Self-Perceived Language Competence and East Asian Students’ Oral Participation in American University Classrooms

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Ee Lin Lee
This study examined English language related competence factors that contribute to East Asian students' (EAS) oral participation levels in American university classrooms. Specifically, this study posited that EAS' self-perceived English communicative competence, English speaking anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation affect their level of oral participation. The results of the statistical analyses supported the hypothesized relationships, indicating (a) EAS' self-perceived English communicative competence correlates positively with their level of oral participation, (b) EAS' reported level of English speaking anxiety correlates negatively with their level of oral participation, and (c) EAS' level of fear of negative evaluation correlates negatively with their level of oral participation. Further analyses were also conducted to determine the effects of EAS' cultural orientation and sex differences on their level of oral participation. The implications of the results of this research were discussed and suggestions for future research were provided.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** ........................................................................................... ii

**LIST OF TABLES** .................................................................................................... vii

**CHAPTER**

I. **INTRODUCTION** ........................................................................................... 1

II. **REVIEW OF LITERATURE** .......................................................................... 6

  Culture..................................................................................................................... 6
  Individualist Culture Orientation ........................................................................ 10
  Collectivist Culture Orientation.......................................................................... 11

  The Interface of National Cultural Orientations
  and Academic Culture............................................................................................ 14
  Individualist Culture and Performance in
  Academic Settings.................................................................................................. 15
  Collectivist Culture and Performance in
  Academic Settings.................................................................................................. 17

  East Asian Students (EAS) in American Classrooms......................................... 21

  EAS’ English Proficiency......................................................................................... 24
  EAS’ English Speaking Skills................................................................................ 25

  Communicative Competence and Perceptions of
  Language Proficiency............................................................................................. 28

  Language Competencies and Classroom Participation.................................... 30

  English Language Proficiency.............................................................................. 31
Table of Contents – continued

CHAPTER

English Language Speaking Anxiety .................................. 32
Fear of Negative Evaluation ............................................... 34
Rationale and Hypotheses .......................................................... 36

III. METHOD ...................................................................................................... 38
Participants ............................................................................................ 39
   Sampling Design ........................................................................ 39
   Sample Characteristics ................................................................. 40
Procedures ......................................................................................... 41
   Solicitation of Participants ....................................................... 41
   Contact via Student Organization Leaders ............................. 42
   Individual Telephone Contact ............................................... 43
   Contact of Participants via Snowball Sampling ..................... 43
Data Collections Procedures ................................................................. 44
Measures ............................................................................................ 46
   Individualism-Collectivism Scale ............................................ 47
   Communicative Adaptability Scale:
      Self-Reference Measure ..................................................... 48
   Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale .......................... 49
   Oral Participation Scale ............................................................. 51
   Additional Measures ................................................................ 52
Chapter Summary ................................................................................. 52
Table of Contents – continued

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................. 96
LIST OF TABLES


2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Standardized Item Alphas for the Independent and the Dependent Variables ................................................................. 56


4. t-Test Values, Means, and Standard Deviations for Females and Males on the Dimensions of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale .......................... 59

5. t-Test Values, Means, and Standard Deviations for Females and Males on the Independent and the Dependent Variables .............................................. 60

6. Means, Standard Deviations, and Minimum and Maximum Values for the Independent and the Dependent Variables .................................................. 63
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1950s the United States education system has undergone a significant demographic shift characterized by a continuing increase in the cultural diversification of the student population. As part of this diversification in student population, the number of international students on American campuses has multiplied more than 16 fold from 29,800 in 1951 to 514,723 in 2000 (Coleman, 1997; Institute of International Exchange [IIE], n.d.b). With the dramatic increase in the number of international students attending American colleges and universities, issues concerning the successful integration of culturally diverse perspectives within American classrooms require increased attention from researchers, administrators, and instructors (Bradley, Parr, Lan, Bingi, & Gould, 1995; Yook & Albert, 1998).

Currently, international students of over 186 nationalities attend more than 2,500 American colleges and universities (Brinson & Kottler, 1995). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2000), in 1998-1999, these international students came from Africa (5.3%), Europe (15.0%), Latin America (11.3%), the Middle East (6.7%), North America (4.7%), and Asia (56.0%). In 1999-2000, out of the total enrollment of international students (514,723 people), students from East Asian countries constituted 34.6% (179,308 people). These students proportionally came from China (10.6%), Hong Kong (1.5%), Japan (9.1%), Korea
(8.0%), and Taiwan (5.4%) (IIE, n.d. b).

The enrollment of international students at American colleges and universities provides both economic and educational benefits to a campus. International students contribute $12.3 billion to the United States’ economy annually (IIE, n.d.a). Further, the presence of international students on American campuses enriches the campus cultural environment (Zimmerman, 1995) and helps expose American students and instructors to the different perspectives and varied experiences of individuals from many countries (Ladd & Ruby, 1999).

In one campus context, the classroom, instructors often strive to facilitate the incorporation of international students’ knowledge and perspectives into class instruction to enhance the communicative and educational experiences of all the students (Yook & Albert, 1998). The inclusion of international students’ oral participation potentially can stimulate and encourage the expression of diverse opinions, enhance critical thinking, and improve communication between instructors and students (Chu & Kim, 1999). In sum, the increased active oral participation of international students in American university classrooms can yield a more culturally sensitive, diverse educational experience for all class members. These classroom experiences then can help students prepare for organizational lives and a society that are becoming increasingly multicultural and globalized (Zimmerman, 1995).

In principle, the enrollment of international students and a greater cultural internationalization on American campuses may be beneficial to all students. Nonetheless, research indicates that instructors are not able to fully unlock
international students' potential in the classroom. For example, in Tompson and Tompson's (1996) study, 77% of the faculty members at a midwestern university agreed that international students do not fully participate in class discussion. Faculty members said that international students seldom debate or disagree with other students, nor do they challenge the status quo of other students. The faculty members also commented that international students do not ask for clarification about issues or assignments that are unclear. Tompson and Tompson's (1996) study describes international students as passive observers in the classroom. As a result of international students' lack of oral participation in American classrooms, instructors and other students are not able to benefit from their cultural knowledge and diverse experiences.

Factors such as classroom discourse, learning, and teaching styles can affect any student's oral participation in the classroom (Cheng, 2000). Students' perceptions of and expectations about appropriate classroom behavior may also influence oral participation. Further, these perceptions often reflect cultural frameworks for understanding the classroom context (Tapper, 1996). These cultural understandings may include the students' attitudes about respect for teachers, and relationships between instructors and students (Chu & Kim, 1997). Since oral participation of students in class discourse is heavily dependent on their own initiation of the behavior, students' perceptions of their repertoire of knowledge regarding the classroom culture can strongly influence their oral participation.

In the case of international students in American university classrooms, their
self-perceptions of their English communicative competence may be a significant factor that affects their oral participation. For example, as nonnative speakers of English, international students may perceive their understanding and usage of the English language (e.g. grammar, verb tense, vocabulary, pronunciation, and word-choice) in speaking as less than adequate. Further, English speaking anxiety or concerns about negative evaluation may influence their level of oral participation in the classroom. At present, the effect of these factors in the classroom oral participation of international students has received little research attention.

This study examines the self-perceptions of oral English communicative competence held by international students, specifically East Asian students (EAS), in American university classroom settings. The study has three specific goals. First, this study reviews the extant literature regarding East Asian cultural values and preferred communication styles. Second, through the literature review, this study identifies classroom behaviors of EAS that influence their current level of oral participation in American university classrooms. The third objective of this study is to test if EAS' self-perceived English communicative competence, English speaking anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation affect their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.

Since the presence of international students on American campuses presents new communication challenges to university faculty, staff, and students, new responses are required to overcome these challenges (Paige, 1983). By enhancing understanding about cultural similarities and by transcending cultural differences, a
more diverse society with rich cultural knowledge can be created. This provides a
good learning opportunity for all as the educational arena goes through stages of
change and growth in confronting the challenges of cultural diversity. In that spirit,
this study about EAS' cultural background, classroom behaviors, and oral
participation in American university classrooms offers one such learning opportunity.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the extant literature regarding the influence of cultural orientations and self-perceived language competence on East Asian students' (EAS) oral participation in American university classrooms. The chapter is divided into five main sections. First, the cultural dimensions of individualist culture and collectivist culture are differentiated. Second, the characteristics of the American university classroom as representative of individualist cultures and the characteristics in East Asian classrooms as representative of collectivist cultures are discussed. Third, EAS' typical behaviors in American classrooms are described with attention to possible explanatory factors for EAS' reticence in American university classrooms. Framed by an explication of communicative competence, this review then focuses on three specific English language related competence factors that may contribute to EAS' reticence in American classrooms: (a) English communicative competence, (b) English speaking anxiety, and (c) fear of negative evaluation. In the last section of this chapter, the hypotheses to be tested in this study suggesting specific relationships among these factors are presented.

Culture

Culture is "...the medium in which we move and breathe and have our being"
Defined as "a complex, abstract, and pervasive matrix of social elements" (Porter & Samovar, 1994, p. 11) that function as a set of multidimensional guidelines for human activities, culture is a society's collective memory of beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, and values that are then transmitted from one generation to the next (Heydenfeldt, 2000). Culture encompasses forms or patterns of living that suggest a predictable social life within which an individual is firmly oriented (Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, & Heyman, 1996; Porter & Samovar, 1994). As a complex matrix of interacting elements consisting of "patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting" (Hofstede, 1997, p. 5), culture plays an integral part in people's attachment of meanings to their own communicative behaviors and the consequent responses of others to those behaviors (Hall, 1983; Martini, Behnke, & King, 1992; Yook & Albert, 1998).

Human communicative behavior and culture are intertwined. According to Singelis and Brown (1995), "...culture affects the development of an individual's psychological makeup, which in turn, affects communication behavior" (p. 355). As the lens through which much of the world is experienced, culture is a significant force in the construction of the social cognitive schema that then influences individual communicative behaviors (Singelis & Brown, 1995). Through the process of socialization, individuals learn the requisite interaction patterns based on cultural norms, rules, and values. These culturally defined patterns of interaction constitute the basis for human communication styles (Gudykunst et al., 1996) and the successful acquisition of a culturally approved style signifies communicative competence within
a cultural group. It is obvious then that people from different cultures acquire different communication styles and hence communication competence is defined differently from culture to culture (Kim, Aune, Hunter, Kim, & Kim, 2001).

A significant amount of research has been devoted to the examination of the similarities and differences in cultural values and interaction practices. Researchers generally have categorized the variation in communicative behaviors into different cultural orientations (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hall, 1997; Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995). One approach to categorizing cultural variation is through the conceptualization of a cultural orientation as a continuum anchored by oppositional characteristics. Examples of these orientations include individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and high- and low-context cultures (Hofstede, 2001).

At the culture level, citizens of a country are presumed to share a certain orientation toward one or the other characteristic of a cultural dimension (e.g., individualist or collectivist). A wide range of cross-cultural studies have categorized nations based on a predominant set of cultural values. As a general categorization, for example, Western cultures, such as the United States and the Great Britain, are viewed as individualist cultures, whereas Eastern cultures, such as Japan, Korea, and China, are viewed as collectivist cultures (Cai & Fink, 2002; Kim, Hunter, Miyahara, Horvath, Bresnahan, & Yoon, 1996; Strunk & Chang, 1999). Some theorists, however, have argued that, within a culture, individuals may vary in terms of their adherence to such a generalized characteristic and to the beliefs and values that
orientation represents. The individual-level cultural orientations, known as self-construals, mediate individual differences in communication behavior (e.g., see Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim et al., 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oetzel, 1998; Singelis & Brown, 1995; Triandis, 1989).

While "cultures are not exclusively individualist or collectivist" (Singelis & Brown, 1995, p. 358) and the complexities of variations in individual cultural belief systems are acknowledged, these cultural-level dimensions such as individualism and collectivism, as a way of understanding cultural systems, are used as the cultural framework of this study. While researchers have begun to explore self-construals in studies of intercultural communication, cultural orientations such as individualism and collectivism can be and often are used in heuristic ways to describe national cultures (Cai & Fink, 2002; Kim et al., 1996).

