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Korean ESL Learners' Evaluative Reactions to Speech Styles from the Three Concentric Circles*

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This study examines the evaluative reactions of South Koreans studying English as a second language (ESL) in the Philippines toward three speakers of different varieties of English: American English (an Inner Circle model), Philippine English (an Outer Circle model), and Korean-accented English (an Expanding Circle model). Following the verbal guise technique, speech samples representing the aforementioned varieties of English were used as attitude elicitation tools. The findings are presented according to the participants' evaluations of the three speakers' character traits, group memberships, and desirability as English teachers. The study generally reflects common notions about speakers from the Inner and Expanding Circles as perceived by Koreans, which may serve to explain the majority's preference for teachers with an American accent. However, the data also reveal relatively uncertain perceptions about the Outer Circle speaker. The knowledge gained from this study is essential because shared attitudes and perceived information about speakers of English could greatly affect students' learning of the language (Baker, 1992; Lado, 1988). Pedagogical implications are therefore discussed in terms of promoting learners' awareness of language variation in English, including more open ways of looking at speakers from the Outer and Expanding Circles.

**[language attitudes/speech style evaluation/world Englishes/
언어 태도/발화스타일 평가/세계 영어]**

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* The data reported in this paper are from a larger study conducted for my graduate thesis submitted to the University of the Philippines. In this paper, I present an extended discussion of the findings relating to the three varieties of English speech samples. More findings specifically focusing on the Philippine English speech sample are reported elsewhere (Castro & Roh, 2013).

I. INTRODUCTION

English is the primary language used for international communication today (Graddol, 2006). The language has gained such a widespread status all over the world with its users coming from a range of regional, socioeconomic, occupational, and educational backgrounds. These realities surrounding the use of English as a global communication tool (Pollard, 2014) has resulted in a characteristic of English as a language that is full of variation. One way variation is discussed in the development and use of English is through Braj Kachru's (1986) three concentric circles, with the Inner Circle corresponding to native speaker varieties, the Outer Circle representing nativized varieties of English as well as speakers of English as a second language (ESL), and the Expanding Circle consisting of countries that speak English as a foreign language (EFL). In this study, American English (AmE), Philippine English (PhilE), and Korean-accented English (KorE) represent a variety within each concentric circle respectively.

Although language variation[1] is present in every aspect of the English language and can be traced even from the time of Old English (Lerer, 2007), there are features that specifically characterize variations in pronunciation. For example, “the typical American pronunciation” include the vowel [æ] in words like *fan*; the articulation of the [r] consonant in all environments; the roundness of [ɒ] in words like *bored*; and the unrounded quality of the vowel [ɔ] in words like *shop* (Baugh & Cable, 2002). Schneider (2006) also characterizes “jod-deletion” (i.e., when *new* is pronounced as [nu] instead of [nju]) as “putatively American” (p. 68). While the existence of regional accents in the U.S. cannot be denied, the “uniformity of American English . . . has repeatedly been observed, in the past, as well as at the present day, especially by travelers from abroad” due to the constant mingling of the population (Baugh & Cable, 2002, p. 336).

Within the Philippine context, there is a range of varieties and speech styles depending on the extent to which the mother tongue manifests itself in the English pronunciation of the Filipino speaker (Bautista, 2000). PhilE as an Outer Circle model means that the society consists of bilingual speakers who have learned to speak English mostly through the education system. One characterization of PhilE is that it is an “approximation” of AmE because when Filipinos speak English, they may be “willing to copy American English up to a point” but they also “retain something of their identity—in their lack of the nasal twang, in the careful articulation of individual syllables, and in their refusal to use the “reduced signals” of the informal conversational style of American English” (Llamzon,

[1] Strevens' (1983) discussion of what is Standard English includes a straightforward description of language variation as something that is distributed geographically. It includes different *dialects*, or differences in grammar and vocabulary, and *accents*, or differences in pronunciation.

1997, p. 43). In the case of vowel sounds, the following substitutions are common: [a] for [æ], [o] for [oʊ], [ɪ] for [i], [a] for [e], [e] for [eɪ] (Gonzales & Alberca, 1978, cited in Bautista, 2001). As for consonants, stops are articulated without aspiration; dental fricatives seldom occur and are consequently substituted with stops; voiced alveolar and palatal fricatives are realized as voiceless; and the use of a flap is prominent (Gonzales, 1997). As for suprasegmentals, polysyllabic words in PhilE particularly "carry a distinctive pattern of word stress . . . compared to [AmE]" (Tayao, 2004, p. 84).

Korean-accented English also comes as a result of interlanguage phonology (Selinker, 1992), or Korean speakers' native language (L1) phonology influencing their English. In characterizing KorE, the influence of the L1 sound system is seen in the distinct way Korean adults produce the /l/ and /r/ English phonemes as if they were allophones (E. Sung, 2006). Other manifestations of KorE include instances when Koreans do not find difficulty pronouncing vowels [i, e, a, u] "because in Korean there are comparable counterparts with these sounds," but at the same time they tend to lengthen their diphthongs as they articulate each sound as a separate phoneme (e.g., [aɪ]→[ai:]) "because the Korean vowel system does not contain the diphthong" (B. Kho, 1982). H.-K. Kim (1999) also adds that when Koreans speak English, they generally keep the syllable structure, the devoicing and aspiration, the vowel insertion, and the nasal substitution rules of Korean so that voiceless stops [p, t, k] regardless of the environment, are generally aspirated; voiced stops [b, d, g] are devoiced; and consonant clusters are split by adding a vowel sound in between.

