

Some Thoughts on the Native Speaker of English¹

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The purpose of this paper is to reconsider the concept of the native speaker of English in light of the heightened status of English as a global language. The broadening and acceptance of criteria regarding who is a native speaker is historically discussed and placed in a modern context. In particular, perceptions towards the English native speaker and the relationship between language and culture were explored through a semi-structured oral interview administered to 56 respondents. Questions in the interview explored perceptions towards non-native speaker's use of English, cultural influence on language, and intercultural communication, among other topics. Interview results show that the respondents are aware that the spread of English across the world has reshaped the notion of the native speaker and the ownership of English. Respondents also recognize the inseparable relationship between language and culture. It is suggested that instead of the term "native speaker of English" the term "glocalized or global English speaker" better reflects the somewhat ambiguous nature of English speakers.

Key Words: native speaker, English as a global language, glocalization

1 Introduction

We are living in a global world where English is the most favored and widely employed language and means of communication. English is learned, taught, and used globally. Wherever we go, we can hear English spoken among people from different cultural backgrounds as a means of communication. In Korea, English is taught from elementary school onwards, and it is more than just a foreign language because "English is a prerequisite for professional success as well as a communication tool for global interaction" (Park, 2006).² Native speakers of English (NSEs), therefore, have long been considered important because there appears to be a firm and blind belief that norms and authentic models should come from NSEs. Particularly, when it comes to authentic phonetic input, an appeal to NSEs is never ending.³ In Korea, the term "native speakers" means NSEs.

English education in Korea appears to be heavily dependent on NSEs, for better or worse and it seems that other Asian countries are not an exception to this. The high demand for NSEs in Korea leads to what we call 'native speaker syndrome.' Both parents and students tend to rely heavily on NSEs for models,

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norms and goals. Students' anxiety to speak like an native speaker of English (NSE) and parents' desire to educate their children to speak like an NSE seem to be well matched with the timing of globalization. NSEs, who are presumed to speak standard, authentic and perfect English, are thought to be an absolute solution to problems of English education in Korea because learning English from an NSE is considered to be a necessary and sufficient condition to speak like an NSE. NSEs seem to be thought and believed as the only solution or as "de ex machina" by most Korean parents and students. In this connection, it is important to think about what is meant by NSEs and to see how people (both NSEs and non NSEs) actually use the term.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the importance of reconsidering the concept of NSE since the term appears to be controversial in that different criteria have been applied to define it. This study, albeit tentative, shows that (1) the broad sense of the term⁴ is widely accepted by a majority of the interviewees whether they are NSEs or non-NSEs and that (2) an NSE may not be the appropriate term to be used in this global world where there are no linguistic boundaries among nations as far as English is concerned. If the majority of speakers accept the concept in a broad sense, there must be reasons for that. Moreover, language is described as it is perceived, thought, and employed by people who are using it. If the term NSEs is perceived, defined, and employed differently from what it used to be, then a new definition of the term should be employed and accepted. Three decades ago, terms such as 'world Englishes' and 'global English' were unheard of. However, now we all know that there is not only British and American English but also other Englishes spoken in this world.

This study attempts to find out what people have in mind when they say and hear the term NSE. We are also interested in people's perceptions of the relationship between language and culture. For this purpose, fifty-six people were selected for an oral interview on the concept of NSE and the relationship between language and culture. We thought their immediate responses to the given questions would reflect their mind on the concept of the term NSE.

2 A Brief Review

In this section, a brief review of the controversial notion of NSEs will be discussed since there seem to be different concepts of NSEs currently.

According to Davies (2003), Bloomfield used the term, 'the native language' instead of 'native speaker' and by that term he meant "language learned at one's mother's knee" or "the first language one learns to speak." In this connection, there is an isomorphic relationship between the native speaker and the first language/mother tongue. A native speaker can be regarded as a speaker of a given speech as his or her mother tongue. However, it was the early part of the 20th century when Bloomfield used the term relating one's mother tongue.

As Davies (2003) stated, we are all native speakers of a language. The question is what it means to be an NSE. In Davies (1991, 39), he introduced problems of defining the term in a narrow sense. If exposure to a language in early

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childhood is the only criterion to define the term narrowly, then we face at least two issues (Davies 2003): (1) very outstanding and successful learners who can not be distinguished from the “birthright native speaker” in terms of their language competence and performance and (2) significant differences among “birthright native speakers” in terms of accents, grammars, and so on. Moreover, if we accept the narrow definition of the term, with an early exposure to more than one language, how are they different from those who are native speakers of only one language? In this case of an native speaker of more than one language, what is the difference between multi-lingual and multi-native speakers? After all, does the term have any meaning at all if native speakers of more than one language outnumber native speakers of only one language? In other words, does the term have any place to stand in this global world?

Davies (2003, p.2) pointed out that the concept of an native speaker appears to be clear enough to be a common sense idea. Nevertheless, the term bears theoretical ambiguity as it raises the question of the relationship between the particular and the universal (Davies, 2003). The concept of an NSE has become a controversial issue since English is employed globally across national boundaries. What is an NSE? We often use the term to indicate idealized models and that an individual NSE represents such model (Davies, 2003). According to Davies (2003), this use of the term provides an inferiority complex on the part of non-native speakers of English because they are on the demand side, depending on the input provided by the supply side. In this connection, should the term be replaced with another term in this global world where everybody has equal membership to use English in this global community?