Cultural-level individualism-collectivism as a heuristic is a well-recognized reference framework for distinguishing cultural differences at national levels. As a particular relevance to this study, orientation toward individualism and collectivism is chosen as the primary cultural heuristic to differentiate the general cultural orientations of two cultural groups who come together and interact in the American classroom. This study focuses on the cultural-level dimensions of East Asian cultures such as China, Japan, and Korea. In the following sections, the major values of individualist and collectivist cultures and the communicative implications of those values will be described.
**Individualist Cultural Orientation**

In individualist cultures, such as those of many Western countries including the United States, the development of the self is very important to each individual; inner characteristics or private traits of individuals are the primary regulators of behavior (Kim et al., 1996). Individualist cultures then value autonomy, self-reliance, personal achievement, and protection of self-interests (Cai, Wilson, & Drake, 2000; Gudykunst et al., 1996; Ho & Chiu, 1997; Kagitcibasi, 1997; Kim, Kingle, Sharkey, Park, Smith, & Cai, 2000; Singelis & Brown, 1995). Since protection of self-interests and achieving personal goals are promoted by the values and beliefs of an individualist society, people in individualist cultures are more self-reliant or independent and more concerned about giving priority to personal goals, as compared to individuals in collectivist society (Kim et al., 2000; Singelis & Brown, 1995).

In general, people from individualist cultures are more detached from in-groups as compared to people from collectivist cultures (Cai, Wilson, & Drake, 2000; Heydenfeldt, 2000; Kim et al., 2001; Redmond, 1999). According to Heydenfeldt (2000), the relationships of individualists are contractual; they are based on equitable exchange and are less dependent on trust and cooperation, as compared to relationships in a collectivist-oriented society. Individuals in relationships within individualist cultures rationally calculate the advantages and disadvantages of association with particular others (Strunk & Chang, 1999). When needs are not met between individuals, people in individualist cultures will move to repair the existing relationship, to terminate the relationships, or to initiate new relationships.
Because people in individualist-oriented cultures do not define themselves in terms of relationship to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), they tend not to necessarily feel heavily obligated to other members in the group (Cai & Fink, 2002) and are less concerned about the consequences of their actions on others (Smith, Dugan, Peterson, & Leung, 1998). As a consequence of their cultural orientation, certain communication behaviors are valued over others. Individualist-oriented culture emphasizes open communication, directness, and clarity (Kim et al., 1996). People in individualist cultures use concise, explicit, and direct communication approaches. In sum, the expression of wholeness or uniqueness of oneself and the achievement of individualistic goals characterize the communication style of people in individualist cultures (Kim, Sharkey, & Singelis, 1994; Redmond, 2000).

Collectivist Cultural Orientation

In a collectivist-oriented culture, individuals value their interdependence with one another (Ho & Chiu, 1994; Kagitzcibasi, 1997; Kim, 2000; Kim et al., 1996). The principal components of the self are found in one’s relations to others (Yook, 1997). Indeed, the self is not a separate entity; it is conceived of as interdependent with and connected to others (Gudykunst et al., 1996). Thus, the private or personal aspects of the self are not the primary forces guiding an individual’s behavior. Instead, individuals in a collectivist-oriented society emphasize in-group cohesiveness, where relationships are characterized by an “exchange of unquestioning loyalty and the performance of obligations and duties” (Heydenfeldt, 2000, p. 385).

As suggested by the notions of interdependence and connection, personal
goals are less highly valued in a collectivist-oriented society in contrast to an individualist-oriented society (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Kim et al., 2000; Yook & Albert, 1998). The pursuit of group interests has priority over the achievement of personal goals. Often, individuals in collectivist cultures are concerned about the consequences of their behavior on the group (Kim et al., 2001). They are motivated by norm conformity and duty fulfillment (Strunk & Chang, 1999). Indeed, preservation of in-group relational harmony is a significant communication goal of individuals in collectivist cultures (Singelis & Brown, 1995; Yook & Albert, 1998).

Due to the emphasis on in-group relational harmony, individuals in collectivist cultures practice more passive, indirect communication tactics and sensitive behavior styles than people from individualistic cultures do (Kim, 1993; Kim et al., 1996; Kim & Miyahara, 1994; Singelis & Brown, 1995; Singhal & Nagao, 1993). Research studies indicate that individual self-assertion and verbal argumentation are not encouraged in collectivist-oriented societies (Cheng, 2000; Suzuki & Rancer, 1994; Zhang, Butler, & Pryor, 1996). Further, silence is valued in many East Asian cultures. For instance, in the Japanese culture, direct communication is not encouraged (Jones, 1999). In lieu of communicating directly and explicitly through words, understanding of the meanings of evasive and indirect messages is derived from the physical environment and situational and cultural knowledge internalized in the communicators (Breslin, 1993; Hall, 1977; Kim & Miyahara, 1994; Yook & Albert, 1998). As Kim (2000) noted, “understanding is seen not as the result of putting meaning into words, but rather as the greater understanding of shared
perspectives, expectations, and intimacy” among the communicators (p. 66).

East Asian countries, for instance, China, Japan, and Korea, share many characteristics of collectivist cultural systems (Kim et al., 1996; Yook, 1997). According to Kim and Wilson (1994), East Asian cultures of Japan, Korea, and China use Chinese ideographs in their language. This creates a bond that allows them to share many cultural views. Additionally, research studies show that people in East Asian countries like China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are high in Confucian values (Chan, 1996; Chang 1998; Hofstede, 1997; Moody, 1996; Park & Cho, 1995; Robertson, 2000). According to Kagitcibasi (1997), the social morality values of Confucianism underpin the worldview of individuals in collective-oriented cultures. In these East Asian countries, modesty, obedience, and social order influence people’s conduct in society (Jin & Cortazzi, 1993; Singhal & Nagao, 1993). Preserving in-group relational harmony and maintaining social order encourage individuals to practice proper conduct according to their social role expectations to maintain the collective well-being of the society (Hofstede, 1980).

In this study of the self-perceptions of language competence and EAS’ oral participation in American university classrooms, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese cultures are viewed as East Asian cultures that are collectivist-oriented and that possess similar communicative values. The cultural values as represented in individualist- and collectivist-oriented cultural orientations, especially values in different communicative expectations and different views of communicative competence, are foregrounded in classroom settings. In short, individualist-oriented
cultures (e.g. the United States) value autonomy, independence, self-interests, and pursuit of personal goals; they practice direct and clear communication strategies. Collectivist-oriented cultures (e.g. China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) value preservation of in-group harmony, group solidarity, and close personal relationships; they practice indirect and sensitive communication tactics. Since these cultural and communicative values are presumed to influence individual communicative practices, classroom communicative behaviors may be significantly affected by these cultural orientations.

In the next section, the American school system will be discussed as the typification of the individualist academic culture, and various East Asian education systems that possess similar characteristics will be described as the collectivist academic culture.

The Interface of National Cultural Orientations and Academic Culture

The cultural-level dimensions of individualism and collectivism provide a heuristic framework for understanding instructional practices and students' behaviors in educational settings. From the previous review of the literature on individualist and collectivist cultures, it is clear that people from different cultural groups acquire different expectations about communicative situations and about appropriate communicative behaviors within those situations. In the classroom, cultural orientations influence norms for teacher-student relationships and interaction, and the
specific role-related behaviors of students and instructors. These orientations include values about education, teacher-student interaction, teacher-student relationships, perceptions of student’s roles, and perceptions of instructor’s roles (Baxter, 1983; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Yook, 1997). In the educational context, culture influences the manner in which individuals understand and respond to classroom events (Powell & Andersen, 1994). From their culturally influenced behavioral repertoire, students and teachers select forms of action in the classroom in accordance with their prior cultural knowledge of social interactions and within their understanding of cultural appropriateness (Yook, 1997).

A review of the literature in second-language learning and cross-cultural classroom instructional studies indicates that students of different nationalities and of different cultural backgrounds behave differently in the classroom (Cheng, 2000; Coleman, 1997; Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Liberman, 1994; Littlewood, 1999; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Tapper, 1996; Yook, 1997; Zimmerman, 1995). For example, North American students from individualist cultures have a repertoire of actions that is somewhat different from that of Asian students (Yook, 1997). In this section, the different behaviors exhibited by students from the United States and East Asian cultures and their respective academic cultures will be discussed, respectively.

**Individualist Culture and Performance in Academic Settings**

American school systems reflect the communicative values and practices of the dominant society and represent a typification of the individualist-oriented academic culture (Chu & Kim, 1999; Tinery, 1992). As shaped by the communicative
values of the individualist cultural orientation, in American classrooms open, direct, and personal communication is practiced. An informal atmosphere and conversational-like discourse characterize American academic culture (Jones, 1999). Based on individualist cultural influences, "expressive individualism," that is to reveal a person's unique self is one of the most important classroom interactional and instructional practices (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985, p. 27). Further, the pursuit of personal goals is one of the major individualist cultural influences on the academic norms of the American classroom.

In the American academic culture, students play active roles in dynamic classroom interaction. They engage in open classroom discussions and make intellectual arguments with their instructors and classmates. They also question the truth of knowledge and challenge the instructor's credibility. For example, students will argue with the instructor on differences of opinion, and they will also negotiate with the instructor on the matters of grading and topics of test questions (Yook, 1997). In addition to the transmission of knowledge, the instructor also emphasizes the students' critical thinking abilities, problem-solving skills, and assertive oral participation in the classroom (Zimmerman, 1995). Indeed, the oral participation and active contributions of the students are highly valued and rewarded in university education (Tapper, 1996). Further, Ladd and Ruby (1999) argue that American students prefer to engage in the interactive learning format. They like high levels of personal interaction and oral participation in the classroom, as opposed to impersonal activities like reading and writing.
Oral participation in American university classrooms is also given priority through an emphasis on public speaking. The majority of students, regardless of academic discipline, are required to take public speaking or oral communication courses to learn the skills of speaking and debating. The inclusion of class oral participation as a part of grading criteria in many courses also indicates the importance of students' active participation and contribution to the class (Chu & Kim, 1999). In addition to being involved in the interactive learning format, students also enjoy informal, friendly, and personal relationships with their instructors (Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Liberman, 1994; Zimmerman, 1995). They speak out very often without being called on in the classroom. Classroom informality characterizes teacher-student and student-student interactions (Anderson, Martin, & Zhong, 1998).

In short, in the context of individualist-oriented classrooms, students are expected to involve themselves in class activities that require assertive oral participation and competent individualistic expression. Students are required to play an active role in shaping classroom communication, in creating learner-centered classrooms, and in pursuing intellectual goals. Just as culture influences other human communicative behavior, individualist cultural values affect the emergence of an informal and dynamic academic culture in American university education.

Collectivist Culture and Performance in Academic Settings

Since classroom contexts are influenced by the larger cultural system, East Asian academic culture is influenced by the cultural orientation of collectivism that emphasizes implicit and collective-oriented communication, in-group relational
harmony, and social order. These collectivist communicative values thus will influence the conduct of the instructor and students in the classroom. In the following paragraphs, the characteristics of East Asian classroom communication will be examined from the perspectives of classroom learning mode, classroom instructional format, and the perceptions of instructors’ and students’ roles.

As discussed previously, maintaining in-group relational harmony is a main goal of the collectivist cultural orientation in East Asian cultures. The self is viewed in relation with others (Kim et al., 1996). Hence, teachers and students from collectivist cultures see themselves in accordance with their social relationships and role expectations. Because of their concern for maintaining in-group relational harmony with the instructor and classmates, East Asian students generally are reticent and passive in the classroom (Cheng, 2000; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Littlewood, 1999; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Tapper, 1996; Tompson & Tompson, 1996; Tsui, 1996). For example, in Japanese academic culture, students’ reticence is influenced by a collectivist culture that values indirect and passive communication styles that are necessary for smooth interpersonal interaction (Makino & Takemura, 1993). Such reticence is found in other collectivist cultures as well. According to Hofstede (1986, 2001), in classrooms that emphasize a collectivist cultural orientation, students will speak in class only when called upon by the teacher in order to maintain in-group relational harmony.

