

ESL Learners and Communicative Activities

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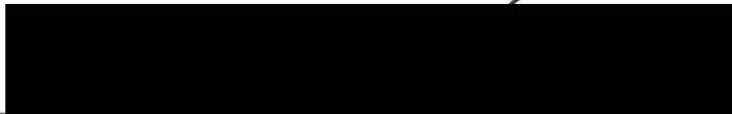
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Abstract

57 adult Asian ESL learners involved in a six week intensive study abroad program at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada were surveyed to assess their responses to communicative language activities. Participants in the study responded to a pre-questionnaire at the beginning of the program and a parallel post-questionnaire at the end of the program. The questionnaires asked for Likert scale responses about 7 communicative activities. The 7 specific communicative activities addressed in this study were: role-plays; group discussions; journals; guest speakers; and the combined activities - speeches, games and singing. In reporting the data, these activities were further differentiated to distinguish responses to activities performed publicly, privately, individually, as well as within and across cultural groups.

The results revealed the extent to which some communicative activities are employed in participants' home countries and revealed participants' expectation to participate in certain communicative activities in their study abroad program. Participants were found to have an inaccurate expectation of the extent to which some activities would be employed in their study abroad program. There was found to be a significant difference between previous participation in an activity and rating of the effectiveness of the activity or feelings about the activity. An analysis of ingroup favouritism/outgroup discrimination revealed no significant effect. Several differences between cultural samples regarding communicative activities and factors involved with these activities were revealed. Specifically, that significant differences were found between the Japanese and Korean cultural samples for 5 of the 7 activities: group discussions (previous experience in the activity and feelings after participating in the activity); Journals (previous experience in the activity and expectation to participate in the activity); listening to guest speakers (feelings after participating in the activity); speeches (previous experience in the activity and effectiveness of the activity); games (feelings after participating in the activity).

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Chapter One - Introduction

The goal of this current study is to access information concerning adult Asian ESL students' responses about participation in communicative language activities with students from their own culture as well as from other cultures and their responses about participation in certain types of communicative classroom activities and factors involved with these activities while participating in a short term intensive study abroad program.

Specifically, the goal of this study is to survey adult Asian ESL learners' responses to questions about participation in several classroom communicative language activities. These classroom communicative language activities are:

- role-plays;
- group problem-solving;
- group discussion;
- speeches;
- games;
- singing;
- journal writing;
- guest speakers.

The concept of communicative language activities is explained by Savignon (1991):

"CLT... (Communicative Language Teaching)... thus can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research. The focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events".... (T)he focus... (is)... on classroom process and learner autonomy.... (In this regard)..., the use of games, role plays, pair and other small-group activities has gained acceptance and is now widely recommended for inclusion in language teaching programs" (p. 265). "...Savignon (1974) described their purpose as that of involving learners in the experience of communication" (as cited in Savignon, 1991, p. 265).

The questions to be asked about the classroom communicative language activities are concerned with:

- (1) **previous participation** in an activity
- (2) **expectation** to participate in an activity
- (3) **feelings** about participating in an activity
- (4) **frequency** of participation in an activity
- (5) **effectiveness** of an activity.

It is hoped that through an analysis of the responses to these questions a better understanding of factors which may have an effect on adult Asian ESL learners while participating in communicative language activities in a short term intensive study abroad program may be achieved.

This goal is important because although much appears to have been written about attitudes in second language learning, and increasingly more is being written about communicative methodology employed in non-native English speaking countries, there appears to be a paucity of information about Asian ESL students' responses concerning participating in international intensive English language programs in native English speaking countries. In this regard, Ellis (1993) points out that "a large amount of research has been done in the area of participation and language learning. Yet, there still exists a large void in the various studies: that concerning the specific cultural traits of students and how these characteristics may affect participation" (p. 4-5). This is reiterated by Liu's (1994) assertion that few studies "... have examined in detail from a social and psychological perspective the influence of L2 speakers' native sociocultural values on their use of the target language" (p. 2) and that "... many have assumed that learners can be defined unproblematically as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly

coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual" (Peirce, 1995, p. 12). Certainly, the focus has been on the phenomenon of L2 acquisition, not on 'the living individual human being' (Conle, 1992, p. 165 - as cited in Kanno and Applebaum, 1995, p. 33).

ESL teachers know that the ESL classroom is fraught with difficulties. The research by Moser (1993), Nash and Tarr (1976), Kanno and Applebaum (1995), Cheng (1988) and Yazigy (1994) makes this abundantly clear.

Indeed, bringing together individuals from different cultures in a host country that dictates the classroom methodology is potentially problematic, regardless of ESL students' stated intentions and language program expectations.

For instance, it is reasonable to acknowledge that 'ingroup favouritism/outgroup discrimination' (i.e., ethnocentric behaviour - for a review of sources see Boski, 1988) may arise, as well as simple day to day misunderstandings between individuals with different personal and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Regarding this, the goal of most communicative language programs is to mix nationalities to create an atmosphere where English is truly the only language of communication. Individuals in that situation may openly complain that one student's accent is impeding another's understanding or one student may complain that he is increasingly excluded from a group activity because, ironically, in his culture, reserving one's opinion is valued. As well, in the case where one cultural group outnumbers another, students may exhibit a lack of motivation to interact with members of their own cultural group because they did not travel abroad to participate in a learning situation which approximates that in their home country. Also, the more mature ESL student who does not see the value in an exercise that does not have specific grammar points may withdraw and become disgruntled.

These situations are frustrating for everyone involved and appear to arise even though students are made aware prior to registration that their ESL program will be international (they would be mixing with students from diverse cultures as well as with students from their own culture) and the program would be communicative in nature (they would be emphasising their ability to speak and listen with others in an interactive manner).

The interesting question, then, is why students exhibit what may be perceived as ethnocentric or discriminatory behaviour, in one form or another, toward classmates or become non-participatory during communicative activities when their ESL program invariably stresses openness to interaction with other cultures and to improving speaking and listening skills through communicative teaching and learning techniques.

However, finding explanations for ethnocentric behaviour, for example, is not as simple as asking why, and receiving honest explanations. Not wishing to offend or fearing academic sanction or ridicule, students are unlikely to report all the preconceived notions or impressions they hold. Bauman (1982), Canaan (1986), Grugeon (1988), and Fine (1981, 1987, 1988) have found that children learn early in life to keep quiet about aspects of their culture that adults will be repulsed or shocked by (as cited in Delamont, 1991, p. 240). Furthermore, children are inhibited from mentioning some of their commonly shared myths to adults because they are vulgar, sexual, or both. This inhibition factor could logically be seen to extend to adult language learners and their willingness to relate their notions or impressions of other cultures. Essentially, this sort of information needs to be accessed indirectly.

• Concerning this, a good model for gathering and interpreting data about expectations and attitudes is Sara Delamont's (1991) article *The Hit List and Other Horror Stories: Sex Roles and School Transfer*. In this article, Delamont studied the sex roles transmitted in the scary stories told among school children when they are facing transfer from primary to secondary school.

Having gathered stories, Delamont employed the theoretical framework of structuralist anthropology with its rites of passage and rituals of reversal developed by Levi-Strauss, (1966, 1967 - as cited in Delamont, 1991, p. 251) and the social role of the urban legend, Brunvand, 1983 (as cited in Delamont, 1991, p. 240) to analyse the scary stories. She discovered that "... the school transfer is a process of leaving the familiar for the strange, and moving from the top of one hierarchy to the bottom of another. A common finding of structuralists is that people draw a distinction between 'us' (the normal, proper, human group) and 'them' (people elsewhere who are not normal, and may even behave in nonhuman ways)" (Delamont, 1991, p. 251). Similar to the common finding of structural anthropologists, discussed in Delamont's research, that there is a distinction between "us" and "them", Johnson and Jenks (1994) in their article about native speakers' perceptions of nonnative speakers cite Gass and Varonis' (1985) observation that native speakers "... are affected by their attitudes and/or their perceptions of people who are 'different' from them" (p. 10).

Given these findings, it seemed logical to hypothesise that there was a possibility of a feeling of "us" (the normal, proper, human group) and "them" (people elsewhere who are not normal, and may even behave in nonhuman ways) buried in the subconscious of Asian ESL learners. Certainly, ESL students travelling abroad for language study would become a minority, leaving the familiar for the strange, and moving from the top of one hierarchy to the bottom of another.

It seemed logical to further hypothesise that ESL students would exhibit certain behaviours because of preconceived notions or attitudes they had about another culture and its practices: a sense of "us" and "them". Consequently, if these sorts of preconceived notions could be accessed, perhaps ESL teachers could begin to attempt to understand why students would profess an intention or behaviour, yet behave in a contrary manner.

Initial research in this regard (McGowan, 1997, unpublished course paper) attempted to gather scary stories from ESL students and try to interpret the stories in the same manner as Delamont. However, perhaps because of the wording of the questionnaire or the nature of the elicitation technique, not one scary story about travelling abroad to study English was found in 50 completed questionnaires. On the other hand, the 50 questionnaires did relate advice given to students and impressions students had about a host country before travelling abroad. The following statements excerpted from the study indicates that, truly, there is a feeling of “us” and “them” in ESL students’ minds before travelling abroad to study English:

- “Orientals in a foreign country don’t like to make friends”;
- “Canadians are superficially friendly”;
- “Canadians discriminate against Asians”;
- “other country’s students are more aggressive”;
- “you will have difficulty understanding pronunciation”;
- “can’t depend on Canadians or expect anything from them”;
- “teachers don’t pay attention to shy students”;
- “threat for security”;
- “most Americans own guns, so chance of being a victim”;
- “Canadian people are really strange”;
- “American people are stupid”.

Following Delamont’s procedure for this initial study, the most significant finding was that preconceived impressions of social aspects of a host country were seemingly foremost in the minds of second language students in the Summer English Language Program (ELPS) at the University of Victoria. Especially significant was the finding that the host country society was viewed as an even mix of positive and negative by males, and quite a bit more negatively by females. The major concern which arose from this study was that such a high

percentage of respondents in this study held negative preconceived notions or impressions of the host society. Certainly, it seemed, effective language learning and interaction with other cultures could not take place if such views were held.

Following this initial study, it became increasingly interesting to try and access information regarding instances of discriminatory behaviour among adult Asian ESL students in a short term intensive study abroad program as well as their varied attitudes toward the different communicative language activities in the classroom.

With this in mind, several representative classroom communicative language activities are focused on in this current research as a basis to ask questions. It is felt that the responses to the questions about the activities will lead to insights about variables that affect ESL learners in an intensive study abroad program.

Activities to be Examined and Questions to be Addressed

More clearly, the classroom activities to be examined are:

1. an English language **role-play** activity performed in front of the class
2. an English language **role-play** activity not performed in front of the class
3. a **group problem-solving** activity using the English language with non-native English speaking classmates from a student's own country
4. a **group problem-solving** activity using the English language with non-native English speaking classmates from a different country
5. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must **share their opinions** on different topics with non-native English speaking classmates from their own country

6. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must **share their opinions** on different topics with non-native English speaking classmates from a different country
7. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must share **personal details** about themselves and their life with non-native English speaking classmates from their own country
8. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must share **personal details** about themselves and their life with non-native English speaking classmates from a different country
9. an individual class presentation activity using the English language (making a **speech** in English)
10. an English language **game** activity in the classroom
11. an English language **singing** activity in the classroom
12. a shared **journal writing** activity using the English language
13. listening to native English speaking **guest speakers** talk about their life, experiences, or work in the English class

The questions to be addressed about the classroom communicative language activities in this research are concerned with:

- (1) **previous participation** in an activity,
- (2) **expectation** to participate in an activity,
- (3) **feelings** about participating in an activity,
- (4) **frequency** of participation in an activity, and
- (5) **effectiveness** of an activity.

Pre-Questionnaire and Post-Questionnaire Format

Pre-Questionnaire

Three different questions (Questions 1, 2 and 3) are asked about each activity in the pre-questionnaire (Appendix A) and students are asked to respond by marking their choice on a 6 point Likert scale immediately following the question. The three questions asked about each activity are concerned with:

- 1) reporting **previous participation** in a given activity;
- 2) reporting **expectation** to participate in a given activity;
- 3) reporting **feelings** about a given activity before participating in it.

Post-Questionnaire

Similarly, three different questions (Questions 4, 5 and 6) are asked about each activity in the post-questionnaire (Appendix B) and students are asked to respond by marking their choice on a 6 point Likert scale immediately following the question. The three questions asked about each activity are concerned with:

- 4) reporting **frequency** of having participated in a given activity;
- 5) reporting perceived **effectiveness** of a given activity;
- 6) reporting **feelings** about a given activity after having participated in it.

It is expected that analyses of the responses to the questions about the communicative activities will facilitate a better understanding of factors which may have an effect on adult Asian ESL learners while participating in communicative language activities in a short term intensive study abroad program. Specifically, the following questions will be considered:

- Is there a relationship between **previous participation** in a given activity (Question 1 : pre-questionnaire) and **expectation** to participate in the same activity (Question 2 : pre-questionnaire)?
- Is there a relationship between **previous participation** in a given activity (Question 1 : pre-questionnaire) and perception of the **frequency** of participation in the same activity (Question 4 : post-questionnaire)?
- Is there a relationship between **expectation** to participate in a given activity (Question 2 : pre-questionnaire) and perception of the **frequency** of participation in the same activity (Question 4 : post-questionnaire)?
- Is there a relationship between **feelings** about an activity **before** participating in it (Question 3 : pre-questionnaire) and **feelings** about the same activity **after** having participated in it (Question 6 : post-questionnaire)?
- What is the perceived **effectiveness** of an activity (Question 5)?
- Are there any significant differences between cultural groups regarding **previous participation** in an activity (Question 1), **expectation** to participate in an activity (Question 2), **feelings** about participating in an activity (Question 3 & 6), **frequency** of participation in an activity (Question 4), and **effectiveness** of an activity (Question 5).