It appears that different criteria are used to define the term NSEs. It is also important to understand how difficult and ambiguous it is to define the term. The concept of an NSE is very controversial now that we're living in this global world where there are many bilinguals and multilinguals. They are considered to be native speakers of two or more languages. Inevitably, there is a need to define the term in a broader sense than before. This is natural if we consider the fact that language is always changing. Some words enjoy popularity before they faded away; some have undergone meaning specification, and some others meaning generalization. There is no reason why the term NSE should be an exception to this change.

Dictionaries such as Collins (ed. by Hanks in 1970) and Longman (ed. by Procter in 1978) provided us with two criteria in defining the term: (1) having a specified native language and (2) learning English as their first language. Some people (Cowie cited from Paikeday, 1985, p. 32) consider “time (early childhood) and place of acquisition (parental home)” as the keys to the concept of the term. For Paikeday (1985, p.87) the key criterion is one's proficiency in a specified language. According to him, the term “native speaker” defined as someone with grammatical intuitions of his or her mother tongue is an artifact made by linguists. To this we must add another criterion, namely, the perspectives of NSEs, especially those who belong to the Inner Circle.⁵ The Inner Circle has been classified as ‘the norm-providing circle’ and the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle as ‘the norm-developing’ and ‘the norm-dependent circle,’ respectively(Jenkins, 2005).

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Depending on whose point of view the term is defined from, a totally different notion could arise. Also, it is important to consider when the term started to be used and what was meant by the term at that time. By tracing back the use of the term, we have a better idea of when and how the term was, has been, and is used by whom in what sense.

It is plausible that there are different concepts of NSE currently. Globalization brings forth the awareness of diversity and, at the same time, of unity. Issues can be seen from multilingual perspectives as well as monolingual perspectives. Globalization naturally brings about multilingual community or society where a person could be a native speaker of many languages.

As Gleason mentioned (cited in Paikeday, 1985, xiv), a native speaker is a very difficult term to define. The term has meant different things to different people at different times. In reality, what counts in defining the term is power and prejudice (Davies, 2003). The history of the English language provides us with a valuable piece of information on how the term has been used differently in different times.

When Great Britain was in the center of world power, NSEs were considered to be the British and their English was regarded as the norm and the model that English learners should copy.⁶ Those who would like to communicate with NSEs had to learn the language from them because they were on the demand side, not on the supply side. Moreover, they were on the minority side of world power and industrial development.

The first diaspora of English began as the English moved to America, Australia, New Zealand, and so forth (Jenkins, 2005). The English moved to these areas with the language they spoke at home, and it was natural that, as time passed and as they adapted to new surroundings, their language changed. In other words, they are still NSEs but different from the ones they left at home, England. American English (and for that matter Australian English and Canadian English too) is different from British English. Americans, Australians, and Canadians who use English as their first language identify themselves as NSEs. As America has become the center of world power, Americans speaking American English are considered to be the model of NSEs. English is used everywhere in this globe, as a contact language, an international language, and a global language.

The second diaspora of English (Jenkins, 2005) began as English was transplanted to countries where it is used as a means of communication, a medium of instruction, and as an official language. English is learned and used as a means of communication in Singapore, India, Pakistan, and Malaysia. Now English is taken for granted as a global communication tool. Everywhere you go, you can see many people communicate in English inter-culturally as well as intra-culturally. The global use of English has an unavoidable impact on the concept of an NSE since interlocutors, whether they are natives or non-natives, can have mutual influence upon one each other. People who are using English as a global communication tool outnumber the British and the Americans. According to Erad (July, 2008, *Wired*), “only 15 % of the estimated 2 billion people who will be using or learning the language” are NSEs by 2020. In this connection, it is not surprising for Crystal (In advance of a lecture, at the University of Winchester, on the growth and evolution of

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the English language, 2008/04/18 by Laura Clout) to suggest that “as English spreads around the world,” people eventually have to have diglossia (one variety spoken in their native country and the other global variety of English). This is inevitable, according to him, because non-NSEs outnumber NSEs. This means that the term can be considered not only from mono-lingual perspectives but also from multilingual perspectives.

The term can be defined differently depending on what is focused on, considering the global status of English. If we follow Kachru (1985)’s categorization of “World Englishes on the basis of the types of English spread, the acquisition pattern, and the functional distribution of English in different regional contexts,” there are three possibilities regarding the concept of the native speaker.⁷

The first possibility is that NSEs are the ones in the “Inner Circle” where English is employed as the mother tongue. This circle is the so-called “norm-providing circle” (Jenkins, 2005) because those who belong to this circle are the NSEs by whom standards of English are determined. According to this view, “the direction of teaching English is from NSEs to non-NSEs” because the Inner Circle provides norms for English (Park & Nakano, 2007). This is the narrow view implicitly adopted by many people who belong to the Inner Circle. This view also takes the term as “flesh and bone” (Paikeday, 1985)⁸ Dictionaries also take the term in the general sense of “a person having a specified native language” (Collins, 1979, cited from Paikeday, 1985), “to denote someone who has learned the language from his earliest days by virtue of having been born in the country in which it is spoken”(Collins, 1979). According to Longman (1978),” NSEs are those who learn English as their first language, especially in Britain, America, Australia, etc.” The term is generally considered in terms of first language, being born in the country where the language is spoken as a first language. There is a problem in this type of the definition.

Recently we met a 20 year old woman who was born in Korea and lived there until she arrived in Hawaii at three years of age. She speaks English fluently both at home and at school. She feels more comfortable speaking in English than in Korean. However, when asked if she considers herself a NSE, her immediate answer was “NO.” We asked her why. Her response was interesting. She was born in Korea, and that’s why she identifies herself as a non-native speaker of English. The language to which she was first exposed was Korean. However, after age three, she was exposed to English. She is learning Korean as a foreign language because she cannot communicate in Korean. Yet she identifies herself as a non-native speaker of English. Evidently her definition of native speaker of English is different. The country where one was born is what counts when defining the term, according to her.