Language variation has its consequences (Lippi-Green, 1997), such as personal, academic, professional, and other social advantages or disadvantages. In speech style evaluation studies (e.g., Butler, 2007; McKenzie, 2006), speakers' accent often lead to favorable or adverse attitudes depending on where they are perceived to be from. A survey of language attitudes and perceptions is therefore important to promote a more meaningful and beneficial experience for English language learners (ELLs) whether in Korea or abroad.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language attitude studies, particularly those focusing on speech style evaluations, are based on the assumption that when an accent is perceived in speech, a listener may begin stereotypical evaluations such as assigning character traits and associating the speaker with certain ethnic groups, socioeconomic status, occupations, and so on (Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Preston, 2004; Street & Hopper, 1982).

Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum's (1960) work is often cited in the literature (see Bradac, 1990; Edwards, 1982; McKenzie, 2006) for their employment of the matched guise technique (MGT) to develop language attitude elicitation tools. The strength

of the MGT is that it gives the researcher the capacity to control extraneous variables (such as differences in voice quality, reading speed, and so on) in the stimulus voices since all speech samples in different accents or languages are recorded by only one speaker (Butler, 2007). However, one major limitation of matched guises is that they can be seen as "feigned" accents that lack authenticity because one speaker may not be able to accurately manipulate all phonological features in the guises to genuinely represent the target accents (Rodriguez, Cargile, & Rich, 2004). More recent studies have therefore employed the verbal guise technique (VGT), which avoids feigning the accent by asking several speakers of the actual accent or dialect to record the speech samples.

Tucker and Lambert's (1972) verbal guise experiments used speech samples from six US English dialect groups to elicit the perceptual judgments of American college students. The students were given a questionnaire with bipolar rating scales containing positive and negative adjectives or character traits important for attaining success and friendship. The speaker of "Network English" (i.e., the speech style used on the news in television networks) was perceived to have the most favorable traits. The same speaker was also perceived to be at least 95 percent white, leading the authors to detect "an interesting relation between the perceived favorableness of a speaker and his perceived race" (p. 183).

As seen in Tucker and Lambert's (1972) study, character trait judgments based on speakers' accents are often divided between success and friendship or the dimensions of competence and social attractiveness. Competence here simply refers to "how well one speaks a language," as displayed or evaluated by speakers within a community (J. S.-Y. Park, 2004, pp. 143-144). Speakers of "standard" varieties or politically powerful languages are often regarded favorably on competence-related traits (Haapea, 1999; McKenzie, 2006). In contrast, higher ratings on social attractiveness, or traits related to group solidarity (e.g., humor, helpfulness, trustworthiness) are often assigned to speakers of regional accents (see Birch & McPhail, 1997; Edwards, 1982; Melander, 2003).

Studies employing the MGT and VGT are important for us to recognize the possible negative or positive evaluations when listeners are asked about their reactions to the stimulus voices. However, other studies relating to language variation also often reflect listeners' judgments by tackling questions such as the intelligibility of various English accents, and even their applicability as English language teaching models.

Smith and Rafiqzad's (1983) study involved 1,386 participants from eleven countries including Korea to investigate the listeners' judgments about the intelligibility and level of understanding of speech samples from nine different sociolinguistic backgrounds. Cloze procedure tests were used to measure intelligibility, and listening comprehension questions were used to measure the participants' level of understanding. From the Korean listeners' perspective on intelligibility, the Philippines ranked only an average of 16%, and the U.S. also received a low ranking of 29%, while Korea had a relatively high ranking with an

average of 55%. However, in terms of the level of understanding by Korean listeners, the speaker from the Philippines received an average rating of 50%, the U.S. 47%, and Korea 61%. This study builds on our knowledge about which varieties may be most intelligible or most difficult for learners to understand, although it also raises the question of why, despite the low level of intelligibility and understanding in relation to the U.S. speaker, a native speaker or Inner Circle model remains to be the most popular pronunciation model for English language classrooms in Outer and Expanding Circle countries such as Hong Kong (see Chan, 2015) and Korea (see S. J. Choi, 2011).

Certain language teaching models have started incorporating features of English as it is used by those from the Outer and Expanding Circles for communication purposes in cross-cultural contexts (Jenkins, 2000). Known as the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) model, it has therefore been recommended for use especially in more casual and interactive settings (Chan, 2015). In an analysis of student essays in Korea, S. J. Choi's research (2011) shows that although Korean students still consider the native speaker model as the most familiar and most appropriate framework, some students also found the ELF model acceptable. They based their judgments on the communicative function of English and the liberating effect of eradicating the negativity associated with using only a traditional native speaking model. Such findings are helpful in building our knowledge about Korean students' thinking when it comes to their needs and purposes for language learning.