Chapter Two - Literature Review

Socialised Attitudes and Second Language Learning

A starting point for a review of the literature is the assumption that prior experience affects students' language learning. As well, the educational and social difficulties of intercultural contact as it relates to second language learning will be discussed.

Certainly, preparing people for intercultural interactions is difficult. Cushner (1988) argues that it is complicated by the fact that individuals often have had little interaction with people from other cultures and have made little effort to reflect on their own experience (as cited in Johnson, 1995, p. 60). More than that, the process of the transmissions of beliefs, values, and experiences from parent to child is embedded within broader cultural systems that include societal institutions that affect the family and that children learn about the nature of the world in which they live through parental socialisation. Johnson (1995) furthers this by pointing out that prejudices are formed through more than cognitive avenues; that is, through more than what one learns. Prejudices are formed to please one's parents or to express how one feels about oneself (p. 60). In short, attitudes are socialised.

Regarding this, there has been much research on the perceptions of ESL learners concerning their attitudes towards the target language and, relatedly, the target culture and society. Kitao (1993) reported that Japanese female ESL students returned from an intensive short term study abroad program at Mary Baldwin College, Virginia, feeling that Americans were kinder and more friendly than anticipated, and that the United States was less dangerous than feared. Fels (1994), in a study of assumptions and expectations among English as a Second Language students from Japan, asserts that ESL students' "... heads are filled with expectations and assumptions of one sort or another..." and that "...

they will unpack more than their suitcases. They will also unpack the social, intellectual and cultural baggage that has been packed for or by them since they were born" (p. 4). Moreover, Fels (1994) study allowed him to see students in their home countries and

"... to take note of the blazing and pervasive differences in everything from language to institutional culture between their current lives and the lives (he) knew they would live in Los Angeles. (He) began to wonder how these students could possibly have formed accurate sets of assumptions about how things would be for them in California" (p. 10).

Relatedly, several EFL specialists with teaching experience in the Arabian Gulf have written about the cultural conflict that sometimes hinders the English language development of Arab students (Abuhamdia, 1984; El-Sayed, 1988; Fellman, 1973; Zughoul et al., 1979 - as cited in Fahmy and Bilton, 1992). Yazigy (1994) in describing Arabic as a God-given language unique in beauty and majesty, the best equipped and the most eloquent of all languages for expressing thought and emotions asks the question: "... how does the belief in the superiority of Arab culture over Western culture influence Arab tolerance of other peoples' cultures and languages"? (p. 69). Yazigy (1994) supplies the answer to this by stating that "the Arab world nowadays is suspicious of any form of foreign influence: political, economic, cultural or educational" (p. 69). Further to this, McKnight (1994) in discussing Chinese learners of English asserts that "... English language teaching may be perceived as another form of cultural imperialism" (p. 47). Indeed, Arab countries struggled against the influence of the two European powers (France and Great Britain) which controlled the area after World War One and "after the Arab countries achieved their independence, they tried to eliminate the impact of the colonial countries, including cultural and linguistic influence" (Za'rour and Nashif, 1977 - as cited in Yazigy, 1994, p. 68). "Thus, some of the aspects Arab nationalism tried to eliminate were the colonial languages and the educational system" (Yazigy, 1994, p. 68).

Mantle-Bromley (1992), in her article about preparing students for meaningful culture learning, explains that “an ethnocentric outlook can hamper some students’ second language and culture learning. They may believe that learning about other languages and cultures is somehow unpatriotic, and consequently resist alternate views and beliefs” (p. 120). Mantle-Bromley (1992) in discussing her own teaching experience asserts that “students’ gains were hindered by their lack of understanding about culture in general: my students were unaware of how much their own behaviours were bound by their own culture” (p. 119). Similarly, Moser’s (1993) study of ESL students and their peer tutors found that ESL students’ avoidance of one-on-one peer tutoring is shown to arise principally from cultural differences between tutor and tutee.

In his sociolinguistic survey of contact between Japanese and other languages, Loveday (1986 - as cited in Gaies and Beebe, 1991, p.159) mentions the educational and social difficulties, including rejection and ridicule by Japanese classmates, faced by returning youngsters as they re-enter the Japanese educational system after a period of residence abroad. Regarding this, White (1988 - as cited in Gaies and Beebe, 1991, p.159) maintains that the Japanese educational establishment perceives school age returnees as suffering from an illness from which they must recover; each sign of deviance in dress, eating habits, liberal use of English loan words, etc., is taken more seriously by teachers when it is exhibited by a returnee than when a “normal” Japanese child does the same thing. White also tells of a returnee who was called *gaijin* “foreigner” by her classmates.

Johnson (1995), writing on ESL teacher education and intercultural communication recalls: “When I taught a course in intercultural communication, one man in my class said he survived working in Japan for over a year by remembering that ‘American is better’ and ‘I’ll be here for only a little while.’ International students in my class echoed the latter statement, saying they

survived their educational experience in the United States by reminding themselves that the condition was not permanent” (p. 59). Similarly, Kanno and Applebaum (1995) point out that students involved in short term English language study abroad “... constitute a categorically different group from immigrant students in terms of language learning. That is, they had less motivation to approach the learning of English as a lifetime commitment than immigrant students and, conversely, had more practical incentives to maintain their first language” (p. 34). Brislin (1978) in identifying negative emotional reactions as prejudice notes that “one of the most annoying facts about a culture is that it can socialise its members into believing that their culture has the one set of behaviours for all situations which a person is likely to encounter” (as cited in Johnson, 1995, p. 60).

Theoretical Issues of Second Language Learning

The next step in a review of the literature will discuss theoretical arguments concerning the role of attitude and second language learning. In particular, Krashen and Terrell’s (1983) Affective Filter hypothesis and Chomsky’s (1965) Language Acquisition Device will be discussed.

It is a common understanding that attitudes help shape students’ language-learning behaviours. A number of studies support the theory that students’ attitudes toward both the language being studied and its culture are related to how well they succeed in acquiring a second language (Gardner et al., 1978; Gardner, 1985).

In fact, Ellis’ (1993) study of Japanese students abroad and their amount of willing interaction with the target language community indicated a positive correlation between use of English outside and inside the classroom with high academic achievement in language and academic subject matter. Low language contact and low participation in class also correlated with low academic

achievement. Concerning this, Romiszowski's (1989) article about attitudes and affect in learning and instruction is based on the argument that "... effective learning of an intentional nature, depends on the initial presence of a predisposition to attend and participate in the learning activity and is only truly effective if the results of the learning experience include, in addition to any cognitive, psychomotor or interpersonal objective, an increased predisposition to the valuing of the objective or to its use in the future" (p. 85).

Krashen and Terrell (1983) argue that there are affective prerequisites or attitudinal variables involved in (language) acquisition, as every teacher and language student knows. Briefly, the acquirer has to be "open" to the (language) input in order to fully utilise it for acquisition. Being open to input implies that the learner's affective filter is "down". Krashen (1981) describes the affective filter as a part of the internal language processing system that subconsciously screens incoming language based on what psychologists call "affect" (p. 46). The affective filter can be described as a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilising the comprehensible language input they receive for language acquisition. When the filter is 'up', the acquirer may understand what he hears and reads, but the input will not reach the Language Acquisition Device (Krashen, 1985, p. 3): Krashen and Terrell (1983) discuss the hypothesis that the Language Acquisition Device is a language specific mental structure which is the central force guiding language acquisition.

According to Krashen and Terrell, factors that contribute to a low affective filter include positive orientation to speakers of the language, acquiring in a low anxiety situation, and at least some degree of acquirer self-confidence (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, pp.19-20). The affective filter goes up when the language acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence, anxious, or when he is on the defensive (Stevick, 1976). Krashen & Terrell's Affective Filter Hypothesis certainly states that attitudinal variables are related to success in second language acquisition (1983, p. 37). Following this, attitudinal variables are

important to be aware of if an ESL teacher wishes to be truly effective at his work.

Second language teachers and researchers acknowledge that language acquisition is an interaction between the learner's innate mental structures, of which the affective filter is considered to be a major part (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982, p. 46), and the language environment. In essence, the act of learning a language is a creative construction process (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982, pp. 8-9) as learners interact with members of the target language. Language learning is a social process and the language learner's environment encompasses a wide variety of social situations occurring in the host society - exchanges in restaurants and stores, conversations with friends, watching television, reading street signs and newspapers, as well as interactive classroom activities. If the learner's Affective Filter is "up" before interacting with members of the host society, the first main hurdle that language data must encounter before it is processed further is enormous. The language learner's attitudes and emotional states will filter what they hear and therefore affect the rate and quality of language learning.

Second Language Teaching Methodology

Following the preceding review of the literature regarding theoretical arguments and second language learning, it is important, as the next step, to review the literature concerning communicative language teaching methodology. This review of communicative methodology will discuss the presence of pedagogical preference as it relates to second language learning. This issue is important to discuss as ESL students' responses to communicative activities is the focus of the current study and it is assumed that pedagogical preferences will become evident through the course of the study.

Regarding attitudes toward communicative methodology, Penner's (1995) article on the introduction of the Communicative Approach in China discusses some of the problems inherent in the direct export of educational methodology across cultures. Penner argues that it appears that resistance to the Communicative Approach is not only a concern with roles in the classroom, but also roles in the culture as a whole. For instance, she cites Gao (1992, p. 38) who points out "those students who rejected the new techniques tend to believe that cultural identity ('we are Chinese') and cultural context ('we are now in China') determine the appropriateness of ... behaviours" (Penner, 1995, p. 7). In short, the Chinese method of language learning has led to an "... obligation to provide instant and specific answers ...(which)... has led to a focus on the end product, and general underestimation of that process of learning where the effort involved in finding out, processing, or recalling information leads to greater memorability" (Byron and Macmillan, 1990, p. 195 - as cited in Penner, 1995, p. 6). Further to this point, Penner (1995) in discussing the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in China discusses how teachers are encouraged to utilise authentic English language materials (radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, real-life dialogues, etc.) rather than a prescribed textbook and the reaction of Chinese teachers to such communicative methods:

"Some of the activities that encourage language use and learner autonomy involve group discussions, role plays, creative writing, peer correction of errors, extensive reading skills (skimming, scanning, etc.), guessing vocabulary meanings from context, playing games and singing songs. All these activities are based on assumptions about learning. The Chinese teachers, however, were not convinced of the value of these authentic, interesting, and student-centred activities. Many Chinese teachers and students argued that these less directive activities were a waste of time" (p. 10).

Moreover, Burnaby and Sun (1989) recommend that "... English speaking countries anxious to promote communicative approaches to language teaching in China should carefully consider the comparability of conditions in the two settings. The fact that these methods are effective in the teaching of ESL at home does not necessarily mean that they are exportable" (p. 236).

For example, Bahloul (1994) in discussing EFL in North Africa states: "The paradox is that almost every U.S. teacher I have known in the last couple of decades opts for a process-oriented approach to language learning - a style the North Africans consider entirely revolutionary and that, among other things, attempts to instill modes of thoughts and concepts that students do not get in other subjects" (p. 5). Moser (1993) argues that "generally, the ESL student comes to an American college with the firmly-rooted expectation of looking up for knowledge, not within or around" (p. 37). Concerning this, Ho (1986, p. 7 - as cited in McKnight, 1994, p. 40) informs us that "obedience, proper conduct, moral training, and social obligations are stressed, rather than independence, self mastery and creativity". Ho also informs us that motivation towards achievement is "... rooted more firmly in the collectivist than in the individualistic orientation" (Ho, 1986, p. 28 - as cited in McKnight, 1994, p. 40). It appears clear, then, that some differences in expectations about instruction noted between Chinese and Westerners have a direct bearing on achievement and potential participation. McKnight (1994) further informs us that "... while the currently fashionable Western 'communicative approaches' to English language teaching are known and used in some institutions, the dominant teaching strategy remains the 'grammar translation approach'..." (p. 46).

Concerning this, Benson (1991) cites Hino's (1988) and Pearson's (1988) attempt to explain "... the mismatch between... [Japanese]... students' memorised chunks of formalised and abstruse English on the one hand, and their abysmal grasp of how the language is actually used on the other" (p. 34) through educational accounts which blame specific learning strategies acquired

in junior and senior high schools. Benson (1991), in a survey of Japanese Freshmen regarding attitudes and motivation towards English, found that "... negative, positive, or mixed attitudes, engendered by high-school experiences of English, remain intact into the early years of university study..." (p. 35). Berwick and Ross (1989 - as cited in Benson, 1991, p. 37) acknowledge that "adult motivation... forms a clear contrast with the motivational wasteland among university entrants". Further to this point:

"When asked to rate their own English abilities under various headings, the students considered reading to be the strongest, followed by writing, understanding, and finally speaking. Given the students' minimal exposure to English, it is not surprising that they showed little confidence in their own ability to handle listening and speaking skills. Here we see the priorities of junior and senior high schools in Japan accurately reflected" (Benson, 1991, p. 44).

Benson (1991) also found that "... English remains a 'broadening' experience, but not one to be taken too seriously" (p. 45). Regarding this, the results of a survey by Cogan, Torney-Purta, and Anderson (1988 - as cited in Benson, 1991, p. 35) probing students' attitudes towards foreign language study found "... that most of the Japanese tested do not believe that foreign language study is especially important for them personally".