Also, we were told (personal communication with Ms. Kim J.S 2008-06-27) about a Malaysian female student who identifies herself as an NSE. Her mother tongue is Chinese and her second language is English. Chinese is spoken at home, and she learned British English at school as her second language. Now she is in America to study and has a hard time communicating with American students due to difficulties in understanding lexical items. British and American English share the

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same lexical items although their pronunciation and meaning are sometimes not the same. Thus, misunderstanding and miscommunication are due to lexical items with different meanings and pronunciations. In this case of the Malaysian student, an NSE means a speaker who speaks the language as a second language.

The second possibility is that NSEs are the ones who belong not only to the “Inner Circle,” but also to the “Outer Circle” (Jenkins, 2005). Thus, NSEs refer “not only to those who speak English as their mother tongue but also to those who speak the language as an institutionalized language at work or at school” (Park & Nakano, 2007). According to this view, if you belong to the circle where English is used as a medium of instruction and communication as well as an official language, you are an NSE. This view implies that those who belong to the “Outer Circle” are the ones who develop their own standards just like the ones in the “Inner Circle.” This is a broad view adopted by many people who belong to the “Outer Circle.” That is, L2 speakers can become NSEs as can be seen by the aforementioned Malaysian student.

The third possibility is that NSEs are the ones who speak English whether they belong to the “Inner Circle” and the “Outer Circle” or the “Expanding Circle.” This is a much broader view than the aforementioned two views. Those who belong to this circle learn English as a foreign language at school. Thus, they have been considered non-native speakers of English both by the Inner Circle and the Outer Circle. According to Rajagopalan (2004), “World English is a linguistic phenomenon that is altogether “sui generis.” World English is a language spoken by a tremendous number of people cross-culturally. If we look at the number of speakers who use English, the majority (62.6%) of English speakers belong to the “Expanding Circle” while 37.4% and only 10% of English speakers belong to the “Outer Circle” and the “Inner Circle,” respectively (Jenkins, 2005). Thus, the number of speakers who use English as a second or a foreign language cannot and should not be ignored.

As Crystal (2008) said, “In language, numbers count. There are more people speaking English in India than in the rest of the native English-speaking world.” Therefore, as he predicts, it is more likely that there will be multitudes of global English dialects as it spreads all around the world (Crystal, 2008). According to him, it is highly plausible that two types of English, or ‘diglossia,’ are available: one spoken in their home country and the other spoken globally which can be understood cross-culturally. If this is the case, then there seem to be two different types of NSEs. If an NSE is to be employed in a much broader sense, we have to create a more congenial term than NSE.

According to Davies (2003, P. 211), it is not impossible for L2 speakers to become NSEs of the target language but it is a very difficult task since L2 learners have to meet the following six criteria: (1) early childhood acquisition, (2) intuitions about his or her own grammar, (3) intuitions about the grammar of the target language, (4) discourse and pragmatic control, (5) creative performance, and (6) interpreting and translating. He argued that all the features can be acquired without the first one. However, this is “difficult and rare” because the crucial differences between NSEs and non-NSEs “are to be found in judgment data on grammaticality sentences and gratitude situations” according to Davies (2003, P.

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215). His conclusion is that power is what counts alongside the L2 learner's awareness of confidence and identity (Davies, 2003, p.215). Thus, the distinction between the NSE vs. non-native speaker of English is not unlike other majority vs. minority power relations where minorities are negatively defined just as the non-native speaker is negatively defined (Davies, 2003).

To his (Davies) conclusion, we would like to add *prejudice* because it is, in many cases, what counts together with a negative attitude toward non-native speakers of English. NSEs tend to consider even the most fluent non-native speakers of English incompetent in the target language. Non-native speakers of English are often told, "Your English is very good." Non-native speakers of English might take this statement as a compliment, but it means that the non-native speakers of English performed better than they expected. NSEs do not seem to say this among themselves since they know and expect that they can understand one another. They belong to the same group who can understand and can be understood.

It is plausible that prejudice may have to do with power, but it seems that prejudice comes from belongingness whether they have power or not. When communicating with nonnative speakers of English, NSEs appear to have prejudice against non-native speakers of English whether they have confidence in the target language or not. NSEs immediately know that non-native speakers of English do not belong to the same community they belong to.

Who is a NS? Is there an isomorphic relation between the notion of an NSE and the standard language. For example, an NSE seems to be the one who employs a standard English. Then, the questions arise: What is the standard language? What is a standard English? Would the British and American regard India English as standard English? Even among British and American English speakers, there are several dialects and it would be hard to define what standard English is. We often hear that a native speaker of American English has a hard time understanding English in London. Also the native speaker of British English might have a hard time in understanding English in New York. It would be hard for non-native speakers of English to comprehend that NSEs have difficulties understanding each other.

The term, an NSE, seems to come from the idea that a specific group of people own the language. However, as Jose Saramago, Portugal's only Nobel literature laureate said (The Honolulu Advertiser, A 14, Sunday, April, 27, 2008), "We have to get over this idea that we own the language. The language is owned by those who speak it, for better or for worse."

We think it is important to find out and understand how people in this global world perceive the term. The oral interview is conducted⁹ to find out how people understand the term: what it means to be a NSE. It would be interesting and important if we can find any linguistic and paralinguistic differences among people who define the term in different ways.

3 The Oral Interview

In this section, (1) sampling of subjects, (2) questions for the oral interview, and (3)

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procedures of the interview will be discussed.

