lecture notes in her ESL academic listening class. She reported that in her country sometimes when she took lecture notes in her English class, it was from a taped lecture with a native speaker of English giving the lecture. Yuki reported that she wrote down all of the words in the lecture and if she did not understand a word then she would check her dictionary or ask the teacher after class. She further stated that she was given directions by her teacher in Japan to listen carefully to the taped lecture and takes notes on everything she heard. Yuki also stated that most of the time in her English class in Japan, however, the teacher tended to lecture and she took notes.

Another perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy reportedly used by Yuki in her ESL academic listening class was participation. She reported that in Japan, students were not typically encouraged to speak up and the teacher lectured most of the
time. Yuki reported that she was not accustomed to volunteering to give answers in her classes in Japan and would only answer a question if the teacher specifically directed the question to her. She stated that it was difficult for her to participate aloud when asked a question by her ESL teacher. Yuki reported that she preferred to not have to speak in her ESL academic listening class and if she had a question to ask her ESL teacher, then she would do so after class had been dismissed and she was alone with her teacher. Yuki reported that she was used to being silent in class so it was easy for her to listen to her teacher’s lectures in the ESL academic listening class and to take detailed notes.

Another perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Yuki was group work. She reported that in her ESL academic listening class, the ESL teacher would sometimes divide the class up into small groups to discuss a song in English which they had listened to in class. Yuki stated that she was uncomfortable working in a group because in the English class in Japan the students never did group work. She reported that they relied strictly on listening to the teacher’s lectures and never interacted with one another in class.
The last perceived cultural variable which seemed to have had an affect on the language learning strategy used by Yuki in her ESL academic listening class was the structure of her English class in Japan. She reported that the main focus besides taking notes during the teacher's lecture in her English class was grammar. Yuki reported that she did English grammar translations everyday in her English class in Japan and that the grammar translations were considered important so that the students would be able to understand discrete grammatical points which would appear on the TOEFL test that they had to take and pass in order to attend a college or university in the United States. Yuki stated that she had a good understanding of grammatical points when she was required to take notes from her ESL teacher's lectures in her ESL academic listening class. She further stated that the structure of her English class in Japan seemed to have had a direct influence on Yuki's note-taking skills in her ESL academic listening class.

Adnan reported that the language learning strategy which he used in the United Arab Emirates when taking notes in his English class seemed to affect how he took lecture notes in his ESL academic listening class. In his country Adnan stated that he had a choice as to whether he would take notes in his English class. He further stated that he
was not required to take notes if he preferred not to, but he had to listen while his teacher was lecturing and had to try to memorize the lecture information. When Adnan did take lecture notes in his English class in his country, he reported that he would write them in English, but sometimes he transferred a word to his native language in order to remember that specific word. He reported that it was easier for him to remember the word in his own native language than in English.

Another perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Adnan in his ESL academic listening class was religion. He reported that the first thing that is taught to all Arabic children is that they must learn about their religion by memorizing the Koran (i.e., the sacred book of Islam and in Muslim belief which contains revelations made to Mohammed by Allah). He stated that they are taught the way to act in life and how to pray. He reported that these beliefs are intermingled in their educational curriculum, including their English class. In Adnan’s English class in his native country, he stated that all of his learning activities were centered around memorization due to the direct influence of the Koran. He further stated that memorization of the Koran seemed to have had an affect on him when he listened to English being
spoken in his ESL academic listening class and had to take notes from his ESL teacher’s lectures as well as from a taped lecture or a song.

Another perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Adnan was body language. Adnan reported that when the ESL teacher from his ESL academic listening class lectured to the class, he focused on her body language (e.g., the movement of her hands and eyes) when he took lecture notes. He reported that the English teacher in his country used her hands frequently when she gave a lecture or while she was teaching. Adnan reported that her body language helped him to understand the information better because he was looking at her body movements. This perceived cultural variable also seemed to help Adnan to understand his ESL teacher in the ESL academic listening class when she would read the directions to an assignment or test. He reported that he preferred her to read the directions aloud rather than for the students to read silently.

The last perceived cultural variable which seemed to affect the language learning strategy used by Adnan in his ESL academic listening class was memorization. He reported that in his country, emphasis is placed on memorization in all of his classes. Adnan reported that since it is
mandatory in his country that he memorize the Koran, then the teaching has also been influenced. Adnan stated that all of the discipline areas (e.g., science, history, English, mathematics, etc.) taught in his country are learned through memorization. He further stated that the students must repeat information taught over and over until it is implanted in their minds. Adnan reported that memorization has influenced his listening to the point that it is the most important language skill for him. He reported that he listened to his ESL teacher in his ESL academic listening class so that he would be able to speak English better when he returned to his country as a military officer. Adnan also reported that listening was important to him because he perceived it as the skill which would enable him to improve his speaking skills in English so he could communicate better with the American military.

Discussion of Research Question Two

The findings of this study corroborate the affect that perceived cultural variables have on language learning strategies according to Oxford’s (1996) research on cross-cultural perspectives of language learning strategies. According to Oxford (1996), culturally-based beliefs and attitudes affect students’ use of language learning strategies and their ultimate language performance. Oxford
(1996) contended that there needs to be a closer look at the beliefs and attitudes held by learners in cultures around the globe and to determine more precisely the effects that those beliefs and attitudes have on them learning English as a second language. She further stated that it is likely that these beliefs and attitudes will differ rather widely and that their effects in many cultures will be strong.

Knowledge of this array of variables can help ESL teachers plan strategy instruction for their ESL students. Teachers need to learn the specific techniques that have so far proven useful in strategy instruction with ESL students of various cultures (Oxford, 1996). They should learn that no single method or technique is appropriate for every student and that a certain amount of tailoring and personalization is essential in helping ESL students improve their language learning strategies (Oxford, 1996).

The third research question which asked what preferred learning style variables are self-identified by adult college ESL students as those which most affect their formal classroom language learning, particularly their listening behaviors, the researcher found that each of the four ESL case study subjects had learning style preferences which influenced their listening behaviors as well as learning English in their ESL academic listening class.
Isabel reported that she was a visual learner and preferred to do all of the visual activities in her ESL academic listening class because it was easier for her to remember and memorize the information if she saw it. She reported that she had to write down an unfamiliar word many times and see that word in an article or book in order to understand the meaning of that particular word. Isabel stated that she had to look at the word more than once in order to remember it and be able to use it in the correct context. She further stated that if the word was similar to Spanish, then she had no problem remembering the meaning of that word.

Another preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Isabel’s listening behavior in the ESL academic listening class was her preference for the ESL teacher to read the directions aloud to the class, rather than having to read them silently. She reported that she also preferred the ESL teacher to write the vocabulary words on the board. Isabel reported that she was able to remember the vocabulary words better if the teacher wrote them on the board because seeing them in a book was not enough reinforcement for her. She stated that by seeing the vocabulary words on the board, she was able to remember them whenever she saw them again, especially during the teacher’s lecture.
A third preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Isabel’s listening behavior in her ESL academic listening class was her preference for note-taking during both teacher’s lectures and taped lectures. Isabel reported that she enjoyed taking lecture notes from her ESL teacher because she would give examples which made it easier for her to remember the information and be able to apply it in a real-life situation. Isabel reported that her learning style preference for note-taking during lectures was to write down the main idea of the lecture, subtitles, key points, and the principle words. She stated that she usually did not write in complete sentences, but wrote only the words that would help her to remember the important facts. Isabel also reported using symbols or abbreviated words when she took lecture notes from the teacher or a taped lecture.

Isabel also reported that even though her main learning style preference was visual, she sometimes used a combination or mixture of approaches to learning English. In the ESL academic listening class, she reported that it was necessary for her to listen, memorize, or see depending on the listening task that she was performing in class at that particular moment. Isabel reported trying to use a
combination of different learning approaches in her ESL academic listening class in order to become more proficient in English.

Felipe reported that he was an auditory learner and his preference was to sharpen his hearing so he could listen more effectively and comprehend what he heard when taking notes in his ESL academic listening class. He reported that his preference was listening because in order to take good notes during a teacher's or taped lecture, the student must be able to hear effectively. Felipe reported keeping a notebook which contained all of the new vocabulary words that he was learning in English and he would repeat them orally for homework so he could enhance his listening skills. He stated that he preferred for his ESL teacher to say the new vocabulary words aloud to the class, rather than writing them on the board. He further stated that listening in English was the most difficult skill for him, so he tried to improve his listening by watching movie videos at home and becoming a disc jockey at the university's radio station.

Another preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Felipe's listening behavior when learning English in his ESL academic listening class was pronunciation. Felipe reported paying special attention in his ESL class to
his teacher’s pronunciation of vocabulary words when she recited them aloud to the class because understanding a native English speaker’s pronunciation of English words was difficult for him at the beginning of the semester. Felipe reported that in terms of learning how to pronounce the words when he listened to other native speakers of English outside of the ESL classroom was difficult for him to understand at times because they had a distinct Appalachian dialect. Felipe reported that he preferred to listen very carefully to the pronunciation of each word when a native speaker of English would speak to him during a general conversation.

A third preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Felipe’s listening behavior in his ESL academic listening class was his preference for note-taking during both the teacher’s lectures and taped lectures. Felipe reported that he preferred to use the same style in English that he used in Spanish when taking lecture notes. He reported that his learning style preference for note-taking during teacher or taped lectures was to write down clue words in which he made arrows to point to the clue words. Felipe stated that he did not write complete sentences when
he took notes, but wrote only the key word to help him to remember and then he would draw an arrow pointing to specific words to identify the main clue word.

Felipe also reported that even though his main learning style preference was auditory, he still liked writing because for him writing was synonymous with listening. He reported that in the ESL academic listening class, it was important for him to listen and write down what he heard during the lecture because that was how he was able to comprehend the information.

Yuki reported that she was a visual learner and preferred reading information rather than listening in her ESL academic listening class. Yuki reported that she preferred that her ESL teacher not read the directions aloud to the class when they engaged in listening tasks because if she read the directions silently then she could ponder over the words she did not understand. She reported that when the teacher read the words aloud, then she became confused because it was difficult for her to understand the pronunciation of the words in English. Yuki also stated that she preferred for her ESL teacher to write the vocabulary words on the board so she could see them.

Another preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Yuki's listening behavior in her ESL academic
listening class was her preference for taking notes during both the teacher’s lectures and taped lectures. Yuki reported that since her learning style preference was visual, she sometimes had a difficult time understanding the new words when she took lecture notes. She stated that when she heard the new words being spoken it confused her because she could not see the main point of the lecture. Yuki further stated that she preferred to underline the main points when she took lecture notes from both the teacher or a taped lecture.

A third preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Yuki’s listening behavior in her ESL academic listening class was individual versus group work. Yuki reported that she preferred to not do group work in her ESL academic listening class because she was not familiar in working with other students in class due to her cultural background. She reported that she did not understand the pronunciation of the other ESL students when they spoke English in group work because it was different from her ESL teacher’s English pronunciation. Yuki stated that she was used to working and studying alone because in her English class in Japan the students did their work individually in class and never engaged in group activities. She also stated that she did not like talking in groups with the
other students because if she made a mistake in English, it would appear to them that she was stupid.

Adnan reported that he was an auditory learner and preferred to do listening tasks in his ESL academic listening class because in his culture memorization was synonymous with listening. He reported that it was easier for him to listen because he would repeat the new vocabulary words introduced to him in class over and over again until he had them memorized. Adnan reported that he learned better by hearing the directions given by his ESL teacher instead of reading them silently and he preferred her to repeat the directions more than once. Adnan also reported that he relied on his ESL teacher's body language when she lectured because it helped him to understand the lecture information.

Another preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Adnan's listening behavior in his ESL academic listening class was his preference for immersion. He reported that he preferred to walk around in the city and mingle with other native speakers of English because he wanted to gain more knowledge about the Appalachian culture as well as improve his speaking in English. Adnan stated that he liked his ESL academic listening class, but preferred to improve his listening skills outside of the
classroom. He further stated that his preference was to make friends (e.g., native speakers of English) so that he could talk to them on the telephone and learn as much as possible about the English language. Adnan reported that by becoming immersed in the culture, he would not only enhance his listening skills, but also improve his English.

A third preferred learning style variable that seemed to affect Adnan's listening behavior in his ESL academic listening class was his preference for taking notes during both the teacher's lectures and taped lectures. Adnan reported that his learning style preference for taking notes during lectures was to write down main ideas or headlines instead of writing every word. He reported that he wrote main words which led to the major point of the reading, instead of writing in complete sentences. Adnan reported that by using this style of taking notes, he was able to remember the entire lecture because he listened very carefully to the teacher or taped lecture and tried to memorize the information as he was writing.

Discussion of Research Question Three

These findings corroborate the preferred learning style variables which most affect ESL students listening behaviors according to Ehrman's (1996) research on second language learning difficulties. According to Ehrman (1996), for most
students, researchers discover their learning styles by making inferences from their descriptions or by observations of their preferred ways of going about the learning task, that is, from their preferred learning strategies. To the degree that learning styles are 'preferences' or 'needs,' they are the same kind of concept, even though the former represents a more limited domain than the latter, which is not just a learning preference, but a personality disposition (Ehrman, 1996). Ehrman (1996) states that they both have a direct effect on the learning strategies, classroom activities, and other choices a learner makes. Every learner is different and has a unique style of learning which is an important concept for teachers to understand (Ehrman, 1996). Learning styles may be illuminating across cultures, and they may help teachers to understand differences between strong learners and those having trouble learning a language (Ehrman, 1996).

Discussion of Research Question Four

The fourth research question asks the researcher what should be the key components of a college ESL program which combines perceived cultural variables, learning strategies, and academic listening skill development. Based on the findings in the present study indicates that there appears to be a need to integrate culture (i.e., home country
experiences), learning strategies, and academic listening
skill development in a coherent fashion. The ESL program
should be designed to help the ESL students to adjust to a
university classroom setting where English is the primary
language spoken and prepare them for academic coursework in
English. The assignments in the ESL course should be
designed to complement and support the ESL students’ culture
(i.e., home country experiences) and learning strategies.
The focus in the ESL classroom should be on essential modes
of academic listening (e.g., note-taking), study skills
development, vocabulary, and the treatment of persistent
note-taking errors. The ESL teacher needs to plan
assignments so that the ESL course can best serve the
students’ linguistic and academic needs. The ESL teacher
also should give the students strategies to help them to
improve their listening skill development. Many visual aids
(e.g., blackboard, flash cards, etc.) should be incorporated
into the lessons to improve the ESL students’ motivation for
listening.

