The problems encountered Korean overseas students at the Wollongong English Language Centre

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The Problems Encountered by Korean Overseas Students at the Wollongong English Language Centre

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION (HONOURS)

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

SEUNGIK CHO
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A deep sense of gratitude is extended to my supervisor Dr. Pauline Harris. Without her observations and recommendations, this thesis would not have been possible.

My sincere gratitude is owed to the 9 case study students, their teacher, and the director at WELC, Ms. Jackie Zelinsky, for their cooperation and suggestions.

A special thanks to Phyllis Tibbs who assisted me during the revision of this thesis.

A special thanks to my family, especially my father, Ilwon Cho, and my mother, Myungju Park, for their support and encouragement over the years.

Finally, thanks to my wife, Youngmi, for her patience and understanding. Thank you my baby boy, Junghyun.
This study identified the problems of Korean overseas students in WELC (Wollongong English Language Centre), and provided possible suggestions to resolve the problems.

This study used multiple research methods, in favour of a more qualitative study. The methods employed were a survey, interviews with 9 case study students, an interview with their teacher, students' journals, and classroom observations.

It was found that most Korean overseas students were instrumentally motivated in studying English, mainly to enter a university. However, their implicit reasons for studying English were somehow different from their explicit reasons. The problems students mentioned in the survey were general. However, these problems were identified in further detail through 9 case studies. The problems identified from 9 case studies included language and communication problems; study problems; living style and emotional problems; accommodation and food problems; financial problems; and problems with Korean agents. Even though the problems were classified into categories and sub-categories, these were inter-connected. These inter-connections provided the bases for suggestions whereby the problems may begin to be resolved.
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<td>Figure 6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
1.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to describe and analyse the problems of Korean overseas students at WELC (Wollongong English Language Centre). It was expected that the Korean overseas students would encounter certain problems or difficulties in their study and living in a foreign country, because they were total strangers learning in a different school context and living in a different culture apart from their families and friends.

WELC is one of the ELICOS centres accredited by the Australian Government. The term ELICOS stands for English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students and covers a wide range of courses in English as a Foreign Language (EFL); for example, it can refer to a course for total beginners who do not even know the Roman Alphabet, but it can refer also to an advanced level study skills course. ELICOS centres offer a wide range of courses designed to assist students in their preparations for further study in Australia and to help meet their personal and professional language learning needs. The courses provided by ELICOS centres are General English, Academic English, Business and Commercial English, Scientific and Technical English, Secretarial English, Medical English, and Computer English.

1.2 Historical Overview of Overseas Students in ELICOS

Even though overseas students have been coming to
Australia since 1904, separate statistics for private students were not maintained during these early years. However, the number of overseas students at Australian universities has increased from 2,352 in 1959 to 8,203 in 1980 (Golding et al., 1984, p 217). The total number of overseas students in the 1980's increased from 17,597 in 1982 to 42,565 in 1988, (shown in Table 1). However, the most significant trend in the 1980's is the dramatic increase of overseas students in non-formal courses.

**TABLE 1**

Private Overseas Students in Formal and Non-Formal Courses in Australia, Selected Years 1982 to 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Non-Formal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>12,447</td>
<td>5,150</td>
<td>17,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>16,053</td>
<td>3,050</td>
<td>19,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>18,285</td>
<td>4,248</td>
<td>22,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>19,322</td>
<td>8,456</td>
<td>27,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>21,671</td>
<td>20,894</td>
<td>42,565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Committee of Review of Private Overseas Students Policy, 1984, p 203; Department of Employment, Education and Training.

( Cited in Jones, 1989, p 28)
Non-formal courses are defined as those which do not lead to a formal award, such as a degree or diploma. Such courses often do not have examinations or formal assessment, and are usually relatively short. Examples of non-formal courses include occupational training, religious or military training, and intensive English language courses.

Table 1 indicates the significance in 1988 of the dramatic rise in non-formal student numbers, from 8,546 in 1987 to 20,894 in 1988. Approximately half of the non-formal courses attended were English language courses (10,227). In 1989 more than 30,000 students came to Australia to study in an English language centre (Sydney Morning Herald, 20th, April, 1990). The rapid increase in the number of overseas students in English language courses has occurred chiefly in the Australian Government's full-fee program. The program was introduced to provide for a market in education for overseas students with no restrictions on access other than ability to pay the full cost of a place in an educational institution. In line with Government policy regarding overseas students, the ELICOS industry has also shown a rapid expansion. Whereas in September 1986, there were only 14 accredited ELICOS centres altogether in Australia, in 1988 there were 74 centres, 42 of which were private and 32 public (Stewart, 1989).
1.3 Reasons for Overseas Students' Studying English in Australia

The reasons for overseas students wishing to study English in Australia are diverse (Stewart, 1989). Some overseas students come to Australia simply to improve spoken English because they need it for their jobs at home, for example, as tour guides or business people for whom English is an international language. A large number of students, however, wish to improve their English because they plan to complete further academic studies in Australia. The students in this study belong to the latter category.

1.4 Number of Korean Overseas Students in Australia

In 1988, there were 1,032 Korean students in English courses. It was the third largest group after China (4,500) and Japan (1,888), as shown in Table 2. The number of Korean students is expected to increase further because the importance of English is high for the students in Korea and most students feel English is essential for their future lives. To gain a professional or technical occupation, English is one of the most important requirements. Higher competition to enter a tertiary institution in Korea also encourage more students to go overseas where university entry is easier.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English (Full-Fee)</th>
<th>Special Studies (Full-Fee)</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Africa</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>2,369</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>7,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1,888</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>2,242</td>
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<tr>
<td>R O Korea</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1,587</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>780</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>243</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1,477</td>
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<td>Other Asia</td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>594</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Europe</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1,292</td>
<td>1,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,046</td>
<td>1,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Pacific</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji / Tuvalu</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other South Pacific</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10,227</td>
<td>5,728</td>
<td>4,939</td>
<td>20,894</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Employment, Education and Training (Cited in Jones, 1989, p 33)
However there is a big difference in the number of Korean students in language courses and in formal courses. The number of Korean students in English language courses (1,032) is much bigger than students in formal courses (195) as shown in Table 3. The main reason may be because a formal course requires a higher English ability, but most Korean students do not satisfy the institutional entry requirement and so they are studying language course to meet the formal course’s language requirement. The purpose of this study was to identify the problems of Korean students in English language courses.

Table 3

Private Overseas Students in Australia in Formal Courses by Country and Region, 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Subsidised Program</th>
<th>Full - Fee Program</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Tertiary / Post Secondary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia :</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R O Korea</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>7,065</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>468</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>138</td>
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<td>Other Asia</td>
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<td>Fiji / Tuvalu</td>
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<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other South Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,414</td>
<td>13,084</td>
<td>2,532</td>
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Source: Department of Employment, Education and Training.
(Cited in Jones, 1989, p 31)
1.5 Principal Objectives of the Study

The principal objectives of the study were:
- To describe Korean students' situation at WELC (Wollongong English Language Centre) from the perspectives of the students as well as their teacher and the researcher.
- To identify some of the students' problems in Australia.
- To suggest possible guidelines whereby the problems identified may begin to be resolved.

1.6 Rationale / Justification for Conducting the Study

While there has been much research on overseas students in Australia, the results of the studies cannot be applied directly to Korean students at WELC. There are three main reasons for conducting this study.

First, there has been little research devoted specifically to Korean students' situation and problems in the Australian university context. There has been much research on overseas students in Australia, some of it dealing with specific national groups such as Malaysians, Indonesians and Thais (e.g., Bradley and Bradley 1984), and other studies such as Rao's survey (1976) or the Golding Report (1984) which took Australia-wide samples. However, there has been no research devoted specifically to Korean students' problems. This is possibly due to the fact that students from Korea make up such
a small proportion of the total overseas student body. However, the number of Korean students is increasing every year, for example, from 165 students in 1983 to 195 in 1988 in formal courses. In particular, the number of Korean students in non-formal courses is the third highest in the demographic order by country of origin after China and Japan.

A number of researchers have stressed that overseas students in Australia share many similar adjustment problems. For example, Rao (1976) insists that:

"Though the countries of origin are different, the social backgrounds, attitudes, experiences and future career plans of overseas students are very similar. The differences that exist between the overseas students in developed countries are only of degree not kind." (Rao, 1976, p 5)

Burke (1986) also insists that:

"While cultural differences between overseas students and Australians clearly exist, their importance must not be over-emphasised." (Burke, 1986, p 219)

He also concluded that:

"The problems faced by foreign students are not so different from problems confronted by students in general." (Burke, 1986, p 220)

However, there is no doubt that each foreign ethnic group has some distinctive needs and problems, based on differences in social and cultural background as well as earlier education. Hodgkin (1974) supports that:

"Through the period in which the training of foreign students has been regarded as Australian aid, we have tended to look at its recipients under certain blanket categories. We call them overseas students, or at a slightly more refined level, Asian, Fijian or New Guinea students, with the general assumption that needs, problems and reactions can be regarded as the same under any one or all of these divisions. This ignores the extreme variations in cultural background and has been found to be unrealistic, and in some cases quite dangerous." (Hodgkin, 1974, p 45)
In Australia, most overseas students are from Asia. However, most students do not belong to or share in one culture. For example, the Malay culture is very different to the India or Chinese culture, even within Malaysia. Even the Chinese students are of several nationalities (e.g., from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore or Hong Kong) with different cultural experiences, as well as quite different language affinities. Despite these differences, the view that all overseas students share the same problems or that their problems are similar to those of Australian students is not acceptable. Even though Bradley and Bradley (1984) studied Asian students' problems from Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, the findings cannot be applied directly to Korean students in WELC because:

1) Sample students in Bradley and Bradley (1984) were from formal educational institutions, secondary and tertiary institutions.

2) The students' learning experiences and cultural backgrounds were different from Korean overseas students.

The second reason for conducting this inquiry focused upon Korean students is that very little research attention has been paid to the increasing number of students in non-formal courses, for example the students in ELICOS. The majority of existing studies deal with students undertaking formal studies in secondary or tertiary institution. In 1988, Australia hosted 42,565 private overseas students, half of them were taking short-term English language courses and other non-formal courses. In particular, 10,227 out of a total of 42,565 overseas students came to Australia to study
English. Among them, Korean was the third largest demographic group (1,032). The number of students coming to Australia to study English is increasing. Last year, more than 30,000 students came to Australia to study English (Sydney Morning Herald, 20th, April, 1990).

There is a large literature on the problems which overseas students encounter, but the subjects of the studies are mostly the students of formal secondary or tertiary education institutions. However, the problems which ELICOS students encounter may be different from those in formal education. The two groups of students (ELICOS students and students in formal education) are different in some characteristics. The former group is engaged in a non-formal course while the latter group is engaged in a formal course for their degree or certificate. Therefore the students in non-formal courses often do not have entrance examination or formal assessment, and the courses are relatively short, usually less than one year. The two groups have different levels in English proficiency. It would be right to assume that the latter group has better proficiency in English than the former group because students in formal courses have passed English language proficiency as the minimum institutional requirement for overseas students while students in ELICOS are still preparing for the test if they want to study in a formal institution.

Even though Hoven (1987) investigated the linguistic and social contexts of an adult Indonesian learner of English as a second language (ESL) in Australia, and how these factors
affected his language learning progress, there is no study dealing with Korean students’ specific problems in learning English.

The third and final reason for this present study is that most of the existing studies on the problems of overseas students have been based on surveys. As Jones (1989) pointed out, there is some evidence that many overseas students feel awkward about providing written responses to questions that canvas such sensitive issues as their financial situation, family background or whether they have been the targets of racism in Australia. Jones (1989) added:

"Some mailed questionnaires have been poorly designed, with unclear questions and generally cluttered appearance. Others have been mailed at inadvisable times, for example mailed during a period dominated by end-of-year examinations and the long summer vacation. Even when researchers have reported a generally satisfactory response rate, sensitive questions are frequently left unanswered." (Jones, 1989, p 36)

Burke (1986) also confessed after his survey that:

"Students may have been reluctant to admit to experiencing severe problems for reasons of personal pride. This may constitute a limitation to the validity of the findings by surveys." (Burke, 1986, p 96)

Because of the shortcomings of surveys on the topic, some researchers (Rao, 1976; Golding, et al., 1984) conducted interviews to supplement the quantitative survey data. Hodgkin (1966) and Hoven (1987) also used multiple data collection methods such as interviews, observations, collection of student’s files as well as questionnaires. This study will also diversify the research techniques, in favour of more qualitative methods including a questionnaire, individual interviews from many perspectives, observations, and students’
1.7 Conclusion

To reiterate, the purpose of this study is to describe the problems of Korean students at WELC and to suggest possible guidelines for resolving these problems, because it is assumed that Korean students have specific problems in learning English which are somewhat different from the general findings on overseas students. This study would seem to be important because of the increasing number of Korean students, currently undertaking English language courses in Australia.

Even though there is no study on Korean students, the large volume of materials on overseas students has been a guideline for the study. In the following chapter, a review of the related research is to be found. This is followed by an outline of data collection and analysis in Chapter 3, and a summary of findings in Chapter 4, and conclusions and discussion in Chapter 5 which includes implications of this study and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
2.1 Introduction

There is a very large body of research literature on the problems which overseas students encounter. The most comprehensive studies in this field in its early stages were conducted by Hodgkin (1966, 1972) and Rao (1976, 1979). In the 1980s, more attention has been paid to the private overseas students according to the Australian Government's policy. Most studies have been conducted during that period (e.g., Ballard, 1987; Bradley and Bradley, 1984; Burke, 1986; Golding, et al., 1984; Radford, 1984; Samuelowitz, 1987). Almost of them were based on surveys of the overseas population, either from the perspective of support service staff (for example, Burke, 1986), or on behalf of policy making bodies (for example, Golding, et al., 1984). The existing studies give detailed descriptions of the overseas student population in Australia (e.g., Rao, 1976; Golding, et al., 1984), or in a particular tertiary institution (e.g., Burke, 1986).