Attitudes and Second Language Learning

As the final step in a review of the literature regarding this subject, it is useful to discuss the teacher's and the researcher's role in maintaining and enhancing motivation and positive attitudes towards learning through an understanding of students' expectations and assumptions associated with the second language learning experience. More than that, the notion that teachers may need to realise that many values and methodologies are ideological and that there is the distinct possibility that communicative methodologies may not be readily accepted by different ESL learner groups will be discussed.

Regarding the research on attitudes and second language learning as well as on the use of communicative methodology, Romiszowski (1989) argues that “the learner should come to the process duly interested and motivated, otherwise, he or she is not ready for instruction...” but that “...perhaps the evidence is now pointing again to the need to prepare the learner affectively, before the instructional process begins” (p. 98). This is difficult, however, as Morgan (1996) points out that “in the classroom, students bring different personal histories, conscious and unconscious experiences of race, class, culture and gender to bear upon meaning making” (p. 12). Concerning this, Bahloul (1994) asserts “... the need for a language teacher to come to grips with the learner’s values and the home teaching situation as a step on the road toward a successful experience” (p. 4). Likewise, Fels (1994) suggests “... that one element that may help to reduce the risk for intensive English language students is for faculty and administrators to build an awareness (in general) and an understanding (in the specific) of students’ expectations and assumptions into the philosophy and curriculum of the intensive English language program” (p. 5). Certainly, Fels (1994) wonders “... if by uncovering some of the assumptions held by international students, we might not be able to form a more complete understanding of our students and, ultimately, provide an important tool for developing successful administrative and pedagogic strategies...” (p. 10). Romiszowski (1989) asserts that “everything possible must be done within the instructional design and development process, to maintain and enhance motivation and positive attitudes towards learning” (p. 98).

“Teachers are often urged to adjust their teaching methods to differences in the learning styles and personality characteristics of their students,... [although they]... hardly know what these differences are or the extent of their influences” (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978, p. 4). However, it is clear that “what evidence we do have seems to suggest that adult learners vary markedly in their attitudes towards learning, their preferred learning styles and their

perceptions of what is of value and what is not" (Willing, 1985, as cited in Nunan, 1988, p. 23), and that a measuring and understanding of such attitudes, styles, and perceptions "... should help the teacher see that students cannot be expected to respond alike to teaching. It should also help students analyse their own characteristics and adjust their learning as far as possible to what they know about themselves" (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978, p. 102-103). Clement, Dornyei, & Noels (1994) assert that "it seems imperative that we all look at the task of learning another language through the eyes of the student. That, (they) suggest, reveals foreign language acquisition to be a complex social process" (p. 443). Fahmy and Bilton (1992) further this notion when they suggest that "... it is only then that the TEFL specialists can really begin to understand the sociocultural dimension of language learning and teaching by considering it from their students' perspective" (p. 270).

Mantle-Bromley (1992) asserts that "...teachers need to increase their understanding of two related concepts: first, what preparation is necessary for students to succeed in learning another culture; second, what problems language teachers and their students may encounter in the culture learning process" (p. 117). As well, Penner (1995) realises that "taking time to reflect on the teaching and learning experience will provide data for regular pedagogical discussions with host country colleagues. Explaining the teaching and learning assumptions underlying teaching activities will contribute further to the learners' understanding of their learning process" (p. 14). Moser's (1993) article "... points to a need for a training program that would prepare tutors for the attitudinal expectations of ESL students..." (p. 41) not just the technical language difficulties these students routinely present.

Brown (1994 - as cited in Wilhelm, 1995, p. 3) proposes a comprehensive theory of second language acquisition, one which includes "as many relevant factors as possible". Crookes and Schmidt (1991 - as cited in Wilhelm, 1995, p. 3) suggest that a broad taxonomy be developed to answer the question "what

factors are relevant to SL motivation?” and note the interrelationship of relevant factors. This, Wilhelm (1995) argues, will “...help to identify the characteristics of learners best served by particular programs... (and)... provide valuable information for program assessment and for an evaluation of the “match” between learner needs and instructional objectives” (p. 15-16).

Yashima and Viswat (1991 - as cited in Kitao, 1993, p. 4) further state that “although many Japanese students go overseas for study, either short term or long term, there has been relatively little study of these students, their preparation, or the results of the students’ experience overseas. Furthermore, Fahmy and Bilton (1992) explain that survey data concerning such experiences “... can help sensitise the staff to their students’ level of English, sociolinguistic and educational backgrounds, expectations, concerns, and attitudes towards the learning situation...” (p. 286).

Indeed, something needs to be done in order to alleviate the difficulties experienced by learners and teachers in the ESL classroom because as Taylor and Simard (1975) assert clearly: “there is often a paucity of cross-cultural interaction... between members of different ethnolinguistic groups who share the same social environment” (p. 240). But, the situation can be seen as even more complex:

“In a study involving Nigerian students, Boski (1988) ‘... offered the in-group favouritism hypothesis in which emotional or interpersonal dimensions are important for ethnic (cultural) self-identity whereas, in contrast, in-group members are viewed as rivals, even threats, in achievement-related performance. It would be important for the intercultural communicator to know if this phenomenon operates for (all) other culture groups in order to determine the effect such emotional versus achievement behaviour has on classroom interaction” (as cited in Johnson, 1995, p. 60).

In short, there is the potential for problems when interacting with other cultural groups in the language classroom as well as with one's own language group. Combine this with students' different socialised attitudes toward instructional methods, which lead to questions about the appropriateness of current language teaching values and methodology for some groups of learners (McKnight, 1994, p. 39) and the task facing ESL learners, teachers, and program designers is enormous. Certainly, Holly (1990 - as cited in McKnight, 1994, p. 39) reiterates this idea in a discussion of how ESL teachers may need to reconsider unspoken assumptions about many of our teaching practices, and realise that many of our values and methodologies are culturally bound. In short, there is the possibility that communicative methodologies may not be readily accepted by different ESL learner groups.

The goal for this current study, then, was to try and access information concerning ESL students' responses about participating in communicative language activities with students from their own culture as well as from other cultures and their responses about certain types of communicative classroom activities and factors involved with these activities while participating in a short term intensive study abroad program. These factors include **previous participation** in an activity, **expectation** to participate in an activity, **feelings** about participating in an activity, **frequency** of participation in an activity, and **effectiveness** of an activity.

Chapter Three - Research Design

The University of Victoria ELPS Program

The six week Summer English Language Program (ELPS) at the University of Victoria is a communicative program for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students of English. The course provides four hours of formal classroom instruction Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. There are two teachers for each class: one for the 8:30-10:30 time period, and one for the 10:30-12:30 time period. Afternoon activities include skill-based workshops such as music, volunteering, journal writing, and sports, as well as excursions to local places of interest. The program's objective is to provide an English language program of classroom and sociocultural activities which will enable students to observe, participate in, and discuss Canadian culture and to improve speaking and listening skills. The instructional methodology is based on a communicative approach to language learning and teaching. At the University of Victoria, as at many other North American institutions, the language skills are not separated but integrated. The mandate of the Summer English Language Program is that students speak only in English.

By the end of the second week of the program, there were approximately 165 students registered in the 1997 Summer English Language Program (ELPS), including about 39 French Canadians, 57 Japanese (46 female, 11 male), 36 Koreans (16 female, 20 male), and 18 Taiwanese (13 female, 5 male). The remaining students were from Mexico, Europe and other Asian countries. The student age ranged from 18-65.

Of the 57 Japanese students, 20 were from the prestigious International Christian University (ICU) in Tokyo. Over the years that the ELPS has operated, it has been found that the English ability of these students is generally superior to the other Japanese students. Of the 36 Korean students, 16 were from

Hanyang University, which has an exchange program agreement with the university of Victoria.

The original purpose of the ELPS program, which began 27 years prior as a bursary program, was to introduce French and English Canadians to each others' language and culture in the hopes of promoting understanding and empathy towards each other. However, the purpose of the ELPS program has been expanded to include a cross-cultural exchange with students from around the world, and the intent is to discuss Western Canadian culture (as referenced in the UVIC ELPS Program brochure) in relation to the countries represented in the program. This program is extremely successful and extremely popular and is usually full 6-8 months before its start each year.

The program, as a bursary program, was designed to be six weeks in length. Due to Government cutbacks, however, the bursary portion of the program is now five weeks only. Despite this, International students continue to have a 6 week program. The first introductory week for the international students is spent discussing culture and cross-cultural communication, in preparation for the arrival of the French-Canadian students.

Participants in the ELPS are tested with the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) test upon arrival and placed into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. The assignment into levels is reshuffled in the second week when French Canadian bursary students arrive to take part in the remaining five weeks of the program. Students are then divided into 9 classes of approximately 18 in each class, according to the results of the SLEP test. There are 11 teachers (including the Head Teacher) and 10 Cultural Assistants (including the Chief Cultural Assistant) in total.

Participants in the Study

Participants were 57 of the approximately 111 adult Asian ESL student population enrolled in the University of Victoria six week Summer English Language Program (ELPS). Participating in the study were 8 Japanese males and 19 Japanese females (mean age 21.1); 10 Korean males and 8 Korean females (mean age 22.4); 4 Taiwanese males and 8 Taiwanese females (mean age 22.9).

Method and Procedure of the Study

Pre and Post-Questionnaires

All 111 of the Asian ESL student population in the introductory week of the program were given a pre-questionnaire (Appendix A) on the first day of the program. From this initial population of 111 students, 57 students comprised the sample for this study and were given a follow-up questionnaire (Appendix B) on the last day of the program.

Several of the pre and post-questionnaires were rendered invalid because of incompleteness (i.e., nationality, age, or questions in the questionnaire not answered). These questionnaires were eliminated from the study. Only those participants who indicated that they had never studied in Canada before and whose questionnaire was entirely completed were included in the study. From an initial sample of 57, 54 pre-questionnaires (Appendix A) and 54 post-questionnaires (Appendix B) were analysed.

The pre-questionnaire (Appendix A) asked for their nationality, age, and whether or not they had studied in Canada previous to this program. Students were requested not to write their names in an attempt to allow them to respond more freely with the understanding that their answers on the questionnaire would have no repercussions on them from their teachers, the administrators, or the researcher. The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses about classroom activities which followed the principles of communicative language learning methodology. The classroom activities were:

1. an English language **role-play** activity performed in front of the class
2. an English language **role-play** activity not performed in front of the class
3. a **group problem-solving** activity using the English language with non-native English speaking classmates from a student's own country
4. a **group problem-solving** activity using the English language with non-native English speaking classmates from a different country
5. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must **share their opinions** on different topics with non-native English speaking classmates from their own country
6. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must **share their opinions** on different topics with non-native English speaking classmates from a different country
7. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must share **personal details** about themselves and their life with non-native English speaking classmates from their own country
8. an English language **group discussion** activity where the student must share **personal details** about themselves and their life with non-native English speaking classmates from a different country

9. an individual class presentation activity using the English language (making a **speech** in English)
10. an English language **game** activity in the classroom
11. an English language **singing** activity in the classroom
12. a shared **journal writing** activity using the English language
13. listening to native English speaking **guest speakers** talk about their life, experiences, or work in the English class

Essentially, all the activities in the study were included as representative of communicative methodology. However, Activities 3-8 were further designed to determine ingroup/outgroup factors as these activities emphasised participation with classmates from a different cultural sample versus classmates from the same cultural sample as variables.

Three different questions (Questions 1, 2 and 3) were asked about each activity in the pre-questionnaire (Appendix A) and students were asked to respond by marking their choice on a 6 point Likert scale immediately following the question. The three questions asked about each activity were concerned with:

- 1) reporting **previous participation** in a given activity;
- 2) reporting **expectation** to participate in a given activity;
- 3) reporting **feelings** about a given activity before participating in it.

The Likert scales employed for each question type in the post-questionnaire (Appendix B) are shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2

Question 4: How often did you participate in an English language role-play activity which was performed in front of your class during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 never : very few : occasionally : often : very often : always
 times

Question 5: How much do you think your participation in an English language role-play activity which was performed in front of your class during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria helped to improve your English language ability?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 not at all : very little : a little : some : much : very much

Question 6: How did you feel about participating in an English language role-play activity which was performed in front of your class during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 disliked it : disliked it : liked it : liked it more : liked it : liked it
 very much : a little : than a little : very much

Analyses

The data were analysed in two ways; firstly, they were analysed as an entire sample (Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese) to determine answers to research questions 1-5; and secondly, they were analysed as individual cultural samples (Japanese vs. Korean vs. Taiwanese) to determine answers to research question 6.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between **previous participation** in a given activity (Question 1 : pre-questionnaire) and **expectation** to participate in the same activity (Question 2 : pre-questionnaire)?
2. Is there a relationship between **previous participation** in a given activity (Question 1 : pre-questionnaire) and perception of the **frequency** of participation in the same activity (Question 4 : post-questionnaire)?
3. Is there a relationship between **expectation** to participate in a given activity (Question 2 : pre-questionnaire) and perception of the **frequency** of participation in the same activity (Question 4 : post-questionnaire)?
4. Is there a relationship between **feelings** about an activity **before** participating in it (Question 3 : pre-questionnaire) and **feelings** about the same activity **after** having participated in it (Question 6 : post-questionnaire)?
5. What is the perceived **effectiveness** of an activity (Question 5)?
6. Are there any significant differences between cultural groups regarding **previous participation** in an activity, **expectation** to participate in an activity, **feelings** about participating in an activity, **frequency** of participation in an activity, and **effectiveness** of an activity.