The studies cited above have so far introduced how variations in language come to form listeners' perceptions about the speaker's personality traits and group membership, how listeners judge the intelligibility of speech of different speakers, and even how principles of language variation could be made applicable in English language teaching frameworks. The studies have found that the popular preference of Koreans in relation to the varieties of English is still AmE especially in the realm of English language teaching (J. Cha, 2013; S. J. Choi, 2011; H. Shin, 2007). But, acknowledging that a society’s linguistic preferences, attitudes, and needs are not static and will change along with migration and other social and cultural changes (Edwards, 1982; Graddol, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2007), it becomes important to examine in more detail how Korean ELLs in the Philippines perceive speakers of an AmE, PhilE, and KorE in terms of the speaker's character traits and social group memberships. With this major research problem in mind, the following questions are also considered: 1) What initial judgments do the participants make in terms of the speaker’s competence and social attractiveness traits? 2) Are the participants able to correctly identify the speaker’s country of origin? 3) How are the American, Filipino, and Korean speakers of English evaluated in terms of their desirability as English language teachers?

III. METHOD

1. Participants

The data for this study were collected during my graduate studies at the University of the Philippines. The participants consisted of Koreans who were engaged in English language learning activities in the Philippines at the time of study. A snowball approach to sampling (Kumar, 2005) was used to contact directors of language schools, private English tutors, university exchange student program coordinators, and other social organizations in Metro Manila and other surrounding areas. Those who agreed to participate further introduced other participants, which gradually increased the total number of respondents to 120. Considering the amount of time needed to complete one survey, only participants aged thirteen years and above were recruited. Male respondents consisted 51.7 percent of the sample, and females comprised 48.3 percent.

2. Materials and Procedure

This paper presents data obtained from materials and procedure originally designed for a larger graduate thesis, which included several sub-categories corresponding to the multifaceted aims of the thesis. However, my description of the methods here include only the areas directly relevant to the main purpose of this paper, which is to investigate Korean ELLs' perceptions about speakers of AmE, PhilE, and KorE accents in terms of each speaker's character traits, social group memberships, and desirability as English teachers.

The three varieties of English were particularly chosen not only based on the fact that they each represent a variety within Kachru's (1986) concentric circles, but also due to the belief that they are among the most frequently heard accents in the case of Koreans learning English in the Philippines. It is precisely these accents to which people are frequently exposed that are assumed to evoke strong evaluative responses (Milroy & McClenaghan, 1977, as cited in Edwards, 1982).

One audio sample from each of the varieties of English in question was used to elicit the speech style evaluations from the listeners. The AmE and KorE samples were collected from *The Speech Accent Archive* (*SAA*), whose contributors from many different parts of the world use only one and the same reading text to showcase their accents. However, due to the limited number of available contributions from Filipino speakers in the said website, the PhilE sample used for this study had to be outsourced from a different database with purposes identical to the *SAA*. The appropriateness of the reading passage used by all three speakers was judged on the basis that the text was short and concise, running only 25 to 30 seconds when read out loud. Also, the text uses neutral and common English words, which

would unlikely distract the attention of the respondent or again make him feel the sort of unease that an unfamiliar word might trigger. The most significant feature of the text is the claim that it contains practically all the consonants, vowels, and clusters of English (*SAA,* n. d.). Previous studies discussing the observed phonological features of AmE, PhilE, and KorE were consulted to ensure that the samples chosen contained such features. Table 1 presents the actual words used in the reading passage, as well as a phonetic transcription from each of the three speech samples in question following the *International Phonetic Alphabet* (*IPA*) system (*IPA*, 2005).

TABLE 1

Transcriptions of the Audio Samples

Original Passage	Sample 1: PhilE[2]	Sample 2: KorE[3]	Sample 3: AmE[4]
Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.	[plis kɔl stɛlə // as həɹ tʊ bɹɪn ðɪs θɪŋs wɨ həɹ fɹəm ðə stoɹ // siks **p**ʾʊns ɔf fɪɛʃ no **p**ʾis / faɪ**b** **t**ʾik sləbs of blu ʧɪs // ɛn meɪbi ə sn**a**kʾ fəɹ həɹ brə**d**əɹ bab // wi ʾɔlso nid a smol pl**a**stik sneɪk / ən a bi:g tɔɪ fɪæg for də kɪds // ʃi kən skʊp ðɪs θɪŋs ɪntu **ʧ**ɹi ɹed bags // ɛn wi wɪl goʊ mɐt həɹ / wɛnsdeɪ at də**s** tʃɹeɪn steɪʃən //]	[p**r**is kol stɛl**a** / æsk həɹ tu bɹiŋ **d**is θiŋs / wi**d** həɹ / fɹom: ɳ **d**ə stoɹ / siks **sp**ʰunz əv / fɹɛʃ **ɪs**no pʰis / faɪ**f** θikʾ / sl**ɛp**s ɔ bl̩u ʧiz ɛn meɪbi ʌ snɛkʾ foɹ həɹ bɹʌ**d**əɹ bap // wi ɔlso nid ə smo**ɹ** plɛstɪk sneɪk ɛn ə bi:k tʰɔɪ fɹa**k** / ə: fo **d**ə k**i:s** // ʃi kɛn skʊp dis **t**iŋs intu θɹi ɹed b**ɛk**s / ɛn wɪ wɪl go mit həɹ wɛnzdeɪ ɛt **d**ə tɹeɪn steɪʃon //]	[plis kɔl stɛlə // æsk həɹ tə bɹɪŋ ði:s θɪŋz wɪθ həɹ fɹm̩ ðə stor // sɪks spunz əf fɹɛʃ snoʊ pʰiz / faɪv θɪk slæbz əv blu ʧiz / ən meɪbi ə snæk fr̩ hr̩ bɹəðr̩ bab // wi jɔlso nid ə smɔl plæstɪk snɛɪk / ən ə bɪg tɔɪ fɹɔg fr̩ ðə kɪdz // ʃi kn̩ skup ðɪz θɪŋz ɪntə θɹi ɹed bægz / ɛn wi wɪl goʊ mit həɹ / wɛnzdeɪ ət ðə tɹeɪn steɪʃn̩ //]