The perceived cultural variables such as memorization,
participation, group work, body language, and language
transference can help ESL teachers plan more effective
strategy instruction for their ESL students. ESL teachers
can take advantage of the ESL students’ perceived cultural
influences and utilize them to the students' benefit, rather than perceiving them as a disadvantage in the ESL classroom. A self-monitoring technique can be used by the ESL teacher to help encourage the ESL students and provide them with positive feedback as to how they are improving in the ESL classroom.

The learning strategies such as guessing, memorizing, and utilization of vocabulary words implemented by the ESL students in the present study appeared to be valuable strategies in improvement of their note-taking skills. Such findings can encourage the ESL teacher to provide strategies to enhance the ESL students' listening skills. Since listening is the most difficult skill area to evaluate, it is the responsibility of the ESL teacher to help motivate the ESL students to concentrate when they listen to an academic lecture. Different listening activities can be devised to help ESL students develop their academic listening skills such as taking notes from a teacher's lecture or a taped lecture, listening to a song in English, watching a movie or listening to a radio broadcast. Listening comprehension is not a static concept to be assessed in the same manner at all times; rather, ESL educators should think of listening comprehension in terms
of the purpose of the listening activity, the type of input that is being processed, and the characteristics of the ESL listeners themselves.

**Discussion of Research Question Five**

The fifth research question asks the researcher what generic guidelines are warranted for college ESL programs. College ESL programs may be more or less effective, depending on the instructional model followed. It is important to the success of college ESL programs that the ESL instructors have a positive attitude concerning the ESL students' culture (i.e., home country experiences) and language.

Based on the findings of the present study, the researcher regards the following generic guidelines to be warranted for college ESL programs:

1. To encourage ESL students to use their individual learning strategies to help them to learn to listen more effectively in English.

2. To build ESL students' self-esteem by showing respect for students' home language and culture (i.e., home country experiences).

3. To train ESL teachers to develop a sense of their own cultural identity in order to enhance their knowledge of cultural differences within the ESL classroom.

4. To utilize the cultural background of the ESL students in playing a part in both identifying the set of learning strategies ESL students bring to a listening task and the ease or difficulty with which new strategies can be trained.
5. To increase language learning effectiveness and development of listening skills by assisting ESL students with the learning strategies which are valuable to their successful completion of listening tasks such as taking notes on a taped or teacher's lecture material.

6. To include specific activities in the ESL teacher's lessons that address the needs of the ESL students' different preferred learning styles.

As found in the data, part of the cultural background of the ESL students is their prior educational experiences. It is vital to the success of the ESL student that the ESL teacher is aware of the student's prior cultural background knowledge. The ESL classroom climate should be a positive environment where dialogue is created between the ESL teacher and students for the resolution of personal, social, and language learning problems. It is important to the success of the college ESL program that the ESL teachers are proficient in English and are experienced in the cultural environments of the language they teach. Lastly, ESL teachers should be knowledgeable about processes to help the ESL students develop their own experience with the cultural environments of the language they are learning (e.g., English as a second language).

Regarding ESL academic listening tasks, the ESL teacher needs to consider the type of materials that might be used in the ESL classroom as well as the task type for building ESL students' listening skills. The materials selected
should be both practical and useful for ESL classroom teachers to integrate successfully into their lessons. The ESL teacher in the college ESL program should help the ESL students to become aware of their own language learning strategies and learning style preferences as well as to guide them to become effective learners as they approach various learning tasks (e.g., academic listening tasks such as listening to lectures). Keeping this in mind, ESL teachers can go a long way toward accommodating individual learner needs more effectively.

Summary

In this section, three of the five research questions were answered and discussed from the students’ self-reports. Overall, the four ESL case study subjects interviewed reported that the teacher was helpful in meeting their needs in learning how to take lecture notes successfully and enhance their listening skills. These ESL students reported that the ESL academic listening course was useful because the course content would be applicable in their future educational endeavors as well as in their personal lives.

Three of the four ESL students seemed to welcome and implement the teacher’s comments when taking lecture notes in class. And interestingly, all four ESL students reported wanting to use English both inside and outside their ESL
academic listening classroom. Even though two of the four ESL students had a tendency to use their native language at times when taking notes, all four ESL students felt they would become better listeners and note-takers if they used English as much as possible in every stage of their academic listening tasks.

The remaining two research questions pertain to the incorporation of perceived cultural variables, learning strategies, and academic listening skill development in a college ESL program and generic guidelines which could be established for college ESL programs. Having the willingness and ability to understand cultural differences may aid a teacher know in making ESL instruction more effective. Sometimes teachers reject information about cultural differences because they equate generalizing with stereotyping (Haberman, 1990), which is the process of attributing certain characteristics to all members of a particular group, without exception. Knowledge and awareness of cultural differences can give ESL teachers new insights about their students and about ESL instruction. When teachers take the time to get to know their students' backgrounds and special qualities as individuals, they avoid stereotyping and find that generalizations apply in many, but not necessarily all, cases. The culture of the ESL
classroom can be seen as a dynamic system of values, beliefs, and standards, developed through understandings which the teacher and the students have come to share.

Cultural differences should not be interpreted to mean that students of diverse backgrounds should be characterized as having a certain set 'learning strategy.' Rather, cultural differences should emphasize and stress how the ESL classroom environment can be changed to better support the ESL students' learning strategies. Listening has a crucial role in students' language development. The students' cultural background and learning style preferences might affect the learning strategies used by the ESL students and how they listen in their class. The ESL student can develop his academic listening skills by reading aloud or listening to another student read aloud. The ESL students could also discuss their ideas about the same text, whether a newspaper editorial or a new novel.

College ESL programs need to incorporate programs into their ESL curriculum in which ESL students are taught to use learning strategies to improve their listening comprehension and the perceived cultural influence of how they learn English as a second language should not be overlooked in the ESL classroom. Many older ESL students may have developed learning strategies attuned to educational experiences in
their native countries. For example, in an educational system that places a high value on assimilation of facts, students might learn highly effective rote memorization strategies. Other strategies, however, are needed for listening to teacher or taped lectures. Many ESL students in their ESL college classroom need direct instruction and extensive teacher-supported practice in using learning strategies appropriate to different types of academic listening tasks.

Conclusions

The findings of the present study provided a gestalt of the problems, customs, and preferences of four ESL case study students in an ESL academic listening class. It further provided a description of some concerns and perceptions of the ESL teacher of the subjects in relation to the case study students as they learned how to take notes in English on the teacher's lectures or taped lectures.

In Chapter 5, major findings and conclusions of the present study are presented, along with implications for ESL programs and recommendations for further research in the area of ESL academic listening, combining language learning strategies, student preferred learning styles, and students' cultural background.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

ESL teachers in the U.S. are likely to see various affects of native language and culture constantly. Cultural differences affect the learning and influence level of class participation, need for achievement, and preferred learning approaches. Learning strategies are realizations of learning styles and often provide indirect information about them. This has a distinct effect on the students' level of achievement in conventional academic settings, and it may affect their learning of English beyond the levels of basic functioning, as well. (Ehrman, 1996, pp. 167-8)

Introduction

Recent focus on learning strategies has included a cultural component in order to meet the learning needs of ESL students. The famous metaphor of the "cultural iceberg" (Hall & Hall, 1990; Oxford, 1995) indicates that many aspects of culture, such as certain beliefs, perceptions, and values, are below the surface of consciousness (i.e., in the submerged, non-visible part of an iceberg). These less conscious cultural aspects often influence how people learn languages (Oxford, 1996). Research by Yang (1992b) has suggested that culture clearly includes beliefs, perceptions, and values which affect language learning, including general learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile; intuitive, sensing; global, analytic; Reid, 1995)
and specific learning strategies (i.e., the particular behaviors and steps learners use to improve their learning such as note-taking, finding conversation partners, and analyzing words). Oxford, Hollaway, and Horton-Murillo (1992) stated that although culture is not the single determinant, and although many other influences intervene, culture often plays a key role in the learning styles and strategies adopted by many participants in the culture.

Teaching learners how to learn in L2 is crucial. The areas of discovering optimal learning strategies for language acquisition and instructing learners in strategy use have thus attracted interest among both theorists and practitioners. Many language teachers and researchers in the past two decades have shifted their focus away from teaching methods towards what students are doing in their language learning. They found that students were not just passive subjects. Some students seemed to be successful regardless of the teaching method, and they appeared to use a variety of learning strategies to help themselves learn the L2 (Brown, 1994; Hosenfeld, 1979; Tarone and Yule, 1989). Cultural background has clearly shown that it affects strategy choice in L2 settings. Thus, in the foreign or second language classroom, the activities and perceived cultural influences cannot easily be separated
from what is learned. Language learning, like many other types of learning, is situated within a particular cultural context for both learners and instructors.

**Explanation of Study**

Preferred learning styles and perceived cultural influence on second language learning strategies used in an ESL academic listening class at a large university were the focus of the present study. A review of the literature defined learning strategies and explained preferred learning styles and perceived cultural influences on those strategies in regard to listening tasks. Learning strategy investigations within the field of foreign and second language education have continued to show that effective learners actively associate new information with existing information in long-term memory, building increasingly intricate and differentiated mental structures (Oxford, 1996). The use of well-chosen learning strategies are what distinguishes experts from novices in many learning areas (e.g., learning vocabulary words by breaking them down into their components). Successful learners often use metacognitive strategies such as organizing, evaluating, and planning their learning. These strategies are sometimes viewed as the learner's own personal 'executive control' over his or her own learning. Use of these behaviors -
along with cognitive strategies like analyzing, reasoning, transferring information, taking notes, and summarizing - might be considered part of any definition of effective learning (Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, & Campione, 1983). Additionally, competent learners often use compensatory strategies such as guessing or inferring and memory strategies such as grouping and structured reviewing - all of which have been identified as cognitive strategies by many researchers. In addition, research results have shown that some of the best L2 learners use affective and social strategies to control their emotional state, to keep themselves motivated and on-task, and to get help when they need it (McCombs, 1982, 1988; Dansereau, 1985). Yet, it appears that many students and some teachers are unaware of the impact of affective and social strategies.

A review of the related literature shows that some ESL students speculated that perceived cultural differences accounted for their misunderstanding of some of the academic listening tasks performed outside of the classroom (Katchen, 1994). Different cultural groups use particular kinds of strategies at different levels of frequency which include guessing, a strategy found common among Asian and Hispanic students (Bedell, 1993). Learning styles may change according to the particular learning situation. Teachers
might identify their students' styles and by attempting to teach to these styles, the ESL students would become proficient in using that language (Reid, 1987). The use of memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies was higher for successful students than unsuccessful ones (Kaylani, 1995).

In strategies research in second language acquisition, two types of studies have provided empirical support for the link between strategies and learning a second language: correlational studies (Chamot, Dale, O'Malley, and Spanos, 1992, 1993; O'Malley, 1992; Padron and Waxman, 1988; Politzer and McGroarty, 1985) and experimental interventions (Brown and Perry, 1991; O'Malley et al., 1985b; Ross and Rost, 1991; Rubin, Quinn, and Enos, 1988). Both types of studies have produced support for the influence of strategies on second language learning. A review of research on learning strategies in second language acquisition and related studies in first language contexts indicated that appropriate strategies use is an important factor that can be used to differentiate between more and less effective language learners, and that L2 learning strategies are both teachable and learnable.

The present study was a case study which involved four ESL students studying English as a second language in an ESL
academic listening classroom at an American university. This research endeavor was stimulated by the research literature on second language acquisition studies which had suggested that greater empirical evidence is needed to show that strategy use correlates positively with preferred learning styles and cultural background.

Many findings of the present study corroborated previous research showing that language learning styles and strategies as well as cultural background appear to be among the most important variables influencing second language performance and were chosen as appropriate content for study. In addition to the variables mentioned previously, investigators have also sought information from another area of research in second language acquisition, namely listening comprehension, and the role it plays in second language performance. Investigations of English as a second language have found that the lecture remains a major part of most university study and thus the ability to comprehend academic lectures (i.e., listening comprehension behavior) is an important part of the necessary proficiency of tertiary level students, but it may present special challenges for students for whom English is a second language (Benson, 1989).
The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles have on the language learning strategies that college-age English as a second language (ESL) students choose to use in an English as a second language (ESL) university classroom, specifically one dealing with academic listening. The investigations of these areas provided pertinent data on strategy and style use, perceived cultural variables, and listening tasks as perceived by an ESL teacher and four ESL students to be significant for the specific field of English as a second language teaching. This research was needed due to the varying interpretations of previous researchers concerning preferred learning styles, language learning strategies and cultural background of ESL students.

A qualitative methodology was used to collect and analyze data in the present study. Four ESL students served as individual case study subjects, being selected on the basis of how they answered the questions on two previously administered questionnaires. Data were collected by observations of four ESL case study subjects, two private interviews with each of the subjects, one interview with the ESL teacher, a sample page of students' note-taking from lectures, three video taped class observations of the
subjects, and informal discussions with two randomly
selected informants. An analysis of the data allowed the
five research questions of the present study to be answered.

The interviews in the present study were audio-taped
and the tapes were subsequently transcribed (Patton, 1990)
by the researcher. The transcriptions of the interviews
were coded by the researcher, using codes that were
developed heuristically and which reflected the content of
the interviews (see appendix M). The codes were derived
from the subjects' responses to questions asked in the
interview in which the codes were later categorized into
groups. Each group contained several issues or themes (Day,
1993; Delmont, 1992).

The researcher examined the data to identify meaningful
themes, issues, or variables, in order to explain the
patterns which were developing (Johnson, 1992). These
themes and concepts were linked to similar data, compared
within and among cases, and grouped to indicate and account
for patterns in the data to guide the final report (Rubin &
Rubin, 1995). These procedures allowed the themes, issues,
or variables to be induced from the data sources to reveal
new insights and understandings related to the research
questions. The findings subsequently resulted in answers to
the research questions of the study.
The observational data, in the form of copious fieldnotes taken during each class session focused on the four ESL college case study subjects who were all non-native speakers of English coming from Colombia, Japan, and the United Arab Emirates. The researcher entered the observational data (i.e., fieldnotes) into a word processor and saved the notes on a computer disk. The researcher also transcribed the tape-recorded interviews, checking transcriptions for accuracy, and conducted a content analysis of the interview data across subjects using procedures recommended by Patton, 1990. All of the data provided by the four ESL case study subjects and the ESL teacher were used to investigate the influence of preferred learning styles and cultural background on L2 learning strategies used in a college-level ESL academic listening class.

Summary of Findings

The research questions guiding this study allowed English as a second language to be explored from four perspectives: 1) listening tasks; 2) learning strategies; 3) preferred learning styles; and 4) cultural background. The qualitative interview data provided a useful profile of four ESL case study subjects regarding their perceptions on their strategies in studying English as a second language.
A summary of qualitative findings related to listening tasks, learning strategies, preferred learning styles, and cultural background follows. Data were previously presented in Chapter IV.

