

## English Accents and L2 Learner's Identity

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### **Abstract:**

This study investigates the perception and attitude toward various world English accents that L2 learners develop in their English learning process. The participants of this study are twenty-two Korean international graduate students who were enrolled in a Mid-western, U.S. University. They are classified in this study by the four categories of Sex, Duration of Stay in the U.S, Age, and major. This study examines the perception and attitude that Korean learners have toward the various accents of World Englishes. The result of this study reveals how language ideology and the misconception about Standard English affect learner identity in their language learning process.

**Key Words:** English Accent, Language Attitude, Standard Language Ideology, Learner Identity, World Englishes

### **I. Introduction**

An increasing number of L2 learners have begun to study English as a chosen foreign and/or as a second language because of the spread of English as a global language. This spread increased the variety of English accents over the world; as such, the English speakers who speak in various accents consider themselves as native English speakers and have engendered many studies about the perception of accent and language attitude. With the increase of English language learners, the debate of model English accent in the field of language education has been intensified.

For the purpose of teaching pronunciation in an instructional setting, researchers have stressed the importance of global intelligibility rather than native-like accent (Crystal, 1997). They supported English as a global lingua franca and proposed teaching pronunciation for 'communication' based on the intelligibility principle (Scales, et al., 2006). As an underpinning of evidence for this position, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) insisted that it is impossible for L2 learners to acquire a native-like accent unless their first exposure is early, around the age of

six.

Nevertheless, many ESL/EFL countries take native-accented English, especially General American English (GAE) or British English (Received Pronunciation: RP), as a model of their pronunciation for public school (Chiba, Matsuura, & Yamamoto, 1995). Due to this practice in the public schools, the L2 learners have a strong tendency of preferring native-like accent for the model pronunciation of their English. This preference brings about the transfer of the social stereotypes of language attitude of the Innercircle of English speakers to the English learners of the outer and Expanding Circle.

According to the studies about language attitude, language accent and perception are closely related with the social stereotypes (Ladegaard, 1998; Kamisli, Sibel, Dugan and Sean, 1997; Purnell, Idsardi, Baugh, 1999; Hosoda, Romero, Walter, 2007). Cargile, Giles, Ryan, & Bradac (1994) and Cargile & Bradac (2001) indicated that speakers' accents and dialects are associated with listeners' evaluation of speakers' status, including wealth, education, competence, solidarity dimensions, and perceived friendliness or kindness. Ryan (1979) also suggested in his research that language attitude includes social status and solidarity as well as more specific aspects such as stereotypes that are associated with a given ethnic group. Accordingly, Nesdale and Rooney (1990) reiterated that accents elicit ethnic stereotypes. In the U.S., African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and the accented English of immigrant populations were stigmatized as low social status, poor communicator and foreigner. Their accented English was associated with the nationwide ethnic stereotypes, which worked negatively for job finding, etc.

As shown in the previous research, language accent is closely related with language attitude and it links the speakers' external and internal identity. In this regard, it is inevitable to ponder over the model pronunciation of English in the public school curriculum. On account of the supremacy of GAE and RP in the English curriculum of an EFL public school, the social stereotypes of accented English in inner-circle (e.g. U.K., U.S. Australia and New Zealand) are reproduced in Expanding Circle (Korea, Japan and China) (B. Kachru, 1989).

Like many EFL countries, Korea has been enthusiastic in learning English and been strongly influenced by American English in the public school curriculum. The excessive national enthusiasm of English in Korea, which refers to 'English Fever', has influenced the Korean learner's language ideology and identity formation (Park, 2004; Song, 2007).

However, despite the individual and national effort of English education, English is still very challenging work to Korean learners. Therefore, it is necessary to examine Korean learners' perception of various English accents as a reflection of their identity in learning English. In this paper, I intend to review in the first section the prior research on language attitudes and social stereotypes of accented English with regard to the perception of native speaker and nonnative

speaker. Also, I will review language ideology focused on standard language ideology and identity formation in terms of language accents. For the second section, I will introduce a pilot study, which examined the Korean English learners' perception of various English accents in the U.S.