Another element of collectivist East Asian culture that affects communicative values is the influence of Confucian philosophy (Ho & Chiu, 1994; Jin & Cortazzi,
The philosophy of Confucius is not only practiced in the East Asian society, but also is taught in schools. According to the teachings of Confucius, students must have great respect for their knowledgeable teachers (Cheng, 2000). For example, in Chinese approaches to learning, students’ reticence is a sign of respect for the teachers. In Chinese traditional practices, challenging the teacher by questioning his or her validity or credibility is not acceptable (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

Since Confucianism emphasizes respect for authority, in East Asian cultures the teacher is considered as a guru with high authority and one of high ethos (Yook, 1997). In the classroom, “teachers outline the intellectual paths to be followed” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 100). Teachers are expected to provide guidance for the students; students must respect the teacher and accept the unequal power relations (Hofstede, 1980). Strict social order is emphasized, and students should defer to their teachers (Hofstede, 2001). In Japan, because demonstration of knowledge by the instructor is valued, students remain quiet and passive in the classroom (Turner & Hiraga, 1996). Additionally, attentive listening is a significant skill that students must acquire and practice in classrooms in Japan (Cook, 1999). In Korea, teacher-student interaction is characterized by formality. Because of the authority distance of the teacher, students do not challenge the teacher’s status (Yook & Albert, 1998). According to Yook and Albert (1998), “neither a teacher nor a student should ever be made to lose face” (p. 19). The role of face also is an important factor in maintaining the unequal status between instructors and students (Garrott, 1995; Jenkins, 2000). For example, in East Asian cultures, the act of negotiating with the teacher, challenging him or her on
factual mistakes, and questioning the validity and credibility of a teacher is considered a challenge to the authority and the social order (Scott, 1993; Yook, 1997). Such argumentativeness is considered inappropriate in teacher-student interaction (Yook, 1997).

Based on these collectivist cultural norms, EAS are socialized into accepting their passive role as students (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). In contrast to students in individualist-oriented academic culture, EAS do not engage in dialectic and analytic discourse in the classroom. EAS sit quietly in lecture-type classes and take verbatim notes (Coleman, 1997; Liberman, 1994). They are taught course material through lecture methods and attend classes in a formal, well-disciplined atmosphere (Coleman, 1997; Ladd & Ruby, 1999). Verbal argumentativeness or expression of public disagreement is avoided in the classroom (Littlewood, 1999). Indeed, silence is more highly valued than verbosity in the collectivist society (Yook, 1997).

In summary, the concepts of maintaining social order and obeying authority are the important cultural values that have significant influences on the classroom communication in East Asian cultures. According to their respective status and role expectations, instructors are the authority figures and students are the passive receivers (Jenkins, 2000; Liberman, 1994), leading to the emergence of the formal, well-disciplined classroom atmosphere. Through observation of these contrasting academic cultures found in American and East Asian classrooms, it is clear that students from different cultural backgrounds contextualize classroom events differently and thus engage in different patterns of interaction. In particular, cultural
expectations regarding oral participation in classroom discourse are dissimilar (Tapper, 1996). Because EAS originate from collectivist cultures, they bring different behavioral expectations and skills repertoire in educational settings to American classrooms than students from mainstream American culture.

East Asian Students (EAS) in American Classrooms

In the recent literature on English-as-a-second-language learning and cross-cultural classroom communication, researchers report EAS as reticent and passive students who participate minimally in class interactions (e.g. Cheng, 2000; Coleman, 1997; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Tapper, 1996; Tompson & Tompson, 1996; Turner & Hiraga, 1996). As Tapper (1996) points out, EAS seldom initiate or engage in classroom discourse, and when they do, they respond to the instructor in short exchanges rather than in long exchanges.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this study, faculty members at a midwestern university indicated that international students seldom participate in class discourse (Tompson & Tompson, 1996). The study reported that international students are quiet and passive during class oral participation. In addition, other studies about second-language learning and classroom communication also suggest that international students are reluctant to adopt active speech roles, especially in regard to asking questions or challenging the instructor in the classroom (e.g. Jones, 1999; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Mori, 2000; Tapper, 1996; Yook, 1997; Yook & Albert, 1998).

Having been socialized in a collectivist culture, the communicative behaviors
of EAS are characterized by implicit, collective-oriented communication that emphasizes in-group relational harmony and social order. Given that they have been socialized into a passive learner role in their traditional teacher-centered, didactic, and quiet classrooms, it is not surprising that when transcending their native culture, EAS in American classrooms face many challenges within a new, unfamiliar academic culture. One challenge is adapting to the new communication norms of the American academic culture (Olaniran, 1993). In the face of this challenge, EAS frequently behave in the respectful and reticent manner they learned as culturally appropriate in their previous classrooms (Jones, 1999).

Although many recent studies have described EAS as quiet, passive students in American classrooms, Cheng (2000) argues that, in actuality, EAS desire to participate in American-classroom discourse. However, they may not be prepared adequately to adopt new academic roles and a different learning approach in the American classroom (Jones, 1999; Redmond, 2000). The traditional learning skills that EAS have adopted and the collectivist communicative values within which they have been raised cannot be easily discarded to overcome their reticence and passive communication behaviors in American classrooms (Redmond, 2000). On the whole, EAS’ inability to become accustomed to the new learning approach and the new academic culture may partially account for some of their lack of oral participation in American university classrooms (Jones, 1999).

Given the value placed on student active class participation in the United States’ education system, there is a mismatch between the local instructors’ and the
EAS' classroom expectations. Because of differences in schema arising from accumulated cultural and social knowledge, EAS' conceptions and expectations about the classroom context could result in communication breakdowns between instructor and student and student to student. In this case, EAS may be perceived negatively by instructors for being nonassertive in class participation, resulting in misevaluation or even discrimination (Jones, 1999).

As suggested by the preceding discussion, EAS' traditional academic culture and cultural values have an important effect on the ways they behave in American university classrooms. Other factors, however, may also influence their oral participation level. For instance, EAS who pursue university education in the United States often study with the goal of obtaining degrees in order to broaden their career choices when they return to their home countries (Anderson, Martin, & Zhong, 1998). As a result, many EAS do not necessarily show interest in understanding the new culture, simply because they want to stay focused and to be successful in the pursuit of their goals during their stay in the United States (Anderson, Martin, & Zhong, 1998). Moreover, their length of stay in the United States does not transform their communicative patterns. Indeed, Yook and Albert's (1998) study of Korean students in the United States indicates that despite the Korean students' mean stay of 3.97 years in the United States, they had not yet adopted even a very slight attitudinal change toward American university classroom norms, especially from the perspective of oral negotiation.

Other research examines insufficient English language competence as a
significant factor that inhibits the degree of EAS’ oral participation in American university classrooms (Cheng, 2000; Mori, 2000; Olaniran, 1993). This factor has relevance to this study. In the following sections of this study, EAS’ previous academic training in the English language will be discussed in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the role of English language competence in oral participation in American university classrooms.

*EAS’ English proficiency*

In East Asian countries, formal instruction in English is conducted in combination with coursework in native languages. For example, in Hong Kong, English lessons at the university are conducted in a combination of the Chinese language and the English language (Lai, 1994). Formal instruction in English is taught in Korea when students attend senior high school (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2001). Indeed, the language in use in the East Asian countries of interest in this study (i.e. China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) does not include English, except in Hong Kong where English can also be used as an official language (CIA, 2001). For students who desire higher education attainment in the United States, the quality of this coursework is reviewed through standardized testing.

Prior to their enrollments at American colleges or universities, many, if not most, international students are required to take standardized English language tests. The two most common standardized English language tests used in North American colleges and universities to measure nonnative speakers’ English skills are the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language
Testing System (IELTS). The TOEFL measures nonnative speaker's abilities in reading, writing, and comprehension. It attempts to measure nonnative speakers' abilities in using and understanding North American English in university-level educational settings. The IELTS tests nonnative speaker's English skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. Although IELTS is managed and accepted by the academic institutions of the Commonwealth countries, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Great Britain, it is only recently becoming more accepted by the United States' institutions of higher education (International English Language Testing System, n.d.).

Typically, international students are required to achieve certain minimum scores on the TOEFL or on the IELTS prior to admission to American colleges and universities. In general, achieving at least the minimum scores on these tests ensures that international students have a sufficient level of English written and oral proficiency when they enroll in courses in which English is the primary language of instruction and interaction.

_EAS' English Speaking Skills._ Despite the minimum score requirement on standardized English language tests, research indicates that not all international students who come to study in the United States possess sufficient competence in conversational English (Olaniran, 1993). Furthermore, as Cheng (2000) points out, even good scores obtained by international students on these standardized English language or equivalent tests may not indicate their actual competence in English communication, especially in oral communicative skills.
Cheng (2000) mentions that, in the preparation for the TOEFL test, students in
China spend hundreds of hours in developing test-taking strategies, in lieu of
enhancing their actual English language skills. As a consequence, English
communicative skills for their intended academic studies in the United States may
contradict their outcomes on standardized tests. Indeed, according to Strom (1993),
assessing an English-as-a-second-language student's English language proficiency
with standardized tests and then equating the scores with his or her level of English
communicative competence is "not so common sensical or well-researched" (p. 140).

In addition to the issue of EAS' lack of proficiency in English language and
English speaking skills, research studies also suggest that EAS have insufficient
experience in practicing oral English in their previous academic training. According
to Liu and Littlewood's (1997) study of students attending English classes at a
university in Hong Kong, students preparing for their university education in English-
speaking countries have very limited opportunities to speak the English language.
Based on Liu and Littlewood's (1997) survey findings, practicing oral English skills
is not among the most frequent activities in English classes. In in-class English lesson
activities, the students spend their time, from the most frequent activity to the least,
listening to their teachers, writing essays, and working on reading comprehension.
Furthermore, Lai (1994) reports that English lessons at a university in Hong Kong are
conducted in the combination of the Chinese language and the English language.
From the research studies, it is clear that even though EAS have been learning
English for quite some time, they may not have acquired competent English oral
Because the American education system emphasizes students' effective oral communicative skills, to become fully integrated into that environment, international students must possess an adequate level of English language proficiency and competent communication skills. For example, international students need to be competent at using the dominant culture's different communication strategies to orally express themselves in order to participate actively in American classroom discourse. Communication skills, in accordance to the American academic culture, include the competencies to speak out, to debate, to argue, to express disagreement, to deal with conflict, and to make recommendations (Mori, 2000). These behaviors require adequate linguistic skills, specifically EAS' ability to use the English language to express themselves fluently, effectively, and appropriately across different classroom contexts. By all accounts, it takes considerable skills for EAS to meet these requirements of demonstrating linguistic and communicative competence in the English language. These requirements, however, are challenging for many EAS.

In conclusion, with EAS' less proficient use of English oral communicative skills, in addition to their previous academic training that is collectivist oriented, EAS are not able to fully immerse in the local academic culture and to participate fully in American classroom discourse. First, EAS' attainment of sufficient standardized English language test scores as required by their current enrolled American colleges or universities does not accurately reflect the English language communicative skills
that are required in the American university classroom. Second, EAS’ insufficient academic training in oral English does not successfully prepare them to meet the expectations of the American education system that requires students’ effective oral communicative skills. In sum, both of these factors may affect EAS’ level of oral participation in American university classroom discourse.

Communicative Competence and Perceptions of Language Proficiency

Communicative competence has been defined as the ability to communicate flexibly in a personally effective and socially appropriate way (Duran, 1983; Wiemann, 1977). Interpersonal communicative competence refers to a person’s ability to interact appropriately and effectively in a social context to achieve his or her communicative goals while maintaining the face and line of other interactants (Rubin, Martin, Bruning, & Powers, 1993; Wiemann, 1977). According to Lustig and Spitzberg (1993), “appropriate interaction avoids the violation of extant valued rules or expectancies for a given context. Effective interaction functions to produce relatively valued outcomes or objectives” (p. 154). In order to be competent in different social contexts, one needs to be able to use a certain language to communicate effectively and appropriately (Duran, 1983).

Fundamentally, a person’s language competence contributes to his or her communication competence (Duran, 1983). For example, one needs to be proficient at using correct grammar, verb tense, and choice of words according to the
Redmond (2000) defines language competence as “the ability to speak, read, listen and understand a host culture’s language” (p. 153). Hymes (1971), however, defines competence beyond the concept of linguistic proficiencies; competence is the communication that is appropriate to the respective context. Competence, more important, is a form of cultural behavior (Hymes, 1971), in which culture is the core context of interaction (Anderson, Martin, & Zhong, 1998). In general, communication competence consists of, but is not limited to, the understanding and knowledge of culture and language (Dinges & Baldwin, 1996), and the familiarity with the host culture’s history, traditions, values, and customs (Redmond, 2000).