We would like to know what the term NSE means to the interviewees. For this purpose, we conducted oral interviews in Honolulu, Hawaii, since we think Hawaii is an ideal place to collect data from both native and non-native speakers of English. Hawaii is a place of linguistic and cultural diversity.

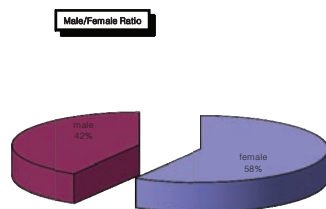
3.1 Subjects

Fifty-six people were selected for oral interviews on what is meant by NSEs and other related issues.¹⁰ Immediate responses to questions illustrate what they have deep in their mind on the concept of an NSE. Generally speaking, one can peep into another person's inner mind and thoughts through his/her immediate responses. The inner mind and thoughts deep in one's heart are not likely to be revealed by conscious thinking. One's immediate responses are unlikely to be covered with constraints.

Selection of subjects was a very difficult task in the beginning. No one seemed to be willing to be an interviewee. After we explained the purpose of this study and got acquainted with her for some time, the first interviewee, a sales clerk working for Marriott Hotel Vacation Rental, was willing to help us with the research. After that, we were fortunate to have recruited 55 interviewees from different walks of life. While conducting this study, we learned that honesty and a warm heart can make unimaginable things possible. We have also found out that there are many hard-working people who are willing to help others if they know that they can.

The above-mentioned 56 interviewees were all very sincere and honest in their oral interviews. Some of them were extremely open and tried to convey all they know related to the issues examined in this study. The following diagrams (1-5) illustrate the composition of the 56 interviewees in terms of 5 criteria: sex, age, nationality, occupation, and length of stay in Hawaii:

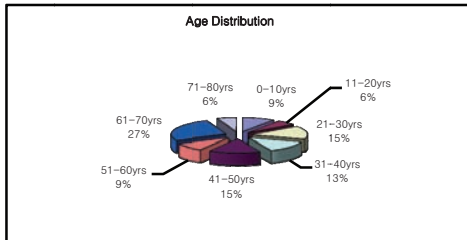
Diagram 1. Sex distribution



As is shown by diagram 1, it happens that females (58%) outnumber males.

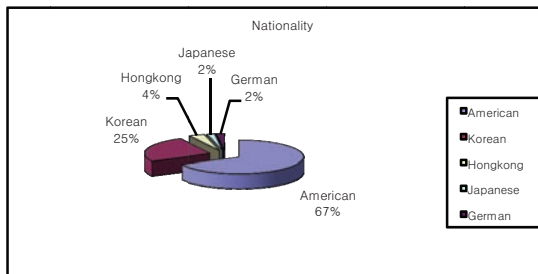
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Diagram 2. Age distribution



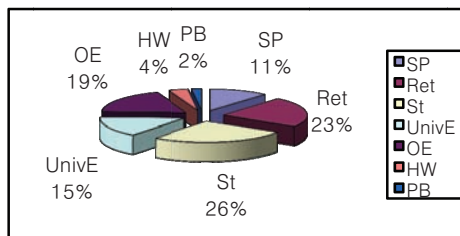
There is great variation in the age range: from 6 to 77.

Diagram 3. Distribution of Nationality



Interviewees for this study are composed of five different nationalities. Americans outnumber other nationalities.

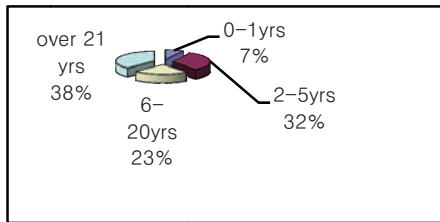
Diagram 4. Distribution of occupation



SP: Sales person Ret: Retiree St: Students UnivE: University employees
 OE: Other employees HW: House wife PB: Private business
 Occupations of interviewees vary greatly. However, student tops other occupations.

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Diagram 5. Length of stay in Hawaii



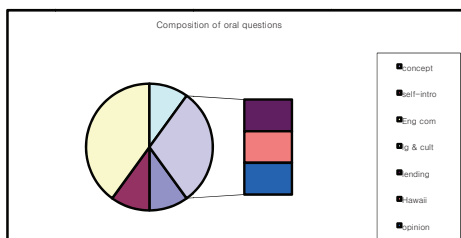
As to the length of stay in Hawaii, the majority of interviewees have lived in Hawaii more than 6 years.

In short, interviewees were selected as randomly as possible, and it turns out that their age and occupation ranges are somewhat greater than we expected.

3.2 Questions

Ten oral questionnaires in English were planned in advance for oral interviews. We crafted these oral questions carefully. We attempted to make the questions as simple, natural, and interesting as possible so that the interviewees would not have any problem in understanding them. In fact, an attempt is made to check if each interviewee understands every word(s) in the questions. Composition of ten questions is shown in the following diagram 6:

Diagram 6. Composition of ten questions



Q1. Question 1 on self-introduction

This is to give interviewees a time of relaxation and a sense of self-esteem and confidence, not to mention to have a smooth start, since they are tense before interviews. This question, however, provides us with a very interesting result about what is included en someone is asked to introduce him/herself. .

Q2~Q5. Questions 2 to 5 are the four questions on possible communication

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difficulties they might have experienced when communicating with native/non-native speakers of English. These are to find out what kind of communication difficulties arise with interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds they might have if they have any.

Q6. Question 6 is on the concept of the term an NSE. This is to find out if they have any clear idea of what an NSE is.