**Listening Tasks**

The four ESL case study subjects described their views of listening tasks from two different perspectives: 1) typical response used when another person speaking English was not understood and, 2) how the student reacts when listening to a native speaker of English. Students supplied direct answers to both perspectives of listening tasks.

First, listening comprehension skills for all four ESL case study students were found to be problematic. The four ESL students would ask the teacher for an explanation when they did not understand someone speaking English to them and they would also ask that particular person to repeat what he/she was saying to them. The four ESL case study subjects reported trying to guess what the person was saying because they typically did not want to ask the person to repeat the information.

Second, listening to native English speakers was found to be difficult for these four ESL students. All four ESL case study subjects reported that they had to listen carefully to English that was spoken by a native speaker of
English because it was difficult for them to understand the speech in conversation. They reported that the native speaker tended to use unfamiliar words as well as spoke too fast. On these points there was agreement among all four ESL students.

Among the listening tasks that were presented by the ESL teacher in the ESL academic listening class was listening to the ESL teacher's lectures in person or a taped lecture. There was a consensus among the four ESL case study subjects that it was easier for them to understand the ESL teacher's lectures than a taped lecture in English. The taped lecture in English was not clear to the students which made it difficult for them to take notes.

Fourth, the four ESL case study subjects described their ESL academic listening teacher as a helpful person. They all reported that their ESL teacher made the classroom environment comfortable for them to ask questions, even though the students reported feeling uncomfortable raising their hands in class to ask a question due to their cultural backgrounds. The four ESL students also agreed that the listening tasks selected by the ESL teacher were beneficial to them in helping to improve their listening comprehension skills. In general, it appears that the ESL academic
listening teacher accommodated her ESL students by using listening tasks and instructional techniques that her students found helpful.

Learning Strategies

The four ESL case study subjects discussed their uses of learning strategies in two areas: 1) student views about their visual memory and, 2) student-identified best learning strategies. Students supplied answers in both areas with respect to their typical L2 learning strategy use. First, the four ESL case study subjects revealed certain strategies that they typically use when taking notes in their college ESL academic listening class. All four ESL students were in accord in rating their visual memory as good, although differences existed as to what strategy was used by each of the subjects. The students' learning strategies ranged from using drawings to help their visual memory to memorization of word forms previously learned in ESL class. They also used imagery to enhance their visual memory as well as repeating the words silently several times in order not to forget the words.

Second, the four ESL case study subjects reported specific strategy use when they needed to learn the information better in their ESL academic listening class. The ESL students' strategy use was reported as writing down
the information several times and attempting to memorize it, reviewing their notes immediately following the lecture, and writing down the information that they deemed important.

Third, all four ESL students reported that taking lecture notes was helpful in the development of their listening skills. The four ESL case study subjects agreed that they had a tendency at times to translate the lecture notes into their native language while they listened to the information in the lectures of their ESL academic listening class.

Fourth, the subjects attributed problems in listening skills to understanding native speakers of English. All agreed that taking lecture notes was easier when they listened to their ESL teacher instead of a taped lecture or music. They reported that the variations in speech of a taped lecture or music made it difficult for them to comprehend the information because they were familiar with their ESL teacher's voice and speech. All subjects reported having a principal strategy which they used when taking lecture notes. The strategies ranged from application of vocabulary words to writing down unfamiliar words from the lecture notes. Other strategies used by the students were
placing emphasis on listening and trying to memorize the lecture notes while listening to the lecture at the same time.

**Preferred Learning Styles**

The four ESL students reported how they preferred to learn English from two views: 1) learning style preference when taking notes from the ESL teacher’s lectures and, 2) learning style preference when taking notes from a taped lecture. The answers supplied by the students related to the influence of their learning style preferences on language learning strategies used in their ESL academic listening class. First, all subjects reported specific learning style preferences when taking notes from the ESL teacher’s lectures. The subjects’ learning style preferences were to write down the main idea of the lecture as well as the clue words and to underline the important information when they took notes from the teacher’s lecture. All four ESL case study subjects reported that they took more notes from the teacher’s lecture at the end of the semester than they did at the beginning because their listening skills comprehension had improved.

Second, the subjects’ learning styles preferences varied when they took notes from a taped lecture. The four ESL case study subjects’ preferences ranged from
abbreviating words and drawing symbols in order to comprehend the taped lecture to using arrows to point to important words in the lecture. They also paid special attention to the speaker's pronunciation in the taped lecture. Other preferences of the students were to underline important words, listen for the main idea and number the sentences in order, beginning with the main idea.

The qualitative data provided evidence of the importance of preferred learning styles as a variable influencing language learning strategies used when the four ESL case study subjects took lecture notes from either the teacher's lecture or a taped lecture. The subjects reported that they were either auditory or visual learners. All subjects reported that they preferred to write as much information as possible when taking notes from the teacher's lectures and the taped lectures because it helped them to remember.

**Cultural Background**

The four ESL case study subjects discussed the influence of their cultural background on language learning strategies used in their ESL academic listening class focusing on two areas: 1) the influence of the educational training in their country on the way they learned in the American ESL academic listening class and, 2) the
differences and similarities of the English classes in their
country from the American ESL academic listening class.
First, all subjects reported that they each brought their
own customs from their country to the ESL academic listening
class. Several factors were reported by the subjects which
related to how they listened in their ESL academic listening
class which had a direct influence on how they took lecture
notes. One factor was that the native language of the four
ESL students was spoken more often in their English class in
their country than English was spoken. Another factor was
that in their country students did not speak up in English
class because the teacher lectured while the students
listened. All four ESL case study subjects reported that
their countries regarded English to be an important language
to know how to speak due to economic empowerment and growth
in their countries' international businesses.

Second, there were more differences between each of the
four ESL students' English classes in their countries and
their academic listening class than similarities. All
subjects in this study reported that the English class in
their country was participatory as opposed to their ESL
academic listening class, the main focus of the English
class in their country was grammar translation, not
listening and students did not interact with the teacher by asking questions as they did in the ESL academic listening class.

**ESL Teacher's Feedback**

The ESL teacher described and gave her perception of the subjects concerning the influence of the students' preferred learning styles and cultural background in relation to the language learning strategies they used when performing listening tasks in her ESL academic listening class. The ESL teacher reported that the four ESL students' learning style preferences varied, but that they all consisted of a combination of independent learning and teaching. She further reported that their approach to learning English was typically to listen to the ESL teacher and to let the teacher guide them in learning the second language. The ESL teacher also stated that the subjects' learning style preference tended to be a dependency on the ESL teacher to aid them in learning the language.

The ESL teacher's perception of the influence of their cultural background was that it varied according to the country where the student had lived. All subjects as a whole were interactive in the ESL academic listening class due to the fact that listening and speaking was important in their culture as well as the influence of their native
language. The four ESL students regarded their teacher to be important and showed respect to her when she was talking because education is considered to be important in their countries. Memorization also was considered to be a perceived cultural influence because in the subjects' culture they were encouraged to memorize their lessons in various discipline areas, particularly in the Asian and Arabic-speaking countries. In Japan, for example, students are taught the information exactly as it is presented on the TOEFL test which requires them to memorize the answers. In the United Arab Emirates, however, all students are expected to memorize their Holy Book, the Koran.

The qualitative data provided evidence that cultural background affected language learning strategy choice in this study. Attitudes toward authority, beliefs about how difficult (or easy) it is to learn a language, ideas about the importance of 'the text' and about memorizing it, and concepts about whether personal expression and creativity are allowed - all of these are cultural issues that affect the use of language learning strategies. Because of Hispanics' global and field dependent style preference (Reid, 1995), many Hispanic ESL students choose particular learning strategies, such as working with others rather than alone, inferring (guessing from context), and basing
judgments on personal relationships rather than logic. In contrast, many Japanese ESL students reflectively use analytic strategies aimed at precision and accuracy, search for small details, work alone, and base judgments more on logic than on personal interactions (Reid, 1995). Cultures that encourage concrete-sequential learning styles (such as those of some Arabic-speaking countries) often produce widespread use of rote memorization strategies. Extroverted learning styles, such as those of many Hispanics and Arabic speakers, are related to the use of social strategies for learning (Harshbarger et al., 1986; Willing, 1988). In contrast, according to Harshbarger et al. (1986), many introverted Asian students display L2 learning strategies that involve working alone. The present study has provided evidence which is in accord with these previous studies.

The findings also suggested that the two Hispanic students have more similarities than differences in the strategies they used in taking lecture notes. Although their preferred learning style varied, the cultural background and preferred learning style of both students appeared to influence the language learning strategies they used when taking lecture notes in their ESL academic listening class. The Japanese student used analytic strategies when taking lecture notes and the Arabic student
used rote-memorization strategies. Even though the Japanese and Arabic students had different learning style preferences and cultural backgrounds, there appeared to be an influence on the language learning strategies they selected when taking lecture notes in their ESL listening class.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data led to several conclusions regarding the topics of language learning strategies, listening tasks, cultural background, and preferred learning style. First, memorization and guessing served as the main language learning strategies used by the subjects when taking notes in their ESL academic listening class. These language learning strategies were helpful to the ESL students when they performed any of the listening tasks (e.g., listening to either the teacher’s lecture, a taped lecture or music) in their ESL academic listening class. All four ESL case study subjects focused on the listening tasks with complete concentration because they valued the tasks and regarded them to be a means of understanding a native speaker of English, their ESL teacher in this case.

Second, in addition to the subjects’ language learning strategies, five perceived cultural variables seemed to affect these strategies used when the ESL students took lecture notes. Participation, memorization, native
language, religion, and body language were the perceived cultural variables which seemed to influence the language learning strategies used by the four ESL students. The ESL students reported improvements in their note-taking skills and were able to develop their listening comprehension skills in relation to the perceived cultural variables. The perceived cultural variables seemed to aid the subjects in understanding the ESL teacher when they took notes in the ESL academic listening class. The ESL teacher’s techniques were reported to have enhanced the note-taking skills of the ESL students.

The third conclusion is that the preferred learning style variables appeared to influence the language learning strategies used by the four ESL case study subjects. The two main learning style preferences shared by all subjects were visual and auditory, although at times the students reported a tendency to use a combination of both learning styles. The nature of these two kinds of learning style preferences seemed to meet the needs of the subjects. The ESL students relied on their learning style preferences because they provided a means for them to understand the listening tasks which they performed in their ESL academic listening class. Overall, each of the four ESL case study
subjects reported learning style preferences which seemed to influence their listening behaviors as well as learning English in their ESL academic listening class.

Last, second language learning strategies seemed to have had value for helping the subjects to comprehend the information presented to them when they took lecture notes in their ESL academic listening class. The perceived cultural variables seemed to be useful in aiding all subjects with understanding the vocabulary associated with the information given to them in academic lectures. Learning style preferences appeared to be helpful to the four ESL students depending on the techniques the ESL teacher used when presenting the information in the ESL class.

Limitations

Since the population in the present study was small, consisting of four ESL students, findings made based on the data can only refer to these participants. While this study examined from an ethnographic perspective what these subjects themselves thought about their second language learning strategy use, the influence of their preferred learning styles and cultural backgrounds on the strategies used when performing listening tasks in the ESL academic listening class, all inquiry was conducted on a single
college campus. Interviews were held in the ESL office and the researcher's office, and the students were only observed in their academic listening classroom, not in external real-life use of the second language. Since one of the aims of ethnographic research is to conduct research in as naturalistic a setting as possible (i.e., 'in the field') it would be useful to see if what the students reported to the researcher would have been different if the interviews had taken place in a different environment (e.g., in the student's home or in a coffee shop). The interview environment was reported to have been comfortable for the students due to the presence of native language informants (e.g., one from each country of the subjects) who interceded during the interview to explain information for the ESL students, from time to time, in their native language. The students seemed to welcome the opportunity to have a native speaker of their language present during the interview. They listened to and interacted with the native language informant during the interviews.

Similar to the interviews being conducted in a somewhat unnatural setting, research on the listening process, including this study, has almost entirely been done within the confines of a classroom. When students have actually been observed listening, it has been when the students were
performing listening tasks in a classroom setting. This is somewhat artificial since some of the listening tasks performed were done outside of the classroom setting. For example, the ESL teacher gave all subjects listening task activities to perform outside of the ESL academic listening class where they were expected to watch television shows and movies. The researcher's observations of the ESL students performing listening tasks were limited to what she saw them do in class. Observing the subjects watching television or movies may have provided different information than what the researcher observed and what the ESL students told her about the individual student strategies used when performing the ESL instructional listening tasks.

Synthesis of Implications

These qualitative findings suggest new ways of investigating learning strategies for ESL students. The findings and conclusions of this study suggest implications for language learning strategy use incorporating preferred learning styles and cultural background as variables in an ESL academic listening context. The purpose of this synthesis is to report how these findings may alter and possibly improve the understanding of language learning strategies used by ESL students and the influence of
preferred learning styles and cultural background on those learning strategies used in a college ESL academic listening classroom.

1. Theoretical Implications. Theories of language learning strategies, preferred learning styles, cultural background, and listening merge in examining the strategies ESL students use in a second language program. The qualitative findings give consideration to the conceptualization of language learning strategies used when performing academic listening tasks. The findings suggest that language learning strategies used when performing academic listening tasks include preferred learning style and perceived cultural background influences. Language interacts closely with culture; one's native language is both a reflection of and an influence on one's culture (Bedell, D., & Oxford, R., 1996). Both language and culture are important in the development of linguistic skills for an ESL student in the second language classroom.

Preferred learning styles include visual and auditory learning in academic listening. These preferred styles of learning require ESL students to improve their listening skills by developing cognitive, compensation, and memory strategies. The use of well-chosen strategies distinguishes successful learners from unsuccessful learners. Use of
these strategies gives the learner control over his/her own learning, particularly his/her learning style preferences.

Cultural background relates to patterns of living and refers to the individual’s role in life situations of every kind and the rules or models for attitudes and conduct in them. Culture (i.e., home country experiences) and its influence on language learning strategies is useful to foreign language teachers who have students from just one culture and second language teachers who have more than one culture represented in their classes.

Overall, the influences of preferred learning styles and cultural background on the language learning strategies used by the four ESL case study subjects when they performed listening tasks in the college ESL classroom were not fully substantiated by the data due to the small number of subjects and non-random sample size which consisted of four students. For this reason, no generalizations can be made about the data beyond the four participants. More research is required to determine if preferred learning styles and cultural background do indeed influence language learning strategies used by ESL students when performing listening tasks. If language learning strategies for college ESL students are influenced by the students’ learning style preferences and cultural background, then foreign and second
language educators have an obligation to become more aware of the potential of language learning strategies and to devise ways to use this information when instructing students.

2. Classroom Implications. The findings and conclusions of this study suggest several implications for the content of ESL programs (e.g., specifically an academic listening class) and ESL teacher preparation programs. These implications follow.