In the context of American classroom culture, EAS not only need to possess English language linguistic fluency, but also need to understand American culture and American communicative norms. Indeed, “communication in the academic context entails more than mere linguistic proficiency; it requires a high degree of sociolinguistic competence, skills of participation and knowledge of the interactive norms of the target culture” (Jones, 1999, p. 246). This said, the foundational assumption is that EAS need to be proficient in their use of English to orally perform competently in American university classrooms.

As the result of their individualist cultural orientation, in American academic contexts, American students perceive students who possess good oral skills and who participate actively as intelligent students and competent communicators (Liberman, 1995). Thus, international students in American classrooms often find that their
American classmates perceive them as incompetent and unintelligent due to their accented English (Liberman, 1995). As a matter of fact, in Schairer's (1992) study of reactions to second-language speakers, listeners rated accented speech less favorably. Native speakers are also less tolerant when second-language speakers speak English (Schairer, 1992). Consequently, American instructors' and students' negative reactions, such as impatience or intolerance frequently exhibited through nonverbal cues, often discourage international students from class oral participation. No doubt, EAS' insufficient English language competence is a significant hurdle to the satisfactory level of oral participation in the classroom, as expected by American instructors and as desired by American students.

Language Competencies and Classroom Participation

Language spoken in class is the primary medium to meaningful communication. In classroom discourse, language functions in the transmission of information (Consolo, 2000) and in the communication of various opinions and diverse ideas from students of different backgrounds. Students' ability to use language effectively increases their opportunities to orally participate in classroom discussion, enhancing classroom diversity. Further, the language competence of international students appears to be a key factor affecting their oral participation. In the sections that follow, three domains related to EAS' competence in the English language that may affect their level of oral participation in American university classrooms are reviewed: (a) English language proficiency, (b) English language speaking anxiety, and (c) fear of negative evaluation.
English Language Proficiency. Language proficiency is a major source of social difficulty in intercultural communication (Olaniran, 1993). Although cultural factors and the previous academic background of EAS clearly affect their lack of oral participation in American university classrooms, English language proficiency may also be a significant factor that affects EAS' oral performance in class discussion (Cheng, 2000; Jones, 1999). Tsui (1996) reports that English teachers attributed low English proficiency as the reason for Asian students' reticence in the classroom. Similarly, Cheng (2000) argues that Asian students who study English as a second language and have less proficiency in English oral communicative skills are unlikely to participate in class discussion at Western universities.

As previously discussed, although many EAS have had their level of English proficiency assessed by taking English language standardized tests prior to their arrival in the United States, their competence in using the English language to communicate effectively may be limited. As a consequence of their traditional academic training, EAS may also lack practice in the oral communication skills that are necessary in American classroom discussion, for example, the skills necessary to debate, to argue, to express disagreement, to deal with conflict, and to make recommendations (Mori, 2000).

In addition to their actual, measurable level of English proficiency, EAS' self-perceptions of their level of English language competence may also affect their oral performance in the classroom. According to Yasutake, Bryan, & Dohrn (1996), an individual's self-perceptions can affect his or her expectations and responses to
certain events. Self-perceptions of competence may be a cognitive mediator between actual skills and performance (Yasutake, Bryan, & Dohrn, 1996). Thus, competent performance not only involves actual skills, but also involves understanding and the cognitive ability to make choices among existing behavioral repertoire to perform (McCroskey, 1984). In fact, while a student may possess actual linguistic proficiency, the students’ self-perceptions of those skills may have a more significant effect on his or her motivation to participate orally in class. For example, when speaking a second language, nonnative speakers are more likely to evaluate themselves low in verbal competence (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997). Some students who speak English as their nonnative language perceive themselves to be incompetent at speaking English, and this self-perception of language incompetence contributes to their speech reticence (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). In this case, EAS’ self-perceived English language proficiency, as opposed to actual English skills, may directly influence their oral performance in American university classrooms.

In sum, the problem of language proficiency, actual or perceived, is a significant factor that inhibits EAS’ oral participation in American university classroom discussion (Coleman, 1997; Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Mori, 2000). In this study, it is argued that self-perceived English language proficiency may affect EAS’ level of oral participation in American university classroom discourse.

*English Language Speaking Anxiety.* Another factor that may contribute to EAS’ lack of oral participation in American classrooms is the level of English language speaking anxiety expressed by the student. A wide range of studies have
documented that speaking anxiety is a factor in speech reluctance for speakers who speak English as their nonnative language (e.g. Cheng, 2000; Cheng, Horowitz, & Schallert, 1999; Ellis, 1994; Lai, 1994; Tsui, 1996; Uba, 1994). Speaking is often cited as the most anxiety-provoking element of verbal apprehension in class participation (Cheng, Horowitz, & Schallert, 1999; Ellis, 1994). According to Tsui (1996), EAS at American colleges and universities self-report that they are extremely anxious at the prospect of speaking, even simply thinking about asking a question in class can increase anxiety. Additionally, Tompson and Tompson (1996) also found that international students indicate participation in class discussion is difficult and anxiety arousing.

In particular, studies show that individuals feel apprehensive, anxious, and less competent when they speak a second language (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997; Kim, 2000). As alluded to earlier, when speaking a second language, nonnative speakers perceive themselves low in verbal competence and thus alter their self-perceptions about oral performance; they then experience second-language speaking anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997). Their self-perceptions of low verbal competence and fear of speaking contribute to their speech reticence (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). In Lai’s (1994) study of students who attend English classes at a university in Hong Kong, the statement of “My English is poor. I dare not speak it” is a leading indicator that students are apprehensive about speaking in class and thus withdraw from class oral participation.

Many students in the English-as-a-second-language (ESL) class found
speaking without prior preparation uncomfortable, and this is further reinforced by their anxiety about speaking well (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). In their reluctance to speak, students of ESL worry about the inadequacy of their ideas when communicated through their use of incompetent English language (Lai, 1994). Consequently, in American classrooms, anxious EAS who worry about their English language speaking performance experience anxiety, and this anxiety affects their oral participation.

According to MacIntyre (1995), negative cognitive activities associated with anxiety impair the quality of verbal performance. This is because other task-relevant information involved in worry and cognitive self-concern competes with task-relevant information for space in the processing system. Hence, these various negative feelings, such as embarrassment, apprehension, anxiety, shyness, and perceptions of incompetence affect EAS who speak English as a nonnative language further compromising their verbal performance (MacIntyre, 1995; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994a, 1994b).

**Fear of Negative Evaluation.** A third factor that may contribute to EAS’ lack of oral participation in American classrooms is the fear of being evaluated. When speaking English as a second language, nonnative speakers have a strong concern about speaking the language well (Yu, Liu, & Littlewood, 1996). In fact, when speaking the English language, nonnative speakers are more self-conscious and sensitive about others’ evaluation of their verbal performance and likely feel uncomfortable (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).
According to McCroskey (1984), when individuals are faced with situations that make them uneasy, they tend to avoid the situation to avoid any negative feelings. Hence, due to the fear of being negatively evaluated, nonnative speakers of English avoid oral communication in English rather than experience feelings of unease or fear. If this notion of avoidance is extended to the understanding of EAS in American academic settings, EAS then will tend to avoid class discussion.

Fearing they are being evaluated negatively by their American classmates and even their instructors (Coleman, 1997; Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Liberman, 1994; Mori, 2000), EAS, consequently, might prefer to withdraw from class participation rather than bear the negative attribution of incompetence. Without knowing how others will evaluate their oral performance and extend that evaluation to perceive them as individuals, oral participation in American classrooms is a form of risk or uncertainty to EAS. To orally express themselves in class is to take risks in front of their classmates (Liu & Littlewood, 1997), such as to make mistakes, to reveal their weaknesses, to be negatively evaluated, and to lose face.

Since EAS come from cultures in which people tend to avoid perceived unclear or unpredictable situations (Liu & Littlewood, 1997), they will decrease the opportunities of exposing themselves to uncertainties or risks. In sum, because of the fear of being negatively evaluated, EAS who speak English as their second language tend to avoid certain kinds of social exchanges, such as participating in class discussion or speaking in front of the class (Cheng, Horowitz, & Schallert, 1999; Jones, 1999). Therefore, in responding to American classroom discourse that
demands oral English language competence, EAS respond with silence and reticence.

In the preceding sections that reviewed (a) English language proficiency, (b) English language speaking anxiety, and (c) fear of negative evaluation, an argument was provided to support the general link between EAS’ self-perceived competence in spoken English and their level of oral participation in American university classrooms. First, EAS’ low English proficiency and insufficient English oral communicative skills impede their oral participation in American university classrooms. Second, speaking English as their nonnative language contributes to verbal apprehension, and hence discourages EAS from class oral participation. Third, when speaking English as their nonnative language, EAS are more self-conscious and sensitive about others’ evaluation of their oral performance. Consequently, EAS tend to avoid negative evaluation of others and respond to class oral participation with reticence.

Rationale and Hypotheses

Self-perceptions about communicative competence influence a person’s motivation to communicate orally. According to Kim (2000) and Kim et al. (2001), people’s self-concept and beliefs influence their motivations for verbal communication. If a person perceives him- or herself competent at linguistic skills, then he or she will seek more social interactions; if a person does not perceive him- or herself competent at linguistic skills, then he or she will frequently withdraw from or avoid activities that engage much verbal expression. According to Kim (2000) and
Kim et al.'s (2001) argument about perception of language competence and verbal motivation, in educational settings, students’ perceptions of their language competence will also affect their oral participation in the classroom.

In this study examining EAS’ self-perceived English language competence and their oral participation in American university classrooms, perceptions of language competence are defined as the beliefs in an individual’s ability to use a certain language to orally express oneself without undue anxiety and to communicate effectively with other people. Oral participation is the act of orally engaging in an activity or an event, in order to communicate and to interact interpersonally or in groups in a classroom setting.

As suggested by the preceding discussion of language, three specific factors to be tested that may affect EAS’ level of oral participation in American university classrooms include (a) English communicative competence, (b) English language speaking anxiety, and (c) fear of negative evaluation.

Based on the preceding discussion, three hypotheses are posed.

\( H_1 \): EAS’ self-perceived level of English communicative competence is positively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.

\( H_2 \): EAS’ reported level of English speaking anxiety is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.

\( H_3 \): EAS’ level of fear of negative evaluation is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

This chapter describes the method used in this study of self-perceived language competence and East Asian students’ (EAS) oral participation in American university classrooms. This study employed survey design. Items in the survey questionnaire were selected from established scales. Literature-based items generated by the researcher were also used. The chapter is organized into four sections. First, the sampling design and sample characteristics are presented. Then, the procedures for soliciting the participants and for conducting the surveys are discussed. In the next section which details the data collection procedures, specifications of the survey interview protocol and the procedures for obtaining the consent of the participants are outlined. The measures used in this study are explicated in the last section.

As the review of literature argued, variables related to self-perceptions of understanding and usage of the English language may affect EAS’ level of oral participation in American class discourse. Specifically, this study proposed to test three hypotheses. First, this study proposed that $H_1$: EAS’ self-perceived level of English communicative competence is positively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms. In the previous chapter, English communicative competence was discussed from the perspectives of grammar, verb tense, vocabulary, pronunciation, and word-choice. Second, this study proposed that
H2: EAS' reported level of English speaking anxiety is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms. Last, this study proposed that H3: EAS' level of fear of negative evaluation is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.

Participants

Below section of sampling design illustrates the inclusion criteria used in participant solicitation. The rationale is provided for each criterion. After illustrating the sampling design of this study, the characteristics of the participants are described.

Sampling Design

The first inclusion criterion was that participants must be EAS who are in the United States temporarily for university educational purposes. EAS, as defined in this study, are citizens from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Individuals from these East Asian countries share many similar cultural perspectives and communicative behaviors (Kim et al., 1996; Yook, 1997; see also chap. 2). Specific to this study, individuals from East Asian countries, specifically China, Japan, and Korea are generally considered to be high on the scale of collectivism as a culture-level cultural dimension (Suzuki & Rancer, 1994; Yook, 1997). Hence, international students from the geographical region of East Asia were studied as a group of participants.