Q7. Question 7 is on pragmatics. It has been assumed that people are not reluctant to lend a large amount of money to their close friends depending on cultures (Park & Nakano, 1999). This is to find out how people from different cultural backgrounds react when a close friends asks to borrow \$2,000.

Q8. One question is on the relationship between culture and language, to be more specific, between L1 and L2. There are two opposing views on the early acquisition of a foreign or second language. The first view is that early acquisition of L2 facilitates native speaker like competence and should be encouraged. The second view is that early acquisition of L2 impedes the L1 acquisition and L1 way of thinking so that L2 acquisition/learning should be encouraged after children get to a certain point (when L1 has been mastered). This question is included to see how ordinary people from diverse cultural backgrounds have different perspectives.

Q9. Question 9 is on the distinctive characteristics of Hawaii. It is a well known fact that Hawaii is always at the top on the list of the countries everyone would like to visit. There must be some reasons why this is so. This question is to find out what makes Hawaii so attractive to many people.

Q10. Question 10 which is the last question seeks personal comments on a picture shown to the interviewee. The picture was taken from a magazine (Oahu This Week, March 2008), a guidebook for tourists to Hawaii. It is a picture of a model for pearls. Hawaii is a place where you can buy cultured pearls (black, white, yellow, and pink). This question is to see if the promotion picture is effectively communicating its original message to people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Although some of the questions may not seem be directly related to our stated research goal, they are included for the purpose of making interviewees feel at ease while being interviewed. However, it turns out that those seemingly unrelated questions provide important clues to the semantic change of the term, an NSE.

For example, Q 1 through Q 5 and Q 7 reveal an interesting result. The so-called, traditional American value system (equality, egalitarianism, directness, pragmatism, and rationalism cited in Sohn, 1986) and the traditional Korean value system (hierarchy, conservatism, indirectness, idealism, emotionalism cited in Sohn, 1986) have been changing in this global world due to cross-cultural interactions are non-avoidable and inevitable. Regarding self-introduction, there is not that much difference between NSEs and non-NSEs: their names, academic

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backgrounds, work experiences, their hobbies. As for the possible communication difficulties, most interviewees regardless of their nationality and cultural differences make themselves very clear that they do not experience that much difficulties. When it comes to lending a lump sum of money to their close friends, the strikingly different result we can find from the one found in a past study.

3.3 Procedures

Before conducting interview careful plans have to be made to make up oral questions for the interview (as discussed in 3.2). Having completed oral questions for the interview, the following procedures are adopted:

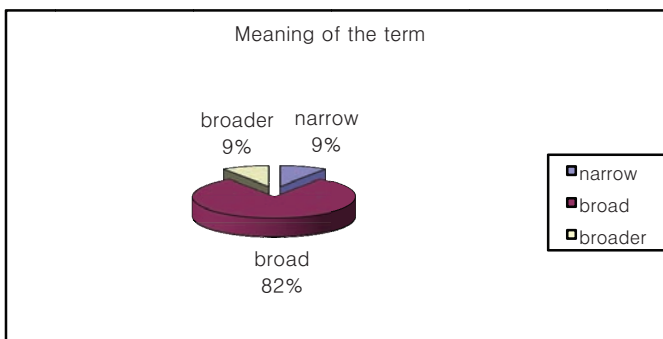
1. recruiting interviewees as randomly as possible
2. a brief explanation about the study
3. a brief introduction of the experimenters
4. creating a congenial atmosphere for interviewees to deliver their candid opinions
5. videotaping of each interview on the basis of oral questions
6. interviews conducted in English
7. transferring videotapes to CD Rom
8. transcription of the CD Rom
9. classification and analysis of the data
10. generalization and significance of the generalization

4 Analysis and Results

Taxonomy of Interviewees' oral opinions about the meaning of the term NSE is made after videotapes are transferred to CD Rom and transcribed. An attempt is also made to see the linguistic as well as paralinguistic differences among those who perceive the term differently. Results of the analysis are as follows:

First, the majority of interviewees take the term NSE in a broad sense, not in a narrow sense. The following diagram 7 on meaning of the term illustrates this point.

Diagram 7. Scope of the meaning of the term

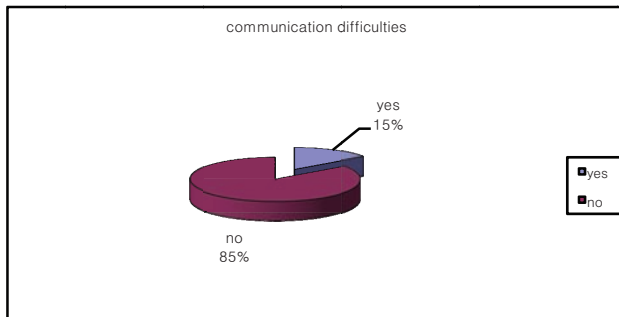


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It is interesting to observe that those who participated in the interview for this study are more tolerant in defining the term in a broad(er) sense. They are more open-minded than linguists and professionals in the related areas. They appear to be more globalized in their way of thinking whether they are NSEs or non-NSEs.

Second, as for questions about communication difficulties in English they might have encountered with speakers from different cultural backgrounds, we have a very surprising and interesting result as shown in the following diagram 8:

Diagram 8. Communication difficulties experienced by interviewees



The majority of interviewees (85%) have not suffered communication problems in English whether they are NSEs or not. One general comment from them is what counts in communication is not only the communication tool, the language, but also the heart, the attitude, and the supportive mind to understand others (interlocutors). Majority of them said that in the beginning it may be difficult to understand one's interlocutors if they are from different cultural backgrounds mainly because of their pronunciation, accent, and intonation. But these types of pronunciation problems are often observed even among people who belong to the Inner Circle. Therefore, once they get to know each other and are used to each other, there are no problems in understanding their interlocutors. This suggests that better communication comes from better understanding and supportive hearts.