2.2 Four Representative Studies

Among the existing literature, early studies by Hodgkin (1966, 1972) and three representative surveys (Burke, 1986; Golding, et al., 1984; Rao, 1976) are briefly reviewed and the common problems of overseas students mentioned most frequently are studied in detail.

2.2.1 Hodgkin's Studies

Hodgkin's contribution to an understanding of overseas students' problems of adjustment to Australia is significant. Her first study (1966) was the investigation of the social and
cultural adjustment of Malaysian students who returned to their country. In her research, she used a variety of techniques including interviews, observations, and collection of files on Malaysian students.

One of the factors which Hodgkin believed played a great influence on the adjustment of Malaysian and other overseas students was their social preference for relying on primary group assistance rather than dealing with strangers. She wrote that

"Where primary ties at home are with special persons, for example with mother, sister or brother, these can be duplicated more or less satisfactorily in the overseas situation and facilitate adjustment. Such relationships are found between Malays and their landladies or girl friends in Australia..... For those who are accustomed to a wider circle of close relationships within extended families or schoolmate groups, tendency here is to form primary ties within ethnic households or cliques. Often these groups constitute a barrier to friendships with Australians, and this is the case especially with Chinese students." (Hodgkin, 1966, p 181)

Hodgkin (1972) insisted that the Commonwealth Government needed to be more cooperative and that institutions should take some responsibility for assisting overseas students to overcome their various problems. She continued (1972) that:

"At present, the evidence indicates that there is considerable wastage of finance and effort at all levels. Universities in particular, have resources which could be used to investigate the crucial issues involved in this exercise. A great many inadequate remedial efforts are being attempted by government, welfare bodies and educational institutions without consideration in depth of the basic cultural, linguistic, economic and social factors which underlie the problems." (Hodgkin, 1972, p 266)

Hodgkin’s identification of four main factors (cultural,
linguistic, economic, and social factors) underlying overseas students' problems was significant because most overseas students' problems identified from other studies on the topic fall into those four main factors. Her data collection through multiple methods provided qualitative data to illuminate these factors. However, she limited the focus of her study to cultural and social factors only. Some problems raised from linguistic factors may be critical for overseas students' study. The next three studies reviewed below identified a wider range of problems of overseas students by employing surveys.

2.2.2 Rao's Study

Rao's study (1976) was conducted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Some studies had been conducted in U.S.A., Canada, France, Britain, and Germany. Rao's sample total of 896 respondents represented a 56% return. In addition to the questionnaire, about 100 overseas students were interviewed to overcome the limitations of a highly structured questionnaire.

In the survey, Rao asked students about those problems which they believed to be important to overseas students, and then asked them about the problems which they had actually experienced. The problems that the overseas students believed to be important were:

1) the need to live away from home;
2) need for proficiency in English language;
3) costs associated with overseas education and
4) the necessity to adapt to the Australian educational programme.

However, the problems overseas students actually experienced were slightly different in order. The main experienced problems were 1) language, 2) academic, 3) personal and 4) other difficulties.

The discrepancy between the responses may suggest that the respondents referred to the problems that were usually perceived to be important in responses to the first question while the respondents referred to problems and difficulties that they had actually faced in the past in response to the last question. These findings suggest that the problems overseas students perceive are not exactly the same as the problems they actually experience.

In another study, Golding and his colleagues identified the problems overseas students experienced very clearly from relatively more respondents (1,842 overseas students).

2.2.3. Golding Report

In 1984, Golding and his colleagues conducted a nation-wide survey of private overseas students in Australia. A brief questionnaire was sent out to 2,509 randomly selected students engaged in formal studies throughout Australia. A response rate of 1,842 completed questionnaires (73%) was obtained. An additional 120 randomly selected overseas
students from Sydney were interviewed, mainly to supplement the quantitative data from the mail survey. Over half the students were from Malaysia and the rest were from a variety of countries, mainly Asian.

In the survey, the students were asked to indicate if they had experienced any serious problems within fifteen supplied categories. Only 16% of the students indicated that they had no serious problems. The other students encountered at least one problem listed in the questionnaire. The proportions for responses were:

- missing home 46%
- finances 26%
- loneliness 26%
- personal problems 25%
- coping with English language 23%
- accommodation 21%
- adjusting to life in a new country 20%
- academic progress 17%
- ability to adapt to the Australian education system 14%
- unpleasant treatment from the public 14%
- unpleasant treatment from other students, faculty members, etc 13%
- health problems 10%
- government departments in Australia 4%
The table shows very clearly the problems of overseas students. However, the simple percentage of the outcomes does not explain the nature and cause of the overseas students' problems. Even though Burke's survey (1986) obtained data from the students in only one institution, he did endeavour to explain the overseas students' problems in detail.

2.2.4 Burke's Survey

Burke's survey of all overseas students at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in 1984 provides useful empirical data as well as comprehensive recommendations. This survey was conducted in October 1984 and a completed questionnaire return was obtained from 1,097 students (62%) of overseas students enrolled at UNSW. Respondents were predominantly from South-East Asia: Malaysia (62%), Hong Kong (20%), and Indonesia (9%).

Students' experiences in 10 main areas were surveyed by asking them how hard or easy it had been for them to cope with a wide range of issues and situations. The area which caused students the greatest difficulty was their financial situation; followed by managing study demands; discrimination and prejudice; future prospects; language and communication;
adjustment to Australia; practical living arrangements; understanding regulations and procedures; and religious and cultural values.

The three studies by Rao (1996), Golding, et al., (1984), and Burke (1986) provided comprehensive data by employing survey methods. They also collected extensive data from many respondents. However, the data obtained were from the students' point of view only, unlike Hodgkin's study (1966) which provided additional data from the researcher's perspective by employing observations. This current study will provide data from three different views; students, the teacher, and the researcher by employing a survey, interviews with students and teacher, student journals, and observations.

2.3 Four Main Problems

Even though each study reflects different aspects of problems experienced by overseas students, four main categories emerge. These categories may be identified as language problems; problems in cultural adjustment; problems in adapting to new study patterns; and financial problems. These four problem areas will now be examined in detail.

2.3.1 Language Problems

Among the four main problems of overseas students, language problems have been paid most attention, especially by Bradley and Bradley (1984). However, the exact nature of
language problems is still unknown. Bradley and Bradley (1984), in their detailed study of the language, culture and educational problems of Asian students in Australia, comment that there is a large literature on the problems encountered by overseas students, but much of this is sociological. They write that

"Language problems are often represented by only one or two items in a long shopping list of areas for concern, despite the fact that students from non-English speaking countries usually rank language as their primary problems." (Bradley and Bradley, 1984, p 3)

As Bradley and Bradley (1984) identified, Rao's study (1976) was sociological in orientation. Of the 25 questions about problems frequently encountered in foreign countries, only two related to language problems (fluency in English and ability to adapt to an Australian educational programme). These two questions were of a very general nature.

In Rao's study, language difficulty was at the top of the problems overseas students actually experienced. Rao (1976) found that students from Indo-China, Thailand and Indonesia perceived lack of fluency in English as a major problem - 71%, 62%, 59% respectively. Rao mentioned that:

"More than half mentioned problems associated with English language. These vary from student to student. The problem is not so much in ability to read and write since a majority of the students appear to have fair ability to read and write. About a fifth of the respondents mentioned problems arising from Australian slang or accent. This makes it difficult for them to follow lecture and to engage in conversation with others." (Rao, 1976, p 52)

In the study, it was identified that overseas students
do not perceive themselves as having any difficulty in reading and writing English, but rather as having difficulty understanding lectures and presenting seminars. However, it is questionable that they do not have any difficulty in reading texts or writing essays, because the overseas students' ability in reading and writing may fall behind the norm of their average Australian counterparts.

This study will identify Korean overseas students' reading and writing problems through interviews with students and their teacher.

In Burke's study (1986), he identified overseas students' language problems in detail. In the study, 60% of respondents expressed that they had difficulty giving oral reports, asking questions or participating in class discussion; 58% expressed difficulty producing long written answers in a short time under examination conditions; 45% expressed difficulty in understanding Australian slang and the Australian accent; 48% found it difficult to know right English words or sayings to express their thoughts; 40% claimed that people did not understand what they said because of the English accent; 39% found it difficult to write essays and reports in English and 36% claimed that it was difficult to get help to improve their written and spoken English. Contrary to Rao's study, in Burke's study, a large number of students expressed difficulty with written essays.
In another study, Bradley and Bradley (1984) stated that for overseas students, written expression is the most serious problem, particularly because in the South East Asian education system essays are rarely required except for a few paragraphs in higher secondary and tertiary studies. Bradley and Bradley's work (1984) is a handbook for tutors of English to students from Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. The study contains a detailed grammatical and linguistic analysis of the types of errors these students make in various language skills in particular sounds, words and sentences.

Bradley and Bradley (1984) concluded that:

"Overseas students, even the most fluent, still make errors which interfere with their comprehensibility. In speaking and writing many are not confident in their abilities. Some also express doubts about their reading ability, and their understanding of spoken English is far from perfect. These various linguistic problems make their educational task very difficult." (Bradley and Bradley, 1984, pp. 211 - 212)

The studies by Rao (1976), Burke (1986) and Bradley and Bradley (1984) identified overseas students' language problems in a tertiary institution or a language centre only, such as reading and writing difficulties. However, they did not fully study the overseas students' problems encountered outside of school. The overseas students may also have language problems in their social life, such as making friends. Conversation with others, for example, landlord or neighbours, may improve their English. However, if their social life is blocked because of language problems, this hinders students' English practice. The students' disadvantages caused by language
problems also need to be studied. This study will identify Korean overseas students' language problems in a class and after the class.

2.3.2. Problems in Cultural Adjustment

Another category of problems expressed by overseas students, which emerges from the research literature, is the difficulty of living in another culture, far away from home, family and friends. As Bochner (1972) defined overseas students as foreigners, they are temporary sojourners, living in an unfamiliar environment with people who have different values and customs.

They have to adjust their life to the host country during their sojourn, even though they have to return to their home country after the completion of their study. In order to adjust successfully to their new environment, overseas students first need to learn and adapt to the culture of their host country. It is at this stage that they first experience what is referred as "culture shock" (Sunda Das, 1972). The severity of culture shock experienced by overseas students is determined to a large extent by their attitudes and experiences prior to and following arrival in their host country. These include willingness to put aside well established habits and attitudes that are not acceptable in Australia; flexibility in adapting to new ones; willingness to participate socially with host - members; and of having confidence in the latter's gestures of friendship and support.
As Schumann (1981) mentioned, second language learning is determined by a student’s acculturation. However, Korean migrants’ acculturation process in the United States of America is very slow as demonstrated in a report by Hurh and Kim (1980). They mentioned that it takes several generations for complete acculturation to be achieved by Korean migrants. They called this slow acculturation process ‘Adhesive Adaptation’. One of the reasons for slow acculturation is the Korean migrants’ segregation of themselves from the English speaking people, largely because of their insecurity in English proficiency. This sort of self-exile attitude is not only observed among the migrants but also observed frequently among the students and scholars attending U.S. colleges and universities (Hurh and Kim 1980). The Korean overseas students in Australia also may segregate themselves from the native speakers and other class mates from other language backgrounds because they are not confident in conversation with others. This may hinder the Korean students’ learning of English.

According to Zwigmann and Gunn (1983), uprooting is a special crisis that occurs in an overseas student’s life and is a more specific term for conditions which are sometimes described as culture shock, homesickness or adjustment difficulties. It is considered a phenomenon experienced of necessity by all overseas students. Problems relating to food, accommodation, climate, racial discrimination are also mentioned by many overseas students.
According to Rao’s study (1976), the problem about which overseas students were most concerned, was the need to live away from home. More specifically their problems were associated with separation from family (35%), homesickness (29%), and loneliness while in Australia (26%). However, there was inconsistency between the problems perceived by overseas students and the problems experienced. Loneliness was an important problem perceived by overseas students, while only 5% of the students stated they had actually faced this problem in the past. Similarly, problems relating to discrimination by Australians against overseas students, food, climate and mixing socially with Australians were mentioned as other important problems encountered by overseas students, but only a small fraction of the respondents had actually faced these problems in the past. This discrepancy may be a reflection of the respondents’ inability to specify the sensitive areas which create these problems. Respondents may not have personally experienced particular problems but may know persons who have. Thus they may be aware of problems without having actually experienced them. Some students may also be reluctant to talk about discrimination experiences.

As in Rao’s study (1976), Golding and his colleagues (1984) found that a high proportion of the respondents expressed problems relating to living in Australia. The problems were missing home (46%), loneliness (26%), accommodation (21%) and adjustment to life in a new country (20%).
In Burke's study (1986), about 40% of respondents said that getting used to being an overseas student and feeling different or conspicuous was the most difficult aspect of adjusting to Australia. Approximately 20% of respondents said they had been affected to some extent by "culture shock", especially in terms of Australian sexual mores, and feeling torn between their traditional ways and Western ways. Slightly fewer respondents expressed difficulty with specific situations covered in the survey - becoming involved in a relationship that would be unacceptable back home, and conflict between traditional and current values.

In addition, about half of the respondents said they had experienced considerable difficulty in locating and obtaining accommodation close to the University. The respondents preferred to live close to campus. Sharing a room was a major problem for 4 out of 10 respondents, and 3 out of 10 said they found the lack of privacy brought about by sharing a house or flat difficult for them to cope with. In spite of this, few students suggested they had serious difficulties in their relationships with housemates.

Cultural adjustment is important not only in overseas students' life but also in their study. To complete their course successfully, the students have to overcome cultural problems caused by living in other country. The severity of cultural problems may be determined by their past experience in their home country. In this study, it is expected that
Korean students' cultural problems will be identified.