The second inclusion criterion was that the participants must speak English as a nonnative language. In general, individuals from these countries do not speak
English as their native language. However, English is a “second, learned (schooled) language” and a part of the school curriculum (Scollon & Scollon, 2001, p. 208).

The third criterion for inclusion in the sample was based on the participant’s length of enrollment at an American university. Specifically, each participant had to have attended the university for at least one semester (four months). The purpose of this criterion was to ensure that participants (a) have had the opportunity to attend classes in an English-speaking academic setting with a majority of American students and/or instructors who speak English as their native language, and (b) have had the opportunity to become familiarized with the academic culture at American universities.

The final inclusion criterion was based on the type of courses attended by the EAS. Specifically, current or previous enrollment in at least one participatory class was required. Participatory classes were defined as small-size classes between 6-35 students that emphasize students’ oral participation. An emphasis on oral participation in these classes could have been encouraged or expected by the instructors, specified in a general description in the course syllabus, or noted in the syllabus as graded and contributing to the total course grade.

Sample Characteristics

The sample of this study consisted of 131 EAS who speak English as a nonnative language and who attend classes at a large midwestern university. The participants in this study ranged in age from 18 to 48 years old, with a mean age of 24.34 years (SD = 4.28). In the sample, 58.8% of the participants were female (n =
77) and 41.2% were male (n = 54). Their mean length of enrollment at the current university was 1.33 years (SD = 1.15), with a range of 0.33 to 6.67 years. Of the total sample, 23.7% came from China (n = 31), 26.0% from Hong Kong (n = 34), 31.3% from Japan (n = 41), 6.1% from Korea (n = 8), and 13.0% from Taiwan (n = 17).

Procedures

In this section, procedures for soliciting participants and for conducting this study are outlined. First, the three strategies employed for participant solicitation are explained: (a) contact via student organization leaders, (b) individual telephone contact for participants who were not affiliated with the student organizations, and (c) snowball sampling applied to the first and second procedures. Following this discussion, data collection procedures for the protocol of surveys are explicated. Procedures for obtaining the informed consent of the participants are included in this section.

Solicitation of Participants

To estimate the number of potential participants who could fulfill the inclusion criteria of this study, a list of EAS noting their countries of origin and their telephone numbers was obtained from the Office of the International Students (OISS). This procedure was in compliance with the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) standards as student names and telephone numbers are public information available from the student directory of the university. The potential population totaled 410 students (N_{China} = 77; N_{Hong Kong} = 142; N_{Japan} = 116; N_{Korea} =
suggesting a sufficient number of EAS available for participation in the survey. The participants were not given incentives for participating.

The three strategies of participant solicitation employed are described in the paragraphs that follow.

*Contact via Student Organization Leaders.* On this midwestern campus, international student organizations have a strong presence. For EAS, these student organizations include the Association of Chinese Scholars, Japan Club, Korean Student Association, and Taiwanese Student Association. The student leaders of these organizations were contacted and used as gatekeepers to the student membership. Permission to seek the student leaders’ help was coordinated with the OISS at the university. Names and contact numbers of the student leaders were obtained through the OISS and via the university’s *People Search* website. This strategy also was in compliance with HSIRB standards, as the student leaders’ names and telephone numbers are public information available from the university’s student directory.

The student leaders were then contacted by telephone. The researcher explained the study and sought help from the student leaders in soliciting the participation of their student members. Brief appointments of approximately 10 minutes were set up with each student leader. They were asked to help distribute the fliers containing information about this study to their student members (see Appendix A). In the flier, the student organization members were asked to indicate their interest in participating and to provide their names and current phone numbers, so that an appointment with the researcher could be arranged. The initial EAS’ contact
information obtained from the list generated by the OISS was not updated. The student leaders collected the fliers and returned them to the researcher. Through this strategy, 35 EAS agreed to participate in the study.

*Individual Telephone Contact.* Telephone interviews were used as a second strategy to solicit participation of EAS. Names and contact information were obtained from the original list of EAS generated by the OISS. During the phone interview, the researcher first introduced herself and the topic of this study. Then, potential participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in this study. If the individual indicated a willingness to participate, he or she was asked a series of filter questions based on the inclusion criteria (see Appendix B for telephone interview script). If the individual met the inclusion criteria, he or she was invited to complete the survey on-campus in the researcher’s office.

*Contact of Participants via Snowball Sampling.* For both of the participant solicitation strategies used in this study, a snowball sampling technique then was applied to generate names of other possible participants. In snowball sampling, the participants act as informants to refer other participants of the population to the researcher (Robson, 1993). According to Babbie (1998), snowball sampling is suitable when a small section of the population will be studied. EAS are a small subpopulation of the total international student body at the university. Additionally, this study specifically focused on EAS who speak English as a nonnative language and who attend classes in an English-speaking academic setting that emphasizes oral participation. A snowball sampling procedure is appropriate for this study, because
the participant inclusion criteria defined a small population that was difficult to locate and to identify. This procedure helped the researcher access 50 members of the population.

The snowball sampling technique was applied in the following manner. First, each student member was asked to voluntarily recommend other possible participants with phone numbers to the researcher through recording their names on the fliers distributed by the student leaders. Second, the participants solicited through individual telephone contact were asked to provide names of other possible participants after answering the filter questions during the phone interview. The researcher also requested the phone numbers of these possible participants. Permission from each participant to mention his or her name in the phone calls to the recommended possible participants was also obtained.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures consisted of two steps. First, the informed consent of the participants was obtained. Then, the survey was administered. Participants were given two options for their form of participation: (a) to meet individually with the researcher to complete a survey, or (b) to independently complete the survey on their own on the questionnaires that were given to them via student leaders.

In the first option where the researcher met individually with each participant, the survey was conducted on-campus in the researcher’s office. The approximate time
for each survey session was 15-20 minutes. Fifty-nine participants met with the researcher to complete the survey.

At the beginning of the survey session, the participants were asked to read the consent document (see Appendix C). For participants who desired, the researcher read and/or explained the informed consent document to them. The consent document provided the participants with the purpose of the survey and ensured them of confidentiality in compliance with the HSIRB standards. Anonymity of participants could not be granted through this approach; however, anonymity was ensured in data analyses in which a subject code was assigned to each participant and the data were aggregated for analyses. Each participant was given two copies of the consent document, one for the participant’s records and one for the researcher’s.

After the participants had read and signed the consent document, they were asked to respond to a survey questionnaire. During the process of survey completion, the researcher left the participants in order to provide confidentiality and to avoid any social pressure. Completed survey questionnaires, along with a copy of the signed consent document, were then returned to the researcher in a sealed envelope.

Participants who preferred not to meet with the researcher completed the survey questionnaires at another location of their choosing. Prior to responding to the survey questionnaire, each participant read the informed consent document by him- or herself. The participant then signed two copies of the consent document and kept one copy for him- or herself. The participant was provided with a pre-addressed envelope in which to return the completed survey and the signed consent document. The sealed
envelope was returned to the study advisor. In this self-administered survey, participant anonymity was preserved. Additionally, a subject code was assigned to each participant during the process of data analyses. Seventy-two participants completed self-administered survey.

In the next section of this chapter, the measures used in this study will be explicated in accordance to its variables. Specifically, this study proposed to test the following hypotheses:

\[ H_1: \text{EAS' self-perceived level of English communicative competence is positively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.} \]

\[ H_2: \text{EAS' reported level of English speaking anxiety is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.} \]

\[ H_3: \text{EAS' level of fear of negative evaluation is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.} \]

**Measures**

A 69-item survey questionnaire was used in the surveys. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. In the first section, 32 items were used as a manipulation check to assess participants' culture-level cultural orientation. In the second section, 15 items were used to measure participants' self-perceived English language competence, English speaking anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. In the next section, five items were used to measure participants' self-evaluated level of
oral participation in American university classrooms. Demographic information was obtained through 10 items in the last section.

As proposed in the hypotheses, the independent variables of this study were EAS’ self-perceived level of: (a) English language competence, (b) English speaking anxiety, and (c) fear of negative evaluation. The dependent variable was the participants’ self-evaluated level of oral participation in the classes that they attend.

**Individualism-Collectivism Scale**

Although the extant literature suggests that individuals from East Asian cultures share a common communication style found in collectivist cultures (see chap. 2) and “are assumed to represent collectivist cultures” (Cai & Fink, 2002, p. 70), in this study, the participants’ culture-level cultural orientations were assessed in order to ascertain if this particular group of individuals could be studied as a totality representing collectivist orientations. In order to determine that the participants of the five countries (i.e. China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan) were oriented toward the same culture-level cultural orientation (i.e. individualism or collectivism), items from Singelis and Triandis’ individualism-collectivism scale (I-C) were used (in Triandis, 1995). The I-C, a 63-item scale, has been widely used to assess individualist and collectivist values. The four dimensions measured by the I-C are horizontal collectivism (HC), vertical collectivism (VC), horizontal individualism (HI), and vertical individualism (VI). Eight items were used to measure each dimension. In the I-C, the items measured by horizontal dimensions reflect equality in communication in a homogeneous society, whereas items measured by vertical
dimensions reflect the acceptance of equality (Triandis, 1995). For example, “It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group” was one item used to measure HC, “I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group” was one item used to measure VC, “One should live one’s life independently of others” was one item used to measure HI, and “Winning is everything” was one item used to measure VI.

In this study, the first 32 Likert-items from the I-C were incorporated into the survey questionnaire. These items were items 1-32 in the questionnaire (see Appendix D). The response scale for each item ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 9 (Strongly agree).

**Communicative Adaptability Scale: Self-Reference Measure**

Items from the communicative adaptability scale: self-reference measures (CAS-SR) were selected to measure the participants’ self-perceived English language competence. The CAS-SR, a 30-item Likert scale, has been used to assess a person’s self-reported level of communicative competence in social situations (Duran, 1983). The dimensions of communicative competence measured by the CAS-SR include social composure, social confirmation, social experience, appropriate disclosure, articulation, and wit.

In this study, all five items from the CAS-SR’s articulation section were incorporated into the survey questionnaire. These five items were used to measure EAS’ self-perceptions of their English communicative competence. The articulation elements measure appropriate English language usage including grammar, verb tense,
vocabulary, pronunciation, and word-choice. These five items were items 48 to 52 the questionnaire (see Appendix D). The response scale for each item ranged from 1 (*Never true of me*), 2 (*Rarely true of me*), 3 (*Sometimes true of me*), 4 (*Often true of me*), to 5 (*Always true of me*).

The wording of the items was altered slightly in order to be applicable to the context of EAS in American university classrooms. The wording changes for items 48 to 52 were: (a) “When speaking I have problems with grammar” was changed to “When speaking English I have problems with grammar,” (b) “At times I don’t use appropriate verb tense” was changed to “At times I don’t use appropriate verb tense when speaking English,” (c) “I sometimes use one word when I mean to use another” was changed to “I sometimes use one word when I mean to use another word when speaking English,” (d) “I sometimes use words incorrectly” was changed to “I sometimes use words incorrectly when I speak English,” and (e) “I have difficulty pronouncing some words” was changed to “I have difficulty pronouncing some words in English.”

*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*

Fifteen items from the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), were used to measure two independent variables, participants’ reported level of English speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

The FLCAS was originally employed to measure second-language learners’ self-perceived level of nonnative language anxiety, specifically speaking anxiety,
test-taking anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. In the FLCAS, 33 items measure speaking anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. However, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) only partially identified the items linked to each factor. In Aida (1994), the underlying structure of the FLCAS was explored and was examined to assess the FLCAS' reliability. According to Aida (1994), 18 items are indicative of speaking anxiety, test-taking anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), 15 items reflect speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The three items that are associated with text-taking anxiety as listed in Aida (1994) were not incorporated in this study.