Another interesting but very important point observed from interviewees is that they do not seem to emphasize or value one's pronunciation and choice of word(s) as long as they can make themselves understand and be understood. Some interviewees (43%) indicate that even among the Inner Circle group, or among Americans and the British for that matter, pronunciations and choice of words vary depending on where one is from. Therefore, it is not surprising to observe differences in pronunciation and diction when they communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. In fact, many of them (65%) mention that those differences are the things to be respected and valued not to be disrespected.

Third, for the questions of lending money to their close friends, we have a surprisingly different result from the study conducted by Park & Nakano (1999).

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According to Park & Nakano (1999) people from Western cultures are reluctant to lend a lump sum of money to their close friends while Asians (especially Koreans) lend money depending on how close they are to their friends. Some Koreans (usually those who want to borrow money) even go further by stating that one's closeness in friendship can be measured by how much money one can lend. "The dimension of solidarity" is what counts (Sohn, 1986). According to our oral interviews, majority of Americans (82%) would lend money to their close friends if they are financially in difficult positions. Half of them would not even ask why their friends need the money for. Some Americans (10%) would say that they would ask the reason to borrow the money and if is reasonable they would lend it to them. However 5% of American interviewees say that they would not lend the money because if they do they would lose both their friends and the money. On the other hand, the majority of Asian interviewees (85%) are very reluctant to lend money even to their close friends as is shown by the following diagrams 9 and 10:

Diagram 9. Westerners' responses

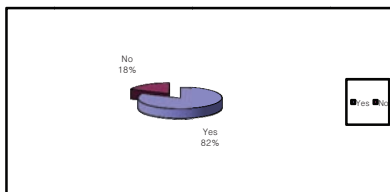
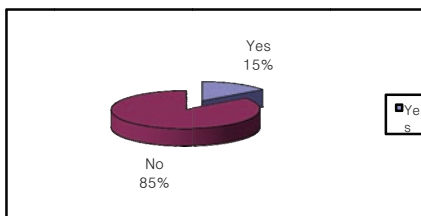


Diagram 10. Asians' responses



Some Asians (5%) would even go further and say that they have to ask their wives about the matter. One can think of several hypothetical reasons for this striking result. One of the plausible reasons for the results of majority of Americans' responses would be due to the fact that since they do not have the money with them now, it would be easy for them to say that they would lend it to their friends if they have it, without thinking in depth. Probably it may be possible for them to say different things when they really have the money with them.

Another plausible reason we can think of is that due to the impact of globalization and the growing diaspora of English, there are many more occasions where East meet with West. In cases of East meet with West, it is highly plausible that East and West cultures learn from each other or are merged. Western value

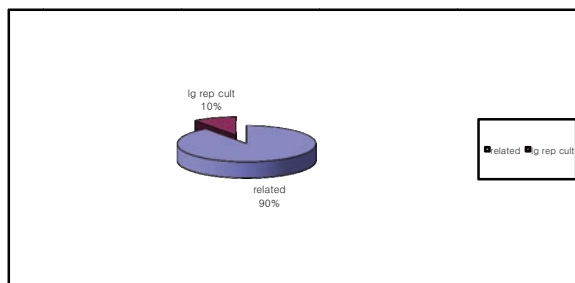
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system -individualism, equality, directness, pragmatism, and rationalism (Sohn, 1986, p.445)- is introduced into the Asian and vice versa. More opportunities to learn about other cultures and to localize them might be a reason.

Still another plausible explanation is that when people have gone through hardships, it is possible that their philosophy of life would change. They begin to understand what is the most important thing in leading their lives. Their life orientation would change. What they thought important and valuable in the past may not be so any more. In fact, some interviewees mentioned that their life experiences are what caused them to change their minds on lending/borrowing money. It may also be possible that our human nature does not simply allow us to do the things which go against our interests. Therefore, no one deep in one's mind would like to lend one's money even to a very close friend when he/she is not reliable. In other words, this may not be a matter of culture but a matter of trust.

Fourth as to the relationship between culture and language, most subjects (90%) think that they are inseparably related but independent. Although some (10%) think that language represents culture, the majority (90%) think that culture and language are reflected in each other and that both culture and language are independent, though they are closely related, as is shown by Diagram 11.

Diagram 11. Relationship between language and culture

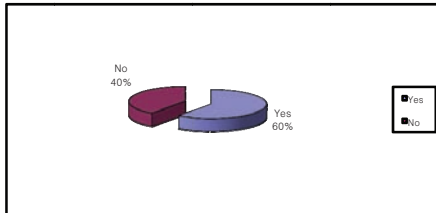


This shows that people whether they are NSEs or non-NSEs feel that both language and culture have inseparable relationship on equal terms. It seems that the close relationship between language and culture is considered to be important in understanding language and culture. This means that diverse variety of English is inevitable under the present circumstances where English is used as a global language.

As to the two opposing views on the impact of the early acquisition of L2, about 60% of the interviewees recommend early acquisition of L2 because of its facilitation especially in the terms of sounds, accents, and intonation as is illustrated in Diagram 12. Moreover, they said that understanding one's culture and language would make them respect L2 language and culture. About 40% of the interviewees still think that mastering one's own language and culture is indispensable for L2 acquisition because it provides you with a reference point and identity.