2.3.3 Adapting to New Study Patterns

The third category of problems is adapting to a new style of teaching and learning. Those problems result from the differences between overseas students' previous educational experiences and those experiences in Australia. As an example, Ballard (1989) insists that overseas students' reading strategies are different from the expectation of their lecturers in Australia. From past experience, overseas students know that close, word-by-word reading is essential. The main purpose of reading is to know a text thoroughly and precisely so that they can immediately answer a detailed comprehension test on the text. However they may not be able to meet their lecturers' expectations of discussing points raised from the text. The difference is based on students' cultural and intellectual tradition which is very different from that in Australia.

Students' learning style differences exist even in their English learning. Sato (1982) examined the classroom interactions of two ethnically mixed university ESL classrooms at the University of California at Los Angeles. The participation of Asian students was compared with that of non-Asian students, and there proved to be significant differences between the two groups with respect to the distribution of talk in their ESL classes. Sato found that Asian students took significantly fewer speaking turns than
their non-Asian classmates (36.5% as opposed to 63.5%). The Asians also initiated turns at talking by means of self selection only as half often as did the non-Asians (34% as opposed to 66%). Each Asian student was allocated on average only 2 turns per class by the teacher, whereas the average allocation of each non-Asian student was of the order of 5 per class. Her conclusion is:

"....... the frequency analyses revealed that the Asian learners contributed to class discussions for less than did the non-Asians. Not only did the former self select less often, but they were also called upon by their teacher less frequently." (Sato, 1982, p 110)

However, Sato's study (1982) did not identify the reason for the differences in English learning. The study also cannot be applicable to other forms of study because English learning covers not only discussion but also other study activities, such as writing and reading.

The Korean overseas students in this study are learning academic English to enter an Australian university. They need to improve their talking skills but also academic writing and extensive reading skills to succeed in their tertiary study. Their learning style in these areas will be included in this study.

Reid (1987) compared learning style preferences between native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) of English. The study indicated that NNSs learning style preferences often differ significantly from those of NSs; that ESL students from different language backgrounds sometimes
differ from one another in their learning style preferences; that other variables such as sex, length of time in the United States, length of time studying of English in the U.S., field of study, level of education, TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language) score, and age are related to differences in learning styles; and that modifications and extensions of ESL student learning styles may occur with changes in academic environment and experience.

Reid's study is important to this study, because he gave specific information on Korean students by studying students in situations similar to this study. The participants in Reid's study were pre-university ESL students in university-affiliated intensive English language programs in the United States. The participants were 154 NSs and 1,234 NNSs. Among them, there were 118 Korean students constituting the fifth largest ethnic group of the study. Of all language backgrounds, Korean students were the most visual in their learning style preferences. They also showed strong preferences in kinesthetic and tactile learning. However, they indicated negative learning style preferences in group learning.

There are differences also in teaching styles among English teachers (Young and Lee, 1985). Young and Lee (1985) used an indirect method of measuring teaching style for a large number of Chinese and Anglo teachers to make comparison between the two groups. The study was carried out among Hong
Kong Chinese teachers of English in primary and secondary schools and consisted of a questionnaire designed to elicit teachers’ attitudes towards teacher-directed or student-centred classrooms. The researchers compared the replies from over 500 Chinese teachers of English with those given to the same questionnaire by 40 Western teachers of English in Hong Kong. The results showed a highly significant difference between the two groups. The replies from the Chinese teachers consistently showed more favourable attitudes towards teacher-directed classroom activities than was the case for the western teachers. The difference seems to lie principally in the degree of control which Chinese teachers and their Western colleagues think appropriate, and in the nature of the evaluation of students’ contributions, which Western teachers feel need to be more positive than do their Chinese counterparts.

Teaching style differences exist even in ESL situations. Guthrie (1983) contrasted the teaching style of two teachers at a bilingual school in the United States. One teacher was an Anglo male who had no experience of teaching Chinese children and the other was a bilingual, biliterate Chinese-American female. Guthrie found that while the teachers interacted in a similar way with groups of students with fluent to middle English proficiency, the Anglo teacher used far more attention-getters (soliciting attention for example, "Hey" and "Look"), requests for actions (seeking the performance of an action by hearer for example, "Give me it"
and "Put the toys down"), and protests (expressing objections to learner's behaviour for example, "Stop!" and "No") with the limited English proficiency (LEP) group than did the Chinese teacher. According to Guthrie, the superior performance of the Chinese - American teacher with the LEP group was not due to the fact that she used Chinese with this group, but rather she was more familiar with the rules of classroom interaction with Chinese children, and could therefore give clearer instructions and anticipate problems that were likely to arise, than was possible for the non - Chinese teacher.

To study teaching and learning styles, direct methods will be used: asking the teacher and students in interviews. However, classroom observations will also yield useful information. The observations will cover areas such as teaching methods, students' responses to teaching methods, and interactions between teacher and student, and among students.

### 2.3.4 Financial Problems

The last category of problems, which may be identified in the research literature, is overseas students' financial problems. Golding, et al., (1984) stated that the majority of overseas students come from low or middle income families. They showed that 62% of overseas students estimated that their parent's combined yearly income was less than $A 15,000; 25% said that it was between $A 15,000 and $A 30,000; and 13% said it was more than $A 30,000. In the study, 26% of the respondents mentioned their financial difficulties. Among
them, 7% reported that they were struggling to survive, and another 35% said they could just manage their expenses if they were very careful.

In Burke's study (1986), financial problems constituted the area causing the highest level of concern for the students among 13 potential problem areas. One of the major expenses for students was the Overseas Student Charge. Apart from the considerable amount involved, unexpected increases in the OSC have exacerbated these difficulties, and made it difficult for students and their families to make appropriate financial plans to cover their education and living expenses.

The other causes for the financial problems was the high cost of accommodation and living in Sydney and the difficulty in finding part time or vacation employment (Burke 1986). Students' financial problems will be studied in detail during interviews.

2.4 Conclusion

The existing studies have identified problems of overseas students in Australia. The problems can be classified into four main categories: language problems; problems in cultural adjustment; problems in adapting to new study patterns; and financial problems.

This current study will collect data from the perspectives of students, teacher, and the researcher by
employing a survey, students' journals, interviews with students, interview with teacher, and classroom observations. The data will be triangulated to describe overall problems of Korean overseas students in WELC. Data collection procedures are described in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY
3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to inquire into and identify the problems encountered by Korean overseas students at WELC and to construct possible guidelines for resolving these problems. It was expected that overseas students would experience a range of problems in a foreign country because their living conditions and learning situations are different to what they have experienced in their home country. Their problems are defined as any difficulties encountered both as a visitor to a foreign country and as a student.

3.2 Site and Participants

3.2.1 Site

WELC (Wollongong English Language Centre), the site of this study, is one of the ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) centres accredited by the Australian Government. It is attached to Wollongong University. In December, 1990, there were 324 overseas students at WELC. Most of these students were from Asia, mainly from Korea (124), China, Taiwan, Thailand and Japan. While the centre is located in Wollongong University, it is private, run by the Illawarra Technology Cooperation. The prime function of the centre is to provide for overseas students' transition from English courses to University or Foundation Studies. The Foundation Studies program is provided
for students who do not satisfy the academic requirements of the university. Students in Foundation Studies learn English and other basic subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, and Sciences according to their special study in University. The procedure for moving students from English courses to University or Foundation Studies is outlined in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*University or Foundation Study Entry*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Pre-Course Entry Exam</th>
<th>Pre-Course</th>
<th>Entry Exam</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Like other ELICOS centres, WELC also provides tuition in English to a level where an overseas student's ability would be acceptable for entering an Australian tertiary institution, in this case Wollongong University. There are three different levels of English classes: General English; Introductory Course; and Pre-Course. The students in General English Class are oriented to learning general skills of English such as conversation skills or business English. The students in the Introductory Course and the Pre-Course are oriented to learning English for academic purposes. The students in the latter two courses intend to enter Wollongong University after they have completed their language course.
At WELC they develop oral and written language skills, research skills, and time management skills.

Prior to enrolling in the English course at WELC, students undertake a Pre-Course Entry Examination. The examination is divided into three parts, A, B and C. Part A includes a 10 minutes lecture and written response. Students are expected to take a few notes during the lecture and then to write a retelling of the lecture. The retelling must be at least 200 words in length in 30 minutes. Part B contains a reading passage. Students are expected to read the passage carefully and then to answer 10 multiple choice items based on the interpretation of the text in 30 minutes. Part C contains several reading passages which the students have studied. Students are expected to write an essay based on the reading passages. The essay must be at least 250 words in length in 60 minutes.

The results of the Pre-Course Entry Examination determine the recommended length of the English course for each student. Students who are assessed as needing 4 months or less of English, are accepted into the Pre-Course. Students who are assessed as needing more than 4 months of English are accepted into an Introductory Course. These students need to satisfactorily pass this course before they are accepted into the Pre-Course. Students who do not satisfy the course requirements, are advised to extend their English course. At the end of the Pre-Course, students
undertake the Wollongong University Entry Examination.

The students participating in this study were enrolled in one of the Introductory Courses at WELC.

3.2.2 Participants

The participants in this study were Korean students at WELC and their teacher. All Korean students at WELC were surveyed in the study's first phase. There were 45 Korean students at the time of survey. Among them, 32 students responded to a questionnaire. Most of the respondents started their study at the beginning of the first semester (February). Their English proficiency varied. Some of them were able to write a short essay at the beginning of the course, but most of them were asked to study English for a whole year before entering the University or Foundation Studies.

Following the survey, one introductory course class among seven such courses, was selected for case study inquiry. The class was selected because:
- there was a reasonable proportion of Korean students in the class (10 Korean students out of a class total of 15).
- the teacher of the class volunteered for this study.
- students of the class aimed to enter University or Foundation Studies after completing the English courses at WELC.

The focal class represented the second highest level of
English according to the results of the students' English test. The students in the class were expected to proceed to the Pre-Course after the semester. Most students in this class already had studied during the previous two semesters at the centre. Among the 10 Korean students in the class, 9 students participated as focal subjects. The students were interviewed and observed. They also kept written journals after class. The data from those methods were used to construct 9 case studies. One student was eliminated because of his frequent absences. The nine students showed great interest in the purpose of this study and were willing to be observed and interviewed.

The Korean students in the focal class were a homogeneous group in terms of their English level and their purpose for studying English. It was presumed that the students' level of English was similar because the class was organised according to students' results of the English test at the end of the preceding semester. These students also wanted to enter University or Foundation Studies in the following year. All of them started their language course in February except a student who arrived at the beginning of the semester and another who studied English the year before in Sydney.

3.2.3 Teacher

The teacher of the class was a volunteer for this study. Like the students, she showed great interest in the purpose of the study and was willing to give any cooperation required.
The teacher had two years’ experience in teaching English for migrants and another two years in teaching English for overseas students at WELC. She enjoyed her work. Her major study was English at university level and she was enrolled as a Masters candidate at the time of this study.

The teacher believed that her class needed to improve general language skills as well as academic skills. She commented that general skills such as talking, grammar and reading skills related to academic skills. She believed that by practising these skills, students could meet the language demands from university study.

The Korean students in the focal class and their teacher were further studied in detail by using multiple research methods, explained below.

3.3 Rationale for Mode of Inquiry and Use of Multiple Methods

Most of the existing studies on the problems of overseas students have been based on surveys as indicated in the previous literature review. However, those studies showed many shortcomings. The quantitative data collected from a survey were not sufficient to describe the complexity of the topic. To overcome such shortcomings, this study diversified research techniques. In the first phase of the study, a survey was used as in other existing studies. However, the researcher used this survey as an initial tool for deciding upon the subsequent direction of the inquiry and the undertaking of a more
detailed case study inquiry. In so doing, multiple methods were employed. These methods were interviews, students' journals and observations.

Smith (1975) commented that:

"Much research has employed particular methods or techniques out of methodological parochialism or ethnocentrism. Methodologists often push particular pet methods either because those are the only one they have familiarity with, or because they believe their method is superior to all others." (Smith, 1975, p 136)

In fact, most of the existing studies on the problems of overseas students have been based on survey. The frequent use of one method has been a difficulty in many of the existing studies. As Jones (1989) indicated, many overseas students feel awkward about providing written responses to sensitive questions. Some questions have also been poorly designed with unclear questions and a generally cluttered appearance (Jones 1989). To overcome the shortcomings of the survey, some studies employed an interview (e.g., Rao, 1976; Golding, et al., 1984). The interviews could supplement the data obtained from the surveys.

The use of multiple methods avoids the limitations of one technique alone, while also providing the researcher with the tools for collecting data which will reflect the complexity of the study's focus inquiry. Thus this study used survey, interviews, observations and journal methods. Data were triangulated across these methods because:

"triangular techniques in the social science attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the
richness and the complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one stand point and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data" (Cohen and Manion, 1985, p 254).

There is an advantage in using multiple methods. Whereas a single method yields sufficient and unambiguous information on selected phenomena, it provides only a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and of situations in which human beings interact. Smith (1975) insists that as research methods act as filters through which the environment is selectively experienced, they are never atheoretical or neutral in representing the world of experience. Therefore, exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the whole picture the researcher investigated, because the data generated are not simply artefacts of one specific method of collection (Lin, 1976). Greater reliability can be achieved when different methods of data collection yield substantially the same results. The incorporation of these data collection methods is depicted in Figure 2, page 47.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

There were 4 main data collection procedures used in this study. They were survey, two different interviews with students and one interview with their teacher, students' journals and class observations. These are each explained below.