A. ESL Programs. Four implications can be drawn from the findings of this study for ESL programs responsible for preparing ESL students for the university classroom. First, ESL programs need to integrate language and content in a coherent fashion. ESL students arriving in the U.S. from other countries for the first time need a program designed to help them adjust to university life and prepare for academic coursework in English. The assignments in the ESL course should be designed to complement and support the learning in the content course at the college level.

Second, ESL programs should appropriately integrate academic listening skills' tasks and language learning strategies into skills-based courses. ESL college students need development of listening comprehension skills and strategy use instruction in order for them to be
successfully matriculated into courses of their major area of studies. These skills and instruction are necessary in order to acclimate the ESL students to the demands of U.S. university education.

Third, when ESL students describe the influence of their cultural background on language learning strategies used in an ESL university classroom, they are commonly referring to their previously educational experiences in their country. Culture (i.e., home country experiences) has been cited as an important variable in learning strategy use because the culture of a student is, in part, made up of prior formal and informal educational experiences. University ESL students could probably benefit from more instruction geared toward strategy use instruction which can, in optimal circumstances, raise both strategic awareness and language performance.

Fourth, learning style preferences can be visual or auditory and are imperative in ESL instruction. Helping the ESL university student to recognize his/her preferred learning style will enhance the student’s development of listening skills as well as learning the language. Because learning styles are often linked with personality and
therefore often difficult to change, helping ESL students learn new strategies may help them to expand their preferred styles when needed.

B. Teacher Preparation Programs. The problems and concerns of ESL students in content-based instructional settings suggest creation of new programs by ESL educators. Future ESL teachers moving towards the twenty-first century must understand that ESL students may possibly learn a second language, specifically English, based on the teacher's strategy use in the ESL classroom. This may mean that an integration of form-focused activities and content-based assignments is needed to achieve students' needs-based results. Teacher trainers must help prepare instructors from both the content and ESL language courses to meet regularly to plan assignments so the ESL courses can best serve both the students' linguistic and academic needs.

Procedural knowledge of how to teach language learning strategies should be an integral part of teacher development programs. It is recognized that teachers have a strong role in the learning process (Richards, 1990). ESL teachers can better understand the difficulties of ESL students and can become more effective in helping students overcome their learning problem if they make the classroom more learner-centered. The goal should be to make language learning
strategies a conscious and useful tool by which students can facilitate their own learning. One issue is that ESL students may have culturally different learning preferences so to rely on a single learning strategy or a single set of strategies, may be inappropriate. One solution would be to teach several task-appropriate strategies with any given task, so that ESL students can have the chance to select the strategies associated with their particular learning styles. Teacher education courses in which participants can practice teaching strategies that are student-oriented and less teacher-controlled are needed (Ely, 1994). Both novice and experienced ESL teachers need to be taught that not everyone learns the same way and with the same strategies. Catering to college ESL students' needs is one way to apply the findings of the present study in teacher education.

3. Research Implications. The present study has contributed to the understanding of language learning strategies by providing qualitative evidence regarding the influence of learning preferences and cultural background on those strategies used in a college ESL academic listening classroom. The use of qualitative methods and data sources in an ESL university classroom setting has provided students' perceptions and insights into the role of language learning strategies, learning preferences and cultural
background in ESL students' listening tasks performance. ESL students' qualitative feedback provided evidence of language learning strategy use. One ESL teacher's qualitative feedback provided her perceptions of students' language learning strategy use when performing listening tasks. The qualitative data also demonstrated how teacher strategies can enhance students' listening comprehension and aid in the learning of the language. The value of the qualitative approach to data collection and interpretation has been valid in the present study and should be continued in future research.

Recommendations for Further Study

The present study has described the findings reported by four college ESL students in two different interviews as well as the concerns expressed by their ESL teacher. The qualitative, exploratory nature of this study has generated questions that should be researched in future investigations in the field of second language education, primarily English as a second language. The following eight recommendations for further study follow from the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. More inquiry investigating this study's research questions pertaining to language learning strategies used when performing academic listening tasks should be conducted addressing the topic of gender and personality influences.
2. Future research should continue to explore language learning strategies and academic listening tasks using ethnographic methods such as participant observation, interviews, and triangulation of data.

3. A quantitative investigation is needed to determine the conditions under which preferred learning styles and cultural background influence language learning strategy use.

4. A study should be conducted in an ESL classroom in the high school setting to determine if the same or similar findings emerge when reported by ESL students in interviews. Such a study could address the need for listening skill development in a second language at an earlier age (e.g., adolescence).

5. A combination of learning strategy, learning style preference, and perceived cultural variables—perhaps with the addition of gender—might help explain listening comprehension skills of ESL students. It would help to replicate and expand the current study in other U.S. universities in order for ESL educators to recognize the complex and interesting relationship among these variables.

6. Further insights into academic listening can be gained by conducting large-scale research comparing the language learning strategies used by language-majority and language-minority student populations focusing on learning style preferences and culture as influencing variables.

7. Future investigations of academic listening should include experimental studies that could serve to corroborate the self-report data from the present study regarding language learning strategies, preferred learning styles, and cultural background.

8. Future researchers should investigate the effect of heightening learners' general awareness of language learning strategies in manageable, time and cost effective ways as well as raising teachers' awareness of language learning strategies which would lead to increased student performance since learning strategies have been found in previous research to be central to language learning.
The use of language learning strategies has been reported to produce a positive effect on ESL students' academic listening skill development. The researcher suggests that the information presented in the present study concerning students' strategy use can help ESL teachers in assisting their ESL students to make learning English easier, more effective, and more enjoyable by aiding in the development of their listening skills and suggesting sample strategies which can be used in the ESL college classroom. In the present study, second language learning strategy use was a means to aid ESL students in acquiring academic English, particularly listening, at the university level.

Due to certain demographic changes and the influx of international students currently enrolling in U.S. universities, ESL educators are faced with the task of developing coherent programs and policies for English as a second language study. This influx also presents a complex picture as we move into the twenty-first century. ESL teacher educators will need to help teachers learn how to communicate and interact effectively with a large number of linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Teachers must have an awareness of these ESL students' various language learning strategies and preferences used in the ESL classroom as well as how to develop the students' academic
listening skills for other college classes. ESL professionals will also need to support college instructors and aid them in incorporating appropriate student strategy use into their teaching routines. Listening tasks (e.g., lecture note-taking) are needed to enhance and develop all college students' listening skills. Understanding how ESL students successfully use their second language learning strategies in an academic listening classroom environment should remain a topic worthy of investigation in second language research during the next decade.
Introduction Letter (Explanation of Research Study)

Dear ESL student:

My name is Macel Braxton and I am a full-time assistant professor in the Department of Modern Languages at Marshall University. I am also a graduate student in Foreign and Second Language Education at The Ohio State University. I am conducting a research study to explore the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles may have on the language learning strategies utilized by ESL students in an ESL university classroom, particularly one dealing with academic listening. In order to learn about the influence and how it may affect the listening tasks you perform in English, I will be attending many of your academic listening classes. I hope to learn more about what you do in class and what strategies you use when you do listening tasks in class.

I will also be asking what you think about how you learn in English and the importance of listening in learning English. I would like to know your thoughts and ideas about
working with your classmates, about your teacher's comments on your papers, and about what processes or habits you have when you listen to English, as well as, what learning strategies you think you use when you listen to English.

I will be asking these questions mainly through interviews. I will have you fill out two questionnaires. One questionnaire will be asking you questions about learning strategies and listening tasks; the other questionnaire will be asking you questions about your preferred learning style. I will also ask for your permission to photocopy your written work so I can study the way you take notes in English according to what you actually hear the instructor say in class.

By listening to your thoughts and opinions about your strategies used when performing listening tasks in English, observing what you do in your class, and studying your note-taking itself, I hope to be able to provide an accurate picture of how your cultural background and preferred learning styles influence the learning strategies you use in performing listening tasks in your academic listening class in my final report. Before I turn anything in, I will show it to you and have you tell me whether I have accurately represented your views and thoughts. Everything you tell me will be completely confidential, which means that I won't be
able to tell people that I am writing about you or your class. I will ask you to choose a "pen name" (or if you like I can give you one) that is different from your own so as to protect your identity. When I am finished writing my report, I will also erase any audiotapes I have recorded of your class sessions and your interviews.

Since everything you tell me will be held in confidence, your classroom instructor will not know about any of the things you share with me unless you yourself decide to tell her. I also want you to know that it is okay if at any time you want to quit taking part in my study for any reason. As for me, I am really looking forward to talking with you and learning about you this semester.

After you read this letter and feel that you completely understand the things I am going to ask you to do, please indicate your desire to participate in my research project by signing and dating your agreement on the lines below. Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Signature:__________________________________________

Date:______________________________________________
APPENDIX B

Instructor Research Project Release Form

I grant permission for Macel Braxton to use the information provided to her through interviews, observations, and questionnaires for her research study being completed for her dissertation at The Ohio State University.

I reserve the right to discontinue involvement in the study.

I understand my involvement will cause as little disruption to my teaching responsibilities as possible.

I understand that the research information will be shown to the dissertation committee only.

I have read the letter that the students received concerning the study and understand what role they will play in it.

Signature:_____________________________________________

Date:_____________________________________________
APPENDIX C

Second Language Learning Strategies Questionnaire

Dear Student:

Put a circle around the answer that best describes you:

sex: male female

college level: 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year

number of years learning English:

less than 5 5-6 7-8 9-10 more than 10

Fill in the blank with the correct information:

native country: ______________________________________________
native language: ____________________________________________

Instructions

A. The following statements describe some study habits and ways of thinking which one might employ in the study of English as a Second Language. Evaluate each statement by circling the appropriate evaluation criterion as explained below. Please be as frank and sincere as possible; there are no right or wrong answers on this questionnaire.

B. To answer the questions in this questionnaire, please note the numbers to the right of each statement refer to the following evaluations:
1-Always    2-Usually    3-Seldom    4-Never

C. For example: Read the example below and circle the number you evaluate as appropriate for you.

1. I talk a lot to myself in English.    1  2  3  4

D. Please complete the rest of the questionnaire in the same manner.

Note: Circle only one response for each statement.

Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) When I respond to cues in oral practice I first formulate the answer to myself in English.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I am not easily distracted from my work when I do my assignments in English.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) It bothers me if I do not understand a structure fully or if I do not exactly know what a word means.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) When something is not clear to me I try to puzzle it out before asking my instructor or fellow student.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I try to apply words or structures, which I have just learned, in paragraphs or conversations.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6) I learn best by rote memory.  
   | never | seldom | usually | always |
   | 4     | 3      | 2       | 1      |

7) I get confused and frustrated easily by all the details which seem to be required in learning English.  
   | never | seldom | usually | always |
   | 4     | 3      | 2       | 1      |

8) I have a very good visual memory, and it helps me recall words and structures readily when I need them.  
   | never | seldom | usually | always |
   | 4     | 3      | 2       | 1      |

9) Reviewing notes taken during class helps me remember words and ideas better.  
   | never | seldom | usually | always |
   | 4     | 3      | 2       | 1      |

10) I learn a lot by participating in small group discussions or conversations in English.  
    | never | seldom | usually | always |
    | 4     | 3      | 2       | 1      |

11) I follow faithfully instructions given in the textbook or provided by the instructor because then I know exactly what I have to do to succeed.  
    | never | seldom | usually | always |
    | 4     | 3      | 2       | 1      |

12) I do not give up easily even if the lesson gets quite hard and requires a lot of thought and/or practice.  
    | never | seldom | usually | always |
    | 4     | 3      | 2       | 1      |
13) I work very carefully in English because I want to be sure that my work is correct the first time.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14) In most learning tasks I find out quite quickly what is important and what is not.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15) It does not bother me to make mistakes when I speak English, even in front of others.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Listening Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) I try to be aware of which grammatical constructions give me the greatest trouble; this way I can pay special attention to them while I listen and practice.  

2) In listening to a taped conversation or in reading a text I take in the overall meaning without picking out key words.  

3) In listening I pick out key words and write them down.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>usually</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4) When I listen to new material on a tape recorder, I read along in the book to connect the sounds with the printed word.

5) During oral practice, I listen for critical features (such as endings or vocabulary items) in a question because I know I will probably be able to use them in my answers.

6) When I listen to a speaker of English I try to anticipate or guess ahead what he will say.

7) In class, I listen very carefully when others - including my instructor - speak; I note errors made by them.

8) I translate a lot into English when I listen to my own native language.

9) When I listen to oral English I identify individual elements of the message first one by one and then I put them together in my mind.
10) When I get stuck on individual words in listening to new material I write them down and look them up later.

11) When I listen to a recording of my own voice I concentrate on comparing my pronunciation and grammar with that of the model.

12) When listening to a conversation I pay special attention to the words which the people involved have selected for that particular situation.

13) When I have an oral assignment I find it helpful to record the whole exercise on tape and then to listen to it many times.

14) When I listen to a tape I try to pay special attention to details in a second or third listening attempt.
15) I try to be aware of which sounds give me the greatest trouble; this way I can pay special attention to them while I listen and practice.

APPENDIX D

Preferred Learning Styles Questionnaire

Dear Student:

Put a circle around the answer that best describes you:

sex: male female

college level: 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year

number of years learning English:

less than 5 5-6 7-8 9-10 more than 10

Fill in the blank with the correct information:

native country: _________________________________

native language: ________________________________

DIRECTIONS: You may do various things to help yourself learn. How often do you think you are likely to do the following? Please use the following scale to rate each item. Place the number on the line provided to identify your answer. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer. Do the sample questions below to practice giving answers.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

1. Almost never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Most of the time

1. ___ I can do more than one thing at once.
2. ____ My mind wanders in class.

Do you have any questions? Alright, now begin the questionnaire.

1. Almost never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Most of the time

1. ____ I usually plan out what I will cover and how I will study when I start to study.

2. ____ I need to take study breaks.

3. ____ I remember better if I have a chance to talk about something.

4. ____ Mental images help me remember.

5. ____ I like to know how the “system” works and what the rules are, then apply what I know.

6. ____ I like to work with some background music.

7. ____ I try to keep my mistakes in perspective.

8. ____ If I write things down, I can remember them better.

9. ____ I like to be able to move around when I work or study.

10. ____ I do not mind it when the teacher tells us to close our books for a lesson.

11. ____ I can trust my “gut feeling” about the answer to a question.

12. ____ I take a lot of notes in class or lectures.