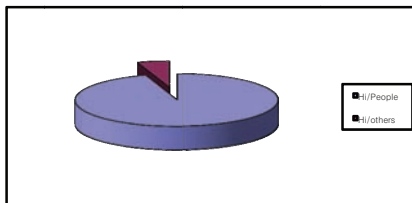
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Diagram 12. Responses to the question of early acquisition of L2



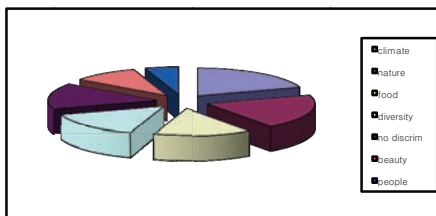
Fifth, regarding the question on the distinctive characteristics of Hawaii, we have a very interesting result. We have two sharply distinctive results as in the Diagram 13.

Diagram 13.



First 95% of those who are from ethnic Hawaiian cultural backgrounds, unanimously consider that what makes Hawaii so characteristics is the people in Hawaii. They consider people in Hawaii are the most important resource for making Hawaii a very special state. The Aloha spirit in Hawaii is what distinguishes people in Hawaii from others and this is what attracts many people from all over the world. Second those who come to Hawaii to work or study, states the climate, nature, multi-cultural people and food at the top on the list. According to them Hawaii is the only state where there is no discrimination in terms of many things.

Diagram 14.



It is a well-known fact that Hawaii is always at the top on the list of the countries

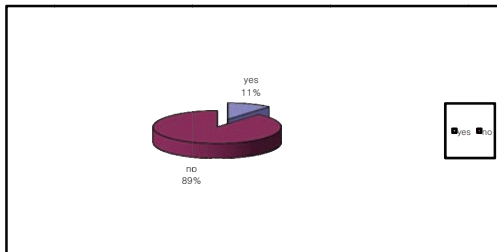
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everyone would like to visit the most. There must be some reasons why this is so. This study shows that what makes Hawaii so attractive to many tourists is mainly combination of many things: climate, natural beauty and diversity in food and people.

Last, as to the picture of the promotion of pearls we have found a very surprising result. Out of 56 interviewees only 11% are successful in understanding the message from the picture. Majority of the subjects whether they are natives or not failed to see what the picture is trying to convey as is shown by Diagram 15.

The picture was taken from a magazine (Oahu This Week), a guidebook for tourists to Hawaii. It is a picture of a model wearing many pearls: rings, earrings, bracelets, necklace, and so forth. Actually Hawaii is a place where you can buy cultured pearls (black, white, yellow, and pink).. There are pearl factories in Hawaii. The promotion picture of pearls can be found in almost every magazine in Hawaii for tourists. Therefore, the result is rather surprising. Evidently the promotion picture is neither very successful nor effective in conveying its message clearly. Only 11 % of the interviewees recognized that the picture is for the promotion purpose. Even people who have been living in Hawaii for a long time fail to get the meaning out of the picture.

Diagram 15. Understanding the message from the picture



Analysis of oral responses of interviewees leads us to reconsider the concept of the term NSE because it is evident that the term is employed in a broad(er) sense in its meaning by majority of interviewees and that there is no difference between the so-called NSEs and non-NSEs in terms of understanding the relationship between language and culture. They can understand others and make themselves understood in English. Both of them are global citizens using glocalised Englishes. In the next section we will briefly discuss what we have learned from the interviews.

5 Conclusion

Results of the interview lead us to the followings:

As to the question of how people from different cultural backgrounds understand the concept of the native speaker of English, all interviewees appear to take the term in 'flesh and bone' sense not in the sense of idealized models. The majority of the

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interviewees (91%) take the term in its broad(er) sense. That is, a native speaker of English is the one with the competence in English. Competence means the ability to make oneself understood and to understand others when communicating in English. This reflects the fact that the term may now be undergoing the process of semantic change as has been observed in many words from the history of English language. Under this plausible semantic change of the term, a NSE is not only the one who belongs to the Inner Circle but also who belongs to the Outer Circle and those who are proficient in English even though they belong to the Extending Circle. In other words, a NSE is any competent English speaker whether he belongs to an Inner Circle or not. If the term is perceived by many as any competent English speaker, then we have to respect the majority's use of the term.

It is true that in this global world English belongs to everybody (Rajagopalan, 2004, p.112), not just to the Inner Circle people. The reason is because of the increasing number of speakers of world Englishes cross-culturally. Not only the Outer Circle and the Extending Circle but also the Inner Circle are advised and recommended to learn from each other in order to be "mutually intelligible, comprehensible, and interpretable"(Smith & Forman, 1997) and not to be misunderstood. Everyone has equal rights to understand and to be understood in English in this global society. It is difficult for people to understand one another due to linguistic and para-linguistic differences even among the Inner Circle. Therefore, it is not surprising to find differences among the Outer Circle and the Extending Circle since tremendous number of people are using English as a communication tool cross-culturally.

The ever increasing number of English speakers is exactly what Crystal (2008) has mentioned and predicted. English speakers from the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle outnumber those of the Inner Circle. This indicates that different types of English are highly plausible as English spreads all around the world (Crystal, 2008). This suggests that people whatever circles they belong to are likely to employ two different types of English: they are the native speakers of two different types of English. As Crystal (2008) said, it is highly plausible that two types of English are available: one spoken in their home country and the other spoken globally which can be understood cross-culturally. If this is the case, then there seem to be two different types of native speakers. Or they are native speakers of both, which lead us to come up with a more congenial and more appealing term than a NSE.