The pairs of questions were analysed for significant differences using the SPSS statistics program for MS Windows (Release 6.1). A two-tailed t-test for was employed for the entire sample with the level for significance set at $P \leq .05$.

The analysis of the individual cultural samples examined each of the questions for the activities in order to identify significant differences between cultural samples regarding previous participation in an activity (Question 1), expectation to participate in an activity (Question 2), feelings about participating

in an activity before (Question 3) and after (Question 6), frequency of participation in an activity (Question 4), and effectiveness of an activity (Question 5). In order to do this, the same SPSS statistics program was used to perform a one way multiple analysis of variance and Scheffe post hoc test with the level for significance set at $P \leq .05$.

All statistics were run by Eugene Dean, Statistical Consultant for the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria, using a main-frame system. From an initial sample of 57, 54 pre-questionnaires (Appendix A) and 54 post-questionnaires (Appendix B) were analysed.

Chapter 4 - Results

Overview

Only significant results are reported in this chapter. The data being reported in this chapter for the entire sample was arrived at by employing a two-tailed t-test with the level for significance set at $p \leq .05$.

54 pre-questionnaires and 54 post-questionnaires were analysed.¹

The data being reported in this chapter for the individual cultural samples was arrived at by performing a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results where the overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$.¹

The results being reported are presented in 5 sections under the following headings: Role Play Activities, Group Discussion Activities, Journal Writing Activities, Listening to Guest Speakers Activities, and Speech, Game and Singing Activities. Each section will begin with the presentation of significant results in tables for the entire sample and for the individual cultural samples. Following the tables will be a discussion of the significant results presented.

Role-Play Activities

The data in Table 1 presents the results of a t-test for previous participation in a role-play activity not performed for the class compared to expectation to participate in a role-play activity not performed for the class for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

1. All statistics were run by Eugene Dean, Statistical Consultant for the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria, using a main-frame system.

Table 1 - Previous Participation x Expectation

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Previous Participation | | Mean Expectation to Participate | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|-------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | t | sig (p=) |
| role play not performed for the class | 2.98 | 1.67 | 3.56 | 1.28 | -2.01 | .020 |

The data in Table 2 presents the results of a t-test for expectation to participate in a role-play activity performed for the class compared to frequency of participation in a role-play activity performed for the class for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 2 - Expectation x Frequency

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Expectation to Participate | | Mean Frequency of Participation | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|-----|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | t | sig (p=) |
| role play performed for the class | 3.52 | 1.13 | 2.79 | 1.52 | 2.8 | .037 |

The data in Table 3 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for previous participation in a role-play activity not performed for the class for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 3 - Previous participation

| Individual cultural samples | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | Sig |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|-----|
| role play not performed for the class | 3.3 | 2.11 | 3.78* | 4.493 | .02 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

The data in Table 4 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for effectiveness of participation in a role-play activity not performed for the class for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 4 - Effectiveness

| <u>Individual cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | Sig |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| role play not performed for the class | 3.54 | 2.62 | 3.75* | 4.104 | .022 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

The significant difference for the entire sample (Table 1) indicates that although **previous participation** (Question 1) in role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) was relatively low, the entire sample clearly **expected** to participate (Question 2) in role-play activities not performed in front of the class. Indeed, the students were made aware of the communicative emphasis of the summer program well ahead of time and likely anticipated greater participation in role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2). This speculation appears bolstered by the significant difference for the entire sample (Table 2) between the higher **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in a role-play activity performed in front of the class (Activity 1) compared to the lower reporting of the **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in a role-play activity performed in front of the class (Activity 1). Regardless, it was important to discover that the ESL students in this program had a high **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in role-play activities performed either in front of the class (Activity 1) or not performed in front of the class (Activity 2).

Interestingly, for the individual samples (Tables 3 & 4), there appears to be convergent data regarding **previous participation** (Question 1) in a role-play activity not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) and the perception of the **effectiveness** (Question 5) of role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2). For both questions, a significant difference was found between the Taiwanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample; The Taiwanese cultural sample responded with a higher mean than did the Korean cultural sample for both **previous participation** (Question 1) and perception of **effectiveness** (Question 5).

The convergence seems to be that the significant differences between the Taiwanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample indicates a relationship between **previous participation** (Question 1) in role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) and the rating of the **effectiveness** (Question 5) of role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2). In short, it could be argued that the Korean sample's relative lack of **previous participation** in role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2), as indicated by the results of this study, is reflected in the Korean sample finding role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) to be not particularly effective. A contrary argument could be proposed for the Taiwanese sample. That is, the Taiwanese sample's relatively high report of **previous participation** in role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) is reflected in the Taiwanese sample finding this type of activity to be more effective.

It is evident that a difference in second language teaching and learning methodology exists between the Taiwanese and Korean cultural samples' home countries as evidenced by the significant difference in means for **previous participation** (Question 1) in role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2). Perhaps, this difference indicates a culturally bound perception

about the usefulness of this type of activity. In this regard, McKnight (1994, p. 39-40) cites Garrot's (1992) assertion that: "effective learning methods may be universal, but... individuals and groups differ in the extent to which certain methods are valued and emphasised. That is, emphasis - not method - may be culturally specific". The basis for these differences appears to lie in the differences between communicative language techniques and more traditional techniques employed in some Asian countries. For example, Penner (1995) has pointed out that many Chinese teachers and students in China argued that less directive activities such as group discussions and role plays that encourage language use and learner autonomy were a waste of time (p. 10). Furthermore, Allen and Spada (1982 - as cited in Penner, 1995, p. 11) found that Chinese teachers viewed small group activities as a threat to their control and status; they felt they would not be able to fulfil their duty by correcting student errors. Also, Burnaby and Sun (1989 as cited in Penner, 1995, p. 11) found that Chinese teachers believed that learning in the traditional Chinese way (memorisation, etc.), was a more efficient use of time than learning with the indirect communicative approach. In short, Chinese teachers were not convinced of the value of these more authentic, interesting, and student-centred activities. Moreover, McKnight (1994), in discussing Chinese learners of English and their different view of literacy, questions "why... the learner-centred approach, with its de-emphasis of the direct role of the teacher, appear(s) confusing and disorienting to some...(Chinese)... learners?" (p. 48).

It is likely, then, the manner in which Chinese students, at least, have been instructed in the English language will have an effect on how they view certain activities. Indeed, Werner (1991 - as cited in Penner, 1995, p. 4), in discussing classroom culture asserts that beliefs are based on shared values and expectations of all the participants, including the role of the teacher, the role of the students, and beliefs about language learning. With this in mind, Dzau

(1990 - as cited in Penner, 1995, p. 7) points out that “the Chinese student’s traditional attitude towards his teacher is one of respect, obedience, and reliance, a reliance that is often dependence”. Moser (1993) furthers this in her article about Haitian ESL students when she asserts that “... it can be argued that their authoritarian view of the teacher is very much a culture-bound phenomenon, and one not limited to this particular group” (p. 40). In short, then, it would be expected that some groups of ESL students would consider role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) a waste of time and too indirect to be of value.

Given this, it is interesting to note that the Taiwanese sample did report a higher mean for **previous participation** (Question 1) in role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) than did the Korean sample and also perceived role-play activities not performed in front of the class (Activity 2) as more **effective** (Question 5) than the Korean sample. Clearly, it is important to be wary of generalisations made about ESL students and, particularly, Asian ESL students; although “‘permissible generalisations’ may well be useful to teachers, for cross-cultural differences affect the way people see education and learning in general, and language learning and teaching in particular” (McKnight, 1994, p. 40), it certainly appears that generalisations about Taiwanese ESL students should not be made from research on ESL in China even though the two cultural groups are able to share a mutually intelligible dialect. It is evident that Taiwan’s use of communicative methodology, particularly role-plays not performed in front of the class (Activity 2), is more widespread than it is in China. Certainly, in a collection of articles on the psychology of the Chinese, Bond (1986 - as cited in McKnight, 1994, p.40) and David Ho (1986 - as cited in McKnight, 1994, p.40) point out that there are definitely differences between China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Further to this point is the indication of this current study that communicative methodology, such as role-plays, is not common in the Korean cultural sample's home country.

It is clear that the Taiwanese and Korean ESL students in this study responded differently to participation in role-play activities. The main reason for this difference in response could be primarily attributed to **previous participation** (Question 1) in the activity.

Group Discussions

The data in Table 5 presents the results of a t-test for previous participation in a group discussion activity where students share opinions with classmates from their own country compared to expectation to participate in a group discussion activity where students share opinions with classmates from their own country for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 5 - Previous Participation x Expectation

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Previous Participation | | Mean Expectation to Participate | | t | sig (p=) |
|--|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| group discussion share opinions with classmates from own country | 3.35 | 1.57 | 3.61 | 1.27 | -.95 | .035 |

The data in Table 6 presents the results of a t-test for previous participation in a group discussion activity where students share personal details with classmates from their own country compared to expectation to participate in a group discussion activity where students share personal details with classmates from their own country for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 6 - Previous Participation x Expectation

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Previous Participation | | Mean Expectation to Participate | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|-----|-------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | t | sig (p=) |
| group discussion share personal details with classmates from own country | 3.02 | 1.34 | 3.28 | .98 | -1.15 | .019 |

The data in Table 7 presents the results of a t-test for expectation to participate in a group discussion activity where students share personal details with classmates from their own country compared to frequency of participation in a group discussion activity where students share personal details with classmates from their own country for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 7 - Expectation x Frequency

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Expectation to Participate | | Mean Frequency of Participation | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|------|-----|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | t | sig (p=) |
| group discussion share personal details with classmates from own country | 3.28 | .98 | 3.42 | 1.35 | -.6 | .027 |

The data in Table 8 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for previous participation in a group discussion activity where students share opinions with classmates from their own country for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 8 - Previous Participation

| <u>Individual Cultural Samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | sig |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| group discussion share opinions with classmates from own country | 4.15** | 2.61 | 2.44 | 9.148 | .000 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

The data in Table 9 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for feelings before participating in a group discussion activity where students share personal details with classmates from a different country for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $P \leq .05$).

Table 9 - Feelings Before Participating

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | sig |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| group discussion share personal details with classmates from different country | 4.59* | 3.94 | 3.33 | 5.342 | .008 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

The data in Table 10 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for feelings after participating in a group discussion activity where students share opinions with classmates from their own country for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 10 - Feelings After Participating

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | sig |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| group discussion share opinions with classmates from own country | 4.32* | 2.92 | 4.08 | 5.843 | .005 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

The data in Table 11 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for feelings after participating in a group discussion activity where students share personal details with classmates from their own country for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 11 - Feelings After Participating

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | sig |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|---|-----|
| group discussion share personal details with classmates from own country | * | * | * | * | * |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

Activities 5, 6, 7 and 8 - a group discussion activity where students share their *opinions* with classmates from their own country (Activity 5) versus a group discussion activity where the students share *opinions* with classmates from a different country (Activity 6), and a group discussion activity where students share *personal details* with classmates from their own country (Activity 7) versus

a group discussion activity where the students share *personal details* with classmates from a different country (Activity 8) were primarily designed to elicit students' responses about ingroup favouritism/outgroup discrimination' (i.e., ethnocentric behaviour). Ethnocentric behaviour was not determined. Interestingly, however, of the seven significant differences found for both the entire sample and the individual cultural samples (Tables 5-11) regarding Activities 5-8, six were concerned with group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample. Regarding this, it did not appear that discussing *opinions* or *personal details* was a factor to any great extent because significant differences for activities concerned with *personal details* were found four times and significant differences for activities concerned with *opinions* were found three times - an equitable distribution with no real pattern emerging. However, participating in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample (Activity 5 and 7) versus participating in group discussion activities with classmates from a different cultural sample (Activity 6 and 8) appeared to be a factor as six of the seven significant differences found (Tables 5-11) were concerned with participating in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample.

Certainly, the data for group discussion activities indicate that participating in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample was viewed differently than participating in group discussion activities with classmates from a different cultural sample.

The significant differences for the entire sample (Tables 5 and 6) regarding **previous participation** (Question 1) compared to **expectation** to participate (Question 2) indicates that although **previous participation** (Question 1) in both types of group discussion activities was relatively low, the entire sample clearly **expected** to participate (Question 2) in group discussion activities. Again, the students were made aware of the communicative emphasis of the summer program well ahead of time and rightly anticipated participation in

group discussion activities. Moreover, given that the entire sample had an **expectation** (Question 2) that the communicative methodology of small group discussion would be more widespread in their summer English language program in Canada than was **previously experienced** (Question 1) in their own countries

(Tables 5 and 6) indicates the degree to which communicative activities, such as small group discussions, are employed in the students' home countries.

Giesecke (1980 - as cited in Alptekin and Alptekin, 1984, p. 15) supports this view in an article about characteristics of English teaching in Japan: "... in Japan, English is generally taught not as a functional tool for cross-cultural communication in international settings, but as a codified system". "Similarly, in China and Korea, the pedagogical focus seems to be on the grammatical features of English without regard for its communicative and/or cultural functions" (Scovel and Scovel, 1980; Evans, 1980 - as cited in Alptekin and Alptekin, 1984, p. 15). Concerning the lack of communicative methodology or resistance to application of communicative methodology, Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) further discuss how "... in Asia, and also in parts of Africa and Latin America, there is a feeling on the part of the educated elite that English instruction... which has not been 'acculturated' and shaped to fit their country's needs constitute a threat to national identity" (p. 15-16). Similarly, Bahloul (1994) points out that:

"the emphasis in most North African schools and colleges is on rote memorisation (a legacy from the French style of teaching and the Koranic tradition). In other words, the focus is on accepting without questioning. French and Arabic teachers stay somewhat within this framework by drilling grammar and by demanding the rote memorisation of texts: As such, a product is preferred to a process. On one French test, for example, the question written on the board was simply 'Write Lesson 42'; not explain it, but simply produce it from memory" (p. 5).