## II. Literature Review

### *Language Attitudes and Socio-cultural Stereotype*

Language attitudes are complex psychological entities that involve cognitive knowledge and affective feeling as well as behavior, and are sensitive to situational factors. Attitudes can be defined as “subjective evaluation of both language varieties and their speakers, whether the attitudes are held by individuals or by groups” (Myers- Scotton, 2006, p. 120). In this sense, research into language attitudes is about how a person's language variety is socially meaningful to others. Attitudinal research shows how the valuations of the language of a group affect judgments of individuals (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 110). For other psychological constructs that are employed in the domain of social psychology, Allport (1954) provides the definition of stereotype as “an exaggerated belief associated with a category and its function is to justify our conduct in relation to that category” (cited in Hewstone & Giles, 1986). Stereotypes deal with both in-group and out-group, group-shared and individual image, which was constructed socially. Hamilton (1979) distinguished three important issues in the study of stereotypes: (1) Cognitive biases that result in stereotypical perceptions of social groups; (2) Cognitive biases that result from stereotypical perceptions of social groups; and (3) Behavioral consequences of stereotyping (ibid). This distinction deals with how people develop relating concepts and group membership to a psychological attribute.

Having noted the concepts of language attitude and stereotypes, Ladegaard (1998) examined national stereotypes of English accents and language attitudes of Danish students. Danish students chose RP (Received Pronunciation) for the accent that they want to model among five speakers who speak RP (Received Pronunciation), Scottish, Cockney, Australian, and SA (Standard American as opposed to Southern or Eastern American English). Despite their great interest in American culture that they showed in the survey, the Danish students did not choose American for their modeling pronunciation. It seemed that RP was the unsurpassed variety of English in Denmark. The RP speaker was perceived as more fluent than the others whereas the SA speaker obtained the most favorable evaluation on only one dimension: sense of humor. Ladegaard (1998) presumed that Danish students learn RP traditionally in school as a model pronunciation; therefore, RP has a prestige in Danish society despite the popularity of American culture.

On the other hand, in a study that examines Turkish college students' perception of American

English accent (Kamisli, Sibel, Dugan and Sean, 1997), Turkish students preferred a southern English accent. The native Turkish students who attend an English-medium University listened to recordings of three accented English speakers in order to make judgments about their background, ability, and character. They rated the southern English accent the highest and an eastern English accent, and African English accent the lowest. The difference between the eastern English accent and the African English accent was not great. Likewise, the perception of accented English varies by countries and cultures where different perception is associated with socially constructed stereotypes that have an influence on the judgment or evaluation of people who speak in different accents.

Purnell, Idsardi, and Baugh (1999) examined, in the context of the U.S, the perception of American English dialect identification and ethnic stereotypes, which are associated with that dialect and which cause discrimination. Purnell, et al (1999) called landlords in order to rent an apartment and studied their reaction and language attitude to three different dialects: AAVE (African American Vernacular English), Chicano English (ChE), and Standard English (SA). In order for identification of the dialect, very little speech and phonetic characteristics were needed during the telephone conversation. Through the telephone survey, the landlords' discrimination against prospective tenants, especially the speakers of ChE and AAVE, clearly showed the social and ethnic stereotypes on the basis of accent. Also, this study exhibits the preferential discrimination based on accents, which imply racial and ethnic background. Hosoda, Romero and Walter (2007) obtained a similar result that underpins the socio-cultural stereotypes of accented English. They investigated cognitive and affective reactions to English speakers with Standard American English and Asian accents. They found out that the Asian accent was associated with low social status and a poor communicator who was less potent, less threatening, and appeared more concerned about others compared to a standard American English speaker. The analysis also showed that Asian accents evoked a more negative effect, which required more attention from listeners than did those with Standard American English speakers.

#### *Intelligibility: Perception of Native Speaker and Nonnative Speaker about Accented English*

In order to investigate successful communication in different varieties of world Englishes, mutual intelligibility becomes an important concept. Following Smith's (1992) analysis of communication, Kachru and Nelson (2006) divided intelligibility into three components: intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability (p. 67). Intelligibility refers to the level of sound and parsing utterances into recognizable or plausible words. Comprehensibility is the next level in Smith's analysis, which involves assigning meaning to utterances, in other words, understanding. As such, successful comprehensibility involves apprehending an utterance's meaning in the situation contextually and culturally as well. Interpretability is the most complex and important level of communication, which is beyond intelligibility (recognition of word elements) and comprehensibility (recognition of meanings which is assigned to words and

phrases within a specific context). Research about varieties of accents and world Englishes demonstrates that the three component of intelligibility are mutually allied for successful communication.