3.4.1 Survey

Survey is the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research. Survey can be used to describe the
nature of existing conditions, or identify standards against which existing condition can be compared or determine the relationships that exist between specific events (Cohen and Manion, 1985). The collection of information involves one or more of the following data gathering techniques: structured or semi-structured interviews; self-completion or postal questionnaires; standardised tests of attainment or performance; and attitude scales. Most studies on the problems of overseas students used the mailed questionnaire. This study also used a questionnaire (Appendix 1) in the first phase to obtain information from many students. The purposes were to discover:

- Korean students’ reasons for coming to Australia;
- their plans for their future; and
- what they have experienced since coming to Australia.

The questionnaires were distributed at WELC to all 45 Korean students through their teachers in class. The questions were written in Korean. The students were allowed to respond in Korean to help them articulate their perceptions and feelings. The questions were deliberately open-ended because it was hoped that students could make any responses they wished in their own words. 32 students out of 45 enrolled students responded.
Figure 2

Data Collection Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Data Collection Procedure</th>
<th>Focus of Data Collection</th>
<th>Specific Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>General Information from all Korean students at WELC</td>
<td>Reasons for coming to Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Future plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Interview 1</td>
<td>9 case study students' Problems in Australia</td>
<td>Why Korean students study at WELC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison of life in Australia with Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Korean students' problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning environment in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview 2</td>
<td>9 case study students' problems in class</td>
<td>Responses to &amp; perceptions of a video tape of a sequence of class episodes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Problems encountered during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other specific problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview with Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher's perspective of Korean students</td>
<td>General problems of the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher's perception of Korean students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Problems in teaching Korean students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common mistakes of Korean students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>9 case study students' opinion on class / examination</td>
<td>Opinions of &amp; responses to class / examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Researcher's perspective of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Interaction between teacher and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching style</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.2 Interview

Although the interview as a research technique is normally considered as one of the survey methods, it was separately employed with the expectation that it would give detailed information on the questions of this study.

There is a range of interview styles, from formal through to completely informal interviews, and beyond to the non-directive interview. Within this range, there are four principal kinds of interviews: the structured, the unstructured, the non-directive and the focused interview (Cohen and Manion, 1985).

For the first interview with students (see Appendix 2), a semi-structured interview was employed. The sequence and wording of the questions were scheduled. However, according to the response, more in-depth questions and probes were asked. Nine Korean students were interviewed to further explore:

- Why they decided to study at WELC;
- What the differences between their life in Australia and in Korea were;
- What their problems were;
- What they thought about their learning environment in Australia.

Each student was interviewed for approximately 30 to 45
minutes after class. The interviews were recorded for transcribing to maintain reliability; in addition, notes were taken to highlight points or to establish areas for further questions.

The researcher felt, after transcribing the first interviews, that students' problems encountered during class time needed to be more fully identified. Thus further interviews were arranged.

The second set of interviews was unstructured (see Appendix 3). These interviews were conducted with each student with a video tape which contained various class episodes; a lecture, a small group discussion, and an essay writing session. The first episode was a lecture by the teacher. In this lecture, she explained a famous person's life, and students were asked to take notes. The notetaking was then used to answer questions after the lecture. The second episode was small group discussion. Each group consisted of three to four students. The students were talking about a topic watched on a television news program on the previous day. The third episode was individual presentation to the class on a topic. Students gave their ideas to their teacher. Then, she wrote the ideas on the board. The collection of the ideas were then used for individual essay writing.

After watching the video, each student was interviewed to explain their perceived difficulties in the different class
situations. Students' journals (explained below) were also used for the interview because the students had explained their feelings after class through journal writing.

This second interview was open-ended. As Kerlinger (1970) noted, although the research purpose governed the questions asked, their content, sequence and wording are entirely in the hands of the interviewer. More specifically the questions asked during the second interview concerned:

- What they felt after watching a video tape;
- What their perceived problems are during a class;

In some cases, specific questions raised from students' journal, were also asked. Some of those were:

- "You continuously wrote that a class was boring. Why was it so boring?"
- "You said you agreed with the teacher's comments after your seminar. How did she comment?"

Each student was interviewed for less than 15 minutes after class. The interviews were again recorded for transcribing.

A teacher interview (see Appendix 4) was also conducted. The purpose of this interview was to obtain teacher perceptions of her Korean students. The questions asked included the following topics:

- General problems or needs of the class;
- Teacher's perceptions of Korean students;
- Problems in teaching Korean students;
- Common mistakes of Korean students.
The interview with the teacher lasted 30 minutes and was also recorded for transcribing.

3.4.3 Students' Journal

Journals (see Appendix 4 and 5) were also used to collect data. It was expected that journal data would supplement data from the first interview with students and provide specific questions for each student in the second interview. Through journal writing, students could express their feelings on a class and opinions on their examination. The students were allowed to respond in Korean to help them articulate their feelings more freely.

As already mentioned, students were asked to write their opinion just after a class. It was written three times after different class activities (writing, reading and discussion). Another journal was written after a test to identify students' feelings about the test. The students' journal was expected to provide more detailed information because it was written just after a class activity. Each student's journals were used in the second interview, as already mentioned.

3.4.4 Observation

An important method in any case study is observation. Observation provides data from the researcher's view point. In the current study, observation data were used to triangulate data from interviews and journals which provided data from students' and teacher's view point. The method
employed in this study was 'participant observation'.

Dobbert (1982) distinguishes 'participant observation' from ordinary or straight participation by a researcher, in a group, in four ways. Firstly, the participant observation systematically organises information about the situation around a framework from social science theory and methodology. Secondly, a participant observer records in detail many aspects of the situation. Thirdly, the participant observer periodically abstracts himself from the situation and reviews the recorded information for completeness. Fourthly, in the interests of intersubjectivity, a participant observer constantly checks observations for evidence of personal bias or prejudice (Dobbert, 1982, pp. 102 - 105).

The inherent advantages of participant observation have been summarised by Bailey (1978; cited in Cohen and Manion, 1985)
1. Observation studies are superior to experiments and surveys when data are being collected on non-verbal behaviour.
2. In the observation study, the investigator is able to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and is able to make appropriate notes about its salient features.
3. Because case study observations take place over an extended period of time, the researcher can develop a more intimate and informal relationship with those he is observing, generally in more natural environments than those in which experiments and surveys are conducted.
Case study observations are less reactive than other types of data-gathering methods. For example, in laboratory-based experiments and in surveys that depend upon verbal responses to structured questions, bias can be introduced in the very data that the researcher is attempting to study. (Cohen and Manion, 1985, p 125)

The researcher observed various class activities to collect data from the researcher's viewpoint. The class activities observed involved free talking on news topics such as political situations in Fiji and workers' diet plan in a factory; discussion of students' language problems; group work before writing an essay; learning dictionary skills; and the teacher's lecture on population. Each observation took 10 to 30 minutes. Among the observations, two class activities were video taped and transcribed. In the other observations, the researcher used field notes. To become familiar with the students, the researcher also attended the class three times prior the initial observation, then participated in the class activities with the students during the observations.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from each method were analysed. The first step was analysing data from the survey. The next step was to analyse data focused upon the 9 students and to triangulate across methods and across students to enhance the validity of the study.
The validity of the study was maintained through:
- using multiple methods
- observing in the naturalistic setting of the students' classroom
- obtaining student perspectives through journal writings and interviews.

3.5.1 Survey Analysis

Once questionnaires were collected, they were previewed for each question to obtain an overall impression of the survey data. Then, for each question all the responses were scanned and rewritten on paper to identify categories. Responses containing thematic similarity formed a category. Five to eleven categories were identified among responses to question 2 to 7 which focused upon students' purposes, future plans, influences, support and problems.

To increase reliability, the categorisation was checked with a research colleague. Relationships across questions were also studied because the questions 2, 3 and 4 contained some similarities in context.

3.5.2 Triangulation of Data across Methods for Each Student

To construct 9 case studies, each student's data from the different research methods were analysed. A file was created to collect data from interviews, journals and observations. Each student's data were examined and themes relating to students' concerns were identified. Each theme for a student
was checked across methods for converging evidence or for inconsistencies or contradictions. The analysed data were used to provide each student's profile in the next chapter.

3.5.3 Triangulation of Data across Students for Method

Data across 9 case study students from each method were analysed before synthesising all data to draw an overall picture. The steps taken in analysing data are described below.

3.5.3.1 Data Analysis of Interviews

Once transcribing interviews with students was completed, all the responses for each question were scanned and summarised. The summarised responses were written under three headings, i.e., motivation, general problems and problems during class. The responses containing thematic similarity were grouped under one category.

3.5.3.2 Data Analysis of Journals

Students' responses were scanned to identify categories. The responses were classified under two headings, problems during a class and feelings after a test. The students' opinions containing thematic similarity were categorised.

3.5.3.3 Data Analysis of Observations

By using field notes, students' attendance, participation, and seating arrangements in class were recorded. Students' participation was analysed by checking
interactions between student - teacher and student - student. After comparing a number of interactions, the students were classified into 4 categories: active verbal participation; occasional voluntary participation; participation when asked; and limited participation in group work only. Individual student's specific activities were also checked.

3.5.4 Triangulation of Data across Methods

The next step was to triangulate data across methods. Categories identified from each method were checked for convergence and variation. Among the convergent data overall themes and concerns were identified. However, emerging contradictions were also used and resolved in order to draw an overall picture of the study. The findings are described in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS
4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines outcomes of the inquiry into problems encountered by Korean students at WELC (Wollongong English Language Centre).

In the first section of this chapter, survey outcomes are examined. Categories of responses for each question are described for the students in each category. Relationships among categories and relationships across questions are discussed. Through survey outcomes, an overall picture of all Korean students at WELC is described. This is followed by the presentation of the 9 case study students' profiles. Finally, outcomes across students and across methods are discussed to draw a broader picture of the 9 case study students.

Before examining outcomes, Korean students at WELC are briefly described.

4.2 Description of Korean Overseas Students at WELC

There are 124 Korean students at WELC, out of 324 total overseas students (as of 20/November/1990). The number of Korean students has sharply increased from 45 students at the time of the survey, 4th. April. 1990. To cater for the increase of student numbers, the centre has run the double-shift school system from July, 1990. Some classes started in the morning, while other classes started in the afternoon.

There are 3 different levels of English classes in the
centre. These are General English, Precourse Preparation, and Precourse. The Korean students are distributed into the above 3 different class levels. However, there are few Korean students in Precourse 8, 9, 10 and 11, which consist of recently arrivals with more proficient English than most Koreans.

Among the 9 case study students in this study, 7 students have proceeded to one of the Precourse classes. However, the other two students have remained in one of the Precourse Preparation classes because they have failed in the Precourse Entry Examination. The distribution of Korean students at WELC is depicted in Table 4.

4.3 Survey Outcomes

The purpose of employing a survey was to draw an overall picture of Korean students' reasons for coming to Australia, their plans for the future, and their experiences in Australia as a student. Thirty two students responded to a questionnaire (Appendix 1) among forty five students (a 71% return rate). Among 32 Korean students, 25 were male and 7 was female. The numeric analysis of survey responses is depicted in Figure 3.

The Korean students' reasons for studying English (Question 2) were to prepare for their tertiary study in Australia (10), for their job and future life (8), and to communicate with others (4). Other respondents did not give
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>No. of Korean Students</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
<th>No. of Korean Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General English 1A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Precourse 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General English 1B</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Precourse 3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General English 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Precourse 4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General English 3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Precourse 5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precourse Preparation 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Precourse 6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precourse Preparation 3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Precourse 7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precourse Preparation 3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Precourse 8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precourse Preparation 4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Precourse 9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precourse Preparation 5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Precourse 10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precourse Preparation 6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Precourse 11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precourse 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3

Numeric Analysis of Survey Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Sex</strong></td>
<td>Male : 25 Female : 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Reasons for studying English</strong></td>
<td>To prepare for tertiary study (10) For a job and better future life (8) To communicate with others (4) Studying English is compulsory (9) No answer (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Reasons for entering a university</strong></td>
<td>29 students wanted to enter a university Study oriented (12) For a better life in the future (5) To improve career opportunity (4) For advantage (3) Failed in Korea (1) Not decided (2) No answer (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Future plans</strong></td>
<td>To be employed (11) To run own business (8) To be a researcher (3) To contribute to society (2) Further study (1) To travel (1) To get married (1) No plan (3) No answer (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Influences in decision making</strong></td>
<td>By themselves (16) Parents (11) Friends (1) Teachers and senior workers (1) Dissatisfaction with society and Experience of failure (2) Advertisement (2) No answer (1) * Two students listed two influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Help/ Support</strong></td>
<td>Better environment (3) Family (3) Friends (3) Good relationships with landlords (3) Enriched experiences (3) Became independent (1) Any help or support (8) No answer (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Problems

Language (13)
Accommodation (10)
Expensive living costs (7)
Food (7)
Commercial administration for overseas students (4)
Homesickness (4)
Human relationships (3)
Different climate (2)
Transportation (2)
No answer (3)

* 12 students listed more than one problem.
reasons in detail. However, they mentioned that studying English was compulsory (9) because they felt it was necessary in a modern and international society. One student did not answer.

In the survey, the Korean students' reasons for studying English were mainly 'instrumental'. Gardner and Lambert (1972) defined two kinds of motivation in second language learning; integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integratively motivated students are interested in learning the culture of the target language group and are prepared to adopt various aspects of behaviour which characterise members of the target language group to integrate with them. On the other hand, instrumentally motivated students intend to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of language rather than to integrate with others. In the survey, Korean students' prime purpose of learning English was to enter a university in Australia and to gain advantage in career or running a business in the future. Even the respondents whose reasons were to communicate with others, wanted to seek university entrance, except one student who needed only a certificate from the language centre. Among the six respondents whose reasons referred to English being compulsory for further education, five students also wanted to undertake a degree in a university for their future. This finding was confirmed in the next question.