It is very interesting to note that, overall, the students **expected** (Question 2) to participate in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample moreso in Canada during their summer English language program than they had **previously** (Question 1) in their home countries (Tables 5 & 6). It is also interesting to note the significant difference found for the entire sample (Table 7) between **expectation** to participate (Question 2) and **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in group discussion activities (*personal details*) with classmates from the same cultural sample. The mean for **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in this activity was higher than the mean for **expectation** to participate (Question 2). These results show that the entire sample's **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample was surpassed.

Furthermore, it also appears to indicate that group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample was employed more **frequently** (Question 4) during the summer English language program than the entire sample had **expected** (Question 2). Following this, it appears that although the entire sample had an **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, the entire sample did not have an accurate conception of the **frequency** with which this type of activity would be employed. Clearly, there was a mismatch between the entire sample's **expectation** to participate (Question 2) and the **frequency** with which they did participate (Question 4) in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample. Certainly, these factors would have an effect on the ESL students' responses to this activity.

Of concern, also, is the **frequency** (Question 4) with which group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample was employed because the goal of the program is to provide as much intercultural contact as possible. It appears, however, that this was not the case, as students of the same cultural sample and, therefore, the same language group,

participated in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample at a higher **frequency** (Question 4) than they had **expected** (Question 2).

Regarding Table 10, a significant difference was found between the Japanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample for positive **feelings** about group discussion activities (*opinions*) with classmates from the same cultural sample after participating (Question 6). The Japanese cultural sample reported a higher positive **feeling** about group discussion activities (*opinions*) with classmates from the same cultural sample after participating (Question 6) than did the Korean sample. Similarly, although no significant differences (Table 11) were found between the groups regarding **feelings** about group discussion activities (*personal details*) with classmates from the same cultural sample after participating (Question 6), the Japanese sample responded with the highest mean, followed by the Korean sample and then the Taiwanese sample. Clearly, the Japanese cultural sample responded with a more positive **feeling** (Question 6) about group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample than did the other cultural samples, particularly the Korean cultural sample.

Again, for the individual samples, there appears to be convergent data regarding **previous participation** (Question 1) in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample (Table 8), the rating of **feelings** before participating (Question 3 - Table 9) and **feelings** after participating (Question 6 - Tables 10 and 11) in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample. Basically, the Japanese sample's relatively high rating (Table 8) of **previous participation** (Question 1) in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, as indicated by the results of this study, is reflected in the Japanese sample **feeling** more positively (Table 10) about it after participating (Question 6). A contrary argument could be proposed for the Taiwanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample.

That is, both the Taiwanese sample's and the Korean sample's relatively low rating (Table 8) of **previous participation** (Question 1) in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, as indicated by the results of this study, is reflected in the Taiwanese sample and the Korean sample **feeling** less positively (Table 10) about it after participating (Question 6).

Relatedly, it appears that the communicative methodology of group discussion is more widespread in Japan than it is in Korea or Taiwan and that this difference in **previous experience** with group discussions has an effect on the different cultural samples' responses (i.e., **feelings** before participating [Question 1] and **feelings** after participating [Question 2]).

Interestingly, this assumption is contrary to Skipper's (1988) assertion that the Japanese have an

"... aversion for explicit verbalisation. He points out that this dislike also reflects the traditional Japanese group orientation and hierarchical consciousness expressed through an elaborate system of honorific speech. Moreover, it is felt within the Japanese culture that the direct expression of views can lead to disharmony among group members or even isolation from one's group. This cultural component of Japanese learners presents numerous difficulties to ESL/EFL instructors who may try in vain to produce spontaneous participation in their classrooms" (as cited in Ellis, 1993, p. 4).

Again, it is very interesting to note the greater number of responses concerning group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample as opposed to different cultural samples because there is much theory and research which analyses the difficulty inherent in bringing together students from different cultural backgrounds and expecting them to get the most from their language learning situation. Quite often it is as Weedon (1987 - as cited in Peirce, 1995, p. 15) acknowledges that "language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political

consequences are defined and contested". Moreover, "many studies have drawn attention to the influence of large-scale social categories on inter-individual behaviour, and have demonstrated that in certain instances individuals both behave and are behaved toward solely as a function of their category memberships" (Hewstone and Jaspars, 1982, p. 2). Dennis and Scott (1975 - as cited in Schumann, 1976, p. 136) further this: "In terms of political, cultural, technical or economic status, in a language contact situation, one group may be either dominant, non-dominant or subordinate... (and)... this situation will limit contact between the two groups such that the 2LL group may have little opportunity, need or desire to learn the target language". Schumann (1976) continues this:

"It is argued that social distance and hence a bad language learning situation will exist where the 2LL group is either dominant or subordinate, where both groups desire preservation and high enclosure for the 2LL group, where the 2LL group is both cohesive and large, where the two cultures are not congruent, where the two groups hold negative attitudes toward each other and where the 2LL group intends to remain in the target language area only for a short time" (p. 135).

Furthermore, it has been "... demonstrated that unawareness of cultural differences often leads to conflicts or breakdown in communication between the instructor and the students as well as among students themselves who are usually from different cultural backgrounds" (Liu, 1994, p. 1-2).

Similarly, Kanno and Applebaum's (1995, p. 33) study reveals that learning English for ESL students "... is inextricably intertwined with establishing their identities in a new environment". Essentially, "... the ESL curriculum was never just about learning English. Rather, it involved critical issues such as their identities in school and their interpersonal relationships with other people" (Kanno and Applebaum, 1995, p. 34). Certainly, "... the relationship between the sender and the receiver of a message is symbiotic. In communication, output depends on input; participants work together to negotiate shared meaning"

(Mettler, 1991, p. 9). However, when characteristics of the speaker, particularly ethnic group (Giles and Johnson, 1987 - as cited in Gallois and Callan, 1989, p. 150) are threatening, listeners will not overcome a tendency to negatively evaluate problematic speakers in order to comfortably comprehend their speech and move into the interpretation and response phases of interpersonal communication (Mettler, 1991, p. 18). Without a doubt, "people bring prior expectations to a communication exchange, and these expectations affect the communication itself" (Johnson and Jenks, 1994, p. 10).

Following this, it is difficult to determine the reason why responses for these activities attempting to isolate ingroup favouritism/outgroup discrimination were predominantly concerned with participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample. Assumptions based on these responses could go in either direction and, perhaps, raise more questions than may be answered in this current study. Certainly, it could be, as mentioned earlier, that an inhibition factor regarding commenting negatively about participation with other cultural samples is in operation, therefore students responded in a more neutral manner for the activities concerned with participation in group discussion activities with classmates from other cultural samples. On the other hand, however, it could be that participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample was a contentious factor for the participants and the significant differences found and the relative means attached, convey a continuum of displeasure with participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample. Indeed, if this is the case, then the Japanese cultural sample felt participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample was less of a contentious factor than did the Korean cultural sample and the Taiwanese cultural sample.

In this regard, an ingroup favouritism/outgroup discrimination factor was not evident in this current study. Activities 5, 6, 7 and 8 which were designed to elicit responses about participating in group discussion activities with classmates from a different country revealed no significant results. Conversely, the activities designed to elicit responses about participating in group discussion activities with classmates from the same country revealed several significant results.

What seems evident, however, through trying to determine an ethnocentric variable in ESL learning, is that **previous participation** (Question 1) in the activity is more of a factor in accounting for different cultural samples' responses to a communicative activity. Given the findings in the current research for group discussion activities and **previous participation** (Question 1) in group discussion activities, it would be anticipated that Japanese and Korean ESL students will respond differently to participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample.

Journal Writing

The data in Table 12 presents the results of a t-test for previous participation in a journal activity compared to expectation to participate in a journal activity for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 12 - Previous participation x Expectation

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Previous Participation | | Mean Expectation to Participate | | t | sig (p=) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|-------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| journal activity | 2.63 | 1.77 | 3.65 | 1.33 | -3.37 | .013 |

The data in Table 13 presents the results of a t-test for previous participation in a journal activity compared to frequency of participation in a journal activity for the entire sample ($N=54$ $p \leq .05$).

Table 13 - Previous participation x Frequency

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Previous Participation | | Mean Frequency of Participation | | t | sig (p=) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|-------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| journal activity | 2.63 | 1.77 | 3.70 | 1.28 | -3.57 | .001 |

The data in Table 14 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for previous participation in a journal activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 14 - Previous participation

| Individual Cultural samples | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | sig |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| journal activity | 3.48* | 1.56 | 2.22 | 8.556 | .000 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test

The data in Table 15 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for expectation to participate in a journal activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 15 - Expectation

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | sig |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| journal activity | 4.26* | 2.89 | 3.33 | 7.462 | .001 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test

The data in Table 16 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for feelings before participating in a journal activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 16 - Feelings Before participating

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | sig |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|---|-----|
| journal activity | * | * | * | * | * |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test

Only Activity 12 was concerned with journal activities. This activity was designed to elicit students' responses to journal activities simply as a representative technique of communicative methodology. Interestingly, more significant differences for both the entire sample and individual cultural samples were found for journal activities (Activity 12) than for any other single activity surveyed.

The significant differences for the entire sample (Table 12) indicates that although **previous participation** (Question 1) in journal activities was relatively low, the entire sample clearly **expected** to participate (Question 2) in journal activities. The mean for **previous participation** (Question 1) was lower than the mean for **expectation** (Question 2). The chief explanation for this is that students were made aware of the communicative emphasis of the summer program well ahead of time and anticipated participation in journal activities. Moreover, this result also indicates the degree to which communicative activities, such as journal activities, are employed in the students' home countries given that the entire sample had an **expectation** (Question 2) that the communicative methodology of journal activities would be more widespread in their summer English language program in Canada than was **previously experienced** (Question 1) in their own countries.

Moreover, a significant difference (Table 13) was found between **previous participation** (Question 1) and **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in journal activities for the entire sample. The mean for **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in journal activities was higher than the mean for **previous participation** (Question 1). This result indicates that the entire sample's **previous participation** in this activity was surpassed. Furthermore, it would appear to also indicate that this type of communicative activity was employed more **frequently** (Question 4) during the summer English language program than the entire sample had **expected** (Question 2). Following this, it appears that although the entire sample had an **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in journal activities (Activity 12), the entire sample did not have an accurate conception of the **frequency** (Question 4) with which journal activities would be employed. Clearly, there was a mismatch between the entire sample's **expectation** to participate (Question 2) and the **frequency** (Question 4) with which they did participate in journal activities. Certainly, these factors would have an effect on the ESL students' responses to journal activities.

Regarding Table 14, a significant difference was found between the Japanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample for **previous participation** (Question 1) in journal activities (Activity 12). The Japanese sample reported the higher mean. Similarly, a significant difference (Table 15) was found between the Japanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample for **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in journal activities. The Japanese sample reported the higher mean. Although no significant differences were found between any two samples regarding **feelings** about journal activities before participating (Question 3), the Japanese cultural sample reported the highest mean followed by the Taiwanese cultural sample and then the Korean cultural sample (Table 16).

Again, for the individual samples, there appears to be convergent data regarding **previous participation** (Question 1) in journal activities (Table 14), **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in journal activities (Table 15) and the rating of **feelings** before participating (Question 3) in journal activities (Table 16). Basically, the Japanese sample's relatively high reporting of **previous participation** (Question 1) in journal activities is reflected in the Japanese sample's higher **expectation** (Question 2) to participate in journal activities and **feeling** more positively about journal activities before participating (Question 3). A contrary argument could be proposed for the Korean cultural sample. That is, the Korean cultural sample's relatively low reporting of **previous participation** (Question 1) in journal activities is reflected in the Korean cultural sample's lower **expectation** to participate (Question 2) in journal activities and the lower rating of **feelings** before participating (Question 3) in journal activities.

These results are interesting to note primarily because of the consistent difference between the Japanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample, but also because it is somewhat contrary to theory and research in the area of Asian ESL learner characteristics and cultural identity. For example, previous research on learner characteristics in China (e.g., Cheng, 1988)

supports Chinese students willingness to participate in a journal activity where they have the luxury of retreating from the classroom and its emphasis on instantaneous and immediate communication and can read and write at their own comfort. Cheng (1988) in an article about teaching English as a foreign language in China reports:

“... teacher and students analyse the text in a linear fashion, sentence by sentence, with the teacher asking questions now and then on some points, which he thinks might hinder students’ understanding, to make sure that students are clear about everything in the text. It often happens that a teacher spends a whole hour of classroom instruction explaining one grammatical concept or exemplifying on the blackboard the usage of some lexical items. This method has a great impact on the formation of students’ reading habits. In fact, it encourages students to focus their attention on minute points instead of the meaning of the text as a whole. It appears that sometimes, even if students have understood the text they are reading, they still feel insecure until they have made clear the exact meaning of every word, every sentence, and its Chinese equivalent. Language learning has more often than not turned out to be a matter of learning the meaning of words and grammatical concepts” (p. 91).