13. ____ I find ways to fill in when I cannot think of a word or phrase, such as pointing, using my hands, or finding a “filler” word (such as “whatchamacallit” or equivalent in the target language).
1. Almost never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Most of the time

14. ____ I hear words in my mind when I read.
15. ____ I work better when it is quiet.
16. ____ I look at the ending when I start a book or story.
17. ____ If I use a computer to learn, I like programs with color and movement.
18. ____ Figuring out the system and the rules for myself contributes a lot to my learning.
19. ____ It is useful to talk myself through a task.
20. ____ I feel the need to check my answers to questions in my head before giving them.
21. ____ I forget things if I do not write them down quickly.
22. ____ When I need to remember something from a book, I can imagine how it looks on the page.
23. ____ I prefer to jump right into a task without taking a lot of time for directions.
24. ____ I am comfortable using charts, graphs, maps, and the like.
25. ____ I try to be realistic about my strengths and weaknesses without dwelling on the weaknesses.
26. ____ I like to complete one task before starting another.
27. ____ I prefer to demonstrate what I have learned by doing something "real" with it rather than take a test or write a paper.
28. ____ I have trouble remembering conversational exchanges word for word.

29. ____ Hearing directions for a task is better for me than reading them.

30. ____ I like to be introduced to new material by reading about it.

SOURCE: Ehrman (1996)
APPENDIX E

PERMISSION SLIP - STUDENT INTERVIEW

The purpose of this research study is to explore the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles may have on the language learning strategies utilized by ESL students in an ESL university classroom, particularly one dealing with academic listening. In order to learn about the influence and how it may affect the listening tasks you perform in English, it is necessary for me to interview you. All of the information received by you as a student will only be seen by my dissertation committee members.

I respect your right to privacy and assure you that there will not be a breach of contract between you as an interviewee and myself as an interviewer. I thank you for your participation in my research study.

Please sign and date below if you are in agreement to be interviewed for this study:

Interviewee_________________________ Date____________________

Interviewer_________________________ Date_____________________
APPENDIX F

STUDENT INTERVIEW I

1. How are you feeling today?
2. Why are you at Marshall University?
3. What are you majoring in at Marshall University? What are you studying here?
4. How long have you lived in West Virginia? The United States?
5. Where are you from?
6. How long have you been speaking English? How old were you when you began to study English?
7. Do you find English to be a difficult language to learn?
8. Do you like English?
9. What kind of classes did you take at home (in your country)?
10. What was the focus of these classes?
11. How is English viewed in your country? Why?
12. What is your best language skill? For example; reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
13. Which one of those skills would you want to improve?
14. Tell me about yourself as a language learner. As a language learner, have you met your goals? Why or why not?
15. How do you feel about your ESL academic listening class?
16. Do you feel that you are learning how to take notes better, and showing improvement in other listening tasks performed in the classroom?

17. Do you interact well with your other classmates in your ESL academic listening class?

18. Do you like working in groups? Why or why not?

19. Do you study your English with your other classmates from the ESL academic listening class?

20. Do you speak English outside of your class? If so, how often?


LISTENING TASKS

1. Do you feel like your listening has improved?

2. What are some problems that you are experiencing when listening in class?

3. What do you do when you don’t understand - when you do not understand someone speaking English, what is your typical response when you don’t understand (what do you usually say)?

4. How safe do you feel raising your hand, asking a question, and saying that you don’t understand?

5. What could your teacher do to help you succeed in taking better notes? In improving your listening?

6. What are your study habits?

7. Which seems to be easier for you to understand when you are listening - a taped lecture or your teacher lecturing to you? Why?

8. What type of listening tasks do you perform outside of the classroom to improve your listening? Why those particular tasks?
9. How careful do you listen when you are holding a conversation with a native speaker?

10. Do you translate a lot into English when you listen to your own native language?

LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. What do you feel your strategy for learning a language is? (learning strategy – skill or technique that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish specific learning tasks).

2. Do you use any particular strategies when you are listening to a lecture or taking notes in your academic listening class?

3. Do you learn a lot by participating in small group discussions or conversations in English in your academic listening class? Why or why not?

4. Do you review your notes taken during class? Why or why not?

5. Do you have a good visual memory? If so, how does it help you in your academic listening class?

6. Does it bother you to make mistakes when you speak English in class in front of your classmates? Why or why not?

7. How do you learn best; for example, by writing information to learn down on paper, by memorization, or what?

8. Do you become easily distracted from your work in your academic listening class when you do your assignments in English?
PREFERRED LEARNING STYLES

1. What do you feel your style of learning English is? (learning style - general approach used in learning a new language).

2. Do you take a lot of notes when you listen to a lecture in your academic listening class? Why or why not?

3. What are some things that work better for you when you are trying to understand what a native speaker is saying to you, for example, do you put a mental picture in your mind of what that person is saying, do you have to ask that person to repeat what they are saying to you?

4. Do you have a particular style of taking notes in your academic listening class when you listen to a taped lecture? When you listen to your teacher lecture?

5. When you are given directions in class for a particular listening task, is it better for you to hear those directions or to read them? Why or why not?

6. Are you able to remember things better if you write them down? Why or why not?

CULTURE

1. How is the skill of listening viewed in the language classrooms in your country? Are you given listening tasks to do in those classes?

2. Do you feel that your educational training from home (meaning your country) influences the way you learn in your ESL academic listening class? Why or why not?

3. Do your teachers in your country lecture and require you to take notes? If so, how is the class there different/similar from your class here at Marshall?

4. How do you view the listening tasks that you perform in class? Do you find them useful? Why or why not?
5. Do you feel that it is important to write down everything the teacher says when she lectures? Why or why not?

6. Is music used as a form of learning in the classroom in your country? Do you find that listening to the words of different songs helps you to understand English better? Why or why not?
APPENDIX G

STUDENT INTERVIEW II

1. When performing listening tasks in the English classes that you took in your country, what strategies did you use?

2. When performing listening tasks in the English classes that you take here at Marshall University, what strategies do you use?

3. How does your learning style preference affect your listening tasks when learning English?

4. What main part of your cultural background seems to affect the language learning strategies you use during listening tasks in your academic listening class?

5. What is the main strategy that you use when you listen to English in your academic listening class?

6. How proficient do you perceive yourself to be in performing various listening tasks in English in your academic listening class? (proficient meaning to what degree one knows the language)
APPENDIX H

PERMISSION SLIP - TEACHER INTERVIEW

The purpose of this research study is to explore the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles may have on the language learning strategies utilized by ESL students in an ESL university classroom, particularly one dealing with academic listening. In order to learn about the influence and how it may affect the listening tasks your students perform in English, it is necessary for me to interview you. All of the information received by you as a teacher will only be seen by my dissertation committee members.

I respect your right to privacy and assure you that there will not be a breach of contract between you as an interviewee and myself as an interviewer. I thank you for your participation in my research study.

Please sign and date below if you are in agreement to be interviewed for this study.

Interviewee___________________________ Date__________________
Interviewer__________________________ Date___________________

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APPENDIX I

TEACHER INTERVIEW

1. How are you feeling today?
2. Why are you teaching at Marshall University?
3. How long have you lived in West Virginia?
4. Where are you from?
5. Do you speak a second language? If so, what language?
6. What else do you teach here besides the academic listening class?
7. Do you like teaching ESL? If so, why?
8. Do you find English to be a difficult language for your students to learn? If so, why?
9. How do you feel about your ESL academic listening class?
10. Do you feel that the four students that I am observing are learning how to perform listening tasks well? If so, why?
11. What does ESL academic listening really mean? What does it consist of?
12. Do you see any improvement in these four students since the first day of class? If so, how much have they improved?
13. Do you think these four ESL students are showing improvement in their note-taking from lectures which you give? From the lectures that are taped?
14. What are some problems that you are experiencing in teaching academic listening tasks to these four ESL students?
15. How do you perceive these four ESL students?

16. Do you interact well with these four ESL students in class?

17. Do these four ESL students seem to work well in group activities?

18. Do these four ESL students interact well with the other ESL students?

19. What do you feel these four ESL students’ style of learning English is? Their preferred learning style? (learning style - general approach used in learning a new language)

20. What is your preferred style of teaching this ESL academic listening class which makes it unique?

21. What do you do in this class to enhance the students’ learning styles?

22. Do you feel you give enough feedback to your students?

23. Do you encourage the students to speak English outside of class?

24. Do you encourage the students to do listening tasks outside of class?

25. Do you see any particular language learning strategies that these four ESL students use when performing listening tasks in your class? (learning strategy - skill or technique that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish specific learning tasks)

26. Do you use any particular strategies when you are teaching the ESL academic listening class? (strategy - a method or plan for teaching or learning)

27. What are some of the problems that you see these four ESL students experiencing when listening in your class?

28. What could you do to help them succeed in taking better notes? In improving their listening?

29. What seems easier for these four ESL students to understand - your lecture or a taped lecture? Why?
30. As an ESL teacher, do you see culture having an influence on these four ESL students in your academic listening class? How?

31. If a cultural influence is prevalent, how does it aid or hinder them in learning in your academic listening class?
APPENDIX J

PERMISSION SLIP - INFORMANT

The purpose of this research study is to explore the influence that cultural background and preferred learning styles may have on the language learning strategies utilized by ESL students in an ESL university classroom, particularly one dealing with academic listening. In order to learn about the influence and how it may affect the listening tasks these ESL students perform in English, it is necessary for me to interview them. You, as an informant, will help me as an interviewer, by your interpretive knowledge, sensitivity, and insights of these students in which you share; thus will aid in rendering the interviews culturally authentic. All of the information received by the students and you as an informant will only be seen by my dissertation committee members.

I respect your right to privacy and assure you that there will not be a breach of contract between you as an informant and myself as an interviewer. I thank you for your participation in my research study.
Please sign and date below if you are in agreement to aid the selected native-speaking student in the interviews for this study.

Informant____________________________ Date____________________
Interviewer___________________________ Date____________________
APPENDIX K

OBSERVATION FIELDNOTES

November 8, 1996

Adnan

10:00 a.m. - Moved in a different seat today. Came into the classroom a little late. He holds a conversation with Yuki. He states to the teacher when she calls on him that he is a visual learner.

10:20 a.m. - Discusses lesson today and answers the teacher's question aloud.

10:25 a.m. - Takes notes on lecture given by ESL teacher. He is rapidly writing down the notes, trying to get everything the teacher is saying.

10:30 a.m. - He writes the answers to questions from his text book.

10:35 a.m. - He takes the review test in his workbook.

10:40 a.m. - He turns in his paper to the teacher.
10:45 a.m. - He listens to his classmates read aloud from his text book.

10:50 a.m. - The ESL teacher dismisses the class.

Isabel

10:00 a.m. - Sits in a different location today. She has stated to the teacher that she sees herself as a tactile learner.

10:20 a.m. - She reads over the sentences out of her text book as the students take turns reading aloud.

10:25 a.m. - She takes notes on the lecture given by the ESL teacher. She has her head laid down on the desk while she takes the notes.

10:30 a.m. - She is writing the answers to questions from her text book.

10:35 a.m. - She takes the review test in her workbook. She asks the teacher a question about the assignment.

10:40 a.m. - She turns in her paper to the teacher.

10:45 a.m. - She listens to her classmates read aloud from her text book.

November 8, 1996
10:50 a.m. - The ESL teacher dismisses the class.

November 8, 1996

**Felipe**

10:00 a.m. - Sits in a different seat today. He states to the teacher when she calls on him that he is a *visual* learner.

10:20 a.m. - He looks at his book and the teacher to find out what to do.

10:25 a.m. - He takes notes on the lecture given by the teacher. He writes his notes quickly to try to get down everything that the teacher is saying.

10:30 a.m. - He answers the questions asked to him by the teacher. He is also asked by the teacher to read aloud from his text book.

10:35 a.m. - He takes the review test in his workbook.

10:40 a.m. - He turns in his paper to the teacher.

10:45 a.m. - He listens to his classmates read aloud from his text book.

10:50 a.m. - The ESL teacher dismisses the class.
November 8, 1996

Yuki

10:00 a.m. - Sits in the same seat that she usually sits in. She states to the teacher when she calls on her that she is a visual learner.

10:20 a.m. - She softly answers the question asked by the teacher.

10:25 a.m. - She takes notes on the lecture given by the teacher. She is continuously taking notes, trying to write down everything the teacher is saying.

10:30 a.m. - She reads aloud a paragraph from her textbook. She uses the dictionary to answer the questions from her textbook.

10:35 a.m. - She takes the review test in her workbook.

10:40 a.m. - She turns in her paper to the teacher.

10:45 a.m. - She listens to her classmates read aloud from her textbook.

NOTE: She picks with her fingernails throughout the class period and drinks a diet coke.
ACADEMIC LISTENING
Level 108

Time: MWF 10:00-10:50

Professor: Emily Clark

Office: GC 20
Home Phone: 525-5625

Course Description:

This course prepares students for the demands of academic lecture comprehension and note-taking. Students will listen to academic lectures, take notes from lectures and organize the information from notes for study. Simulated lectures and some social-oriented listening will be used to provide students with practice in developing listening skills. In addition to in-class listening activities, students are able to use the Language Lab for listening to a variety of other ESL listening selections to improve pronunciation and listening skills. Students will have the opportunity to sit in on a lecture at Marshall and report back to the class on their experience.

Text: Selected Topics, High-Intermediate Listening Comprehension, Kisslinger, (Longman)

GRADES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework -</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>93-100% = A (Excellent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83-92% = B (Good)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam -</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>73-82% = C (Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam -</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>63-72% = D (Unsatisfactory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>≤ 62% = F (Failing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ATTENDANCE POLICY:

All absences will be marked as unexcused. Except in unusual circumstances, any work missed or turned in late will be marked as zero. It is the responsibility of the student to check with the teacher about make up work.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Sept. 4, Wed-Introductions, Class Overview, Preview of Text
Sept. 6, Fri-Chapter 1
Sept. 9, Mon-Chapter 1
Sept. 11, Wed-Chapter 1, Music
Sept. 13, Fri-Video
Sept. 16, Mon-Chapter 2
Sept. 18, Wed-Chapter 2, Music
Sept. 20, Fri-ACTIVITY
Sept. 23, Mon-Chapter 3
Sept. 25, Wed-Chapter 3, Music
Sept. 27, Fri-TOEFL Video
Sept. 30, Mon-Chapter 4
Oct. 2, Wed-Chapter 4, Music
Oct. 4, Fri-ACTIVITY
Oct. 9, Wed-Chapter 5, Music
Oct. 11, Fri-Video
Oct. 14, Mon-Chapter 6
Oct. 16, Wed-Chapter 6, Music
Oct. 18, Fri-MIDTERM EXAM
Oct. 21, Mon-Chapter 7
Oct. 23, Wed-Chapter 7, Music
Oct. 25, Fri-TOEFL/ACTIVITY
Oct. 28, Mon-Chapter 8
Oct. 30, Wed-Chapter 8, Music
Nov. 1, Fri-ACTIVITY
Nov. 4, Mon-Chapter 9
Nov. 6, Wed-Chapter 9, Music
Nov. 8, Fri-Activity
Nov. 11, Mon-Chapter 10
Nov. 13, Wed-Chapter 10, Music
Nov. 15, Fri-ACTIVITY
Nov. 18, Mon-Chapter 11
Nov. 20, Wed-Chapter 11, Music
Nov. 22, Fri-Video
Nov. 25, Mon-Chapter 12
Nov. 27, Wed-Chapter 12, Music
Nov. 29, Fri-THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Dec. 2, Mon-Chapter 13
Dec. 4, Wed-Chapter 13, Music
Dec. 6, Fri-ACTIVITY
Dec. 9, Mon-FINAL EXAM
APPENDIX M

Interview I

Felipe October 31, 1996

M=Macel (Interviewer)
F=Felipe (Interviewee)

M: How are you feeling today? I know you’ve already told me, but.