In respond to Question 3, "Are you going to enter a
university after study English? If so, what is the reason?", 29 students wanted to enter a university in Australia after the completion of the language course at WELC, while only 2 students did not want to do so. Their main reasons for wishing to undertake university study included enhancement of their studies, future lives and careers. The majority of the respondents was study oriented (12). Some others responded that their study in a university would provide for a better life in the future (5), or improve their career opportunities (4). Three students thought that their experiences in English speaking country would be advantageous. One student confessed he wanted to enter a university in Australia because he failed in Korea. Two students responded that they could not decide and another two students did not give reasons.

In these responses to Question 3 of the survey, it was confirmed that most Korean students were motivated for their academic study in Australia, and that they believed it would relate to their future for better life or employment prospects.

The responses to Question 2 and 3 showed a strong connection with each other. For example, a student's reason for studying English was to prepare for his tertiary study, but his purpose for entering a university was to run his own business. Two students (one male and one female) also thought that their English study would be advantageous for their jobs and that their tertiary study in Australia would lead to a
better life in the future. They believed that English study would lead to a better life by improving employment prospects.

The respondents also described their plans following graduation in responses to Question 4 "What do you want to do after graduation?". 27 students stated that they had clear plans after graduation, while 3 students did not have plans. Two students did not respond to this question. Eleven students wanted to be employed after graduation, and eight students wanted to run their own businesses. Three students wanted to be researchers and one student wanted to undertake further study after graduation. Two students wanted to be able to contribute to the development of society. One student wanted to travel and another student wanted to get married after graduation.

Most of the respondents wanted to work after graduation, for example by being employed, running a business, or undertaking research. Even a student whose purpose of studying English was to communicate with others, planned to run his own business after graduation. It seemed that they perceived that studying English is a means for entering a university in Australia and it would improve their career paths after graduation. They also believed that these advantages would be connected with a better life in the future.

When asked in Question 5, "Who or what has influenced
your decision to come to Australia?", parents were identified as important influences as well as personal choices by the students themselves. 16 students decided by themselves without any influences from others, while 11 students were influenced by their parents. Other influential people were friends (1), teachers and seniors at work (1). Dissatisfaction with society and experience of failure in Korea were also factors for two students. Advertisements in newspapers also influenced two students.

Question 6 and 7 asked students to describe their experiences in Australia and what has helped them. Half of the respondents did not experience any help or support (8), or did not answer (8) Question 6. Experiences included better environment (natural and learning) than Korea (3), support from families (3), friends (3) and good relationships with landlords (3). Some other students mentioned results of studying overseas rather than describing what they actually experienced. These students stated that they could enrich their experiences (3), and become independent (1).

Reasons for not answering Question 6 were not clear. However, it was assumed that many students either felt reluctant to respond or they did not actually experience any help or support. If the second assumption was correct, the need to inquire into their problems is emphasised.

The problems the students frequently mentioned in
question 7 were language (13), accommodation (10), living costs (7), and food (7). Other problems such as commercial administration for overseas students (4), homesickness (4), human relationships (3), different climate (2) and transportation (2) were also mentioned. Three students did not experience any problem and another 3 students did not respond to this question.

The students responded more frequently in question 7 than question 6. This might be because the students have experienced more problems than help in Australia. Their problems were studied in detail by other methods, to be presented later in this chapter.

Following the survey, one introductory course class was selected for more case study inquiry. 9 Korean students in the class participated in the case study. The outcomes are presented below.

4.4 Student Profiles

In order to provide portraits of the 9 case study students in this study, individual student profiles are presented below. Following these profiles, recurring themes and concerns across all 9 students will be presented and discussed.

There were nine students in this study. Student's initials were used. They were HC, IL, JB, JM, JW, KS, MR, SK
and TJ.

### 4.4.1 HC

HC has stayed in Australia for 6 months. HC came to Australia because his marks in high school were not high enough to go to a good university. His father influenced him in making the decision to study in Australia. He wanted to study Hotel Management in one of the Australian colleges. However, before coming to Australia, he intended to study commerce in a university. He believed that improving English would relate to better employment in Korea.

HC chose Australia for his study because he thought America was dangerous and Canada was too cold. In deciding upon a language centre, an agent recommended WELC without giving enough information on the centre. He believed that entering a university in Australia was easier than in Korea, because he needed to study only English in Australia, while he had to study more than ten subjects in Korea.

HC expressed his problems in Australia through interviews. The problems were communication with others, transportation, food and loneliness.

The most significant problem was communication with others. Even though HC could understand what his teacher said in class, he could not fully understand what his class mates said. In particular, he had difficulties in understanding
class mates from other language backgrounds because of different pronunciations. He also could not express what he wanted because of inappropriate word order in sentences.

The next problem was transportation to school. Even though there was a bus service, the service was not frequent. The interval was once per hour or every second hour. The service also terminated early in the evening. So, the subject had to walk for more than 1 hour to reach home.

Different food was another problem. He had to change accommodation three times looking for better food.

Another problem was loneliness. After his father's visit two months ago, he felt stronger loneliness and homesickness. However, he did not express his feeling to his parent in Korea because he was concerned that his parent would worry about him.

Through journal writings, he continuously showed that he was bored in the class. HC confessed he had studied hard during the first 2 or 3 months in Australia, but he was relaxed since his father visited him 2 months ago and lost interest in studying. He sometimes felt homesickness and wanted to go back to Korea. The problem of expressing exactly what he wanted in class was significant.

HC was absent from class twice during observations. He
tended to sit with Korean boys in class. He infrequently contributed to group work and was very passive in class.

HC, as an adolescent, may not have been well prepared to study overseas especially a long way away from his family. His decision to study in Australia was influenced by circumstantial reasons, such as low school records and his father’s influence, rather than being an outcome of his own purposes. The fact that he changed his intended special study in a tertiary institution also reflects that he had not firmly planned his study overseas. His father’s visit, even after 6 months’ separation, indicates possible concern about HC’s adjustment to a totally different environment. However, his father’s visit exacerbated his study: HC lost interest in study and became passive in a class. Loneliness and homesickness were posed serious difficulties which seemed to affect study overseas.

4.4.2 IL

IL has stayed in Australia for six months. He was preparing for a language test to undertake a Masters course in Wollongong university. He was motivated to come to Australia because he had failed to get a job after graduation in Korea. He said he failed twice in the interview test because of his personal problems. However, he was reluctant to talk about this in detail. However, he believed he could overcome his problem with a degree from overseas. His father’s inducement also was an important motive to come to Australia.
When IL decided to study English in Australia, he wanted to study in one of the language schools in Sydney. However, an agent in Korea persuaded him to study at WELC by advertising that Wollongong University was a good institution for computer science which was his major study. He expected advantages when entering Wollongong University if he studied at WELC. He knew the advertisement was not true after arriving in Australia. He said that there were more Korean students in the centre than the agent told him. Language requirements to enter a university was higher than he expected.

According to his teacher, IL started his course with good grammar, but has not learned much in class because of his hearing problem. He often did not know when other classmates were reading and often answered the wrong question in class. During the interview with him, he often showed some slight hearing difficulty. It was also observed that he was looking at another student's notes while the teacher was addressing the class.

Even though IL said he has not experienced severe problems in Australia, he mentioned some of his experiences and added that he overcame the problems through his religion, which is Christianity. The problems IL mentioned during interviews were language problems, different learning experiences and student-teacher relations. He also complained there were too many Korean students in the language centre.
The language problem was mentioned first. IL felt his slow improvement in speaking. He hardly spoke English after school because he was living with other Korean students. Different English from native speakers also hindered his practice of speaking. He felt native speakers were too fast. IL wanted more listening practice at school to improve his communication skills. Continuous grammar mistakes constituted another problem. He made many grammar mistakes in speaking and writing even though he knew the rules of grammar.

IL confessed that he had no experience in writing an essay. He explained that he was accustomed to answer the questions with multiple choices or the questions requiring a short answer. He said that organising an essay structure and expressing his opinion were difficult in writing an essay because he was not trained to develop his opinion logically.

IL expected a close relationship with his teacher. He said that teachers in Korea tended to scold, interview, or encourage them when students' records were bad because teachers had the responsibility for students' achievement.

Through journal writings, IL expressed his problems in a free-talking-class. He did not like to talk because he already knew the topic. He also knew his pronunciation problems between [f] and [p], and [s] and [z].
During observations, IL always sat in the middle of Korean students. Talking to other nearby Korean students in Korean was observed several times. Even though his vocal participation was not active, he sometimes contributed to group discussion.

IL may have been reluctant to speak with native speakers because of his unclear pronunciation and hearing problems. His living style also deprived him of the chance to speak English, and subsequently, he seemed to prefer more listening practice at school. However, communication skills cannot be fully improved without proper exposure to the native speakers, thus highlighting another difficulty confronted by Korean students studying overseas.

4.4.3 JB

JB has been in Australia for only 2 months. He wanted to study computer science at Wollongong University after his language course. He has failed the university entrance examination in Korea. Even though he could try the examination again in the following year, his father recommended him to study overseas with his brother who had already failed the university entrance examination twice. His father's plan to immigrate to Australia also motivated him. Before JB came to Australia, he had admissions to several language schools, but choose WELC on the basis of a Korean agent's recommendation.

Even though JB started the language course later than
other class mates, his grammar was good enough to join the class in the middle. He did not say anything just after arrival, but recently he seemed to come out of his shell and participate in class.

JB mentioned his problems in two interviews. These were worry about future study, communication with others, and problems in learning and teaching.

JB seriously worried about his future. He was anxious about passing language at the end of the year. He did not think learning from the centre would be enough to pass the test. He believed he had to concentrate on his areas of self - perceived weakness. For example, he said he had to increase his vocabulary. Even after entering a university, he questioned if he could complete the course. Also his special study in university was not firmly decided. He vaguely intended to study Computer Sciences without a detailed future plan.

The next problem was communication with others, especially with native speakers. JB could express what he wanted, but could not properly understand what others said. Because of that, the conversation did not last long, and it was difficult to make a friend.

JB also expressed some difficulties in learning. He felt a total outsider when a class was engaged in some areas such
as economics, culture, and politics. He felt he could not contribute to the class because he knew little on those areas. JB also felt it was difficult to find what he had to study because, in Korea, a teacher usually advised individual study. JB complained there were too many Koreans in the centre. He felt peer pressure when speaking English with other Korean students.

During the observations, JB mixed well with other classmates across nationalities. He liked to talk with others in a small group. He voluntarily answered the teacher's question. He also asked if he did not understand several times. However he contributed less in a discussion of news class because he could not fully understand a television news program. Talking with Korean mates in Korean was also observed.

JB seemed to have potential and strong motivation to study in Australia. He was active in class and showed rapid progress even after joining the class in the middle of the session. As he mentioned, he was anxious about passing the university entrance examination. His desire to pass was particularly strong because he had already experienced failure in Korea. However, this same desire may have caused him irritation or anxiety when he thought he would not pass the examination. It seemed that JB needed to broaden his focus in order to improve his English in areas other than academic English, such as conversation.
JM has stayed in Australia for six months. She intended to study Computer Sciences at Wollongong University after completing the language course at WELC. During her high school in Korea, she did not get enough marks to enter her targeted university. Even though she could go to another university which required lower marks, she decided to undertake a university course overseas, because a certificate from overseas would be better for her career than that from low status universities in Korea.

In the decision to come to Australia, an agent in Korea played an important role. The agent chose a language centre (WELC) and her special study in University without asking her. She thought she could enter a university without language requirements. JM wanted to move to one of the language centres in Sydney because her aunts were living there, but she hesitated to move.

JM mentioned her problems through interviews. These problems were food, individual study, teaching and learning environment.

The first problem JM experienced in Australia was a food problem. Even though her first landlady was very kind and was willing to teach English, she had to change accommodation three times because of food problems. Finally she was living with another classmate in a unit, where she could cook Korean...
food. However she regretted having less conversation with Australians.

The next problem was finding an effective method for individual study. Even though JM did homework everyday, she felt she needed to do more individual study. She thought she had to improve grammar and reading comprehension. However, she did not know how she could improve those skills.

Another problem was her teacher’s teaching. JM felt her teacher taught less than Korean teachers did. She wanted her teacher to teach more grammar for use in real situations such as writing an essay and conversation.

JM also complained that there were too many Koreans in her class. Because she was surrounded with other Korean students, she asked her nearby classmate in Korean when she did not understand rather than asking the teacher. She confessed she did not need to think in English.

Through journal writings, JM expressed a class was boring because she could not understand what other class mates were saying. She thought that she needed more background knowledge on the topic, in which the class was engaged. Hearing difficulty also made her bored. She used to wait until her teacher explained what others had said.

JM has been always attentive in a class during
observations. However, she did not participate well. She hardly expressed her opinion fully. When the teacher asked her to talk, she gave short answers. She reasoned that she sometimes could not follow the class because she could not understand what the teacher and others said. It was observed several times that she was talking to nearby Korean student in her language.

Even though the class in this study was homogeneous according to the students' English level, their background knowledge represented a heterogeneous mix. Under these circumstances, JM experienced disadvantage when a class was led by several outstanding students. This seemed to cause her boredom and encouraged her to talk Korean in class. She seemed to need a group of students who shared common interests.

4.4.5 JW

JW has stayed in Australia for 20 months. During the previous year, he had studied English in one of the language centres in Sydney, then he was permitted to undertake a Masters course in Wollongong University. However, after spending two months in university, he came back to the language centre (WELC) to undertake more language course at WELC. He intended to undertake a Masters of Accountant course in Wollongong University in the following year.

In making the decision to come to Australia, JW was motivated by a friend at work, who previously had studied
English in Australia. The friend recommended that studying English overseas would be advantageous for his career. When he arrived in Australia, he wanted to study in a university for 2 to 3 years because he had saved that amount of money. However, he did not have a detailed plan, for example, what course he would undertake and how many years the course would take to complete.

JW believed WELC was better than other private language centres because the centre was attached to a university and its prime purpose was to provide transition into the university. JW thought teachers in the centre were enthusiastic in teaching academic skills which he wanted to learn in Australia. He confessed he failed to learn those skills in his previous language centre.