The above IPA transcriptions reflect variations in the pronunciation of consonants, vowels, and pauses in between words. The features encoded in bold fonts represent some of the English accent variations described in the introductory section of this paper.

In the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions about each speaker's character traits before proceeding to categorize the speakers according to their

[2] The PhilE speech sample was recorded by user Ali's on August 19, 2007 through *Kantalk.com* (2007). The website privacy policy declares that the audio files "are all public information, and can be seen, listened [to], or read by anyone." The text used was from the *SAA.*

[3] The KorE sample is labeled as *korean16* in the *SAA*, which is run by the Linguistics Program in the Department of English, the College of Arts and Science's Technology across the Curriculum Program, and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. Audio files in the archive are under a Creative Commons License.

[4] The AmE sample is labeled as *english50* in the *SAA*. Same credits apply as in *english50* above.

social memberships in order to capture the listeners' immediate reactions upon hearing each speech sample. Finally, they were asked if they would choose the speaker as their English teacher.

For the question on participants' judgment of each speaker's character traits, a Likert scale was used. All listeners were asked to rate the speakers' character traits on the dimensions of competence and social attractiveness. The indirect strategies of the VGT include asking respondents to rate "Speaker 1 / 2 / 3" (without revealing the speaker's nationality) separately. For the question on how listeners perceive the social group memberships of the speakers, multiple choice questions were given so the participants can make guesses about the speaker's country of origin, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment. An open-ended question was additionally asked to give some space for the participants to explain their choices. The participants' evaluation of the speakers' desirability as English teachers was also asked in a multiple choice format.

3. Data Analysis

The social nature of language evaluation is based on the premise that, when listeners begin to adhere to social conventions and popular preferences, they may no longer be evaluating the language or speech per se, but rather the speaker (Edwards, 1982). In other words, although the speech style evaluations considered here in fact uses accented speech samples as elicitation instruments, the object of participants' evaluation are assumed to be the speakers, and not the speech. This justifies the inclusion of questions on the speaker's character traits and social memberships in the research.

Like previous speech style evaluation studies, the character traits considered here relate to dimensions of competence and social attractiveness. Competence-related traits included adjectives such as intelligent, self-confident, fluent, and clear. Meanwhile, social attractiveness-related traits included pleasant, gentle, familiar, friendly, and trustworthy.

To analyze the respondents' identification of social categories in relation to each speaker, frequency counts were used. The given answers were further categorized as either correct or incorrect. For instance, in response to the speaker's country of origin, correct answers would be the Philippines for Speaker 1, South Korea for Speaker 2, and the U.S. for Speaker 3. All other responses were labeled in the analysis as "incorrect."

The listeners' choice of whether or not they would have the speaker as their English teacher was finally asked to detect how real-life choices could be shaped by their positive or negative judgments about the character traits of a speaker, and their correct and incorrect categorizations of the speaker.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Initial Judgments on Each Speaker's Character Traits

1) Competence-Related

The data gathered from competence-related character trait evaluations are summarized in Table 2. Only the most frequent ratings given by the highest percentage of respondents are noted. A scale of 1 to 5 applies, with the following values: 1 = not evident at all; 2 = not very evident; 3 = neutral; 4 = somewhat evident; and 5 = very evident.

Each speaker elicited a different nature of responses. For the KorE speaker, a somewhat negative rating of 2 persisted, especially in relation to "confident." The AmE elicited the opposite, receiving the highest ratings of 5 in traits such as "clear," "confident," and "fluent." Also, for these three traits, more than 50 percent of the participants agreed to give the highest ratings, which reflects the highest rate of participant agreement compared to the previous two samples. Despite the tendency displayed by the listeners to give clearly positive or negative evaluations to the AmE and KorE speakers respectively, the results in relation to the PhilE speaker show that a neutral rating was assigned on all four traits. These relatively less concrete evaluations could be due to a lack of awareness about the speaker's ethnic, special, or educational background.