F: Well, sometimes I feel good. Sometimes I don’t feel good. You know home sickness is the worst sick that I feel in this country. And, actually uh I don’t feel good this week. I don’t know why. Maybe the change of season Fall the leaves fall. And, then sometimes I feel like I don’t waste my time here because I don’t understand everything. I cannot express myself my ideas like I can in Spanish. But, I know that this is normal. I been here only for two months and I expect to improve my English around six months. Uh, but sometimes I don’t feel good. I feel sad that on the other hand I feel very good because this experience is almost impossible to do other people in my country. I have privilege. I am priviledged because this is kind of expensive for other people in my country.

M: And, why are you here at Marshall University?

F: For what?

M: Why are you here at Marshall University?

F: I am International Student. I just study English all of my time. I start at 9:00am and finish around 2:30 or 3:00pm. I only take English classes. Different kind of English. Writing, reading, listening, but only English. No more than English.

M: Okay, and you said that you’ve been here in West Virginia for two months?
F: Yes.

M: Is that the same amount of time you’ve been in the United States as well?

F: No. This is the third time in the United States. I went here and I went in Miami, but around fifteen years ago. Only to know Orlando, you know this is the typical trip for all the children in. I mean all the world wants to know Mickey Mouse. (Laughter) And, the second time was around three years ago. I was in Boston. And, I was there in an English course about only for one month. And, I improved my español a lot. I only speak español there because every people every classmate speak Spanish. And, I had Mexican girlfriend. (Laughter) Was very nice. I was very fun there, but I didn’t learn English. I waste my money. It was very nice. I didn’t feel good when I returned my country. My mother asked me hey, how was the course? Good, very nice. Very nice Spanish course. What? What do you say? (Laughter)

M: Well, since you’re from Columbia have you learned English before in your country? And, if so how old were you?

F: It’s an obligation. Our schools teach English and French. But, in the two last years of high school you can choose French between French and English. I chose English around five the last six years of high school I started English and two years at the University I studied English. But, the University was technical English. Industrial engineering and I learned about technical terms and engineering. It’s different. It’s not it’s more reading and comprehension you know technical words. But, this is different.

M: Do you like English?

F: Yes, I love English?

M: Do you?

F: Yes. I am lucky because in my house we have a satellite dish and I can get Discovery channel and Cinemax, HBO and other channels. I like to see movies
in English without translation. And, Discovery channel is very nice because they speak very slow, very good and very pronunciation too.

M: Do you find English a difficult language to learn?

F: No. This is ambiguous answer because yes, but no. Yes because when you think about the grammar composition and try to speak with grammar and composition you cannot do that. Because maybe you need more time to think. Okay thinking this is the correct way. And, if I do that other people who talk with me was worried. You thinking too much to say two or three words. This is kind of difficult because I think in Spanish and try and translate when I speaking and grammar is different. Maybe I sound like bizarre. To speak in this order you don't follow one strict order because I'm thinking in Spanish. But, it's easier than Spanish. Definitely easier than Spanish.

M: English?

F: Yes.

M: For you? Really?

F: Yes. Verbs for example. Verbs is the root of all language in Spanish and English verbs is most important. If you don't say one verb don't say anything. And, past, future and present is easier. Spanish is very difficult because if you talk about more than one people change completely verb. Future, past sometimes in Spanish I have doubts about how do I say one word. This is correct? Because verbs the worst.

M: I agree. Well, what kind of classes did you take at home? Meaning in your country.

F: In my country. English, basically grammar and listening. This is most important lesson in English. But, grammar teachers there follow one book. And, show different situations each chapter show different situation about English. For example, do you have any brothers and sisters? This is the name of one chapter and it starts with talk about this chapter and the teachers make a situation you are Tony, you are Robert and ask him and answer and follow the book. When I
came here the first time one people made me the same question, but with other words. I didn’t understand.

M: I know. I understand what you’re saying. How is English viewed in your country? How do people look at it?

F: I think it’s most important language in the world. And, English make difference between one good salary and no good salary.

M: In your country?

F: Yes.

M: Really?

F: Yes. This like one undergraduate degree. If you speak English you have for example, I am industrial engineering. And, if I speak English I have two degrees. Like two degrees. Engineering and spoken English. It’s kind of this is very important. And, many companies in the city where I live at Cali there are many companies from the United States and other countries like Baxter Laboratories and Colgate you know. Johnson and Johnson and Gillete, they asked about people that speak English.

M: So, you need to know how to speak English when you return to your country?

F: Yes. It makes difference.

M: What do you feel your best language skill is for example the skill meaning reading, writing, speaking and listening out of those four skills which one do you feel is your best or strongest?

F: Well, I think it’s easier for me than speaking. This I think maybe you feel in my class that I speak more than Arabic guys or Japanese girls. But, I think it is more easy for me reading. When I came here I almost don’t understand every people. I don’t understand. I don’t know why maybe I was accustomed in my country to listen to Discovery channel, for example, different kind of conversations. It’s like a history about animals.
But, it’s not impolite conversation. It’s not informal conversation. I couldn’t understand, but now I feel better.

M: You feel you can understand better.

F: Yeah, definitely.

M: So, if you were able to improve one of those skills, which one would you like to improve?

F: Listening and speaking. I need listen first. If I can’t listen and if I can’t speak then the other won’t come.

M: The reading and writing will come. For yourself as a language learner, when I say as a language learner, meaning learning English for you I’m sure you have specific goals. Like you just suggested you want to learn how to speak and listen better, so with your specific goals do you feel like you have met your goals yet? Have you gotten to the point where you feel like you have met them or do you feel like you have more work to do?

F: I need more work. I think here I can improve I can improve my English very better than in Boston for example. Here I need I must use English. In Boston if I don’t need use my English I can do that.

M: Why is that? Between West Virginia and Boston would you not have to use it in Boston?

F: Because in Boston I can find in each corner one people who speak Spanish.

M: Okay.

(Laughter)

F: It was very funny because I was walking in Harberry Square and I saw a kind of tropical music and I walked down the street and I saw one four people singing in Spanish. And, all people American and Spanish people dancing and I say this is my country. I feel like my country.
M: How do you feel about your ESL academic listening class that you’re taking?

F: I think it is one of the best classes. And, it’s very important because when I came here I feel that I didn’t understand and I pay special attention. I paid special attention in this class cause I need to improve my listening. My listening skill. The same thing about the laboratory I put very special attention to this class too. But, right now I feel that this class is very easy. When I start I feel it was very difficult, but now I feel it is very easy.

M: It’s getting easier for you. Well, do you feel that you’re learning to improve in taking notes in this listening classroom.

F: Yes, definitely. I make uh first time I made bad take notes. I think about four or five sentence. No more than four or five sentence. And, I’m not sure I only got one to two words and I tried to make some sentence. But, now I understand maybe not all words, but I understand what is the meaning. What are they talking about. I know the difference.

M: And, the other listening task, for example, that you do; do you like to listen to the songs and music once a week. Is that helpful to you?

F: Yes, but sometimes music I prefer to listen to rhythm than the words. This is a personality. Other people loves to sing it, I prefer to follow the rhythm. And, sometimes I pay attention more to the rhythm, the music than the words.

M: Oh, okay.

F: I think it’s good cause.

M: Do you feel like you interact well with other classmates in the ESL academic listening class?

F: Yes. Yes, I like them. This class isn’t when Emily reads she reads very good. And, I think the other people enjoy what she reads. This is a dynamic class. I think she’s more specific in class than in homework, for example. I think sometimes the homework is boring because when I make up homework and come back to class
the next class and I go to the next class, and this class answer the homework. It’s like repeat.

M: Yes, I understand what you’re saying.

F: I prefer to do homework in class then take my time in other kinds of activities, for example, watching TV or talking with Americans.

M: And, that will help you improve your listening skills?

F: Yes.

M: Well, do you like working in groups?

F: Uh.

M: In the class. I know sometimes your time is divided into groups. How do you like that?

F: I sometimes because you know, for example, other guys don’t want to learn English. They are very lazy. And, I need to do double work. My work and his work. Sometimes to work in couples is good because he helps me and I can help, but in this case only I have work.

M: Do you sometimes study with your other classmates from the listening class? Do you guys get together and study sometimes or is there anyone in ‘the class’ that you study with?

F: No.

M: You just basically study by yourself.

F: Yes.

M: Well, outside of your classroom do you usually try to speak English?

F: Yes.

M: With other people?

F: Yes. I have on my same uh floor lives another guy from Korea.

M: But, he’s in that listening class?
F: Yes. He’s a classmate in all classes. And, I try to talk with him about homework in English because he doesn’t understand Spanish of course. And, I try to be not close with Isabel because she speaks Spanish. I try to stay far away from her, but I try to speak only in English and understand everything in English. When I don’t understand I prefer ask him than Isabel.

M: Okay. Now, when your teacher in the listening class gives you feedback and, what I mean by feedback is when you get your test papers back or when you get your homework assignments back or quizzes or any of the written lecture work that you get back, when she responds to you because feedback is a response that she gives you like a grade or if she gives you comments, how do you view those comments that she gives you on your work?

F: Uh, fortunately I have good grades. And, she write on my papers good job. Or, sometimes excellent or, for example, when we were in regular class at Marshall I was taking notes there and I think my notes was very good because I understand everything. She wrote good job. I feel good. I think it’s good way to say you improve your English or you are not good. Or be careful.

M: So, it helps give you some type of understanding or idea what you should be doing.

F: Some people don’t like grades. This is a number, I’m not a number. But, if you uh look at other point of view is good because it’s a measure of your improve or not improve.

M: Now, as far as your listening, not only in the listening class, but as you listen you know to other people speak, native speakers, listen to television programs and other listening tasks in English that you may perform, do you feel like you have improved quite a bit since you first arrived?

F: Yes, yes I feel better, the first time I feel like I can communicate my ideas better than the first time. Two months ago I couldn’t speak fluently I only say the same words around 20 words that I know. I mix all the time the same 20 words. Uh, and when somebody ask me about my country or about what are you doing here. I
was very confused because I don’t know to say where, when, why. You know, the same kind of question. You can say the same words, but only if you change why, where, when. It’s different.

M: You can only do certain answers. Memorized answers.

F: Yes, yes I memorized answers.

M: Well, now in your listening class what kind of problems are you experiencing in the listening tasks you know that the teacher gives you? What are some of the problems?

F: Sometimes, I can’t understand her. She reads and some expression, for example, give up, for example. This kind of up, out, off. Some words in English if you combine with of, at, out, in, on means different. We have in Spanish we have no this kind of words. If you, for example, let’s say give up. This words these words don’t have translation to Spanish. I feel confused, cause she say give and up. What is give up?

M: Okay, yes I understand.

F: She in the lecture say give, but up 7th floor, maybe? Or, what she say, what she say? This kind of problem I have. Other problem may be some situations, some questions. I have problem with questions.

M: Do you?

F: Yes. I have problem. I was very I was a little bit afraid because this is an interview and you make questions.

M: Okay.

F: And, I have problem with questions.

M: When people ask you questions?

F: Yes, because maybe I understand, but I’m not sure if I understand correct.

M: In English, what I’m asking you?

F: Yes.
M: Well, anytime if you don't understand what I'm asking you, you tell me to explain.

F: But, I answer what you ask me or I answer different.

M: Yes, I just want you to answer what you feel, you know. What is coming from how you feel, but if it's a specific question that you do not quite understand the whole question, say I don't understand. Explain it to me because that's what I'm supposed to do. And, I know having a list might make you feel uncomfortable, but it's so many questions that I can't half remember in my mind, but that's why I don't want you feel nervous or anything because there's no right or wrong answer. I just want to get to the truth as to how you feel about all these questions that I'm asking you. It is what you feel. It's not what somebody else feels, statistics feel, people say. It's what you feel. So, when you do not understand something in your listening class, for example, or you don't understand someone speaking English, you're just not quite clear on what they're saying or what you should be saying, you know back to them. What do you usually do? What's your typical or usual response? Do you have a sort of mannerism or a set thing that you say to them or what do you usually do when you really don't understand something in English?

F: First, I try to guess, cause I can get some words at least one or two that I try to guess. If I understand I ask Emily, I don't understand or I try to look for in my book for example. If I listen some word or two words I'm looking for in my book sometimes related. Something related about this conversation. This is my usual way. But, I ask the best way uh Emily, I don't understand, could you repeat?

M: So, in other words, if you don't understand and you have a question, you don't feel uncomfortable raising your hand in class and asking?

F: No.

M: What do you think your teacher could do to help you in improving your listening?

F: Maybe read I think sometimes she reads too much. And, some lectures are very long. She can divide, for
example, in shorts. For example, she feels the one part this is confused she try to stop. For example, like she play a tape and she stops the tape sometimes to review and part of this is a good way. But maybe she try to invite other people to read in class because I custom to hear her reading.

M: Also, other native speakers of English.
F: Yes.
M: To have them come and do a lecture.
F: Yes.
M: And, that way it would be good. That's a good idea.
F: Yes, because for example I understand my roommate in everything because I know how he says some stuff.
M: So, your roommate is from West Virginia?
F: Virginia.
M: Virginia, oh okay.
F: He speak the same thing. He say the same ways to say something. I know what he say after my question, but when I try and talk with other people. Raul's roommate, Raul's from Colombia, I don't understand.

M: His roommate?
F: His roommate.
M: His roommate is from West Virginia?
F: I think. I'm not sure.
M: But, he's a native English speaker. He speaks English. So, it's hard for you to understand him?
F: Yeah.
M: Do you feel like you have good study habits in English? Do you study a lot? Discipline yourself?
F: No. No, sometimes I feel like I have no time to do all the things that I like to do. For example, I would like to watch TV more, but I don't have time because I would like to go to Center or go downtown or I don't have time to do all kinds of things that I like to do, but I try to fix my time, like a budget. Budget my time.

M: Which seems to be easier for you to learn when you're listening, a taped lecture on the tape recorder or your teachers?