In this study, the 15 items indicative of speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation as labeled in Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and Aida (1994) are incorporated in the second section of the questionnaire, items 33-47 (see Appendix D). In the questionnaire of this study, items 33-39 were used to measure English speaking anxiety, the independent variable proposed in $H_2$, whereas items 40-47 were used to measure fear of negative evaluation, the independent variable proposed in $H_3$. The wording of the 15 items measuring speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation were partially modified. For example, “when I speak in my foreign language class” was modified to “when I speak English in my class” and “in my language class” was changed to “in my class.” For these 15 items, the response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neither agree nor disagree), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly agree). In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to label a participatory course of 6-35 students that they have attended or are attending.
They were then asked to recall their specific experience in the indicated class when responding to items 33-39 in the questionnaire.

*Oral Participation Scale*

The measure for the dependent variable (i.e. level of oral participation in American university classrooms as proposed in $H_1$, $H_2$, and $H_3$) was incorporated in the fourth section of the survey questionnaire, items 53-59 (see Appendix D). The participants were asked to self-evaluate their level of oral participation in the specific participatory course that they indicated in the second section of the questionnaire. In the literature of nonnative speakers of English in English-speaking classrooms, common patterns or behaviors of nonnative speakers’ and students’ verbal reticence have been identified (see chap. 2; see also Cheng, 2000; Coleman, 1997; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Mori, 2000; Tapper, 1996; Tompson & Tompson, 1996; Turner & Hiraga, 1996). These behaviors include, but are not limited to, reluctance to speak out without being called on, avoidance of expressing opinions and disagreements, and passivity in seeking clarifications about assignments or asking questions.

Based on the common behaviors or patterns of nonnative speakers’ and students’ speech reluctance, in this study the participants’ self-evaluation of oral participation level was assessed on the following communication practices: speak out without being called on (item 53), express opinions in classes (item 54), ask questions (item 55), express disagreements (item 56), make recommendations (item 57), seek clarifications (item 58), and avoid arguments (item 59). The response scale for each
item included 1 (NO! = very strongly disagree), 2 (NO = strongly disagree), 3 (no = disagree), 4 (° = neutral feelings or don’t know), to 5 (yes = mildly agree), 6 (YES = strongly agree), to 7 (YES! = very strongly agree).

Additional Measures

Items 60-69 assessed participants’ demographic information (see Appendix D). Each participant was asked if he or she speaks English as a native language (item 60), to assess his or her level of fluency in speaking English (item 61), years of learning English formally (item 62), years spent in English-speaking countries (item 63), years spent in the United States and at current university (items 64 and 65, respectively), country of origin, age, sex, and curriculum major at the university (items 66-69).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the method used to conduct this study was described. First, the sampling design and sample characteristics were presented. Second, the procedures for participant solicitation and for data collection were discussed. Details regarding the options of approaches to survey completion were outlined. Last, the measures used in this study were explained. In the next chapter, the data analyses and results will be presented.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

This chapter reviews the data analyses and results of this study. The chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section, the response rate, measurement models, and the methods used in preliminary data analyses are detailed. Specifically, for the manipulation check, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was employed to assess participants' differences in the culture-level cultural orientation by country. In addition, \( t \) tests were conducted to test for sex differences in the participants' cultural orientation, independent, and dependent variables. The second section of this chapter reports the tests of the three hypotheses of this study. For each hypothesis, a partial correlation was performed.

Preliminary Data Analyses

This section reports the results of the preliminary data analyses. These analyses include the study's response rate, tests of internal consistency and parallelism using confirmatory factor analyses, and reliability analyses. A one-way ANOVA and \( t \) tests were conducted as manipulation checks.

Response Rate

Three strategies for participant solicitation were described in the previous chapter, and each yielded different numbers of participants. Participant solicitation
via student organization leaders recruited 35 individuals, recruitment via individual phone contact gathered 46 participants, and snowball sampling procedure produced 46 participants. The overall response rate for this study was 90.34% \( (n_{\text{response}} = 131; n_{\text{non-response}} = 14) \); 9.66% participants who agreed to complete self-administered surveys did not return the questionnaires.

**Measurement Models**

To test the construct validity of each scale, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted. Tests for internal consistency and parallelism were performed to test the dimensionality of each scale. Items that exhibited substantial errors were dropped from further analyses. Standardized item alpha was determined for each scale.

As explained in the previous chapter, the individualism-collectivism scale (I-C) measured four cultural dimensions: horizontal collectivism (HC), vertical collectivism (VC), horizontal individualism (HI), and vertical individualism (VI). These four dimensions were treated as separate scales in confirmatory factor analyses. For the HC scale, a 5-item unidimensional solution was found; items 2, 11, and 20 were dropped. A 7-item unidimensional solution was found for each of the VC and HI scales; items 27 and 6 were dropped, respectively. For the VI scale, a 4-item unidimensional solution was found; items 12, 19, 26, and 30 were dropped. The means, standard deviations, and standardized item alphas for each factor are presented in Table 1.

A 4-item unidimensional solution was found for the English communicative competence scale; item 52 was dropped. A 4-item unidimensional solution was found
Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Standardized Item Alphas of the Dimensions of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>33.27</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>32.74</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>44.22</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. HC = horizontal collectivism; VC = vertical collectivism; HI = horizontal individualism; and VI = vertical individualism.

for the English speaking anxiety scale; item 34, 38, and 39 were dropped. A 7-item unidimensional solution was found for the fear of evaluation scale; item 46 was dropped. A 6-item unidimensional solution was found for the oral participation scale; item 54 was dropped. The means, standard deviations, and standardized item alphas for each scale are presented in Table 2.

In summary, each measure for HC, VC, HI, and VI consisted of 5, 7, 7, and 4 items, respectively. The English communicative competence scale consisted of 4 items, the English speaking anxiety scale consisted of 4 items, the fear of negative evaluation scale consisted of 7 items, and the oral participation scale consisted of 6 items.

Manipulation Checks

Two manipulation checks were conducted. First, a one-way ANOVA was
Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Standardized Item Alphas for the Independent and the Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$\alpha$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English communicative competence</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English speaking anxiety</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of negative evaluation</td>
<td>22.34</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral participation</td>
<td>23.27</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

performed to assess if differences existed in the four dimensions of culture-level cultural orientation based on participants’ countries of origin. Second, $t$ tests were used to test for sex differences in participants’ culture-level cultural orientations, independent, and dependent variables.

Culture-level Cultural Orientations. An ANOVA procedure was performed as a manipulation check to test the extent to which the participants, according to their countries of origin, were more collectivist- or individualist-oriented in their culture-level cultural orientations. These culture-level cultural orientations were assessed from the four dimensions measured by the I-C (i.e. HC, VC, HI, VI). As mentioned before, the participants of this study came from five East Asian countries (i.e. China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan). As the literature review suggested, individuals from East Asian cultures are typically collectivist in their culture-level cultural orientation (see chap. 2). Thus, it was assumed that the participants would exhibit no differences in their culture-level cultural orientation and that they were
collectivist-oriented. However, in order to determine if this particular group of participants could be examined as a group who shares a collectivist-orientation in the culture level, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess if the participants’ countries of origin accounted for differences in their cultural orientations.

Table 3 provides a summary of the ANOVA results examining differences in cultural orientation by participants’ countries of origin. The analysis revealed that across the five countries of origin, the participants did not differ significantly on the cultural dimensions of HC, HI, and VI. A significant difference across countries of origin was obtained on the cultural dimension of VC (see Table 3).

**Sex Differences.** Independent sample $t$ tests were computed to determine if differences existed in the sample between female and male participants on these dimensions of cultural orientation. Results indicated no statistically significant sex differences in the cultural dimensions of HC, VC, HI, and VI. Table 4 provides a summary of these tests. The alpha level was set at $p < .05$.

As an additional step in the preliminary data analyses, $t$ tests were computed to test for sex differences in the independent and the dependent variables. The variables were English communicative competence, English speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and oral participation. Results indicated no statistically significant sex differences ($p < .05$). Table 5 provides a summary of these tests.

In sum, in manipulation checks the ANOVA test revealed that the participants did not differ significantly between their countries of origin and their cultural dimensions of HC, HI, and VI. However, they differed significantly between their
Table 3

One-Way Analysis of Variance Values, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Dimensions of the Collectivism-Individualism Scale by Country Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimension</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75.43</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32.63</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36.12</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34.26</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31.51</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32.91</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>278.65</td>
<td>5.01*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42.47</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40.77</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41.68</td>
<td>5.21</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
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<td>45.13</td>
<td>9.36</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>45.47</td>
<td>8.15</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43.74</td>
<td>8.46</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>8.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43.62</td>
<td>7.43</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.13</td>
<td>8.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
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<td>6.71</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>18.94</td>
<td>6.13</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19.98</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.47</td>
<td>5.22</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. HC = horizontal collectivism; VC = vertical collectivism; HI = horizontal collectivism; and VI = vertical collectivism.

*p < .01.
Table 4

$t$-Test Values, Means, and Standard Deviations for Females and Males on the Dimensions of the Individualism-Collectivism Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Dimension</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33.19</td>
<td>6.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>33.19</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>39.91</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44.50</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>8.73</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20.61</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td></td>
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<td>VI</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>19.18</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* HC = horizontal collectivism; VC = vertical collectivism; HI = horizontal collectivism; and VI = vertical collectivism.

countries of origin and the cultural dimension of VC. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences between male and female participants on the extent to which they were collectivist- or individualist- oriented in the culture-level cultural dimensions. Similarly, participants’ sex showed no statistically significant differences in the independent and the dependent variables of this study.
Table 5

$t$-Test Values, Means, and Standard Deviations for Females and Males on the Independent and the Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English communicative competence</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10.15</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>-0.74</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English speaking anxiety</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>12.88</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of negative evaluation</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.06</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>22.55</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral participation</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24.02</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>1.13</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>6.48</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Results

In this section, the results of the tests of the hypotheses of this study are reported. To test the predictions regarding the relationships of the independent variables and the dependent variable, Pearson $r$ Correlation Coefficients were employed. Due to differences across participants’ countries of origin on the cultural dimension of VC, partial correlations were conducted to control for the effects of these differences in the tests of hypotheses. In the following discussion, the results are
reported for each hypothesis.

The first hypothesis addressed by this analysis was:

\( H_1: \) EAS' self-perceived level of English communicative competence is positively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.

Partial correlation results indicated that the data were consistent with \( H_1 \). The results show that there was a statistically significant relationship between the level of English language competence and the level of oral participation \([r (131) = .18, p = .021]\). The results also indicated that about 3.2% of the variance was shared between the two variables. The strength of the relationship was low, as compared to the correlations of English speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, and the dependent variable, levels of oral participation.

The second hypothesis of this study was:

\( H_2: \) EAS' reported level of English speaking anxiety is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.

Partial correlation results indicated that the data were consistent with \( H_2 \). The analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the level of English speaking anxiety and the level of oral participation \([r (131) = -.59, p = .000]\). About 35% of the variance in the level of oral participation was accounted for by the level of English speaking anxiety. The results indicated that these two variables moderately correlated with each another. In fact, the level of oral participation was most accounted for by the level of English speaking anxiety, as
compared to English communicative competence ($H_1$) and fear of negative evaluation ($H_3$).

The last hypothesis addressed by this analysis was:

$H_3$: EAS’ level of fear of negative evaluation is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American university classrooms.

The results of this partial correlation analysis also supported $H_3$. There was a statistically significant relationship between the level of fear of negative evaluation and the level of oral participation [$r (131) = -.51, p = .000$]. The variance shared between the level of English speaking anxiety and the level of oral participation was about 26%. The correlation of this hypothesis showed a stronger relationship as compared to $H_1$ and slightly weaker relationship as compared to $H_2$.

Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations for the independent variables (i.e. levels of English communicative competence, English speaking anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation) and the dependent variable (i.e. level of oral participation).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the methods of data analyses of this study and the statistical results of the tests of hypotheses. Tests of internal consistency and parallelism using confirmatory factor analysis were employed to test the dimensionality of each scale, and reliability analyses were performed to determine the standardized item alpha of each scale. Manipulation checks showed no significant
Table 6
Means, Standard Deviations, and Minimum and Maximum Values for the Independent and the Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English communicative competence</td>
<td>10.40</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English speaking anxiety</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of negative evaluation</td>
<td>22.34</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral participation</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

differences across participants' countries of origin in the cultural orientation dimensions of HI, VI, and HC. A significant difference across countries of origin was obtained on the dimension of VC. Sex was not found to be a significant variable affecting culture-level cultural orientation, the independent variables, or the dependent variable. The statistical tests supported the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In short, the three hypotheses posed by this study (a) EAS' self-perceived English communicative competence is positively related to their level of oral participation in American classrooms, (b) EAS' reported level of English speaking anxiety is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American classrooms, and (c) EAS' level of fear of negative evaluation is negatively related to their level of oral participation in American classrooms were all supported.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This chapter contains a discussion of the implications of the data analyses reported in Chapter 4. First, the three hypotheses and the findings of this study are reviewed and explained. Next, the methodological limitations of this study are discussed. Finally, the implications of the findings for practice and suggestions for future research in the study of East Asian students’ (EAS) oral participation in American university classrooms are offered.

Summary of Findings

The primary goal of this study was to explore the relationships between EAS’ self-perceptions of English language competence related factors and their level of oral participation in American university classrooms. Based on the rationale that an individual’s self-perceived communicative competence will affect his or her level of oral performance (see chap. 2), three hypotheses were posed. Specifically, this study posited that: (a) EAS’ self-perceived level of English communicative competence correlates positively with their level of oral participation in American university classrooms, (b) EAS’ reported level of English speaking anxiety correlates negatively with their level of oral participation in American university classrooms, and (c) EAS’ level of fear of negative evaluation correlates negatively with their level of oral
participation in American university classrooms.

In the tests of hypotheses, the data were consistent with the predicted relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Statistical analyses supported all three hypotheses. In this section, the findings of this study are summarized and explained.

First, the central concern of this study, the effect of EAS' self-perceived English communicative competence on EAS' level of oral participation in American university classrooms was found to be a statistically significant positive relationship. That is, participants who perceived themselves as competent in English communicative skills, defined and measured as appropriate English usage (i.e. grammar, verb tense, vocabulary, pronunciation, and word-choice) in this study, evaluated themselves as participating more in class discourse as compared to participants who perceived themselves as less competent in English communicative skills. The strength of the hypothesized relationship, however, was less than expected ($r^2 = .03$). Further, the analysis indicated that only about 3.2% of the variance in level of oral participation was accounted for by self-perceived level of English communicative competence.

Two possible explanations may account for this result. First, while many previous second language studies have focused on students' actual English skills as evaluated by observed oral performance in the classroom or as measured by scores on standardized English language or equivalent tests, this study was concerned with EAS' self-perceptions of their English communicative competence. As presented in
Chapter 2, it was argued that EAS’ self-perceptions of their level of English communicative competence may be a cognitive mediator between their actual English skills and their oral performance in the classroom. As such, it was argued that their self-perceptions of their competence may have an important effect on their oral participation behavior as their actual English communicative competence. The results of this study however suggest that the use of self-perceptual measures may have been problematic. Over- and underestimation may have occurred when EAS self-evaluated their oral participation levels, such as found by MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) in their study of second-language anxiety and students’ self-ratings of their second-language competence. They found that anxious second language learners usually underestimate their second-language competence, whereas self-confident learners showed a self-enhancing bias of their second-language competence. Further, on the oral participation scale, the participants in this study might have stated their estimations based on factors such as social desirability or cultural expectation, instead of an evaluation of their actual oral behaviors in the classroom. Finally, the limiting of English communicative competence to the language proficiency dimension assessed in this study may have narrowed the focus of communicative competence for EAS too stringently. While language proficiency is certainly the foundation on which competence is built, it is possible that by the time EAS attend American colleges or universities after several years studying the mechanics of English grammar in their native classrooms, their concerns about syntax have been displaced by concerns about the pragmatics of English language usage in day-to-day interactions as well as in the
classroom (Kuiper, 2000). Accustomed to using English syntax in written assignments, EAS may have evaluated their competence in that domain rather than in oral expression. Further, at this stage in their experiences with English, they may more likely evaluate themselves and their English competence holistically. In short, the use of self-perceptual measures on these two specific variables and the complexities of the evaluation of English communicative competence may have influenced the strength of the results revealed on the first hypothesis.

The data of this study were also consistent with the second and third predictions: EAS' reported level of English speaking anxiety correlated negatively with their level of oral participation in American university classrooms, and a moderate negative relationship existed between EAS' fear of negative evaluation and their level of oral participation in American university classrooms. The statistical analyses revealed that EAS' reported level of English speaking anxiety accounted for approximately 35% of the variance in the level of oral participation, while approximately 26% of the variance in level of oral participation was accounted for by EAS' reported fear of evaluation. Participants in this study who reported higher levels English speaking anxiety or who had higher levels of fear of negative evaluation from the instructor and other students evaluated themselves as participating less in class discourse when compared to participants who reported lower levels of English speaking anxiety or who reported lower levels of fear of negative evaluation. The results of the tests of these two hypotheses then are generally consistent with previous research examining the influence of nonnative language speaking anxiety and fear of
negative evaluation on students' oral participation in second-language classrooms (e.g. Aida, 1994; Cheng, Horowitz, & Schallert, 1999; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). In this study, these factors were found to significantly affect EAS' levels of oral participation in American university classrooms.

While the current study provided valuable information that supported the relationship between self-perceptions of English language related competence factors and the level of EAS' oral participation in American university classrooms, the study also has methodological limitations that need to be explored. In the next section, the methodological limitations of this study are addressed.

Methodological Limitations

This study has four primary methodological limitations. These limitations included, but are not limited to, those found in the sample composition, participant solicitation procedures, data collection procedures, and measurement of oral participation level.

One of the methodological limitations of this study is found in the selection criteria of the sample composition. This study is based on some assumptions about the criterion of enrollment in participatory courses. This criterion was based on the assumption that oral participation is expected and encouraged in small-size classes and would be a feature of courses limited in size to 6-35 students. This assumption resulted in treating each participant's experience with oral participation in the American classroom as similar in data analyses. This strategy potentially may have
affected the results of this study as significant variation in classroom experiences were not accounted for in this design. While participants did indicate and recall their experiences from a specific course as they competed the oral participation scale in the questionnaire, further clarification of the specific nature of the course was not sought. For example, specific information about the types of class participation in the course was not collected. Further, data regarding teaching styles of the instructors, different lecture or discussion topics as foci of the course, and the importance and contribution of oral participation as evidenced by their inclusion in course grading criteria were not assessed. These all might be significant factors that could account for EAS’ willingness to participate in class discourse and might define a participatory course under differing assumptions.

Another methodological issue that may have affected the results of this study arose from the participant solicitation procedures. Because the inclusion criteria for participants in this study significantly narrowed the subject population, three procedures were employed to seek participants: (a) contact via student organization leaders, (b) individual telephone contact for participants who were not affiliated with the student organizations, and (c) snowball sampling applied to the first and second procedures. Generally, inconsistent solicitation procedures may affect the responses of the participants. Further, in compliance with the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) standards and in protecting the confidentiality of the participants, no method was employed to identify or to associate participant recruitment with regard to the specific solicitation procedures. Thus, no tests of
impartiality across methods could be conducted and the effects of solicitation procedures themselves on the results could not be assessed.

Further, in the data collection procedures, two approaches were used to administer the surveys. For participants who met individually with the researcher, the researcher was able to monitor and control both the procedures and the process. However, in the self-administered survey situation, the participants controlled some elements of the procedure and the totality of the process. In this data collection method in particular, factors such as timing, setting, or the existence of other individuals was not controllable. Further, the manner in which surveys were returned to the researcher as guided by the HSIRB requirements eliminated the opportunity to identify the category of data collection procedure and hence eliminated the opportunity to test for effects that may have occurred as a result of the two data collection procedures.

The fourth methodological issue was the use of self-evaluation as a measure of oral participation. In this study, the participants' evaluated their own level of oral participation in American classrooms. As suggested previously, these self-evaluations may be positively or negatively biased. Ideally, video- or audiotaping students' oral participation in classes would have ensured the attainment of a more precise measure of level of oral participation. Such studies of English language communicative competence using direct observational methods, however, are complicated by problems of both a practical nature such as inaccessibility and an ethical nature such as confidentiality of the participants. In sum, while direct observation of students'
level of oral participation in the classroom is ideal and no doubt would enhance our understanding, the difficulties inherent in such an approach suggest the utility of self-report measures for initial exploration of variables such as in this study.

In the above paragraphs, four primary methodological limitations regarding the sample composition, participant solicitation procedures, data collection procedures, and oral participation measurement were presented. To further refine this study, suggestions are provided for future research and practice in the next section.

Suggestions for Future Research and Practice

Given the findings of this study and despite its limitations, some specific implications for practice and research can be drawn. First, strategies for future practice in enhancing EAS’ oral performance and oral participation in American university classrooms are suggested. Next, suggestions for future research in overcoming self-perceptual measure of English communicative competence are provided. Last, recommendations regarding methodological concerns from the perspectives of sample of study and oral participation measurement are offered.

As revealed by the results of this study, language competence is the foundation of communicative competence. As a strategy for future practice to enhance EAS’ oral performance in American university classrooms, their English language competence needs to be improved. At present, competence in written English is emphasized over oral competence in East Asian countries (Lai, 1994; Liu & Littlewood, 1997). English language instructors in these countries should increase
the opportunities for EAS to practice spoken English, such as conducting in-class oral activities or language games that require English conversational skills. EAS should also have an opportunity to increase their understanding and awareness of the values and expectations associated with their academic culture of origin and the academic culture in which they will be matriculating.

Increasing awareness of these cultural differences in expectation for appropriate classroom behavior should be part of the training of American instructors and students as well. This increased awareness should be coupled with enhanced strategies to increase specific opportunities for EAS to participate in class discourse in American university classrooms. For example, in their study Liu and Littlewood (1997) suggested that class instructors could increase EAS' presence proportionally in small-sized classes, or instructors could increase EAS' oral participation by using small discussion or "buzz groups" that encourages active oral participation (p. 379). Further, in American university classrooms, instructors could call on students randomly to answer questions, instead of addressing only those who raise their hands. Instructors also could clarify and emphasize the expectations and requirements associated with class oral participation for all students. Finally, different forms of oral communication activities could also be practiced in the classroom. For example, instead of evaluating EAS' oral participation in class discussion, instructors could also provide alternative activities of oral communication for EAS, such as oral presentation and individual interactions with instructors after class.

As explained in the section of summary of findings of this chapter, a low
relationship between EAS’ self-perceived level of English communicative competence and their level of oral participation in American university classrooms may have been affected by the participants’ biases in evaluating their English language competence. As a suggestion for future research to minimize the effects of participants’ over- or underestimation, researchers may obtain a more complete measure of English communicative competence by bridging or comparing the evaluation of actual English skills and self-perceived English communicative competence. Further, as alluded to earlier, the participants’ may have evaluated their English communicative competence focusing on the domain of the use of English syntax in written assignments, rather than in oral expression. In fact, their concerns in the English language may have shifted to the pragmatics. As such, instead of limiting English language usage from the perspective of syntax, future research may also examine EAS’ English pragmatic skills, such as sociolinguistic expressions.

Finally, issues related to sampling may be addressed in future research. In obtaining a sample, EAS may be studied according to their countries of origin. In other words, the sample for a study may be a group of individuals from the same country. This will obviate the need for accounting for differences by country, while establishing a more consistent sample with participants who are closely similar in their cultural orientation including belief systems, educational backgrounds, and governmental exercise, with less room for difference and error. Future research also may establish the criterion of recruiting students who attend the same class with the same instructor. This will help ensure a consistent teaching style and lessen the
effects of different lecture or discussion topics on EAS’ oral participation and the class as a whole.

Last, in measuring levels of oral participation, future research may want to observe students’ actual behaviors of class discourse. Instead of using self-evaluated level of oral participation, researchers may record actual observations or videotape students’ oral participation in the classroom. Other alternatives include employing instructors’ and/or classmates’ evaluation of the participants’ level of oral participation.

Answers to the above suggestions for future research and practice will help provide important information about EAS’ oral participation in American university classrooms.