Furthermore, in discussing Chinese teachers of English, Burnaby and Sun (1989) observed that “... traditional structures are maintained in that teaching English at the tertiary level (grammar, literature, and linguistic analysis) carries greater prestige than teaching students to speak the language for real communicative purposes” (p. 223). Moreover, concerning Japanese attitudes and motivation towards English, Benson’s (1991) survey discovered that Japanese students “... rated themselves much lower on understanding and speaking than on reading and writing” (p. 40) and this accurately reflects the priorities of junior and senior high schools in Japan (p. 44). Concerning Korean students, Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) cite Scovel and Scovel (1980) as well as Evans’ (1980) observation that the pedagogical focus seems to be on the grammatical features of English without regard for its communicative and/or

cultural functions (p. 14). The literature is consistent with the higher mean responses for the Japanese cultural sample regarding journal activities (Activity 12), but does not account for the lower mean responses by the Taiwanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample.

Certainly, it can be observed that the Japanese cultural sample favours journal activities (Activity 12) moreso than the Taiwanese cultural sample and particularly moreso than the Korean cultural sample. The main reason for this difference in response is primarily attributed to **previous participation** (Question 1) in the activity. Furthermore, the data for **previous participation** (Question 1) in journal activities certainly indicate that this type of communicative activity is more prevalent in Japan than it is in Taiwan and, especially, in Korea.

Listening to Guest Speakers

The data in Table 17 presents the results of a t-test for expectation to participate in a listening to guest speakers activity compared to frequency of participation in a listening to guest speakers activity for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 17 - Expectation x frequency

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Expectation to Participate | | Mean Frequency of Participation | | t | Sig (P=) |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| guest speakers | 4.19 | 1.30 | 3.08 | 1.11 | 4.74 | .028 |

The data in Table 18 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for effectiveness of a journal activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 18 - Effectiveness

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | Sig |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|---|-----|
| guest speakers | * | * | * | * | * |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

The data in Table 19 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for feelings after participating in a journal activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 19 - Feelings After Participating

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | Sig |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| guest speakers | 5.18** | 4.31 | 4.17 | 6.316 | .004 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test.

Only Activity 13 was concerned with listening to guest speaker activities. This activity was designed to elicit students' responses to guest speaker activities simply as a representative technique of communicative methodology. Three significant differences were found (Tables 17-19).

Interestingly, the mean for **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in guest speaker activities (Activity 13) for the entire sample was lower than the mean for **expectation** to participate (Question 2) indicating that the entire sample's **expectation** to participate in guest speaker activities (Activity 13) was not met (Table 17). Clearly, there was a mismatch between the entire sample's

expectation to participate (Question 2) and the **frequency** with which they did participate (Question 4) in guest speaker activities. It appears that this type of communicative activity was not employed as **frequently** (Question 4) as the entire sample had **expected** (Question 2) during the summer English language program. Certainly, this finding could be seen as a factor in how students respond to this activity.

The participants' high **expectation** (Question 2) could be tied into students' lack of real contact with native speakers of English in their home countries as, for example, Benson's (1991) Japanese survey "... revealed a group of freshmen with the barest exposure to English outside the language classroom. Relatively few had encountered English at home, through visits to other countries where it is spoken as a native language, or in either structured or unstructured settings in Japan" (p. 44). Burnaby and Sun (1989) in their article on Chinese teachers' views report that "... by far the bulk of the foreign language teaching in the country is conducted by Chinese teachers, the majority of whom, particularly those teaching below the tertiary level, have probably never talked to a foreigner and/or been outside of China.... Very few opportunities are available for learners to read or hear contemporary foreign language materials created by native speakers, much less to interact with native speakers" (p. 223). McKnight emphasises this point when he states: "most Chinese learners of English will never have the opportunity of interacting with native speakers" (p. 42).

It seems generally evident, then, that the students involved in this summer English program are eager to hear and interact with as many native English speakers as possible. Perhaps, Ellis' (1993) advice is being heeded by teachers and students alike:

“... as the research indicates, a positive relationship exists between the use of English in the community with participation and language achievement. Therefore, learners must be made aware of this in order to receive the maximum benefit from their language study. Language instructors should promote participation in the community and encourage students to make a strong effort to develop an English language network outside of the classroom” (p. 37).

Following this, a significant difference (Table 19) was found between the Japanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample as well as between the Japanese cultural sample and the Taiwanese cultural sample for **feelings after** participating (Question 6) in guest speaker activities (Activity 13). The Japanese cultural sample reported the highest mean followed by the Korean cultural sample and then the Taiwanese cultural sample.

These data suggest that the Japanese cultural sample **felt** more positively about guest speaker activities after participating (Question 6) than did the Taiwanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample. Given this finding, it would be anticipated that the Japanese cultural sample would respond more positively to participation in guest speaker activities than would the Korean and Taiwanese cultural samples.

Speeches, Games and Singing

The data in Table 20 presents the results of a t-test for previous participation in a singing activity compared to expectation to participate in a singing activity for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 20 - Previous Participation x Expectation

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Previous Participation | | Mean Expectation to Participate | | t | sig (p=) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|-------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| singing activity | 2.04 | 1.17 | 3.17 | 1.42 | -4.51 | .031 |

The data in Table 21 presents the results of a t-test for previous participation in a singing activity compared to frequency of participation in a singing activity for the entire sample (N=54 $p \leq .05$).

Table 21 - Previous Participation x Frequency

| Entire sample (N=54) | Mean Previous Participation | | Mean Frequency of Participation | | t | Sig (P=) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|-------|----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| singing activity | 2.04 | 1.17 | 2.75 | 1.53 | -2.73 | .004 |

The data in Table 22 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for previous participation in a journal activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 22 - Previous Participation

| Individual Cultural samples | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | Sig |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| speech activity | 3.0* | 1.83 | 2.56 | 6.385 | .003 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test

The data in Table 23 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for effectiveness of a speech activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 23 - Effectiveness

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | Sig |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| speech activity | 5.0* | 4.31 | 5.0* | 3.588 | .035 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test

The data in Table 24 presents the results from a one way multiple analysis of variance with Scheffe post hoc results for feelings after participating in a game activity for the individual cultural samples (overall F is significant at $p \leq .05$).

Table 24 - Feelings After Participating

| <u>Individual Cultural samples</u> | Japan Mean | Korea Mean | Taiwan Mean | F | Sig |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------|------|
| game activity | 5.11* | 4.23 | 4.67 | 3.706 | .032 |

NOTE: A Scheffe test with a significance level of .05 indicates which of the groups was significantly different from the others: This difference is indicated by a single asterisk (*) where the highest mean is significantly different from the lowest mean; by a double asterisk (**) where the highest mean is significantly different from the other two means; or by asterisks (*) for each cultural sample indicating a significant difference between the groups according to the analysis of variance, but no significant differences between groups according to the Scheffe test

Activity 9 (speeches), Activity 10 (games) and Activity 11 (Singing) were designed to elicit students' responses to speech, game, and singing activities simply as representative techniques of communicative methodology. An interesting pattern emerged from the data for these three activities (Tables 20-24).

Speeches

What was interesting to note about responses to speech activities (Activity 9) was the generally consistent significant differences found between the Japanese cultural sample and the Korean cultural sample (Tables 22-23). Again, for the individual samples, there appears to be convergent data regarding **previous participation** (Question 1) in speech activities and the **effectiveness** (Question 5) of speech activities. The Japanese cultural sample responded with a higher mean for both **previous participation** (Question 1) in a speech activity (Table 22) and perceived **effectiveness** (Question 5) of a speech activity (Table 23) than did the Korean cultural sample. Basically, the Japanese cultural sample's relatively higher response for **previous participation** (Question 1) in speech activities is reflected in the Japanese sample perceiving speech activities to be more **effective** (Question 5). A contrary situation exists for the Korean cultural sample. That is, the Korean cultural sample indicated a relatively lower response for **previous participation** (Question 1) in speech activities (Table 22) which is reflected in the Korean sample perceiving speech activities to be less **effective** (Question 5 - Table 23).

Given this finding, it is apparent that Japanese ESL students do respond differently to participation in speech activities (Activity 9) than do Korean ESL students. Moreover, it appears that not only does the Japanese cultural sample have more **previous participation** (Question 1) with speech activities than the Korean cultural sample but the Japanese cultural sample also perceives speech activities to be more **effective** (Question 5) than the Korean cultural sample. It might also be supposed that the communicative activity of participating in speech activities is more widespread in Japan than it is in Korea.

Singing

Regarding the singing activities (Activity 11), the significant differences for the entire sample indicate that although **previous participation** (Question 1) in singing activities was relatively low, the entire sample clearly **expected** to participate (Question 2) in singing activities (Table 20). Again, students were made aware of the communicative emphasis of the summer program well ahead of time and likely anticipated participation in singing activities. Moreover, this result also indicates the degree to which communicative activities, such as singing, are employed in the students' home countries given that the entire sample had an **expectation** (Question 2) that the communicative methodology of singing activities would be more widespread in their summer English language program in Canada than it had been in their own countries.

A significant difference was found between **previous participation** (Question 1) and **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in singing activities for the entire sample (Table 21). The mean for **frequency** of participation (Question 4) in singing activities was higher than the mean for **previous participation** (Question 1). This result indicates that the entire sample's **previous participation** in singing activities was surpassed during the summer English language program. Moreover, it appears that the entire sample's **expectation** (Question 2) to participate in singing activities (Activity 11) was well-matched to the actual use of this activity during the summer English language program. Certainly, consideration of these factors would help to anticipate the ESL students' responses to this activity.

Games

Regarding game activities (Activity 10), the Japanese cultural sample responded with a higher mean for **feelings** about game activities after participating (Question 6) than did the Korean cultural sample indicating that the Japanese cultural sample has a more positive **feeling** about game activities after participating (Question 6) than does the Korean cultural sample (Table 24).

The responses for game activities and singing activities are interesting to note because, as Penner (1995) asserts, ESL learners “often... resist activities, such as singing songs or playing games, because they do not recognise their pedagogical value” (p. 14). For example, it has been asserted that the essential characteristics of the Chinese view of language learning are memorisation, repetition, habit formation, and the quantitative accumulation of knowledge (Yu, 1984; Scovel, J., 1983; Wu, 1983 - as cited in Penner, p. 5) which eventually leads to the creative use of language. However, contrary to these assertions, it is clear that the entire sample **expected** to participate (Question 2) in singing activities and the Japanese cultural sample, in particular, had a high positive **feeling** about participation in game activities after participating (Question 6).

Chapter 5: Discussion

Regarding overall trends which emerged from all the significant differences revealed, there were four instances for the entire sample where **previous participation** in an activity was lower than **expectation** to participate in an activity:

- role-play activities not performed in front of the class;
- group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample;
- journal activities;
- singing activities.

Furthermore, there were three instances for the entire sample where the reporting of the **frequency** of participation in an activity was higher than **expectation** to participate in an activity:

- Group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample;
- journal activities;
- singing activities.

Evidently, although the ESL students in this program reported low **previous participation** in role-play activities not performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities and singing activities, the ESL students in this program clearly **expected** to participate in role-play activities not performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities and singing activities. Moreover, the reporting of the **frequency** of participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities and singing activities surpassed their **expectations**.

Regarding the importance of expectations in language learning, Keller's (1983 - as cited in Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 481) education-oriented theory of motivation identifies expectancy as one of the major determinants of motivation. The concept of expectancy

“... draws upon research based on the concepts of locus of control, expectation for success, and attributions concerning success or failure. In general, learners who think they are likely to succeed are more highly motivated than are those who expect to fail; those who think they control their own learning and attribute success or failure to their own efforts are more motivated than are those who attribute outcomes to external causes such as luck, a teacher's moods, or the difficulty of a task” (Deci, 1975; Keller, 1983; Pintrich, 1989 - as cited in Crookes and Schmidt, 1991, p. 482).

Gardner and Tremblay (1994), who have been responsible for the most influential work in the field of motivation, acknowledge there is currently a rich inventory of motivational theories, and these theories “... generally focus on individual differences or situational factors of motivation... the individual differences are best represented by theories of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, need for achievement, expectancy-value, learned helplessness, and goal oriented behavior” (p. 362). Gardner and Tremblay (1994) further add that “the first, and clearly one of the most important events in the history of motivation, was the demonstration by Tolman that learning could occur without reward and drive reduction. This led to a more cognitive motivation, with ‘expectancy’ as its basic construct” (p. 362).

Concerning expectancy-value theories of motivation, theorists assert “... that behavior is, in large part, determined by a multiplicative relation between one's expectation about attaining a goal and the valence or attractiveness of the goal” (Good & Brophy, 1986, p. 404). Furthermore, “Rotter suggests that any behaviour... is determined by two prime variables: *expectancy* and *reinforcement value*. An expectancy is a subjectively held probability that a particular

reinforcement will occur as the outcome of a specific behavior” (Phares, 1988, p. 89). Regarding this, differences in expectations about instruction between Asians and Westerners have a direct bearing on achievement and potential participation as beliefs are based on shared values and expectations of all the participants, including the role of the teacher, the role of the students, and beliefs about language learning. Without a doubt, people bring prior expectations to a communication exchange, and these expectations affect the communication itself.

It could be seen, then, given the results of the current study, that the entire sample’s expectation to participate in role-play activities not performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities and singing activities was a response to the attractiveness of the goal and the subjectively held probability that a particular reinforcement will occur as the outcome of a specific behavior. Certainly, the adult Asian ESL students in this study enrolled in the University of Victoria Summer English Language Program to experience, practice or reinforce these types of behaviours through communicative activities in the classroom. Considering this, it seems reasonable to observe that the expectation to participate in role-play activities not performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities, and singing activities would be higher than previous participation in the activities.