TABLE 2

Listeners' Ratings[a] of the Speakers' Competence-Related Character Traits (n = 120)

Speaker's Accent	Ratings	Competence-related traits			
		Clear	Confident	Fluent	Intelligent
1 (PhilE)	Value	3	3	3	3
	% of Total[b]	31.1	36.7	35.3	36.7
2 (KorE)	Value	2	1	2	2
	% of Total	37.5	45.8	41.7	37.5
3 (AmE)	Value	5	5	5	4
	% of Total	54.2	56.7	56.7	45.0

Notes.

[a] The values in this table only reflect the mode, or the most common rating given by the respondents using the Likert scale.

[b] This shows the percentage of respondents who gave the aforementioned value.

2) Social Attractiveness-Related

The most frequent ratings given by the highest percentage of respondents are summarized in Table 3. A scale of 1 to 5 also applies, with values the same as in Table 2.

On character traits relating to the speakers' social attractiveness, the dominant rating assigned to the PhilE speaker ranged from 3 to 2. For the KorE sample, the ratings also ranged from 3 to 2, although the values are observably lower than those assigned to the PhilE speaker. Despite the rating of 3 assigned to "gentle," three other traits received a rating of 2, and the lowest rating of 1 was assigned to "pleasant." This goes beyond the expectation that this speech sample would get favorable ratings in the dimension of social attractiveness given the presumed tendency of listeners to positively evaluate speech style based on the similarity or familiarity they perceive to share with the speaker (Berger & Bradac, 1982; Melander, 2003). In other words, the KorE sample actually gathered the least favorable ratings in comparison to the other two speech samples. Considering the sociolinguistic context surrounding Koreans' use of English, the negative ratings assigned to the KorE sample could be due to the fact that despite the increased functions of English in the Korean education system (Brender, 2007) and media (J. S. Lee, 2006; J. S.-Y. Park, 2004), some Koreans still feel that there is still little to no opportunity to use English on a daily basis (Albela, de Guzman, Ferrer, Nieto, & Santos, 2006). Given the gaps in Koreans' opportunity to practice speaking in English, the English accent that one Korean uses may not necessarily be likened to that of another Korean, which thus implies that KorE may have less symbolic social attractiveness features to Koreans.

TABLE 3

Listeners' Ratings[a] of the Speakers' Traits Related to Social Attractiveness (n = 120)

Speaker's Accent	Ratings	Social Attractiveness-related traits				
		Gentle	Familiar	Friendly	Pleasant	Trust-worthy
1 (PhilE)	Value	3	3	2	2	3
	% of Total[b]	36.7	36.4	32.5	31.7	45.0
2 (KorE)	Value	3	2	2	1	2
	% of Total	36.1	33.3	33.3	41.7	37.0
3 (AmE)	Value	3	4	4	4	4[c], 5[c]
	% of Total	41.5	42.5	35.0	32.8	41.7

Notes.

[a] The values in this table only reflect the mode, or the most common rating given by the respondents using the Likert scale.

[b] This corresponds to the percentage of respondents who gave the aforementioned value.

[c] These two ratings were given by an equal number of respondents.

In relation to AmE, four out of the five traits within the social attractiveness dimension were evaluated positively, which implies that positive attitudes towards the AmE accent still generally prevail, especially in comparison with other English varieties. The context surrounding Korean language education may serve to explain these positive results. Koreans' history of encounters with Americans shows that the U.S. has occupied a special place in Korea from 1882 when the Korea-U.S. treaty was signed (A. Nahm, 1988; J. S.-Y.

Park, 2004) up to the present day when the majority of English-speaking professors being sought by universities and other institutions in Korea are those whose background include an American education (Brender, 2007) or nationality (J. Cha, 2013).

2. Perceptions about Each Speaker's Social Memfberships

This phase looks at categorizations according to each speaker's country of origin, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment. Categorization refers to a phase in cognitive processing, whereby an accent (or other cues) perceived by listeners may enable them to locate the speaker sociologically (Rosch, 1978; Giles & Ryan, 1982).

1) Country of Origin

This question was included to establish whether the Korean learners could accurately identify, based on the variations they heard from the accented speech samples, the speaker's country of origin. The listeners were given multiple choices including the U.S., Australia, the Philippines, India, Japan, South Korea, and Others. The countries included in the list represent those whose nationalities had the top two greatest number of tourist arrivals from respective Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle countries to Korea in August 2009 according to the statistics compiled by Korea Tourism Organization.