If English belongs to everybody, the term loses its original meaning (the supply side of English). There is no point of using the term only from perspectives of the supply side vs from the demand side or vice versa since both sides should learn from each other. What was once "underdeveloped and developing" countries are no longer so in terms of IT technology and world power. The unidirectional relationship between the Inner Circle and the other Circles that has been cherished and encouraged from the supply side in the past isn't likely to be appealing. In other words, the term which was defined from a narrow point of view (the Inner Circle point of view) is in the process of being redefined from a much broader viewpoint.

If we have to come to a new term, a glocalized English speaker/global

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English speaker would be a good candidate. A global English is an idealization of the English used globally since people use different glocalised Englishes depending on where they are from. Though people use different glocalised Englishes they can communicate among themselves because there are commonalities among the different Englishes and commonalities and differences can be accounted for by linguistic and paralinguistic rules.

Regarding the relationship between language and culture this study shows that there is a close and inseparable relationship between language and culture. Language and culture are independent of each other and yet they are closely related and affected by each other. Since language and culture affect each other there are many different types of English that should be accepted and respected.

Endnote

¹ This paper is the result of collaborative work over a year. In the first part, Prof. No introduces the background of the concept of a native speaker of English. In the later part Prof. Park describes interviews conducted on the concept of a native speaker of English. We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Susan Iwamura and Prof. Elizabeth Haejin Koh who have read, proofread and edited an earlier version of this paper, for their kindness, assistance, and valuable comments.

² Every year many Korean students especially at elementary and secondary schools leave Korea heading abroad especially where English is spoken as a native language. According to a newspaper report (Cho Ji-hyun (sharon@heraldm.com), Korea Herald June 19, 2008), the number of students going abroad has doubled in the past two years. This is mainly due to the belief that acquiring English earlier in real life situations would give them not only an advantage when applying for admission at a foreign language high school in Korea but also confidence in English proficiency and the speaking ability to a native speaker of English. As reported in Korea Times (Strong@hk.co.kr, Korea Times, June 17, 2008), English has somehow been worshipped as a religion. Somehow there is a widely spread belief that English is the primary index to measure one's success in life. Not only the students who are fluent in English but also their parents become objects to be respected.

³ In order to cope with this widespread desire of parents and students among others, the Korean government (education authorities) has done two things: (1) provide elementary and secondary schools in Seoul with high-tech multimedia classrooms and (2) recruit large number of native speakers of English for elementary and secondary schools in Korea. These are mainly for the purpose of providing schools in Korea with enhanced English education. Today it is not surprising to see native speakers of English in every elementary and secondary school in Korea, not to mention "English Only Villages" and private English institutions where the focus is on the developing of communicative competence of English. "English Only Villages" in Korea are villages specifically created for the purposes of teaching English to Korean speakers while building students' cultural awareness to promote their

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English skills. Students can get short-term English immersion in a live-in environment where only English is spoken. The first English-Only Village in Korea was opened in August 2004 in Ansan, Gyeongido Province.

⁴ For the broad and narrow definition of the term native speakers of English, please refer to pages 3-4.

⁵ Kachru (1985) was the first one who categorized World Englishes into three different circles: Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle.

⁶ Word meaning is also changing. According to Pyles (1963, pp. 305-322), not fixed meanings can be ascribed to words because change of meaning is a natural phenomenon common to all languages which is not wholly unpredictable. For example, the word, 'meat' meant simply 'food' not only 'beef' but also 'pork' and 'lamb.' But now it means specific kind of meat, namely beef. The meaning has been specified, restricted and narrowed. There are opposite cases of specialization. For example, the word barn is a compound of two Old English words, 'bere(barley)' and 'aem(house).' Now the meaning of the word has been generalized to refer to a storehouse of any kind of grain.

⁷ If we trace the origin of the word, English, it means 'the language of the Angles,' one of the Germanic tribes invaded Britain. (Pyles, 1963).

⁸ Alan Davies (2003, P. 214) refers this as "the flesh-and-blood native speaker."

⁹ Ten questions(for the oral interview) used in this study are listed in Appendix 1.

¹⁰ The oral interview was conducted in English. We tried to select subjects as randomly as possible.

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Appendix A.

The purpose of giving the following 10 oral questions to you is to find out how people from different cultural backgrounds perceive the term the native speaker of English. Your oral responses to the ten questions are used only for the purpose of a research on the tentative title of "Some thoughts on the term, the native speaker of English." I would appreciate it very much if you answer the following questions sincerely.

1. Would you please tell us about yourself?
2. English is your mother tongue? If yes, do you feel uncomfortable when you communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds or from countries where English is not used as a mother tongue? If you do, why? What do you think the reason would be?
3. Have you ever heard of the term, the native speaker of English? Do you understand what it means? If you do, who do you think can be included in the category of the so-called *native speakers of English*?
4. What do you think of the Englishes spoken by non-native speakers of English? Do you think you can accept the Englishes employed by non-native speakers of English as a legitimate variety of English?
5. Do you have friends from different cultural backgrounds? If you have any friends from different cultural backgrounds, what kind of problems do you have when communicating with them. Give some examples you have difficulties understanding when you communicate with your friends who are native/non-native speakers of English, if you have any.
6. If one of your best friends who needs \$2,000 desperately ask you to lend the money, what would be your response?
7. Some people say that if you know and value the culture you belong to, you are better off in learning a foreign language. What do you think of the statement?
8. People say that there is so much they have been blessed with here in this beautiful island of Hawaii. Do you agree with them? What is so good about Hawaii?
9. Have you watched any foreign TV soap opera or films? If you have, what are they? Do you like them? Why and what is your opinion on those?
10. I am going to show you one picture. Look at the picture and please tell us anything that occurs to your mind at your first thought?