What is equally reasonable to observe is that the frequency of participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities, and singing activities was higher than expectation to participate in these activities. Certainly, it can be argued that the adult Asian ESL students in this sample could not possibly perceive correctly the exact amount these activities would be employed relative to their expectations. Unfortunately, for the purposes of this current study, the only conclusions that can be drawn

about previous participation, expectation to participate, and the frequency of participation are the aforementioned reasonable observations.

However, what is really interesting, in regard to the entire sample's responses toward role-play activities not performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, and journal activities is how these same activities constitute the majority of significant differences found for individual samples.

There were four instances for individual cultural samples where a high response for **previous participation** led to a similarly high response for either **effectiveness** of the activity or positive **feelings** about the activity after participating:

- role-play activities not performed in front of the class;
- group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample;
- journal activities;
- speech activities.

More specifically, three of the four instances (group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities and speech activities) where a high response for **previous participation** led to a similarly high response for either perceived **effectiveness** of the activity or **feelings** about the activity after participating were responses by the Japanese cultural sample .

Conversely, there were four instances for individual cultural samples where a low response for **previous participation** led to a similarly low response for either perceived **effectiveness** of the activity or positive **feelings** about the activity after participating:

- role-play activities not performed in front of the class;
- group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample;
- journal activities;
- speech activities.

More specifically, all four instances where a low response for **previous participation** led to a similarly low response for either perceived **effectiveness** of the activity or **feelings** about the activity after participating were responses by the Korean cultural sample.

This finding is important to consider because it indicates a relationship between **previous participation** in an activity and the perception of the **effectiveness** of the activity or **feelings** about the activity after participating. That is, the Japanese cultural sample's higher response for **previous participation** in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities and speech activities is reflected in the Japanese cultural sample perceiving these activities to be more **effective** and **feeling** more positively about these activities after participating. On the other hand, the Korean cultural sample's lower response for **previous participation** in role-play activities not performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities and speech activities is reflected in the Korean cultural sample perceiving these activities to be less **effective** and **feeling** less positively about these activities after participating.

The finding that there is a link between previous participation in an activity and the perception of the effectiveness of the activity or feelings about the activity after participating in it seems to support a growing consensus that "... the term motivation has been used as 'a general cover term - a dustbin- to include a number of possibly distinct concepts, each of which may have different origins and different effects and require different classroom treatment'" (McDonough, 1981, p. 143 - as cited in Crookes and Schmidt, 1991, p. 471). Indeed, Gardner and Tremblay (1994) express "... the view that motivation is best explained as a complex and dynamic process with room for several intervening variables" (p. 366). Part of this complexity and dynamism is captured in Keller's (1983)

definition of motivation: “Motivation refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect” (as cited in Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 481).

Certainly, the number of choices people make is equal to the different types of motivation individuals bring to a language learning experience. Relatedly, Gardner (1985, p. 10 - as cited in Gardner & Tremblay, 1994, p. 361) “proposes that motivation ‘refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language’”.

Concerning this, Savignon (1991), in her article *Communicative language Teaching: State of the Art*, describes ESL students “... as active participants in the negotiation of meaning. Schemata, expectancies, and top-down/bottom-up processing are among the terms now used to capture the necessarily complex, interactive nature of this negotiation” (Savignon, 1991, p. 261). Moreover, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) “... see SL learning as an extended process, often taking place both inside and outside the classroom over a number of years; and above all, as one in which the learner takes an active role at many levels of the process” (p. 483). In this regard, second language teachers and researchers acknowledge that language acquisition is an interaction between the learner's innate mental structures and, in essence, the act of learning a language is a creative construction process.

Certainly, “one factor that emerges from the literature on effective teaching and learning is the importance of the role of prior knowledge in the attainment of new information. A foundation of knowledge and experience is required for cognitive growth to occur” (Cushner, 1988, p. 168). In this regard, Ausubel (1963 - as cited in Cushner, 1988, p. 168) refers to cognitive structures as a person's knowledge of a particular subject matter and how well organized it is at a particular point in time. Existing cognitive structures are the critical factor in determining whether new material will be meaningful and how the information will be acquired and retained. The stronger the individual cognitive structures, the more the new information will be integrated and retained.

Concerning this, in studies designed to investigate the importance of prior knowledge, Bransford (1979 - as cited in Cushner, 1988, p. 168)) cites that up to 80% of posttest gain can be directly dependent upon pretest knowledge". Relatedly, Gardner and Tremblay (1994) cite Cooley and Leinhart (1975) who emphasize the importance of general ability and prior achievement..." (p. 363). Moreover, Keller's (1983 - as cited in Crookes and Schmidt, 1991, p. 481) education-oriented theory of motivation identifies interest, in cognitive terms, as a positive response to stimuli on the basis of existing cognitive structures such that learners' curiosity is aroused and sustained.

Furthermore, "Hofstede (1980 - as cited in Cushner, 1988, p. 168), a prominent cross-cultural trainer and researcher, finds that the amount of international experience within a group of trainees strongly affects the way his training is received. He finds that audiences with a considerable amount of international experience have little trouble seeing the importance of his training and... audiences with little or no international experience have difficulty accepting his points" . Furthermore, Currall and Kirk's (1986) study predicting success in intensive foreign language courses found the presence of previous French courses predicted grades in intensive language courses.

Dweck (1986) contends that "one of the hallmarks of effective learning (and of intelligent thinking) is the tendency to apply or transfer what one has learned to novel tasks that embody similar underlying principles" (p. 1043). Moreover, Alderson and Clapham (1992) assert that "it is increasingly commonplace to suggest that variability in performance may be due to variations in factors like background knowledge... and... what is background knowledge for one candidate may be new information for another" (p. 159).

Relatedly, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) assert that "... numerous researchers have proposed that achievement might actually be the cause instead of the effect of attitude (Savignon, 1972; Burstall, Jamieson, Cohen &

Hargreaves, 1974; Backman, 1976; Hermann, 1980; Strong, 1984 - as cited in Crookes and Schmidt, 1991, p. 474). Indeed, Gardner argues that self-confidence arises from positive experiences in the context of the second language (Gardner, 1985, p. 54 - as cited in Peirce, 1994, p. 1). Essentially, successful SL learners might tend to acquire positive attitudes toward both language learning and the target language community as a result of doing well, whereas relatively unsuccessful learners might acquire negative attitudes" (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991, p. 474). That is to say, we like to be successful, and usually find activities in which we can achieve success pleasurable. In regard to this, Crookes and Schmidt (1991) acknowledge "student expectations of self and self-evaluations of likelihood of success appear to have important motivational effects" (p. 490). As well, Mikulecky, Lloyd & Huang (1996) state: "Thus it can be seen that, in a variety of arenas, people's attitudes toward tasks and senses of their own abilities are related to their likelihood of persisting in the face of difficulty" (p. 5). Similarly, O'Malley *et al.*'s (1985) study, *Learning Strategy Applications with Students of English as a Second Language*, found that students used a variety of learning strategies but typically used more familiar strategies and applied them to discrete-point rather than integrative tasks.

What is interesting to note at this point is the apparent discrepancy between the communicative goals of the University of Victoria Summer English Language Program and, at least, the goals or experiences of the Korean sample. Certainly, the significant differences found between the Japanese and Korean samples illuminated how the Japanese sample's goals and prior knowledge were met, in that they reported high levels of previous participation in group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities, and speech activities and, thus, reported these same activities to be more effective and reported higher positive feelings about these activities after participating. However, the Korean sample's goals and prior knowledge were not met, in that they reported low levels of previous participation in role-play activities not

performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities, and speech activities and, thus, reported these same activities to be less effective and reported lower positive feelings about these activities after participating. This appears contrary to the goals of communicative language teaching technique.

Firstly, Long and Porter's (1985 - as cited in Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 488) assertion that "the various recent 'communicative approaches' are characterized by a fairly extensive use of group work, which has been said to result in greater motivation among students" appears false in this case. The assertion appears false because the Korean sample reported low levels of previous participation in role-play activities not performed in front of the class and group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample indicating low levels of background knowledge. Concerning this, if existing cognitive structures are the critical factor in determining whether new material will be meaningful and how the information will be acquired and retained and if the stronger the individual cognitive structures, the more the new information will be integrated and retained is accepted, the Korean sample could not reasonably have acquired positive attitudes toward language learning through these activities as a result of doing well beforehand. The Korean sample's expectations of self and self-evaluations of likelihood of success would, indeed, have important motivational effects. Indeed, Krashen and Terrell (1983) would argue the acquirer's affective filter would be up because of low self-confidence resulting in a lack of motivation. That is to say, if learners like to be successful, and usually find activities in which they can achieve success pleasurable, the Korean sample was relatively incapable of this given the low level of prior experience in role-play activities not performed in front of the class and group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample.

Secondly, communicative language teaching technique was “derived from neo-Firthian systemic or functional linguistics that views language as meaning potential and maintains the centrality of context of situation in understanding language systems and how they work... (van Ek, 1975 - as cited in Savignon, 1991, p. 263). “Functions were based on assessment of learner needs and specified the end result, the *product* of an instructional program. The term *communicative* was used to describe programs that used a functional-notional syllabus based on needs assessment...” (Savignon, 1991, p. 263). Furthermore, “A communicative approach presupposes that students take the central role in learning. This idea of student-centredness is first of all embodied in the design of the syllabus. We claim that our communicative syllabus is student-oriented because it gears its objectives to what students actually need...” (Xiaoju, 1984, p. 9). Concerning this, it is clear the Korean sample’s needs were not met regarding journal activities and speech activities.

A needs assessment for the Korean sample that acknowledged effective language learning emphasizes the importance of general ability and prior achievement and acknowledged that one of the hallmarks of effective learning (and of intelligent thinking) is the tendency to apply or transfer what one has learned to novel tasks that embody similar underlying principles would have predicted that variability in performance in journal activities and speech activities for the Korean sample would be due to variations in factors like background knowledge. Certainly, a foundation of knowledge and experience is required for cognitive growth to occur and SL learning is an extended process, often taking place both inside and outside the classroom over a number of years; and above all, is one in which the learner takes an active role at many levels of the process. Clearly, the Korean sample reported a low level of previous participation or prior experience in journal activities and speech activities indicating a lack of foundation of knowledge and a lack of an active role in these activities. A low level of effort of achieving in journal activities and speech activities was

established at the outset indicating motivation, referred to as the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect, would be similarly low. It is clear that for the Korean sample, journal activities and speech activities were not a familiar strategy for language learning. Moreover, an increased predisposition to the valuing of the objective of the activity or to its use in the future was not present.

Evidently, Wan, Chapman and Biggs (1992) assertion that “classroom experience can involve role expectations that are not clearly defined and that conflict with... (students’)... previous academic experiences... (and)... the resulting stress can have a strong, negative impact on international students’ experiences...” (607-608) was borne out for the Korean sample in this study. “As Spolsky states: ‘A language may be learned for any one or a collection of practical reasons. The importance of these reasons to the learner will determine what degree of effort he or she will make, what cost he or she will pay for the learning’” (Spolsky, 1989, p. 169 - as cited in Gardner & Tremblay, 1994, p. 361).

“There is general acceptance of the complexity and interrelatedness of skills in both written and oral communication and of the need for learners to have the experience of communication, to participate in the negotiation of meaning” (Savignon, 1991, p. 262). As well, “Savignon (1972 - as cited in Savignon, 1991, p. 264) used the term *communicative competence* to characterize the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge”. However, the question that needs to be asked is: Is communicative language technique capable of replicating ‘genuine’, ‘natural’ or ‘authentic language’ through the negotiation of meaning in perceived novel situations or is it as Seedhouse (1996) suggests “... an institutional variety of discourse produced by a speech community or communities convened for the institutional purpose of learning English, working within particular speech exchange systems suited to

that purpose? This question needs serious consideration given the results in the current study that previous participation or prior knowledge had an effect on the reporting of effectiveness or feelings about certain communicative activities.

In this regard, Seedhouse (1996) argues that replicating 'genuine' or 'natural' rather than 'typical' or 'traditional' classroom communication is both paradoxical and unattainable. Seedhouse (1996, p. 16) cites Nunan's (1987, p. 141) results as follows:

"... there is a growing body of classroom-based research which supports the conclusion... that there are comparatively few opportunities for genuine communicative language use in second-language classrooms. Thus, Long and Sato report: 'ESL teachers continue to emphasize form over meaning, accuracy over communication' (Long & Sato, 1983, p. 283 - as cited in Seedhouse, 1996, p. 16).

Savignon (1991) furthers this when she states: "Even when all lessons ostensibly focus on functional aspects of language use, patterns of classroom interaction provide little genuine communication between teacher and learner or, for that matter, between learner and learner" (p. 271). Furthermore,

"making the students learn through use naturally implies that the target language they come into contact with should be real, that is, authentic, appropriate, and 'global'. Quite a number of teachers seem to take the term 'authentic language' to mean standard native speaker language. In fact, it means language that is actually used in real communication situations, as opposed to language that is artificially made up for purposes other than communication" (Xiaoju, 1984, p. 5).

Concerning this, "we must bear in mind that every manifestation of speaking is speaking in a context (and thus requires) context-specific skills and experience. Indeed, speaking ability does not exist in isolation from contexts and therefore every test of speaking is a performance test" (Alderson & Clapham, 1992, p. 160).