Conclusion

This study has presented an understanding of the influence of EAS’ self-perceived English language related competence on their level of oral participation in American university classrooms. The results of this study, as consistent with the findings of previous second-language studies, demonstrated that EAS’ self-perceived (a) English communicative competence positively related to their level of oral participation, (b) English speaking anxiety negatively related to their level of oral participation, and (c) fear of negative evaluation negatively related to their level of oral participation. These results also suggested that EAS’ self-perceptions of their English proficiency, in addition to their actual English skills, are important factors
that influence their ability and willingness to participate in class discourse. Effective oral participation from EAS will not only unlock the potential that they can bring with them, but will also enhance classroom diversity. Therefore, understanding the significant factors that have relevance to EAS' communicative behaviors in American university classrooms has pragmatic values and is beneficial to the growth of the educational arena.
1. Kagitcibasi (1997) also indicated that Confucian values are seen in Eastern religions and philosophies, such as Taoism, Buddhism, and Shintoism. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2001), the mainstream religions in these countries are (a) Taoism and Buddhism in China, (b) Taoism and mixture of local religions, as practiced in Confucianism, in Hong Kong, (c) Shintoism and Buddhism in Japan, (d) Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism in Korea, and (e) Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism in Taiwan.

2. These are items 1-32 in the questionnaire: HC, items 2, 9, 11, 14, 16, 20, 22, and 28; VC, items 3, 7, 13, 17, 24, 27, 29, and 31; HI, items 1, 5, 6, 15, 18, 21, 25, and 32; and VI, items 4, 8, 10, 12, 19, 23, 26, and 30.
Appendix A

Flier
An Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

Dear international students,

I am seeking your assistance for my research project. I am interested in knowing your experience in WMU classrooms. This project may benefit you from the perspective of reflecting on your own communicative experiences in American classrooms. At a larger level, the results of this study may be helpful to the university staffs and professors at increasing the quality of education and providing better services to international students.

It would be very helpful if you can participate.

If you are interested, please write your name and phone number and return the below section to [write the name of the organization leader]. [He or she] will return it to Dr. Leigh Ford, the principal investigator of this research project. I will call you and we can make arrangement for the research participation. If you would like to recommend a friend or friends to me, you can fill out the below information or ask your friends to contact me at eelin_lee@yahoo.com or call me at 373-1464.

Thank you,
Ee Lin Lee.

Are you interested in participating in this research project? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes,
Name:______________________________
Phone:__________________________

If no,
Can you think of a friend or friends who might be interested in participating? _____ Yes _____ No

Please list your friend(s) whom I can contact.
Name:______________________________ Phone:____________________
Name:______________________________ Phone:____________________
Name:______________________________ Phone:____________________
Name:______________________________ Phone:____________________

Do I have your permission to mention your name when I contact them? _____ Yes _____ No
Appendix B

Telephone Interview Script
My name is Ee Lin Lee. I am a graduate student from the Department of Communication at WMU. I am calling to seek your assistance for my research project. My research project is about international students’ experience in American classrooms. It would be very helpful if you can participate.

By participating, this project may benefit you from the perspective of realizing your own communicative experiences in American classrooms. At a larger level, your participation may be helpful to the university staffs and professors at increasing the quality of education and providing better services to international students.

Would you be interested in learning more about participating?
If no,
Thanks. Bye.

If yes,
I greatly appreciate your interest in learning more about participation in this project. I am primarily looking at international students of East Asian origin who speak English as a non-native language, who are currently enrolled at WMU for at least four months, and who have or had attended classes of 6-35 students.

If you fit the inclusionary criteria mentioned, I would like to brief you about the research procedures. I will like to set up a place and a time, that you choose and is convenient for you, to interview you. During the interview, you will be completing a survey questionnaire. It will take you no longer than 15 minutes to complete the survey questionnaire.

Are you interested in participating?
If yes, proceed to question 1.
If no, skip to question 6.

1. May you please tell me what country are you from?
If country specified is one of these, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, or Taiwan, proceed to question 2.
If not,
I am very appreciative of your willingness to participate, but the study requires international students from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, or Taiwan.

2. Is English your non-native language?
If yes, proceed to question 3.
If not,
I am very appreciative of your willingness to participate, but the study requires international students who speak English as their non-native language.
3. How long have you been attending WMU?
If at least 4 months, proceed to question 4.
If not,
I am very appreciative of your willingness to participate, but the study requires international students have been attending WMU for at least 4 months.

4. Since coming to WMU, have you attended any classes that had/have 6-35 students?
If yes, proceed to question 5.
If not,
I am very appreciative of your willingness to participate, but the study requires international students who have attended classes with the class size specified.

5. Are those classes incorporating discussion as a part of class activity?
If yes, the interviewee will be asked to set up a face-to-face interview with the researcher at a mutually agreed upon time and place.
If not,
I am very appreciative of your willingness to participate, but the study requires international students who have attended or are attending classes that emphasize oral participation.

6. Do you have a friend or friends that you would recommend to participate in this study?
If yes, proceed to question 7.
If no,
Thanks. Bye.

7. a. May you please tell me his/her or their name(s)?
   b. May you please provide me his/her or their telephone numbers?
   c. Do I have your permission to mention your name when I call your friend(s)?
      Thanks for providing me with the information.
      The possible participant will then be asked to set up a time and a place for the interview.
Appendix C

Consent Document
Western Michigan University  
Department of Communication  
Principal investigator: Dr. Leigh A. Ford  
Student investigator: Ee Lin Lee

I have been invited to participate in a research study for Ee Lin Lee's master's thesis entitled "Self-Perceptions of Language Competence and East-Asian Students' Verbal Participation in American Classrooms". As a participant, I will be asked to respond to a survey questionnaire that consists of three sections with a total of 69 items. The first three sections entail questions about my cultural orientation and my communicative experiences in American classrooms; the third section includes some demographic items. I can clarify anything that I do not understand. It will take me no longer than 15 minutes to complete the whole questionnaire.

Risks to subjects: 
The known risks to participants are minimal. There is a potential risk that I might feel minor discomfort and/or anxiety associated with listening and speaking to the researcher. As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participants. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or treatment will be made available to me except as otherwise specified in this consent form.

Benefits of research: 
This research may help me to become aware of my English language competence and to reflect on their verbal participation in English-speaking classrooms.

Confidentiality of data: 
My responses on the questionnaire and my demographic information are confidential. The survey questionnaire that I answered will be assigned a code number. The data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Leigh Ford's office for at least three years following completion of this research. Dr. Ford will also maintain the confidentiality of computer data files.
Protection of subjects:
Participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the research without prejudice or penalty. I can refuse to answer any specific questions. If I have questions or concerns about this study, I may contact either Ee Lin Lee at 373-1464 or Dr. Leigh Ford at 387-3592. I may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 387-8293 or the vice president for research at 387-8298 with any concerns that I have.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not have a stamped date and signature.

My signature below indicates that I have read and/or had explained to me the purpose and requirements of the research and that I agree to participate.

_________________________________________  ________________
Signature                                      Date
Appendix D

Questionnaire
Instructions: There are 32 statements in this section. Circle your response according to the scale provided for each statement. Circle your response according to the scale provided for each statement. If you think that the statement does not apply to you, circle and “X” a 5.

1. I prefer to be direct and forthright when I talk with people.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  Strongly Agree

2. My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  Strongly Agree

3. I would do what would please my family, even if I detested that activity.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  Strongly Agree

4. Winning is everything.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  Strongly Agree

5. One should live one’s life independently of others.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  Strongly Agree

6. What happens to me is my own doing.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  Strongly Agree

7. I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  Strongly Agree
8. It annoys me when other people perform better than I do.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

9. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

10. It is important to me that I do my job better than others.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

11. I like sharing little things with my neighbors.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

12. I enjoy working in situations involving competition with others.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

13. We should keep our aging parents with us at home.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

14. The well-being of my co-workers is important to me.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

15. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree
16. If a relative were in financial difficulty, I would help within my means.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

17. Children should feel honored if their parents receive a distinguished award.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

18. I often do "my own thing".

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

19. Competition is the law of nature.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

20. If a co-worker gets a prize I would feel proud.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

21. I am a unique individual.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

22. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

23. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree
24. I would sacrifice an activity that I enjoy very much if my family did not approve of it.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

25. I like my privacy.
Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

26. Without competition it is not possible to have a good society.
Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

27. Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure.
Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

28. I feel good when I cooperate with others.
Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

29. I hate to disagree with others in my group.
Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

30. Some people emphasize winning; I am not one of them.
Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree
31. Before taking a major trip, I consult with most members of my family and many friends.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

32. When I succeed, it is usually because of my abilities.

Strongly Agree 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly Disagree

Instructions: This section contains 15 statements. Circle your response according to the scale provided for each statement. In the space that follows, please name a class of 6 – 35 students that you have attended or are attending: ______________. Your response to each statement should best describe you in the class that you have just named.

33. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in my class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
5 4 3 2 1

34. I keep thinking that other students are better at the English language than I am.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
5 4 3 2 1

35. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
5 4 3 2 1

36. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in my class.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
5 4 3 2 1
37. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38. I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39. It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in the English language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40. I get nervous when the teacher asks questions which I haven’t prepared in advanced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43. I get nervous when I don’t understand every word the teacher says.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
44. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45. I feel confident when I speak in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of other students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Even if I am well prepared for my classes, I feel anxious about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructions:** In the next 5 items, think about your English language skills in general, in all your different classes. Circle your response according to the scale provided for each statement. Please note that the response scale for these items will be ranged from “5 = Always true of me” to “1 = Never true of me”.

48. When speaking English I have problems with grammar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always true of me</th>
<th>Often true of me</th>
<th>Sometimes true of me</th>
<th>Rarely true of me</th>
<th>Never true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49. At times I don’t use appropriate verb tense when speaking English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always true of me</th>
<th>Often true of me</th>
<th>Sometimes true of me</th>
<th>Rarely true of me</th>
<th>Never true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
50. I sometimes cannot think of an appropriate word when I speak in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always true of me</th>
<th>Often true of me</th>
<th>Sometimes true of me</th>
<th>Rarely true of me</th>
<th>Never true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51. I sometimes use words incorrectly when speaking English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always true of me</th>
<th>Often true of me</th>
<th>Sometimes true of me</th>
<th>Rarely true of me</th>
<th>Never true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52. I have difficulty pronouncing some words in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always true of me</th>
<th>Often true of me</th>
<th>Sometimes true of me</th>
<th>Rarely true of me</th>
<th>Never true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Instructions*: For each of the below statements, circle the response that best describes you in the same class that you named previously in this questionnaire. In responding to the statements, please use the following scale:

- **YES!** = very strongly agree
- **NO!** = very strongly disagree
- **YES** = strongly agree
- **NO** = strongly disagree
- **yes** = mildly agree
- **no** = mildly disagree
- **?** = neutral feelings or don’t know

53. I speak out without being called on in my class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO!</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54. I express my opinions in my class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO!</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
55. I ask questions in class when I don’t understand about assignments that are unclear.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
NO! & NO & no & ? & yes & YES & YES! \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

56. I avoid expressing disagreement in my class.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
NO! & NO & no & ? & yes & YES & YES! \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

57. I make recommendations in my class.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
YES! & YES & yes & ? & no & NO & NO! \\
7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

58. I ask for clarifications when issues discussed in class are unclear.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
YES! & YES & yes & ? & no & NO & NO! \\
7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

59. I avoid arguing in my class.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
YES! & YES & yes & ? & no & NO & NO! \\
7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\end{array}
\]

**Instructions:** For the following items, please provide the appropriate information.

60. Is English your native language?

a. Yes  
b. No  

61. Assess your level of fluency in speaking English.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\text{Very fluent} & \text{Not fluent} \\
\end{array}
\]
62. How long have you been learning English formally?
   a. Less than 1 year
   b. 1 – 2 years
   c. 3 – 5 years
   d. more than 5 years

63. In total, how much time have you spent in the English-speaking countries?
   ______ year (s) ______ month(s)

64. In total, how long have you been in the United States?
   ______ year (s) ______ month(s)

65. In total, how much time have you been in your current university?
   ______ year (s) ______ month(s)

66. Country of origin: ________________________________

67. Age: ______

68. Sex: ______

69. Major: ________________________________

*After completing the entire survey questionnaire, please place it in the envelope provided. Please seal and write “completed” across the seal. Thank you.*
REFERENCES