JW mentioned his problems through interviews. The problems were in communication, finance, and teaching and learning. The first problem was communication with native speakers. Because JW could not perfectly understand spoken language, he did not have enough conversation with his landlord and his companions. Another reason was lack of cultural background. He confessed it was difficult to talk without enough knowledge of culture and society, because of a different sense of values between Western and Oriental society. Frequent use of slang also made it difficult to talk with Australians.
The next problem was financial difficulty. Even though JW had saved to study for 2 to 3 years in Australia, he worried whether he could finish his Masters Course, which required another two years. Other factors which exacerbated JW’s financial difficulties were expensive tuition fees which were more expensive following devaluation of Korean currency, and job scarcity. JW stated that it was more difficult to find a job in Wollongong than in Sydney. He also added there were no scholarships to support students’ study at the centre.

Another problem which concerned JW was teaching and learning. He complained that some teachers’ teaching was not scheduled. He said that a teacher was sometimes inconsistent from day to day. Some of the teachers did not check homework regularly. JW also complained that he was sometimes bored in some subjects such as arts and customs. He explained students showed different attitudes toward a topic. He wanted a class that was organised according to students’ special intention of study at university.

Through journal writing, JW wrote that a test did not fully evaluate students’ English. He wanted a test which would evaluate a wide scope of English.

JW was one of the active students in the class. His participation was good. He was one of the students who dominated group discussion and free talking classes. According to his teacher, JW was willing to ask questions unlike other
class mates.

Even though JW was very active in class, he still experienced difficulty in communication with native speakers. As he mentioned, understanding cultural background was an important factor in conversation. However, he also needed to practice exact pronunciation and native speaker's talking pattern, i.e., idiom, to lead conversation more effectively because conversation is not simply display of one's knowledge.

4.4.6 KS

KS has been in Australia for 7 months. He wanted to study computers in one of the TAFE (Technical And Further Education) Colleges after completing his language course. When he arrived in Australia, he intended to study in a university, but he had to change because of its expensive tuition fee and higher language requirement from the university.

KS had studied Material Engineering in a Korean university for two years, but he abandoned his studies to run his own business, at which he later failed. Failure in his academic degree and business influenced him to study in Australia. An unsatisfactory social environment in Korea also motivated him.

KS mentioned his problems through the interviews. These were listening difficulties, financial difficulties, individual study, and teaching and learning environment.
KS has experienced listening difficulties. He could not understand the orientation program which explained medicare cards, study methods and teaching schedules. He also had difficulty in understanding a lecture in class. He could not fully understand what his teacher said.

KS also was in financial difficulty. Even though he came with some money which he thought sufficient to live and study for a year in Australia, he expended more than expected. He complained about expensive living costs and tuition fees. He wanted to get a job to support his study. However, it was difficult because an employer required proficient English or sufficient skills.

The next problem was that KS could not find time for his own study, due to heavy homework. He felt the need to improve his vocabulary because he could not write an essay without a dictionary. He worried about doing a test without a dictionary. He thought homework did not help improve his vocabulary.

KS also complained about teaching. He thought the teaching was not scheduled and too teacher-centred because the teacher talked more than the students did. He also believed that because the teacher emphasised writing, his conversation skills were not developing. He said he could not ask a question because of his insufficient talking skills. KS also complained there were too many Koreans in the centre. He
felt he was in Korea.

Through journal writing, KS mentioned that he needed to correct pronunciation and to improve his listening and speaking skills.

In class, KS hardly contributed to group discussions and seemed to avoid giving his own opinions. Sometimes he also responded late to the teacher's question or lost track of a class activity because of his frequent use of the Korean-English dictionary.

Even though KS had plans to study in a TAFE, his main reason for coming to Australia seemed to escape from his continuous failure in university courses and business in Korea. He seemed to have more severe problems than other students. It had been a long time since he had left school, and it would have been difficult to adjust to a new learning situation. As he mentioned, his small English vocabulary led him to frequent use of a dictionary. He was also married and he had to consider his financial circumstances in order to take care of his family. These factors might have affected his slow learning achievement.

4.4.7 MR

MR has stayed in Australia for 6 months. She wanted to study Computer Sciences in a university after completing the language course. She decided to enter a university in
Australia because she thought it was easier than entering one of the Korean universities. Her low marks in high school also motivated her to come to Australia. She believed English was important for her future career and travel to other countries.

In deciding upon a language centre, an agent in Korea played an important role. The agent recommended her to study at WELC. She followed this advice because she did not have any information on other language centres.

MR mentioned her problems in Australia through interviews. These were her life style, transportation, learning and teaching, and environment.

The first problem was her life style. She was living with a Korean classmate in a flat because it was convenient for cooking. However, she regretted that she hardly had a chance to speak English at home. She thought her conversation skills had not been improved. She wanted to have conversation with native speakers.

Another problem was transportation. An infrequent bus service made her stay at home after school, even though she wanted to visit her friends from other countries to practise English. She also wanted to join a sports club and church to contact many Australians if transportation was available.

The third problem was learning and teaching. MR
complained that sometimes she was bored because she repeated routine activities in a class such as reading and writing. She wanted some different activities such as games and group discussion with other classes. She also confessed she could not fully express her opinion in a class because other classmates were faster than her in making contributions. She thought older classmates had an advantage in a free talking class because they had learned more with better background knowledge and better vocabulary.

The last problem MR mentioned was there were too many Koreans in the centre. She complained she spoke less English because she felt she was in Korea. When deciding upon a language centre, she thought there would be few Koreans in the centre and she planned to make foreign friends.

MR was talkative during interviews. However her vocal participation was hardly observed during a class. She sometimes did talk to Korean students. She explained she could not participate in class because she did not understand other classmates. She said that she was talking in Korean to improve understanding. However, she sometimes talked about something which did not relate to the class activity.

MR thought that sharing social activities with native speakers would improve her English. She believed that inconvenient transportation hindered her from doing these activities. However, she avoided practicing English by living
with other Korean students. She also talked Korean to nearby students in class. MR needed to build the environment wherein she could use more English.

4.4.8 SK

SK was the oldest student in the class. He had stayed in Australia for 5 months. He intended to undertake a Ph.D. course in an Australian university. He was motivated after receiving a post card from an agent which advertised study in Australia. Before deciding to come to Australia, he wanted to study English and Computers in business college. However, the agent recommended him to study English at WELC and then undertake a Ph.D. in a university after hearing about his academic career to date.

SK planned to study for 5 years to complete a Ph.D. degree in Australia. He has saved to study in Australia. Unlike other students, he wanted to work in Australia because he felt human relationship was more important than individual ability at work in Korea.

SK mentioned his problems through interviews. These were improving conversation skills, wrong information from his agent, teaching, and emotional problems.

SK thought his conversation skills had not been improved since arrived in Australia because he rarely could speak English at home, where he shared with other Korean friends.
Recently SK had moved to board in an Australian home. He expected that he would be able to speak more English and think in English by living with Australians. He also was very delighted when his landlady promised to check his essay writing.

The next problem SK mentioned was wrong information from a Korean agent. The agent advertised that every student automatically could go to university after completing a language course. SK thought this misleading advertisement induced more students to come to Australia without deep consideration, which then caused many Korean students to fail in their studies.

Another problem concerned his teachers' teaching style. Even though SK was satisfied with teaching topics and levels, he complained about grammar teaching. SK said that he had already known the grammar which his teacher taught. However, he added, he still made grammar mistakes in essay writing though he knew the grammar rules.

The last problem concerned emotional problems. SK regularly felt homesick. Especially when he was tired, he was depressed in his study. He talked less in a class and worried over his future study. He questioned himself 'Why I do not speak English well?', 'Why my English is not improved?', and 'Did I choose wrong way in my life?'. 
In the class, SK was called an 'older brother' by Korean classmates. During class, he voluntarily talked and asked questions if he did not understand. However, it was sometimes observed that he put down his head or napped while the teacher was explaining.

SK seemed to be active in constructing his learning environment. He changed his living style in which English exposure would be greater. However, another problem concerned his future plans. Even though he intended to undertake a Ph.D course, he also worried about his future. As a student in his mid-thirties, he was not always sure that his current study would be an advantage in building his future life.

4.4.9 TJ

TJ had been in Australia for 7 months. She planned to undertake a Bachelor of Commerce at Wollongong University after her language course. She had completed a Bachelor degree in a Korean university. However, she decided to study further overseas to improve her English, because she believed it was essential in her future life in running her own business. She chose Australia because she thought that Australia was safer than America in terms of criminal rate, and the Australian Government took less time in issuing visas for overseas students.

An agent in Korea recommended study at WELC because it was easier to get admission than at other language centres.
Even though she applied to another language centre in New South Wales University, she could not get admission from the centre, but did not know the reasons. She thought WELC would teach better than other private language centres because it was attached to a university. She also expected study at WELC would be advantageous for entering Wollongong University.

TJ mentioned her problems through interviews. Those were communication problems with others, financial pressure, finding accommodation, and teaching and learning.

The first problem was a communication problem with others. TJ found it difficult to communicate with outsiders because of English which was different from her teacher. She could understand her teacher because she spoke slowly and her pronunciation was correct. However, other native speakers were fast and used lots of slang. She felt stressed while talking to native speakers. She thought that communication difficulties hindered the process of making Australian friends.

TJ also felt financial pressures. Even though her father supported her study in Australia, living costs were more expensive than she thought. Being a burden to her father also made her worry about her study, especially when improvement was slow. She worried that she might fail in her study.

TJ experienced difficulty in finding accommodation. Even
though she had applied for accommodation through an agent in Korea, it was not available when she arrived. She was also refused rental of a unit by several real estate agents because she was not employed and did not have enough money.

TJ complained about her teacher’s teaching. She said that it was writing centered. However, she thought, writing without learning grammar was useless because grammar mistakes would be repeated. TJ said that her teacher corrected grammar mistakes in her essay, but did not explain why these were wrong. She also wanted more practice in speaking. She complained that she felt peer pressure when trying to speak English after school.

Through journal writing, TJ said she could not understand other classmates because of different pronunciation and grammar mistakes. She also complained that discussion classes were dominated by several students.

In class, TJ was very active. She participated very well. She was willing to express her opinion even by using body language. If she did not understand, she asked questions in class or wrote to the teacher in her journal.

TJ had adjusted herself to studying English at school. However, she still had great difficulty in conversation with native speakers, where she experienced English different from the classroom context. To narrow the gap, she needed more
practice with native speakers. Even though her current target was passing the English test, too much emphasis on academic skills would impede the development of her English.

4.5 Overall Themes and Concerns across Students and across Methods

The students mentioned many problems through interviews and their journals. Some of these problems were also observed in the class. The findings from each method are depicted in Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6. Overall, the problems may be classified into six categories: language and communication problems; study problems; living style and emotional problems; accommodation and food problems; financial problems; and problems with Korean agents. These problems are discussed below.

4.5.1. Language and Communication Problems

Even though the students in this study did not have proficient English, their language and communication problems were more severe than expected. All nine case study students expressed their language and communication problems in school and after school. They continuously had language and communication problems even in a classroom because they did not fully understand their classmates. Some of them felt reluctant to speak English in a class because of their low level of English. One student expressed:

"In the class, because teacher speak easily I almost understand. But when I say, it does not make sense. Words come in disorder."
Figure 4
Findings from Interviews

Motivation
- To enter a university (HC, IL, JB, JM, JW, KS, MR, SK, TJ)
- Failed in university entrance examination in Korea (JB)
- Low school record in high school (JM, HC, MR)
- Unsatisfactory social factors (KS, IL)
- Influence from parents (IL, HC)

Students' General Problems
- Communication with others (HC, JB, JW, TJ)
- Speaking (IL)
- Understanding lecture (KS)
- Improving conversation skills (SK)
- Different learning and teaching experiences (IL, JB, JW, TJ, MR)
- Relationships with teacher (IL)
- Worry about future study (JB)
- Individual study (JM)
- Study pressure (TJ)
- Loneliness and homesickness (HC, SK)
- Food (HC, JB)
- Living style (MR)
- Accommodation (TJ)
- Transportation (HC, MR)
- Too many Koreans in school (IL, JM, KS, MR, TJ)
- Financial pressure (JW, KS, TJ)
- Wrong information from agent (IL, JM, SK)

Problems encountered during a class
- Speaking (MR, TJ, HC, KS)
- Understanding others (MR, JM, HC, JB)
- Grammar mistakes (TJ, SK, JW)
- Talking in Korean (KS, MR, JM, HC)
- Lack of vocabulary (KS, JB)
- Pronunciation (JW, IL)
- Background knowledge on topic (JM, JB)
- Boring (JM, HC, IL)
- Need to individualised teaching (IL)
- Easy grammar teaching (SK)
Problems during a class
- Boring class (HC, JM)
- Homesickness (HC)
- Difficulty in verbal expression (HC, JB, KS)
- Uninteresting topics (IL)
- Pronunciation (IL, KS)
- Listening difficulty (JB, JM, KS)
- Need background knowledge (JM)
- Need verbal participation (KS)
- Communication (TJ)
- Discussion dominated by several students (TJ)

Feelings after examination
- Easy : Reading comprehension (HC, SK, IL, JB, JM, KS, MR)
- Difficult : Essay writing (HC, SK, JM, JW, KS, MR)
  Retelling lecture (IL, JB, JW, TJ)
- Good exercise for real test (HC, SK, JB, JW, KS)
- A test makes us study more (HC)
- Evaluates partial language skills only (JW)
Figure 6

Findings from Observations

Absences: HC (2), KS (2), MR (1)

Sitting patterns:
  Sitting with other Korean students (HC, IL, JM, JW, KS, SK)

Participation:
  Active verbal participation (JW, TJ)
  Sometimes voluntary participation (JB)
  Responses when asked (SK)
  Limited participation in group work (HC, IL, JM, MR, KS)

Other activities
  Talking to nearby Korean students (IL, JB, JM, MR, KS)
  Loosing track (KS)
  Late response to teacher (KS)
  Napping (SK)
Several factors contributed to their language and communication problems. These were different pronunciation patterns, difficulties with English grammar, background knowledge, and communication difficulties.