F: No, teacher's speaking. Teacher's speaking because I customize I hear you know. But, I think it's good the taped.

M: You do?

F: Yes.

M: Now, in addition to the task the listening task you know like she has you listen to music, songs once a week and listen to lectures either from herself or giving them or a taped one, what other listening tasks do you like to do in learning English you know outside of the classroom to improve it? Are there specific or particular tasks that you like to do to improve your listening?

F: Maybe watching some news for example. And, to get main idea about the news. Maybe this would be good. I don't know.

M: That's fine. You don't have to give a real long answer either. When you do hold a conversation with a native speaker of English, are you real careful in listening to what they say?

F: Yes, sometimes after if I'm talking about any topic American after one hour I have headache because I try to pay more attention right to don't make mistakes. Trying to understand clearly and everything. After that I have a headache. I use my brain.

M: Now, when you listen to your own native language of Spanish when you are speaking to other Spanish speakers, do you try to practice translating English when you are speaking Spanish?
F: Sometimes, yes. Sometimes I try to translate for example song in Spanish or jokes in Spanish. I try to translate. I was speaking, I was saying jokes in English, but sometimes it’s funny, sometimes it’s not funny because in Spanish jokes play with the words. Similar words mean.

M: Yes, play on words. Different from?

F: But, I try to translate songs too. I was in the radio station and actually I have a program each Saturday after 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and I try DJ and in the radio station ask me about what this song say. I try to translate. I am the DJ at this.

M: In WMUL?

F: Yes.

M: Oh, you’re a DJ there?

F: Yes.

M: I didn’t know that.

F: Yes.

M: Do you play Spanish music?

F: Yes.

M: When?

F: All Saturday. Every Saturday.

M: Every Saturday. What time?

F: We start at 2:00 p.m. and end at 4:00 p.m.

M: You play Spanish music from 2:00 and 4:00 every Saturday?

F: Yes, yes. But, this Saturday we have no program because of the football game.

M: Homecoming.

F: Yes, homecoming.
M: I didn’t know that.
F: Yes.
M: Well, I’m glad to know that.
F: I recall and I speak in English. I read the weather.
M: In English or in Spanish?
F: In English.
M: But, you play Spanish music.
F: But, I only play Spanish music, but I mostly speak in English.
M: Well, that’s wonderful.
F: Sometimes I say some words in Spanish. The name of the song for example I say in Spanish. Sometimes I translate in English. For example, I was playing last Saturday one song called, (Spanish). Very interesting to know the name. I was in Chesapeake, a high school in Chesapeake. The Spanish teacher invited me to talk about my country about some topics in her class. And, I wrote the “Macarena” lyrics for example.
M: Oh, did you?
F: Yes. Every time was interesting. What this song say? It was very exciting.
M: That’s wonderful. Now, what I wanted to ask you now, I’m giving you a definition of what I’m getting to ask you because you know you may not understand. What I’m asking you is what do you feel your strategy for learning a language is? And, what I mean by strategy is it’s a skill that an individual has and they use in order to complete a specific learning task in learning that language. So, that’s what strategy means. So, my question is, what do you feel that your specific strategy is? What you use when you’re trying to learn English?
F: I don’t understand.
M: You don’t understand.
F: No.

M: Okay, okay a strategy is like a technique.

F: Yes, I know this word, but what do you want to know about my?

M: Okay, like when you’re learning English as a second language, what do you feel like you do in order to learn?

F: Okay, I understand. Do you mean what is my strategy to learn some stuff?

M: Yes.

F: I think guessing. I think guess is most important. Sometimes when other people ask me I try to guess. Say maybe he asked about my country. I start to speak about my country maybe it is not the specific question maybe it is relate about the question. I told him about my country and maybe he repeat the question, more specifically this time. But, this is my strategy to listen, guessing. Maybe she or he try to say try to ask about whatever. I start to answer his or her question that I think is true.

M: Does it work a lot for you?

F: Yes, yes. Almost never. I feel good when some people ask me and I answer response the question because they accept what I say.

M: What you say?

F: Yes.

M: But, most of the time you are guessing at what they are asking you because you are really not sure?

F: Yes, this is the first the principal problem. I’m not sure what some people say. I’m not sure, but I try guessing.

M: Is this the same type of strategy that you use in your teacher’s class too?

F: Yes, guessing.
M: When you're listening to her or listening to a lecture.

F: When I don't understand, I try to stop when about a couple of seconds or more and stop and hey, she say something. I'm not sure I ask. I don't understand. Could you repeat? I met one girl in the Center and she asked me about how long have you been here? But, I don't know I'm not sure if she ask me here or the past or the future. I was confused.

M: Okay.

F: I didn't listen how long have you been this is the past form? I don't listen. I didn't listen this part. And, I ask please I don't understand. Could you repeat the question? Sometimes the people change the question?

M: When they repeat it for the second time?

F: Yes.

M: It's not the same thing that they asked you before.

F: Yes, or change the words. Maybe the same meaning, but changed the words. I expect to say the question again because I got some words. And, I need to complete it. But, when people change the question. Another time I feel confused. It has happened many times. For example, you asked me how old are you? I don't understand you say please tell me your age. I feel confused again because maybe I don't understand second time.

M: It's two ways of asking the same question.

F: Yes, I prefer people repeat the same question.

M: When you do, I know you said earlier when you participate with another non-native speaker of English sometimes you don't get to learn anything, but sometimes when you're in groups do you get to transact, you know learn something from someone else? Does it happen sometimes when you're in the groups in the listening class?

F: Yes, yes. It's kind of repeat. I try to guess or talk about, but sometimes I have problems.
M: Understanding another student in the class?

F: Yes, yes.

M: Sometimes you don’t really learn anything by what I’m saying. It’s like when you interact and communicate with another native speaker do you sometimes learn from them?

F: Yes, yes I try to get some expressions use after. But, when classmates sometimes I try to guess, but he say and I’m not sure if he say correct or he made a mistake for example. I try to get from only native English speakers. Not from my classmates.

M: Oh, okay. Because they are learning too.

F: Yes. They are similar.

M: Do you have a good visual memory? Do you remember?

F: Yes. But, my problem is sometimes I don’t feel good because I learn some forms in grammar class, but when I try to use and try to talk with these forms I make I feel confused. Because I have in my mind other ways to say something. Maybe is wrong way, but never correct me before. I think is correct. If I learn other way, I have two ways to say it, maybe one is wrong, the second is correct, but I used first one because nobody told me, hey this form is not good. This form is wrong. And, I use the first one because I was used to talking like this.

M: So, you use that in the listening class as well.

F: Yes.

M: Now, when you take your notes in class, do you usually review them? Go over them? Look over them to see whether or not you think that you made some mistakes?

F: Yes, yes sometimes I go back when I listen in the end, for example, I remember one sentence the speaker says before and I complete, for example.

M: Does it bother you when if you would make a mistake you know in your listening class in front of the class? Does it bother you to make a mistake?
F: Sometimes.

Tape One Side One Ends

F: Sometimes I would like to talk with good pronunciation and when I read when I express an idea and make a mistake it doesn't bother me, but I don't feel good. Sometimes I say this is easy. When I say this word bad? This is easy. Some words comfortable and when I read convertible. Because I speak it.

M: You get it mixed up with the pronunciation. Because they're so close.

F: Yes.

M: English and Spanish. Now another one I want to explain the definition of, I wanted to ask you this is different from strategy. I wanted to know what do you feel like your style of learning English is? What your style and what I mean by style is it's an approach that you use. It's an approach. It's different from a strategy. This is like an approach that you use in learning a language. Something that you come into the classroom with like it's a preconceived preference. Something that you prefer you know using in learning a language. And, that's different from a strategy. So, what I'm going to ask you now, is what is your preferred style that you use in learning English? What do you prefer?

F: Listening, pronunciation. Where I work this is my style. For example, I pay special attention to teacher pronounce the word, cause I think this most difficult, but it's most important too. English is not difficult. English is difficult if you don't pronounce very good. I can say some words for example most things. This is very difficult, but I try to say mountains like people say here.

M: Yes.

F: In other, in my country when I learn this word I say mountains, you know. Nobody here understand me if I mountains. It's mountains. Something like that.

M: It is mountains.
F: It is very difficult.

M: But, see here it's a different accent totally.

F: This is my style. Listen each word pronunciation of each word.

M: As the person, the native speaker of English speaks do you listen to every word that they say?

F: Yes.

M: Now, when you said earlier in the course when you first began in the listening course, you took a few notes, now you take more. Do you see yourself taking more notes than you did before?

F: Yes, I do. Right now I increase my notes in about 40% or 50%.

M: Really?

F: Yes. Sometimes I feel like I’m doing correctly because I write too much sometimes. But, this is not taking notes this is copy. But, I think it’s good.

M: But, it’s really not copying because you are listening. You are writing down what you hear. So, that’s really an improvement, isn’t it?

F: I feel the first lecture about computers I remember about computers I feel was very difficult. I thought to talk with Emily because this class I feel was very most difficult class. But, now this only one best class that I receive.

M: Oh, really?

F: Yes.

M: That’s excellent. You said that you have a style of listening word by word when you listen. Do you have a particular style that you use when you’re taking notes in class too?

F: I think that this style my style is like in Spanish I only write the clue words. I use many arrows take notes, for example. And, say computers make an arrow
and say important machine. And, built arrow 1950. I
don't make complete sentence. The computers was built
in 1950. Computer arrow built arrow 1950. This is my
style.

M: When you take notes in her class?

F: Yes, yes this is the same as Spanish. I use arrows. I
use I don't the name like you know this kind of like
this one.

M: Okay. Brackets. Uh huh, the brackets. You use those
or the arrows?

F: Yes. I write only words. No sentence big sentence,
for example, when teacher we were talking about
dyslexia. Say different kind of dyslexia. I wrote
dyslexia here make an arrow or a bracket and write
learning problem. It's not illness. You know this
kind of take notes. This is my style.

M: Do you feel that your educational training, what I
mean, your education the classes that you had in your
own country in Colombia affects the way you learn in
the classes here?

F: Yes. Because my country I learn to memorize same kinds
of sentence. And, answer with same kinds of answers.
And, there teachers in the system I don't know I don't
know how don't let me make my own answer or make my own
question. If I don't make question like the book says,
it's wrong.

M: Really?

F: Yes. For example, do you have any brothers and sister?
This is typical question in my book. But, if I try to
ask how many brothers do you have? Maybe it's correct,
but I didn't follow the book. It's not correct.

M: So, in your country it's follow the book exactly?

F: Yes, yes.

M: Now, in this listening class though, it's a little
different, isn't it? You don't have to follow the
book?
F: Yes, yes this is different. This is other way to teach English. I don't have to make question in my listening class, but I try I need to understand the question. How the other people may make question and how other people answer this question.

M: But, do you have a tendency, what I mean by tendency, do you sometimes since you had that training and that type of education in your home, isn't it easy to kind of follow that same pattern here? I mean sometimes don't you, do you use what you know?

F: Yes, yes I use because this way I was using the way many years.

M: So, it's kind of hard to break this.

F: Yes.

M: You have a tendency to use that same format here in your class?

F: Yes, yes. My I have in my mind many words teacher written, no?

M: Uh huh.

F: I say does the sentence without thinking because it's recorded in my brain. Maybe it's good because I correct way to pronounce it to ask back. In this part of my brain, don't this brain don't let in new forms.

M: Because you're used to.

F: Yes.

M: Now, do you feel like your culture and there's so many different definitions of culture, but culture meaning you know your habits, your behavior, what you grew up with, what you learned in your country, do you think that influences how you learn English here?

F: This is a difficult question.

M: I know.

(Laughter)
M: If you can't answer it, don't worry about it.

F: This is complex because.

M: I know it is.

F: Because what I think sometimes is when I am speaking Spanish, we use many articles, for example. I try to use this kind of articles in English, but English you don't use many articles. And, for example.

M: Like el and los.

F: Yes, for example, listen to the radio is correct, but maybe listen to the music is not correct, but we say listen to the music. I don't when to use on, in, at, for example. We have not this kind of difference. You say in Spanish, you can "aqui", but here it's different. At, for example, at Marshall University, why not in Marshall University, on Marshall University? Why not?

M: Because "in" means "at".

F: Why "at"? Why "on"? Why not "in", you know? And, this is an influence in English, my Spanish mind influenced in my English mind. I think I tried to answer this question.

M: You did. You answered it perfect. That's a hard question because a lot people say, it's a big, big issue as to when you learn a language. Like, for example, when I started learning, Spanish and Latin where Latin is really you can't speak like, for example, the Spanish you can. So, you say the educators always say well, when you learn a new language are you learning the culture? Now, my answer has always been you cannot learn a language without learning the culture, but some people argue that point and say they are not the same. But, that's what I was trying to you know find out from you because, if you learn English, are you learning the culture? When you learn Spanish, are you learning the culture? The influence from your country you bring here when you're learning English. To you, is there an influence from your upbringing?
F: Yes, I brought many customs and to talk, for example, we use many words like, what. We use, for example, in Spanish you say, some people stay outside that in that we use many that or what, you know.

M: The "que"?

F: Yes, "que" means means location. Is not question. It means location. I try to talk in English like in Spanish.

M: And, it.

F: Many not too many people understand.

M: Because you’re transferring Spanish into English?

F: Yes.

M: But, like you said it’s difficult not to because you’ve been speaking Spanish longer than English. Well, I know you’re tired and you have done excellent. Oh, thank you so much. This is a wonderful interview.

F: Finished?

M: Yes, because I know you’re tired. I have another one to give you.

Tape One Side Two Ends

Interview II

Felipe November 19, 1996

M=Macel (interviewer)
F=Felipe (interviewee)

M: If this is working. Testing, testing this is a test. Okay, Felipe when performing listening tasks in your English class, in your country, in Colombia, what strategies did you use when you were doing listening tasks in your English class in Colombia?

F: During the test?
M: Tasks. Listening tasks. Like the task that you do here for example, note taking, listening to teacher lecture. What type in your own country?

F: Uh, listen to music.

M: You listen to music in class?

F: Yes, music in class. Uh, try to fill out blanks. Uh teacher gave us piece of paper with the lyrics words to music and we try to fill out. Uh, what else? Watching some program like documentaries, you know. Maybe like Discovery Channel or sometimes CNN news or Batman. Most times I just listen music. American music.

M: So, when you did perform that type of specific task, what type of strategy did you use in order to understand the English?

F: I prefer watching TV.

M: Okay, like strategy, like what I talked about before, a technique that you used.

F: Okay in the past, I didn’t have a TV with with close captioned. Right now, it’s helped me a lot. Because I can hear and read almost at the same time. When I was in my country uh.

M: What technique did you use to learn English?

F: Well, I didn’t have technique or my teacher. When I would to the classes more like okay, listen music and try to fill blanks and.