One respondent failed to answer this item in the questionnaire, and thus was excluded from the analysis. Of the 119 respondents, 42.9% correctly associated Speaker 1 with the Philippines, while the remaining majority were divided between associating her with countries such as South Korea (18.5%), Japan (15.1%), and others. The participants' responses to this item are relatively more varied in the sense that all the given choices (i.e., the U.S., Australia, the Philippines, India, Japan, South Korea, and Others) were selected by at least four listeners. The relevant data are summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Listeners' Identification of the Country of Origin of Speaker 1 (n = 119)

		Frequency Count	Percentage
Responses	South Korea	22	18.5
	Japan	18	15.1
	Philippines	51	**42.9**
	United States	7	5.9
	India	9	7.6
	Australia	8	6.7
	Others	4	3.4
	Total	119	100.0

The following comments gathered from the open-ended question may explain the respondents' mixed responses in relation to the Speaker 1:

(1) “accent was . . . strange” (incorrect response: Japan)
(2) “She is not good in English” (incorrect response: South Korea)
(3) “She speak very well. very good pronunciation” [sic], and “the speaker spoke clearly” (incorrect response: United States)

And at last, correctly identifying the speaker as coming from the Philippines, some respondents observed that:

(4) “pronunciation is similar to the Philippines person pronunciation” [sic].

Comments 1 and 2 were negative in nature, arising from the respondents’ misidentification of Speaker 1, who was in fact a Filipino, as either Japanese or Korean. This directly contrasts with Comment 3, given by respondents who incorrectly identified the speaker as someone from the U.S. The contrast between these two groups of incorrect comments clearly depict views influenced by traditional perceptions about the differences surrounding “native” and “non-native” speakers of English. Since Koreans and Japanese are widely known as “non-native” speakers, the speech sample was judged as “strange” when associated with this category. And since Americans are known as “native” speakers, the same speaker was perceived as “very good” when perceived as American. Comment 4 does not contain such evaluative messages; it is simply stating what the listener noticed about the speaker's pronunciation. The relatively lower percentage of Koreans who correctly identified the Philippines as the Speaker 1's country of origin is not surprising because some features of PhilE are found to be shared by many varieties of English used in Asia and Africa (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008).

As far as Speaker 2 is concerned, the data indicate that 87.5% of the respondents correctly associated her with South Korea, indicating that the speaker was not difficult to locate regionally. Unlike the pattern of responses observed in relation to Speaker 1, only a few respondents chose to associate Speaker 2 with other neighboring countries such as Japan (6.7%) and the Philippines (4.2%). Table 5 presents the details of how the respondents identified the country of origin of Speaker 2.

TABLE 5

Listeners' Identification of the Country of Origin of Speaker 2 (n = 120)

		Frequency Count	Percentage
Responses	**South Korea**	105	**87.5**
	Japan	8	6.7
	Philippines	5	4.2
	India	1	.8
	Australia	1	.8
	Total	120	100.0

Quite similar to the nature of Comments 1 and 2 about Speaker 1, a 15-year-old male respondent shared, "I've heard that Japanese people are not good in English" (his emphasis). Another 17-year-old male respondent who believed that the speaker came from the Philippines said, "When I listen to her voice I think about Filipino" [sic]. Despite these incidental observations, the number of correct answers amounted to 87.5%, which represents the highest percentage of correct responses compared to Speakers 1 and 3. According to the comments gathered from the open-ended question, Speaker 2 was believed to be Korean because she sounded like the respondents themselves or some other person from their community. This is a logical justification, but it does not explain why none of them chose to categorize the speaker as coming from the United States. In fact, the statistics shows that the U.S. is the only country given in the choices that had zero frequency, implying that none of the respondents thought it possible for Speaker 2 to come from the U.S. The reason must be that they generally perceived the KorE variety as very different from AmE; that the phonological features they heard from Speaker 2 did not exhibit something that they would associate with the U.S. Further making it unlikely for a listener to associate a KorE variety with AmE are the existing perceptions about the two varieties as expressed in Comments 2 and 3 above.

In relation to Speaker 3, again, one respondent failed to answer this item in the questionnaire, and thus was excluded from the analysis. Of the 119 valid responses, Table 6 shows that 73.3% of the respondents correctly associated the speaker with the U.S.

TABLE 6

Listeners' Identification of the Country of Origin of Speaker 3 (n = 119)

		Frequency Count	Percentage
Responses	South Korea	3	2.5
	Philippines	17	14.2
	United States	88	**73.3**
	Australia	9	7.5
	Others	3	2.5
	Total	119	100.0

To explain why they answered accordingly, the respondents stated that Speaker 3 was "fluent," "confident," and had "good intonation and smooth pronunciation." Two selections that do not appear in Table 6 (i.e., Japan and India) have not been chosen by any respondent as the country of origin of Speaker 3. Again, Comments 1 and 3 previewed above may explain that it is not possible for the respondents to associate a "very good" accent with a country (i.e., Japan) whose people are perceived to sound "strange" when they speak English. Meanwhile, other respondents thought Speaker 3 was from the Philippines (14.2%) and Australia (7.5%). Guessing the Philippines to be Speaker 3's country of origin could be related to the fact that the survey location was in the Philippines and they might have encountered Filipinos who spoke like the AmE speaker.

2) Socioeconomic Status and Educational Attainment

The data gathered in this section also includes additional details such as socioeconomic status and educational attainment to explore how the listeners perceived the social memberships of the speakers based on accent. Table 7 shows that all three speakers were generally categorized in the "middle-class" socioeconomic stratum.