4.5.5.1 Different Pronunciation Patterns

Miscommunication between students or teacher and students was observed in a class. The students also stated that other class mates did not exactly understand what they said. A student confessed:

".... But I don't know. Because of bad pronunciation, I do not understand. They also would not understand me."

Miscommunication was severe between Korean students and students of other language backgrounds. For example, an Iranian student reported:

"Thai and Taiwan speakers are better to understand than Korean. After teacher's repeat, I can understand."

Korean students also stated that Iranian students' English was more difficult to understand than students of other language backgrounds. A student explained that different pronunciation might block discussion or conversation among students.

To help students understand better, the teacher sometimes retold or summarised what a student said. For example, the teacher summarised to ask another question:

"Abuld said, 'It is the most important way to communicate with each other.' Suya! What's another reason?"

The teacher's retelling helped students understand better.
However, sometimes the teacher herself did not understand exactly what her students had said. For example, when a student said, 'grammatical', the teacher heard 'omative' or 'omit'. The miscommunication was solved when the student gave full spelling of the word. Miscommunication was sometimes caused by pronunciation problems. The teacher of the class identified Korean students' pronunciation problems in the following interview excerpt:

"Korean students also have again special pronunciation problems, e.g., the letter l and r and also p and f and also b and v - sometimes some of them also have difficulties with s and sh .... It sometimes make it very difficult to understand. One of them, SK, was saying the word 'riches' and when he said it to me it sounded like 'leaches' - a kind of insect - so sometimes it is difficult."

However, a student explained:

"I can pronounce [P] and [f], but when making a sentence it is confused."

The Korean students seemed to be able to distinguish the pronunciations which the teacher mentioned, but they could not effectively distinguish these in real situations.

### 4.5.1.2 Difficulties with English Grammar

Different grammar rules between Korean and English also seemed to hamper the students' speaking. Korean students confused the sequence of a verb and object in a sentence. In Korean, an object comes before a verb, unlike English. A student explained that

"I usually say 'I school go' than 'I go to school' because of different grammar."

Even though the Korean students knew the English grammar well, they had problems in using it in real situations. The
teacher reported that

"Many Koreans seem to have slightly more problems with grammar than the Chinese or something like that. They seem to able to tell you the grammar rules perfectly - the most obscure grammar rule - they can tell you exactly what it means. However, it doesn't come through in their writing."

In the Korean students' essays, disorder in tense and omitting 's' for present third person were common mistakes made by many Korean students.

The reason for this difficulty may be that in Korea, the students stressed learning the rules but did not use the rules in real situations, for example, in writing or conversation. Many Korean students reported that they were used to multiple choice examination and exercises which asked if the grammar was wrong or right in a sentence.

4.5.1.3 Background Knowledge

The next factor causing students' communication difficulty in class was the students' lack of background knowledge on a certain topic. Some class topics led some Korean students to lose interest and become less attentive. When they lost interest, they were passive while others were talking and did not contribute to discussions. Some would even talk to nearby Korean students in Korean. A young student complained that because he had less background knowledge, he could not understand what other students were discussing. The student explained:

"There are some old students in my class. Because they graduated from a Uni and completed their own special studies, they have more background
knowledge. So if a topic goes to what we do not know, we do not understand. In fact because we do not understand it even in Korean, we can’t talk."

The topics which many students reportedly did not like were politics and economics. Even though the teacher gave students all the reading materials beforehand, still some of them did not like to talk on the topics. The teacher explained:

"Yes, it’s possible that they could think that, but I have usually given them enough information. We never ever have a discussion without me giving them something to read first, so perhaps I think it’s the confidence again. Also perhaps it’s just a matter of the older students being more confident."

At the beginning of the semester, the class used to have news talking classes with the teacher’s expectation that the activity would encourage students’ conversation. The students were supposed to watch a television news programme on the previous day, and select one topic to present in class the following day. However, the news talking hours were dominated by several students with political or economic interests.

In an observation of a news talking class, topics included a Korean political event, a Fiji election, weapon and gold smuggling, and a factory worker’s diet plan. Among these topics, the last topic (a factory worker’s diet plan) drew more contribution from students than other topics. To boost other students’ contribution, the teacher asked about working conditions in the students’ own countries. For example,

"Back to the topic. So Chinese does exercise in Taiwan? How about in Thailand?"

The teacher’s question pulled attention from more students and
contributed cultural exchange between students. The students liked to talk about their own country. A student reported:

"Because I know better on Korea, I can say about my country."

The teacher also boosted more contribution from girls who said relatively little during discussions, by saying that

"Come on girls, any other opinion?"

To encourage attention from more students, one student would have liked the class to be organised according to the students' interests or special studies in university as well as the students' level of English.

4.5.1.4 Communication Difficulties

Students identified and explained the communication difficulties they experienced from native speakers. One student stated:

"I can speak in class, but I can't outside."

One problem was that a native speaker's English was too fast for them. Slang was more difficult to understand. Superficial knowledge on Australia did not lead to full conversation with other students. A student reported:

"When I talk about Australia with other students, I feel I do not have enough knowledge. When they speak fast or use slang, I frequently miss what they say. In fact there is no common field to talk with...."

Because the students were learning English for academic
purposes, usually writing, their conversation skills were not developing well. The students expected that they would develop their conversation skills through the course. However, the expectation was from the Korean students' different perceptions of the purpose of the course, which was to provide for overseas students' transition from English courses to University or Foundation Studies. The students would have to develop their conversation skills by interacting with native speakers. The teacher also explained that,

"Because many of the students like to discuss a lot about animals in Australia, one day we had a very good discussion on customs in Australia, things like that. But unfortunately, because of the tight curriculum schedule and the fact that they have to get to full course level by the end of the year, .... we often don't have time to teach it to them which is very sad actually."

Poor conversation skills also affected the students' social life, i.e., making friends or joining clubs, and finding jobs or accommodation. These are discussed under later subheadings, accommodation and food.

Because of the students' language problems, they have experienced many difficulties such as finding a school just after the arrival, renting accommodation or completing forms for their own purposes.

4.5.2. Study Problems

Many problems encountered by Korean students related to their study. These study problems can be sub-categorised into three areas: individual study; different teaching and learning experiences; and learning environment.
4.5.2.1 Individual Study

Even though the students in this study believed they have studied hard and did homework everyday, they were seriously concerned about their success in the examination at the end of the school year. The teacher indicated the students' lack of academic skills such as verbal expression on a topic, reading comprehension and essay writing. She also asked students to improve their grammar.

However, the students tried to approach their problems from a different viewpoint. They felt that their poor vocabulary hampered the development of these academic skills. For example, some of them made a word card for every unknown word in a text. They believed vocabulary was the best solution for overcoming problems in talking and writing essays. Some students also believed they had to study what they would learn in university before acceptance into their respective courses.

4.5.2.2 Different Teaching and Learning Experiences

The students liked their teacher more than other teachers they had experienced previously. They commonly said the teacher was kind and enthusiastic. None the less, the students expressed some problems. They found that the teacher sometimes did not follow her teaching schedule. It was observed that the teacher sometimes did not teach what previously she had forecast. Students complained that

"Occasionally I feel, for example, that teacher does not know what students ask. Then she writes
Another problem was also observed in checking homework. During the class, the teacher gave homework if it was necessary. However, she sometimes did not bring it to class on the next day and students were depressed. Students expected teacher's comments on their homework to correct their mistakes. Especially in journal writing, students sometimes wrote personal problems with the expectations of gaining a teacher's opinion. The teacher also reported:

"... many of them seem to have lots of questions to ask in their journals that they don't feel like asking in class. [For example], How can I find a house? or Please check me with my essay."

They believed the journal writing was a good method for interacting with their teacher. However, if a teacher did not check the homework on time, they became lazy in doing homework, and thus further hindering interaction between student and teacher.

Students also had different interests in the topics discussed in class. While some students liked topics such as arts and culture, other students lacked interest and were not willing to contribute to the class. However, these students did not ask the teacher to do other more interesting topics. One student explained the reason:

"... At first, students do not want to make trouble against teacher; next they cannot suggest any alternatives and they are overall passive."

The students' passive attitudes in a class might have been formed from their learning experiences in Korea. They
might think that suggesting alternatives to their teacher in their learning would challenge the teacher's authority. They may think a good student is obedient and unquestioning of the teacher's authority.

Another concern commonly expressed by the Korean students in this study was they had no experience in writing essays. They were accustomed to multiple choice formats in Korea, and so could choose a right answer, but could not fully explain their opinion.

4.5.2.3 Learning Environment

Many Korean students in a class or in a group were also hampered in their use of English because the students tended to assemble with other Korean students in a class, even though they did not have to. This encouraged them to speak more Korean during class. It was observed that some students spoke to the next classmate (Korean) in their own language to query the procedure of the class or to talk privately.

In small group discussions, the problem became more serious. Korean students openly spoke in Korean. They received a lot of peer pressure not to speak English to other Korean students. One student said:

"If there are many Koreans, that makes me use less English. I hardly try to speak English because I don't feel I am overseas. If I speak to friends (Koreans), they might think I am self important."

The teacher also mentioned this difficulty in organising small groups for discussion:
"Probably just that there are so many of them (Koreans) in the class. Because of this, whenever I do group work, I end up with a group consisting nearly solely of Koreans. I have tried before putting one or two Chinese in the group, but it doesn't work. Mostly the Chinese just become very quiet because they are the minority and they just speak Korean as you saw today. It's a bit hard to stop them because I cannot be there standing over them all the time."

The problem has to be resolved by considering two aspects together, students' peer pressure and total number of Korean students in the class. The Korean students might speak Korean because it was easier to express themselves without any peer pressure.

4.5.3. Living Style and Emotional Problems

Some students mentioned their emotional problems. These problems related to their living style.

Most Korean students did not mix with other students. In an extreme case, one introspective student said he never tried to make an Australian friend or to understand Australian culture. Even though they maintained good relationships with other class mates, these were not extended after school. Some complained they did not have a social life after school. They did not have non-Korean friends or did not know how to join social clubs to meet other students. One of the reasons for the difficulty, aside from their poor English, might be their living style. Among 9 case students, 6 students were living with other Korean students. Some of them wanted to meet other friends, but transportation also made this difficult.
Because of these social problems, they felt their life in Australia was calm and boring. In some cases, they felt lonely and homesick. These feelings often caused absences from school. The teacher explained that:

"......Because they are homesick even more than other nationalities, again I think it's because they stay with their parents for such a long time and the social structure is so tight that they seem to be family oriented and to pull them away is very, very painful for them....... I sometimes get annoyed because they are so homesick and this makes them get depressed...... So often many of them tend to miss school or come late."

According to the teacher, Korean students' emotional problems were more serious than other students. Some students also expressed their emotional problems in interviews. A student felt lonely continuously. He stated:

"I absented school without any reason. Since my father visited me last July, I have been alone."

Another student confessed he felt homesick when especially he was tired. He stated that:

"Usually once a month, I felt homesick. When I was tired, it led to homesick. Then I talked less and I was lost in thought."

These emotional problems often caused students' absences from school and affected their study.

Another problem was study pressures upon the Korean students. The students were very anxious to go university after the language course. This imposed strong pressures on them. Previous failure in Korea and expectations from family also caused stress.
4.5.4. Accommodation and Food Problems

Even though accommodation and food problems did not directly relate to Korean students' study, these problems were mentioned by many students.

4.5.4.1 Accommodation

The first problem which Korean students experienced after arrival was finding accommodation. They had to spend up to a week in a motel before finding proper accommodation. Even though the agents in Korea contracted accommodation prior to their arrival, often it was too far from school or they had to wait until a room in International House became vacant.

During their sojourn, they moved several times because of distance from school, relationships with landlords, or food problems. One student complained:

"It is different from what I heard in Korea. I applied for International House through agent, but they contracted an Australian home stay instead. When I arrived there, I had to change a bus twice and walk. It took one and half hour."

Different customs or language problems also caused anxious relationships with a landlord.

4.5.4.2 Food

For two students, food was another reason to move, even though it took longer to cook Korean food. Because of these problems, students tended to live with other Korean students. For that, they had to rent an accommodation by themselves. However, their language problem and not enough proof of income
made it difficult to find accommodation.

4.5.5. Financial Problems

Three students mentioned financial difficulty and five students were fully supported from their parents in Korea. The common opinion from the students was that living and tuition fees were more expensive than they had expected. One student explained:

"In fact I came to Australia because it was thought to be cheaper in tuition fee, but it is not true."

Another student added:

"I have saved some to live for a year, but that seems to be not enough. I spend $800 a month with my wife for living only."

Devaluation of Korean currency against the Australian dollar exacerbated the students' financial problems. Some students wanted to have a job to cover their living costs, but it was very difficult because of job scarcity for unskilled workers or because of their language problems. A student complained:

"I wanted to work while I study to support myself. I have not lived in Sydney, but there is no job for me in Wollongong."

Even those students who had full support from their parents, felt heavily burdened by the need to be successful at their studies. They worried about their parents' upset if they failed. This too may have affected their studies negatively.

4.5.6. Problems with Korean Agents

Many Korean students complained about the agents in
Korea. After students had decided to study in Australia, the agents played important roles for the students' convenience. The agents gave information on the language centre, and acted for the students in applying for admission from the language centre, completing their passport and visa papers, and finding accommodation in Australia. However, some students reported the information was not accurate and they could not find accommodation after arrival in Australia even though they had applied through agents. Another complaint was that the students chose a language centre without comparison with other language centres because their agents recommended a specific language centre without giving information on other language centres. A student stated:

"A person in the agent introduced me this school was good. I did not know if there were so many schools."