M: What I mean is what did you do to try to understand?

F: Myself?

M: Yes. Your own.

F: Uh, pay attention a lot and try to write some words that I don’t understand and look in front of the dictionary or ask, but they say. Really I didn’t have one big technique. Here I try to change.
M: Well, my other question is when you perform listening tasks like a lecture or listen to the music tape in the class, listen to your teacher's lecture or a taped lecture, what specific strategy do you use when you perform the task here?

F: Basically.

M: Is there a specific type of technique that you use?

F: Basically, is watching TV a lot. Or, listening to conversation. Try to get some words and expressions and actually I have a TV with closed captions. This help me a lot because I can't write some words that I didn't understand. And, look in front of the dictionary after that, but I think this is my strategy. Listen a lot. Try to get more quantity of words that I can. Of course, take notes is good idea. I don't like to take notes a lot.

M: You don't

F: No, I don't, but I know this is very important.

M: Did you take notes a lot in your own country? In Colombia, in your class?

F: But, when I was in high school, my high school has a different kind of education. It's not traditional education. This education is big classes like the name is Monster classes. Teacher explain and the teacher they give us kind of guide, points to make our research in groups. It's not like copy. You take notes about my test.

M: You didn't do that?

F: No. For this reason I think I don't have this custom to take notes. But, at university I try to take notes, but I prefer to draw more than write. For example, I use a lot of arrows, expressions like circles, for example, one "x" and one little "upper X" means human.

M: Oh, you draw pictures for words when you take notes?

F: Yes. I'm trying to change because you know I don't if I understand what is it.
M: But, that's what you've been doing?

F: Yes, Egyptian or whatever.

(Laughter)

M: So, that's been one way that you take notes here in your class?

F: Yes.

M: Okay, We talked a couple a weeks ago about your learning style preference. How you prefer to learn. You know like some people are visual learners. Some people are auditory learners. Some people are kinesthetic you know. Some people like to touch or do tasks that are hands on, so what I wanted to know is how does your preferred learning style have an affect on the listening tasks that you perform in your academic listening class?

F: Uh, you mean about my listening?

M: Whichever, you know you said one of your preferences was listening. It was your preferred style of learning.

F: Yes.

M: So, how does that affect how you learn English in your academic listening class?

F: I don't understand.

M: Okay. How does it affect, when I say affect, how does it have a bearing on how you learn?

F: I know that word. I don't understand.

M: Okay, the way you prefer to listen, for example, in your class, when the teacher gives directions, do you prefer, for example for her to read the directions to you before you're getting ready to do an assignment? Or, would you prefer to read the directions yourself? That would be one example. In the different tasks that she gives you, you know, there are options. When she writes the vocabulary words on the board would you rather for her to write them or just tell them to you?
F: No. I prefer to write and first look for the English dictionary, for example. But, I prefer to write. Some uh I have a book, notebook, with all, not all, but almost all of words that I learn that is new for me. And, I write in it, but no I prefer listening and write what kind of words I don’t understand and looking for the dictionary.

M: So, you’d rather listen to the words and write down what you think you hear than for someone to write them down for you?

F: Yeah. But, I prefer to write.

M: But, I mean instead of the teacher writing them on the board for you, you would rather hear her say them and you write them down from what you hear?

F: Yes, yes.

M: Than to see them. So, you’re more of an auditory learner than a visual learner?

F: Yes, yes.

M: So, your preference would be to listen.

F: Yes, because when I write I hear and I know my listening is the worst in my English and I try to improve my listening. And, I use more my listening than my speaking or my writing. I can read right now, news in the newspaper. I couldn’t do that before, but right now I can. But, I prefer to sharpen my ear more.

M: In English? In listening to English?

F: Yes.

M: Now, this is another kind of question I asked you before. You said you don’t have an overall strategy that you use when you listen to English. There’s none that you know of, a strategy or technique that you use when you listen to English in your English class? Or, when you listen to someone like a native speaker speaks to you like on the street or like in the dormitory. Is there a certain technique that you use when you are conversing with someone?
F: Yes. My first thing is think all of international students is guessing. Guessing. Actually, right now I understand more words since September 20th whatever. But, for example, I know I listen right now words, but I don't understand, for example, some sentences that people find though, though what? I understand. I got it that sound that word, but I don't understand what it means. Because maybe my ears are more able to catch more words, but I need understand. For example, this word for me is a big example. Why say though? On, the end.

M: At the end of a sentence?

F: Yes. In the end of the sentence. Say for my roommate sometimes say, "I got to go. Uh, I'm going to stay here, though." Though? Though what?

(Laughter)

F: It's kind of difficult because you know if you say in Spanish you cannot say though.

M: At the end?

F: Yes. I got this word I couldn't do that before. You understand. Right now in one sentence of ten words I can get six, seven words. I think it's pretty good.

M: It is. That's excellent. But, you say you still do guess a lot, though?

F: Yes. Yes, I try to guess.

M: When you hear a word that you don't understand?

F: Yes, sometimes when I don't understand I try to talk about my topic. Some people say what? What are you saying? No, I try to talk about myself because I didn't understand the question. They say, okay. I try to change. I told you the last interview much of the times I try so I don't understand, people change the sentence. And, I expect to hear the same sentence, but is change. I have in mind two kinds of questions. Maybe this one I don't understand. Maybe this one I don't understand either and make double confusion.
M: Yes, because you are thinking that they would say the same thing over again, but they change it thinking that you might understand it better, another way, but it confuses you.

F: Yes, yes.

M: Now, this is probably kind of difficult for you and for me to explain to you. Like we talked about your culture in Colombia as opposed to in the United States. What I'd like to know is that you know your culture is a part of you. It's been a part of you all your life, right? Do you agree with that?

F: Uh huh.

M: So, what main part or main focus of your culture from Colombia that you brought with you here to the United States, do you feel seems to, there goes the word again, affect? Do you understand how, when you say affect, hear bearing, have a focus, have some affect, have a reason, you know?

F: Yes.

M: On the type of strategy that you use in your listening class in order to learn how to listen to English? What your culture, what you brought from Colombia? How does it affect how you learn in your listening class? Just one thing, one example.

F: Maybe the big problem is I expect in listening that you or my teacher talk like in Spanish, but you she thinks in Spanish, but she translate English, you know.

M: Uh huh.

F: Because this one way in my life I hear some expression, for example, the other day I was making a line to the cafeteria and I passed another ID. I tried to explain to girl, oh I'm sorry this is not my correct ID. I have it confused because I have my correct ID in my wallet. She say okay I understand, but I know she doesn't understand everything.

M: Uh huh.

F: The next.
M: This was a native speaker English speaker?

F: The next one was a native speak English and he passed another card like me, and he say Oh, oh I'm sorry wrong card. And, changed. She understand better three words. I'm sorry. Or two expressions. I'm sorry. Wrong card. And, I try to explain what's happened and she didn't understand me. Because in Spanish we try to say everything, you know? We don't talk like orders. English is like orders, you know?

M: In an order?

F: Yes, you know it's like instructions.

M: Okay.

F: Wrong card.

M: Oh, okay. But, in Spanish.

F: In Spanish, you don't say that because it's kind of rude. We prefer to explain softly but what's happened. What's happened, you know?

M: Okay.

F: Here you can say one expression, one instruction and she accept this instruction and.

M: And, understood it.

F: And, understood it.

M: But, in your country you explain for politeness and respect, you deem, respect very important?

F: Yes, yes. And, for example, I try to talk like in Spanish because we explain everything. We try to I think Spanish richest in words than English.

M: It's what?

F: Yeah, for example, you in English you can use four or five words, up, out, of, in, on. If you combine with some words, means too many things, different things. And, this is a short words, it's like give up. In my country you can not combine two words to say something.
You explain everything. And, this is most my problem in listening. I expect my teacher to talk like in Spanish.

M: So, you expect your teacher to give more explanations?

F: Yes, more words. Use more words.

M: Use more words than she does because in your country your teacher would explain and use more words to explain.

F: In Spanish, my English teacher in my country. She or he explain. Talk like Spanish, not English.

M: So, that's the way you expect here? Only it's going to be in English, but it would be the same principal that's applied in your country, it would be explanation, more gracious, more polite, more respect. Not as rude as some statements are made here. To you some of the statements, the conversations are rude. They would be considered rude in your country because it's not enough explanation of politeness to explain. Do you know, is that the same as when you carry on conversations with native speakers in English?

F: Sometimes they don't understand me because I try to explain a lot. I try to talk about many things, but in English you can use three or four words to say all of my big sentence. Because English summarize all expression in short sentence.

M: Not in Spanish?

F: Not in Spanish. You cannot but it doesn't sound good.

M: So, when you speak English you're still doing the same thing. You're trying to use a lot of words in English as you would in Spanish, but since native speakers don't speak that way in English, then you feel like they don't understand.

F: Yes.

M: This is the last one. Now, what I want to know Felipe is how proficient do you perceive or see yourself to be when you perform listening tasks? And, what I mean by
proficient means to what degree you feel you know the language? Proficiency means to what degree. In other words, do you feel like you know the language? Extremely well, average, do you know it a little bit? Or, you know to what degree do you feel like you are performing learning English in your academic listening class? Do you see yourself, nobody else, not your teacher, not your classmates, not your friends, how do you feel about the listening tasks that you perform in your English class? How proficient do you feel that you are when you are given these specific tasks to perform? Like to take notes when you listen to the teacher’s lecture, to take notes when you listen to the taped lecture. To write in, fill in the words when you listen to a song that someone brings in? When you’re given a reading exercise you know to answer the questions after you’ve done a lecture? What level do you feel you are on?

F: I think I improve my listening a lot. Uh, for example, I came from listening lab and I feel in this listening lab I am top of the level because no other students cannot get all information in the first time. I can get all information for example. My test, Emily’s class, are good. I think like Isabel and I we have the better best grades. Uh.

M: Why do you think that is that you’re doing so much better?

F: I think it is, first our language is kind of similar to English, songs and words. And, these words sometimes are the main word in a sentence. Second one, for example, Arabic guys are not very interested because they are here no for they own you know?

M: For, their own purpose of wanting to learn.

F: Yes, yes, for example, I miss my job in my country. I left my family. I left my stuff there. Change all my life. But, because I did that my own interest. And, I don’t what’s happening with Japanese with anything Japanese or Arabic. They need to learn how to write first. This is an advantage for us. I wrote I write like you like United States like English. Japanese only make houses?

M: Characters.
F: Houses, trees things like that. And, Arabic make a
snakes. And, this is the first. After Japanese is
very different English. I think this is an advantage,
big advantage. Uh, and then other ways is our
interest. Isabel and I are very interested in learning
English.

M: In learning English. So, you say that you feel like
you’re very proficient then.

F: Yes.

M: Much more proficient.

F: I know how difficult it is to get the money to came
here. Uh, I don’t know maybe Arabic guys this is not
their money. And, Japanese is more slow, you know.
Difficult to learn because you know characters. This
is one reason. Another reason is interest. For me my
interest was listening first time. Right now my
interest is combining listening and speaking. Because
I have a pretty good grammar, but I have pretty good
grammar, but when I try to talk I don’t have good
grammar.

M: Really?

F: Yes. You know, for example, in grammar test I have
good grades in grammar test. But, when I try to talk I
use the same things, the mistakes. I know, but I speak
with mistakes, but I use again. I need to pass on
grammar part of my brain to speak with all the grammar
that I know. Maybe this is because I need to talk fast
because if I speak slow people say this is boring.
What’s wrong with him?

(Laughter)

M: Well, you’re learning, though and you know everybody
has to learn. Just the same way if someone is learning
Spanish. It’s going to take time. But, as far as your
listening, have you seen a big improvement?

F: Yes.

M: So, as far as you’re concerned, you are more proficient
now than ever before in listening. So, do you feel
like you have accomplished your goal that you have set out to learn how to listen better in your class?

F: Yes, yes.

M: But, do you feel like you still need more practice in listening?

F: Yes, yes. I need more practice in listening. I think my focus in this last part of the semester is in expression like out, up, on because some, for example, figure out. I don’t mean that word, but in my mind out means I’ll try. In my mind, up means upstairs.

M: (Speaking Spanish)

F: Yes, yes.

M: (Speaking Spanish)

F: Yes, yes. I think in my mind this.

M: So, you think in Spanish with all of these different prepositions that are used in English. You are relating them to Spanish, but they don’t mean the same thing in Spanish as they are used in English. So, that is kind of confusing.

F: This is my next purpose.

M: Your project is to...

F: I’ve always made in Spanish, I’m trying to think like here.

M: In English?

F: Yes. Think in English.

M: So you’re trying to think more in English and try not to compare it with Spanish. And, you think that will help you better.

F: I think for this reason I speak slow because I try to translate all the time.

M: From Spanish to English.
F: Yeah.

M: And, I guess that’s natural to do because when I speak in Spanish and someone asks me question in Spanish, I’m thinking English and then I put it in Spanish because you can’t help but do that because that’s your first language.

F: Yes.

M: It takes time.

F: I know. I know it takes time, but I have a corporation point of some people from Japan, China learn very good English almost perfect English they want to to change they correctors. Their way to write because some people write up to down.

M: Left to right.

F: For me it’s more easy than other this kind of people. Why I cannot do that. I always think in this situation. If other people can do, why I don’t. Can’t do that. But, it takes time.

M: That’s right. Mucho tiempo.

F: Mucho tiempo.

Tape 2 Side One Ends
APPENDIX N

REFLEXIVE JOURNAL

The following are pre-observational reflective thoughts which the researcher had concerning the present study. My mind keeps reflecting back to my readings from Marshall and Rossman’s (1995) text: *Designing Qualitative Research* as well as Glesne and Peshkin’s (1992) text: *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*. As I reflect on all of my readings, I try to remember that I must think as a qualitative researcher instead of a teacher when I enter the ESL academic listening classroom as a participant-observer for the first time. I must also consider my presence in that class and the effect it may have on the teacher and students. I keep thinking about how they are doing me a favor by permitting me to enter their world for fifty minutes, three times a week. I am feeling overwhelmed, frightened, leery, and anxious to do a good job. I remember what Erickson (1986) quoted in one of his books: “making the familiar strange and the strange familiar” which I interpret as being that the classroom is familiar to me because I am a teacher, but now it becomes unfamiliar to me.
because I am no longer a teacher, but a researcher. By studying qualitative research, I found that it has helped me to develop a different outlook and view as to how research can be conducted by using another method. My role as a participant-observer is important and cannot be taken lightly. As I reflected, I thought about the advice given on data organization by (Patton, M., 1980; Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y., 1994; & Mason, J., 1996). I feel that all of the information that I have read regarding qualitative research can help me in conducting a useful research study.
# Appendix O

## Descriptive Statistics

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