With this in mind, it is difficult to discount the notion that any classroom learning situation is contextually-bound and, therefore, any classroom learning can be seen to rely on specific background knowledge in regard to language

learning tasks. Regarding this, ESL students' prior knowledge and experience of certain methodologies and activities must be taken into account in order for effective classroom learning and interaction to occur. Indeed, communicative language teaching technique based in functional linguistics maintains the centrality of context of situation in understanding language systems and how they work. Obviously, ESL students who are unfamiliar with the learning context of certain communicative activities will not respond as favorably in terms of achievement or attitude toward those same activities.

Furthermore, Nunan (1988) discusses another type of authenticity to consider for the language learning classroom:

“another important type of authenticity (perhaps the most important of all) is what might be called ‘learner authenticity’. By this is meant the realization and acceptance by the learner of the authenticity of a given text, task, set of materials, or learning activity. For learners to authenticate materials, these need, minimally, to fulfil two conditions. In the first place, they need to be recognized by learners as having a legitimate place in the language classroom. Secondly, they must engage the interests of the learner by relating to his interests, background knowledge, and experience, and, through these, stimulate genuine communication” (p. 102 - as cited in Seedhouse, 1995, p. 62-62).

Certainly, role-play activities not performed in front of the class, group discussion activities with classmates from the same cultural sample, journal activities, and speech activities were not “authenticated” by the Korean learners in this study. It is clear that these activities did not relate to the Korean learners' background knowledge and experience. Concerning this, the Korean learners in this study could not recognise that these activities had a legitimate place in the language classroom.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

Regarding the findings of this current research, it seems apparent that further research on adult Asian ESL learners in a short term intensive study abroad program would benefit from examining the role of previous participation in communicative activities. Moreover, further analyses of previous participation in communicative activities and, relatedly, learner responses to communicative activities appears to be important to consider. Concerning this, Savignon (1991) asserts:

“a recent initiative, supportive of CLT, is the analysis of activity or task-based curricula. Researchers are looking at classroom language events, breaking them down into units of analysis with a view to establishing a typology of tasks that teachers frequently use. Since tasks determine the opportunities for language use, for the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning, their systematic description constitutes the first step in establishing a relationship between task and learning outcomes. No researcher today would dispute that language learning results from participation in communicative events. Despite any claims to the contrary, however, the nature of this learning remains undefined” (p. 271).

In this regard, Politzer and McGroarty's (1985) study, *An Exploratory Study of Learning Behaviors and Their Relationship to Gains in Linguistic and Communicative Competence*, recommends considerable further research is needed to explain which behaviors are helpful for learners at various levels and to relate their behaviors to current second language learning theories. This current study indicates evidence that adult Asian ESL learners vary markedly in their attitudes towards learning, their preferred learning styles and their perceptions of what is of value and what is not. Further measuring and understanding of such attitudes, styles and perceptions should allow everyone involved in the acquisition process to understand that students cannot be expected to respond alike to teaching strategies. There is a need for everyone involved in the acquisition process to come to grips with the learner's values and

the home teaching situation as a step on the road toward a successful experience.

Moreover, Reid's (1987) study, *The Learning Style Preferences of ESL Students*, indicated that non native speakers' learning style preferences often differ significantly from those of native speakers and that ESL students from different language backgrounds sometimes differ from one another in their learning style preferences. "Negotiation in CLT highlights the need for cross-linguistic, that is, cross-cultural, awareness on the part of all involved. Better understanding of the strategies used in the negotiation of meaning offers a potential for improving classroom practice of needed skills.... To assume that sheer quantity of exposure shapes children's speech is simplistic. Identification and motivation are what matter" (Savignon, 1991, p. 270).

The finding that previous experience significantly affects attitude toward instructional activities seems imperative to consider as a factor in designing a curriculum for a short term intensive study abroad program. It is reasonable to suppose that some groups of ESL students will have had more exposure to certain activities than others and, therefore, will respond differently to those activities. Clearly, effective learning methods may be universal, but individuals and groups differ in the extent to which certain methods are valued and emphasised.

In the current research, a link between previous participation in a communicative activity and the higher or lower rating of the effectiveness of the activity and/or feelings about the activity after participating is established. Certainly, more research concerning previous participation in certain communicative activities for individual cultural samples is necessary in order to aid in the design of language programs that better fit the needs of individual cultural groups and ESL learners in general. After all, theory and research supports that ESL students' favourable response and attitude toward activities leads to a more favourable learning situation (Gardner, 1985). Regarding this, a

survey of previous participation in certain communicative activities is a link towards ensuring that more favourable learning situations are presented to ESL students. Perhaps, not only surveying what ESL students want to learn in their programs (e.g., learner inventories) but also surveying the amount of previous experience with communicative activities will shed more light on what type of curriculum could be developed that will lead to more effective learning.

Savignon (1991) proposes that “as interest in communicative language teaching grows, more traditional programs will undoubtedly find ways to involve both learners and teachers in the definition of goals and the selection of meaning-focused interpretive and expressive tasks designed to meet those goals” (p. 274). Moreover, “program design and implementation depend on negotiation between policy makers, linguists, researchers, and teachers. And evaluation of program success requires a similar collaborative effort. The selection of methods and materials appropriate to both the goals *and* context of teaching begins with an analysis of both learner needs *and* styles of learning” (Savignon, 1991, p. 265-266). Certainly, better understanding of the strategies used by ESL learners in the negotiation of meaning offers a potential for improving classroom practice of the needed skills.

“Berns (1990) stresses that the definition of a communicative competence appropriate for learners requires an understanding of the sociocultural contexts of language use. In addition, the selection of a methodology appropriate to the attainment of communicative competence requires an understanding of sociocultural differences in styles of learning. Curricular innovation is best advanced by the development of local materials which, in turn, rests on the involvement of classroom teachers” (as cited in Savignon, 1991, p. 267). Without a doubt, the thousands of teachers who staff language classrooms everyday constitute a group of professionals with the potential to make enormously rich contributions. Their daily contact with students provides them with unique opportunities to engage in research activity, and they should be urged to take

advantage of them. From the many bits and pieces of knowledge that can be generated in a hundred or a thousand mini-studies conducted by classroom teachers, a meaningful picture can emerge.

Interestingly, Prodromou's (1992) epilogue to his study, *What Culture? Which Culture?: Cross-cultural factors in language learning*, asks the question: "what's the use of classroom research?" His answer is: "It is both disconcerting and stimulating to discover that our assumptions and those of our students do not always coincide. As one wanders around the mid-career plateau, such shocks to one's complacency are a refreshing form of self-development. Going back to the learners generates a renewed interest in a process which, after fifteen years of language teaching, risks becoming an unexamined ritual" (p. 49). Certainly, learner communicative needs provide a framework for elaborating program goals in terms of functional competence and this implies global, qualitative evaluation of learner goals and achievement as opposed to quantitative assessment of discrete linguistic features.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the responses of individual cultural groups toward a communicative activity rather than the response of an entire group of ESL learners comprised of different cultural groups. For example, responses for previous participation in an activity for an entire learner group may, on average, be low, but each cultural group may respond differently along a continuum of high to low responses. Certainly, it was revealed in this study that an individual cultural group's relatively higher response for previous participation in an activity was related to a relatively higher response for feelings about participation in an activity and/or effectiveness of participating in an activity. It appears obvious that a learner inventory of responses to communicative activities proposed for the language classroom which does not take into account cultural variables is not as effective and, indeed, could prove erroneous. Concerning this, Minami (1995) asserts "... extrapolating from one Asian culture and its underlying values to another culture is inappropriate at best, and making

sweeping generalizations of Asian cultures lead to erroneous conclusions and stereotyping at worst” (p. 5).

“When language use is viewed as social behavior, learner identity and motivation are seen to interact with language status, use, and contexts of learning to influence the development of competence. The description and explanation of the differential competence that invariably results must include an account of this interaction” (Savignon, 1991, p. 273). Berns (1992) further discusses this issue:

“... if English varies functionally across contexts, is the communicative competence in English of speakers in those contexts to be described with reference to a native speaker variety? Or is the variety of English unique to that context, for example, European English, more appropriately the reference point for communicative competence? More specifically, which functions of language should European learners be prepared for? Which patterns of behavior and which meanings should they learn? Those of the native English-speaking speech community or the European English-speaking speech community? If English is used by non-native speakers to communicate with other non-native speakers, which norms, those of native or non-native models, should prevail?” (p. 8-9).

In conclusion, more studies are needed in which the learning variables of students prior to studying language abroad are compared with achievement in and responses to learning activities after a given period of instruction. Although correlational, such studies may help to suggest more clearly whether causal relationships exist between any variables, and if so, whether they influence each other in a reciprocal relationship.

Summary

This study presented the findings of a survey of adult Asian English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' responses to communicative language classroom activities while involved in a short term intensive study abroad program at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Information concerning ESL students' responses about participating in certain communicative language activities and factors involved with these activities was discovered.

Through an analysis of the findings of this study, it is hoped a better understanding of adult Asian ESL learners' responses to certain communicative activities was achieved. Moreover, it is hoped that a better understanding of factors which have an effect on adult Asian ESL learners in general, and individual cultural samples in particular, while participating in communicative language activities in a short term intensive study abroad program was achieved.

Particularly, it is important for ESL program planners and designers to consider that people bring prior expectations to the language classroom and that there are individual differences or situational factors of motivation which affect any kind of goal oriented behavior. Certainly, ESL program planners and designers need to acknowledge that language acquisition has much to do with the learner's innate mental structures and that these existing cognitive structures are the critical factor in determining whether new material will be meaningful and how the information will be acquired and retained. Effective learning relies on applying or transferring what one has learned to novel tasks that embody similar underlying principles. Given this, does a communicative approach which presupposes that students take the central role in learning really embody the idea of student-centredness as critical to the design of the syllabus? Does the communicative syllabus really gear its objectives to what students actually need? Without a doubt, some of the most effective ways ESL program planners and

designers would be able to accomplish this is to conduct surveys, needs assessments and personal interviews of students and consider patterns that arise from cultural groupings. ESL program planners and designers need to acknowledge that an increased predisposition to the valuing of the objective of a learning activity is crucial and that this predisposition could be accessed through relatively simple needs assessments, personal interviews and surveys. In any way possible, ESL program planners and designers need to access ESL learners previous experience and prior knowledge in order to *effectively* plan and design a program.

The findings of this study are important because although much appears to have been written about attitudes in second language learning, and increasingly more is being written about communicative methodology employed abroad, there appears to be a paucity of information about Asian ESL students' responses concerning participating in short term intensive English language programs abroad.

This study focused on a specific institution's short term intensive study abroad program, but it is expected that the findings will benefit similar institutions with similar programs. A careful consideration of the findings cannot help but inform and raise more discussion about the nature of adult Asian ESL learners studying in short term intensive English language programs abroad.

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Appendix A

Pre-Questionnaire

C) group problem-solving activity using the English language with non-native English speaking classmates from your country

** a group problem-solving activity is any activity where you and other people discuss a problem or situation and try to solve that problem or situation together
**

for example:

10 people need a new heart or they will die, but only one person can have a new heart. Which person should receive the new heart?

1) How often have you participated in a group problem-solving activity using the English language with non-native English speaking classmates from your country?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
never very few occasionally often very often always
 times

2) How often would you **expect** to participate in a group problem-solving activity using the English language with non-native English speaking classmates from your country during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
never very few occasionally often very often always
 times

3) How do you **feel** about participating in a group problem-solving activity using the English Language with non-native English speaking classmates from your country during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
dislike it dislike it like it like it more like it like it
very much a little than a little very much

J) English language game activity in the classroom

** an English language game activity is any activity where you practise a language point while participating in a contest or game: The goal is to have fun **

1) How often have you participated in an English language game activity in the classroom?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 never very few occasionally often very often always
 times

2) How often would you **expect** to participate in a language game activity in the classroom during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 never very few occasionally often very often always
 times

3) How do you **feel** about participating in a language game activity in the classroom during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 dislike it dislike it like it like it more like it like it
 very much a little than a little very much

L) shared journal writing activity using the English language

****** a shared journal writing activity is an activity where you communicate to another student through writing in a journal or diary ******

1) How often have you participated in a shared journal writing activity using the English language for your English language class?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 never very few occasionally often very often always
 times

2) How often would you **expect** to participate in a shared journal writing activity using the English language during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 never very few occasionally often very often always
 times

3) How do you **feel** about participating in a shared journal writing activity using the English language during your summer English language course at the University of Victoria?

_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____
 dislike it dislike it like it like it more like it like it
 very much a little than a little very much

Appendix B

Post-Questionnaire

VITA

Surname: McGowan

Given Names: Skye Morgan

Place of Birth: Terrace, British Columbia, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| University of Victoria | 1995 to 2001 |
| University of Victoria | 1984 to 1989 |
| Northwest Community College | 1983 to 1984 |

Degrees Awarded:

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------|
| B.A. (English) | University of Victoria | 1987 |
| Diploma in Applied Linguistics | University of Victoria | 1988 |
| Teaching Certificate | University of Victoria | 1989 |

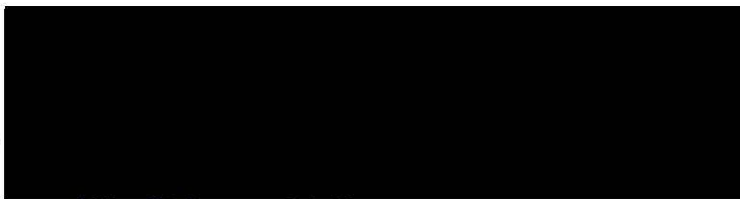
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Author



Skye Morgan McGowan

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