The second most frequent categorization made by the listeners was in relation to the AmE speaker as belonging to the "rich" class, and both the PhilE and KorE speakers as belonging to the "working class." These results illustrate that through accent evaluation, ESL learners could also play a role in reinforcing the "lectal" framework that was used to describe the varieties spoken in different socioeconomic (Llamzon, 1997) and educational (Platt & Weber, 1980, as cited in Y. Kachru & Smith, 2008) settings. Categorizing the PhilE and KorE varieties as products of the working class is equivalent to saying that the respondents considered these as "basilectal" varieties (i.e., the kind that is spoken with features from the speaker's mother tongue substituting the phonemes in the target language) (Tayao, 2004).

TABLE 7

Listeners' Perceptions of the Speakers' Socio-economic Status (n = 120)

Speaker's Accent	Socio-economic Status				
	Super Rich (%)	Rich (%)	Middle Class (%)	Working Class (%)	Poor (%)
1 (PhilE)	0.0	8.3	64.2	22.5	5.0
2 (KorE)	0.0	3.3	80.0	15.0	1.7
3 (AmE)	3.3	45.0	50.0	1.7	0.0

Similarly, Table 8 shows that the most frequent response in terms of the Korean listeners' perceptions about each speaker's highest educational attainment was also the

same across the three speakers, which was the “undergraduate” level.

TABLE 8

Listeners’ Perceptions of the Speakers’ Highest Educational Attainment (n = 120)

Speaker’s Accent	Highest Educational Attainment					
	Elementary School (%)	Middle School (%)	High School (%)	Technical School (%)	Undergraduate Degree (%)	Graduate School (%)
1 (PhilE)	5.0	12.5	25.8	15.8	38.3	2.5
2 (KorE)	2.5	14.2	32.5	12.5	35.8	2.5
3 (AmE)	.8	0.0	.8	8.4	65.8	24.2

Again, the second most frequent values in the data set, specifically “graduate school” for the AmE speaker and “high school” for both the PhilE and KorE speakers imply that speakers perceived to be from the working class are not only associated with having poor socioeconomic status but also with being less educated (Platt & Weber, 1980, cited in Y. Kachru & Smith, 2008). The underlying principle connecting the two variables is that the working class only has minimal access to education, not to mention that they must also have limited opportunity to properly learn a target language (variety).

The questions on socioeconomic status and educational attainment were meant to explore any social perceptions that the listeners held toward a couple of other aspects in the speakers’ background. They were also envisioned to provide supplementary insight towards an understanding of the respondents' expression of preferences later on.

3. Desirability of Each Speaker as English Teacher

After taking into account the judgments made by the Koreans in relation to the three varieties of English, there is another measure left to do in order to arrive at an "overall impression" of listeners’ evaluations of the accents, and that is to find out the likeability of the accent according to the listener (Giles & Ryan, 1982, p. 213). This last phase of evaluation was included in the study to find out whether the accent heard would result in Koreans’ positive or negative preference to have the speaker as their English teacher. The question was limited in a way that would be applicable only to the respondents’ preferences for English teachers (and not for other purposes such as the accent that they prefer to hear or use in the home, among friends, etc.) because of the assumption that only particular speech styles are appropriate for particular settings and that different accents have their own distinct uses (Bourhis, 1982; Nader, 1968).

Considering the accent they heard from Speaker 1, Table 9 shows a relatively wider distribution of responses gathered from the respondents: 57.5% gave an answer of “No” to have the speaker as their English teacher; 23.3% said, “Yes”; and 19.2% answered, “I

don't know." With regard to Speaker 2, the "No" response given by the Korean listeners was heavily condensed at 89.1%. Speaker 3 gathered a popular response of "Yes" at 88.2%.

TABLE 9

Listeners' Evaluations of the Desirability of Each Speaker as English Teacher (n = 120)

Responses (%)	Speaker's Accent		
	1 (PhilE)	2 (KorE)	3 (AmE)
Yes	23.3	4.2	88.2
No	57.5	89.1	4.2
I don't know	19.2	6.7	7.6

The Korean students' preferences as shown in Table 9 reflect that the most ideal English teacher is the speaker with an AmE accent, followed by a PhilE accent, and lastly, KorE. While KorE and AmE gathered an almost 90% agreement rate, the largest degree of disagreement in relation to the PhilE speaker is worth noting. The reason behind this relatively wide distribution of mixed answers could be due to the results from the previous questions. Since only 42.9% of the respondents correctly identified the Philippines as the speaker's country of origin while the rest had mixed responses, it appears that the listeners could not precisely place the speaker in any social group. Thus, it would not be an easy task for the respondents to express a clear preference for or against this speaker.

Another thing worth noting is the reason behind the popular preference for the AmE speaker and against the KorE speaker. One female university student from the sample justifies this preference by commenting, "I don't want to study English with Korean especially for speaking English. Of course there are people who are really good at English in Korea but I think she's not." Also, with reference to Speaker 3 (i.e., American), she shares, "…I think she is native speaker. If she is my teacher, she correct my way of speaking English more easily and clearly" [sic]. Her views have been echoed by many other respondents, and also reflect their evaluations of the two speakers' character traits on the dimensions of competence and social attractiveness.