Another student reported:

"I thought I can directly go university here. I knew I had to do language and foundation course after I finished physical examination. I found I have to pass the exam to procedure to other level in here."

Some students were motivated to study in Australia by advertisement from the agents without considering requirements from a university mainly because they thought it would be easier to enter a university in Australia, or because they had failed in Korea. However, the students need to realise these kinds of motivation cannot lead to successful study overseas. Rather, they would experience more severe study problems and emotional problems, and possible failure in their study.
4.6 Inter - Connections among Categories

Even though Korean students' problems were classified into 6 categories and 13 sub-categories, the problems were inter-connected with each other.

The students' difficulties with English grammar related with their learning experiences in Korea. They could tell the grammar rules well, but they made many grammar mistakes in their writing. Even simple grammar mistakes were found in their essays. This was because they learned the grammar rules to answer questions which asked if the usage of the grammar was right or wrong in a sentence. They hardly used these rules in their writings or in conversation. It seems likely that such experiences exacerbated the students' difficulties in applying the grammar rules in their writings.

Another inter-connection was found between students' background knowledge and their individual study patterns, which was formed by their learning experiences in Korea. Students' lack of background knowledge on a certain topic seemed to be caused in part by their individual study patterns. Students were required to read information which their teacher had given, and to search for other reading materials in a library in order to participate in class activities. However, students' overemphasis on vocabulary hampered their reading. For example, some students made a word card for every unknown word in text to learn by heart. This strategy might have been influenced by their learning
experiences in Korea. In Korea, they had to know every word in a text and know grammar rules thoroughly to respond to a question in multiple choice examinations, another common feature in Korean education. This study method is likely to exacerbate students' language problems. As their teacher mentioned, the students do not always need to know every single word, rather they need to undertake extensive reading and to understand a text quickly.

Korean students' communication difficulties appeared to be connected with their living styles which were in turn connected with their emotional problems and accommodation and food problems. The Korean students confessed that they hardly spoke English after school because they were living with other Korean students. Among the 9 case study students, 6 students were living with other Korean students. The main reasons were to be less homesick by sharing Korean culture with other Korean students and to have Korean food at home. However, their self-aggregation hindered contact with native English speakers, which then seemed to exacerbate unbalanced development in their English in writing and in conversation.

4.7 Conclusion

The outcomes from the different sources described the Korean students' situation in WELC and identified their problems in Australia. However, to most effectively resolve the problems, a solution to each problem cannot be itemised separately, because the problems and solutions are inter-
connected. Suggestions for practice to resolve or avoid the problems and suggestions for further research will be discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the Korean students' situation in WELC, and identified some of their problems. This chapter will provide a summary of findings from the study. Next, suggestions for practice to resolve or mitigate against these problems will be discussed, and suggestions for further research will be made.

5.2 Summary of Findings

From the survey, Korean overseas students' reasons for coming to Australia, their future plans and their experiences in Australia, were identified. Their main reasons for studying English were instrumental. Students intended to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of English rather than to integrate with others. Their prime purpose was to enter a university in Australia and to gain advantage in a career or running a business in the future.

However, in the decision-making process to come to Australia, parents were identified as important influences as well as the students themselves. This might indicate that some students were not fully motivated by themselves to study overseas. As the director of the centre indicated, some students might be motivated to come to Australia to escape from study pressure from their family, or to avoid military service in Korea for boys.
The problems Korean overseas students mentioned in the survey were language, accommodation, expensive living costs, food, school's commercial administration as perceived by the students, homesickness, human relationships, different climate and transportation. The nature of these problems was general and was common to all overseas students. These problems were already identified by other researchers (e.g., Burke, 1984; Golding, et al., 1986; and Rao, 1976). However, the current study identified these problems in further detail through 9 case studies.

The problems identified from the 9 case studies were classified into six categories: language and communication problems; study problems; living style and emotional problems; accommodation and food problems; financial problems; and problems with Korean agents. The language and communication problems were again classified into four sub-categories; different pronunciation patterns; difficulties with English grammar; background knowledge; and communication difficulties. The study problems were classified into three sub-categories; individual study; different teaching and learning experiences; and learning environment.

Among these problems, specific problems for Korean overseas students were identified. The Korean students had specific pronunciation problems between [l] and [r], [p] and [f], and [b] and [v]. Different grammar rules between Korean and English also caused Korean students' language problems.
However, a more important finding was that there was inconsistency between what the Korean overseas students knew and the ability to use it. Even though the Korean students knew the English grammar well, they had problems in using it in real situations. They often made simple grammar mistakes in speaking and writing. The inconsistency might have been formed from their learning experiences in Korea.

Another important finding from this study was that in addition to students' linguistic background, their background knowledge on a certain topic was an important factor causing communication difficulties in class. Students' lack of background knowledge seemed to stem mainly from their different interests in topics and their reading strategies. Their reading strategies were different from the expectation of their teacher. Word-by-word reading was common for Korean overseas students, as Ballard (1989) found from other overseas students. Their emphasis on vocabulary caused word-by-word reading and hindered the broadening of knowledge on specific topics.

Korean overseas students' living style was another important factor causing problems. As Hurh and Kim (1980) found in their study from Korean students in America, the 9 case study students also tended to segregate themselves from the native English speakers. Most of them were living with other Korean students and had limited interactions with other classmates and native English speakers. The students also
tended to assemble with other Korean students even in class, even though they did not have to do so. The self-exile attitude seemed to further hinder them from improving the communication skills.

Problems with Korean agents were also specific for Korean students. Many students complained about the Korean agents. They found that the information on requirements from university and duration of language courses was not always complete or accurate. These problems have to be interpreted from two different perspectives. One is students' motivation to escape from study pressure. Some of the students expected that it would be easier to enter a university in Australia because it requires English proficiency only. The other is the Korean agents' commercial administration by boosting more students to study overseas.

Another important finding was that even though the Korean students' problems were classified into categories and sub-categories, the problems identified could not be treated separately, because on further analysis, it could be seen that the problems were inter-connected with each other. For example, the students' difficulties with English grammar were inter-connected with their learning experiences in Korea. Other examples were the inter-connection between students' background knowledge and their individual study, especially their reading strategies, and the inter-connection between
students' communication difficulties and their living style and emotional problems. These inter-connections provide the bases for important suggestions for practice.

5.3 Suggestions for Practice

5.3.1 Students' Motivation and Problems with Korean Agents

In the survey, students' main reasons for studying English were instrumental. Their prime purpose was to enter a university in Australia. The 9 case study students also were motivated to enter a university after completing language courses.

However, there is a contradiction between the students' explicit reasons and implicit reasons, when considering their problems identified in this study. In the survey, one third of the students were influenced by their parents in the decision-making process to come to Australia. Among the 9 case study students, four students mentioned that they failed in the university entrance examination in Korea or that their high school records were not enough to be admitted from their targeted university. Some of them thought it would be easier to enter a university in Australia than in Korea. These reasons suggest that they might be motivated to avoid high competition from entering a university in Korea, or to avoid pressure from their family.

Because some students were not intrinsically motivated to study in Australia, they showed severe emotional problems
and study problems. As the teacher mentioned, they were homesick more than other students and tended to absent from school more often.

The students' 'avoidance motivation' might have been encouraged by inaccurate information and advertisements from the Korean agents. They might have decided to study overseas without considering potential problems in studying overseas.

To avoid these problems, it would seem that the Australian Government needs to revise the full-fee program, which asks of overseas students in non-formal courses only the ability to pay the full cost of a place in an educational institution. The Government needs to make the school authorities more carefully consider students' intention of study and their ability to study before being admitted by the school. The school might ask for recommendations from their teachers in Korea. Students' school records in their country might be used to evaluate their ability to study in Australia.

The school also needs to give information directly to students by mail when they are admitted. The information would include requirements to enter a university, the procedure for graduating from a language course to university, and so on. The information on study methods in Australia, teaching programs, and expected problems experienced by overseas students would help the students prepare for study overseas. Such information could be covered by running information
programs that somehow provide the whole picture of what it is like to be a Korean student studying overseas, for example by showing a video tape. Providing seminars for students intending to study overseas would be another suggestion.

The students might also use public organisations such as the Australia Educational Centre in Seoul run by the Australian Government for intended overseas students.

5.3.2 Enriching Background Knowledge by Diversifying Reading Strategies

One important factor causing students' communication difficulties in class was their lack of background knowledge on certain topics, such as economics and politics. As some students confessed, they could not understand what other classmates said because of their lack of background knowledge.

This problem may be resolved in part by diversifying their reading strategies. For study purposes, students do not always need to know every single word in a text. Rather they need to understand and interpret meaning efficiently from extensive reading by using different reading strategies, such as skimming, scanning, or using features of how factual texts are organised. These reading skills would assist students in enriching their background knowledge and so enrich their understanding in group discussions on a certain topic, and provide more information for their essay writing. The
development and practice of these reading skills also need to be included in teaching programs.

To obtain extensive reading materials, students are recommended to use a library. Even though the students in this study learned library skills in class and practised these skills with their class in the university library, they hardly used the library on their own. Giving reference lists on a certain topic might be one method to encourage students' use of the library. By using the library, students also can increase opportunities to develop and maintain contact with native English speakers, such as librarians.

5.3.3 Improving Communication Skills

Many Korean students articulated their communication difficulties with native English speakers. Apparently most Korean students had limited opportunities to mix with native speakers to improve their conversation skills. The main reason was because they were living with other Korean students. The living style prevented them from mixing to native English speakers. Unless they are more exposed with native English, their communication skills cannot be improved.

The solutions have to be sought by the school and more importantly, by students themselves. The school needs to boost students' social activities by introducing some social organisations, such as sports clubs, whose members share common interests with them. Through the activities from the
clubs, students can interact with native English speakers. Such social activities also would minimise students' emotional problems.

As Sunda das (1972) suggested for overseas students, the Korean overseas students also need to develop open minded attitudes, with a willingness to adapt to Australian culture and to mix socially with native speakers. Students who live with other Korean students also need a strict rule, which asks them to speak English to their mates.

5.3.4 Organising a Class

One important reason for students' becoming less attentive in class was because the topic was boring. Certain topics could not draw full attention from all students, because each student had different interests in the topics. While some students liked topics such as arts and culture, other students liked topics such as politics and economics. To encourage attention from more students, a class might be organised according to the students' special studies in university and interests.

Another problem was found in organising small groups for discussion. Because there was a large proportion of Korean students in the class, each group had more than one Korean student. In these groups, the Korean students talked in Korean. Students need to observe the rule that they have to speak English in class. The teacher also needs to ensure that
students contribute to group work by allocating specific roles to students.

On the other hand, the school authority has to consider the number of Korean students in each class when organising a class. There was a discrepancy in the proportion of Korean students among the classes. There were relatively fewer Korean students in some classes, such as General English 2 and 3, Precourse Preparation 1 and 5, and Precourse 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11. (see Table 4, page 60).

5.3.5 Financial Problems

Even though most Korean students were fully supported by their parents, some of them had financial problems. They also had difficulties in finding a job mainly because of their language problems. Incentives, such as scholarships, for the students who are willing to study but have financial difficulties might better encourage students' study.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The current study identified a wide range of Korean overseas students' problems from pedagogical and social perspectives. While highlighting large problems, there needs to be further in-depth identification. More specific articulation is needed to inform pedagogical practice in language programs. This would be possible by focusing on specific areas through classroom-based action research.
Possible areas of focus for further research would be:
- individual study strategies which might be different from teacher's expectations;
- reading strategies to cope with school requirements;
- classroom interaction patterns to support Korean overseas students' effective participation; and
- systematic linguistic analysis of Korean overseas students' essay writings and comparison with native speakers' essays.

Further research on these areas will provide more detailed information to understand Korean overseas students' specific problems.

5.5 Conclusion

The Korean overseas students at WELC experienced many problems: some problems specific to Korean overseas students, and some general problems for all overseas students. The findings from this study of one English language college are applicable for other Korean overseas students, especially for those who are in English courses preparing to enter a formal course.

It is hoped that further research will be undertaken to more fully understand Korean overseas students' specific problems and to support their study in Australia.


Rao, G. L. (1979) *Brain Drain and Foreign Students: a Study of the Attitudes and Intentions of Foreign Students in Australia, the USA, Canada and France*. University of Queensland Press.


Appendix 1
Survey questionnaire

1. Sex: M  F

2. Why do you study English?

3. Are you going to enter a university after study English? If so, what is the reason?

4. What do you want to do after graduation?

5. Who or what has influenced your decision to come to Australia?

6. What has helped you study and live in Australia as a student?

7. What problems have you experienced since coming to Australia?
Appendix 2
Interview Questions

Interview 1

1. Why did you decide to study at WELC?

2. How is your life in Australia different from the life in Korea?

3. What are your problems?

4. Describe your learning environment and compare it with Korean situation.
Appendix 3
Interview Questions
Interview 2

1. What do you feel after watching a video tape?

2. What are your problems during a class?

3. Specific questions raised from students' journal.
   
   For example,
   
   "You continuously wrote that a class was boring. Why was it so boring?"
Appendix 4
Interview Questions

Interview with Teacher

1. What are the general trouble or needs in your class?

2. What is your opinion on the Korean students?

3. Who is a good student in your class?

4. What are the problems in teaching Korean students?
Appendix 5

Please write your opinion after the class.

Date:
Name:

1. What did you learn in the class?

2. How did you feel?

3. What was your problem or difficulty during the class?
Appendix 6

Please write your opinion in detail after the test.

Name:

1. How do you feel after the test?

2. What was difficult and why?

3. What was easy?

4. Do you think a test is necessary? Why?

5. Do you think a test is a good instrument for evaluation? Why?

6. Do you study enough for a test? Why?

7. Please state other opinion on test.