The statistics collected from the Korean respondents seems to substantiate the impression that a large portion of the society does accept the AmE variety as a "norm" or a desirable model based on the language perceivably used by native speakers (B. Kachru, 1986). In contrast, a speaker identified as "non-native" does not typically lead to popular acceptance as this clashes with their clear desire to acquire a native accent.

V. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Speech style evaluation is such a complex situation and it is not correct to assume that listeners' evaluative reactions to accent differences are simply due to outright prejudice or favor towards a certain speaker. It is the character trait or social group of the speaker that is perceived through the language variety itself that could lead to more pronounced preferences in terms of practical matters such as choosing one's English teacher's accent.

The results obtained from this study reflect a general pattern that assigns a less competent and less attractive, less prestigious and less educated status to speakers who are perceived to be using "non-native" varieties of English. This echoes Rajagopalan's (2005) sentiment that non-native speakers are only considered "second class citizens" (p. 283), and may serve to explain why, in contrast, a speaker identified as using a native or Inner Circle variety remains as the more highly-preferred language teacher. It is possible that ELLs do not only wish to acquire native proficiency in the language, but also unconsciously want to attain the social prestige they themselves associate with speakers of an Inner Circle variety.

Since attitudes and perceived information about speakers of English have been observed to greatly affect students' learning of the language (Baker, 1992; Lado, 1988), it is important to improve our critical awareness about the existing evaluative reactions surrounding speakers from the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle. This is particularly relevant in countries such as South Korea, where institutions are beginning to take advantage of study abroad programs, global English conversation classes, and other similar courses advocating the principles of intercultural English learning and teaching as modern strategies in English education (J. Cha, 2013; K.-Y. Lee, 2012).

The results of this study should move academics and teachers to re-conceptualize their practices in the language classroom, be it in Korea or abroad. One way to do this is to continue reflecting and seeking ways to set straight ELLs' common notions about "native" and "non-native" varieties of English. Clearly, the PhilE speech sample in this study elicited evaluations that were rather less definitive compared to the other two speech samples. Simply accepting an Outer Circle variety as a "native" variety of English could distort learner expectations and even cripple the unique advantages of learning English from an Outer Circle speaker. However, viewing speakers from the Outer Circle as "non-natives" could likewise lead to misleading perceptions about the speakers, such as their lack of proficiency or level of confidence in speaking the language. A growing body of research on PhilE speakers has actually shown that Filipinos take pride and have strong beliefs in their English language abilities (e.g., Borlongan, 2009; Mahboob & Cruz, 2013). Yet, those who are exposed to Filipino speakers of English are not able to create strong characterizations of the competence or social attractiveness of the speakers of this language variety. These uncertain evaluations of the Outer Circle variety imply a kind of confusion

among language learners, which teachers and language policy-makers could take advantage of in order to spread more facts about the history and development of this variety, not as a learner variety or non-native variety, but a more established, nativized variety of English. Perhaps, this alternate perspective into the formation of attitudes toward speakers from the Outer Circle may also lead to a more open atmosphere that welcomes speakers of this variety of English in the language classroom.

Likewise, one practical way of dealing with the stigma found against KorE would be to lead ELLs towards the discovery that not all regional accents or Expanding Circle varieties of English necessarily imply lower proficiency or lower social status and prestige. The persistent negative views should be taken as a compelling factor for scholars, teachers and policy-makers to re-evaluate whether or why they need to uphold any particular pronunciation model as the target. It is also important to note that despite the results from the current study, there have been relatively open responses to alternative English education frameworks in Korea, such as the ELF model (see S. J. Choi, 2011). These could be a promising indication of the possibility that changes can happen in terms of striving to speak in only one "ideal" accent to attaining something more realistic and applicable in specific contexts. A shift from strict pronunciation goals may also work to alter the prevailing stigma, low self-confidence, indifference to the language learning experience that many language learners often find difficult to escape from. While radical changes on the majority's language attitudes may not happen immediately due to the current teaching practices and pronunciation models, there are definite steps available to learn how to acknowledge English and all of its various characteristics and uses, and finally ensure that 'equal treatment is allotted to all varieties of English and its speakers' (Marlina, 2014).

The results from this study have been helpful in providing information about the language attitudes of Koreans in a study abroad context, although some methodological limitations present further opportunities for inquiry. First, in relation to the respondents featured in this study, a comparison of study abroad participants versus ELLs staying in Korea would help future studies to specifically investigate how exposure to different varieties of English might be a factor in determining language attitudes. Also, in selecting the speech samples used for attitude elicitation, the only factors considered were the similarity in voice quality, speed, background noise, and most especially the speakers' employment of the allophonic variants of vowels and consonants that have been discussed in the relevant literature characterizing the varieties of English in question. As in previous studies following the verbal guise technique (e.g., Y. S. Kim, 2007), the current study did not consider the differences in the speakers' language proficiency levels, which could have actually been perceived by the respondents and thus influenced their evaluations. Future studies would therefore benefit from ensuring that all speech recordings do not only represent authentic speakers, but also exude the same language proficiency level.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Secondary/Tertiary

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