Bresnahan, et al.(2002) conducted a study about the variation of intelligibility and role identity of foreign accented English speakers. This study exhibited that the intelligible foreign accent drew a more positive attitude and affective response from listeners (native speakers) compared to an unintelligible foreign accent. The more understandable the speaker with a foreign accent is, the more positive attitudes and responses the American undergraduate students expressed. In terms of role identity, when it is a friendship relation, the degree of affectiveness increases more than with those of international teaching assistants. Also, listeners who have a stronger ethnic identity showed the tendency of thought that American English is more pleasant and more dominant than other foreign accents compared to those who represented a weak ethnic identity. Those who showed strong ethnic identities had a more positive emotional response to American English and an intelligible foreign accent compared to an unintelligible foreign accent.

On the other hand, in the study of perception of nonnative language learner's English, nonnative English speakers were harsher to the other nonnative speakers' English than native English speakers. In the comparison of their reactions on the native English speakers and native Spanish speakers who listened to tapes of Puerto Rican learners of English, the native Spanish speaking listeners rated the linguistic forms of the Puerto Rican learner's English much lower and reported more annoyance and irritation than the native English speakers. This result indicates that the Spanish-speaking listeners were less tolerant of their peers' nonnative English than the native English speakers (Fayer& Krasinski, 1987).

In Scales' (2006) study about ESL learners' perceptions of accent, American speakers received the highest ratings among the four groups of speakers, standard American accent, British accent, Chinese English accent and Mexican accent, in being easy to understand, nice to listen to, and being a good teacher. The ESL learner's accent preferences were associated with ease of understanding and a speed of speech which reflect the importance of listening comprehension in learning English. The Mexican accent received the lowest preference from the learners due to its speed and was highly correlated with the difficulty of its understanding. However, regardless of their preference to the native English accent, the participants identification ability of the accents that they claimed to desire to internalize was very low.

According to Chiba, Matsuura, & Yamamoto (1995), Japanese undergraduate students rated positive descriptors (e.g. friendly, elegant, skilled, etc.) higher for Inner Circle speakers from the United Kingdom and the United States than for English speakers from Japan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. As mentioned earlier, this preference to Inner Circle accents (U.K, U.S., Australia, and New Zealand) is shown in Ladegaard (1998), which was done with Danish

students. This preference of the Inner Circle pronunciation leads them to a favorable view of the norm of Inner Circle speakers. With the exception of Outer Circle language learners, the language learners in Expanding Circle show the preference to the norms of Inner Circle, such as pronunciation, grammar, and register in formal and informal situation. Only the language learners in Outer Circle from India, Pakistan, and South Africa preferred to retain their own accent (Timmis, 2002).

As shown in above studies, language learners in Expanding Circle show the familiarity and preference to the standard of the Inner Circle, although not all could identify native accents when they listened to speech samples.

#### *Power and language Ideology: Standard Language Ideology (SLI)*

The other facet of the spread of English, which is not linguistic or sociolinguistic, is a question of power and ideology that it brings about. Bourdieu (1982) has stated that a person's linguistic repertoire is a source of *symbolic power*. Another key concept is that of *habitus*, which Bordieu used as a set of dispositions which generate practices and attitudes that individuals act and react to in similar ways in daily life in line with the social conditions in which they were raised (cited in Myers-Scotton, 2006).

The idea of dispositions refers to the relationship between speakers and value in the linguistic market where power relations are expressed. Those who control the linguistic varieties have more power and symbolic capital which can make symbolic profits. Language is a very visible symbol of a group and obtaining linguistic varieties can be an admission tickets to membership in various groups which have more power and privilege.

Phillipson (1992) asserts that "the advance of English, whether in Britain, North America, South Africa, Australia or New Zealand has invariably been at the expense of other languages". He claims that "the monolingualism of the Anglo-American establishment blinds its representatives to the realities of multilingualism in the contemporary world and gives them ... false perspective." (cited in Kachru & Nelson, 2006, p. 17) He divides the communities of the English-using world into two categories: the core and the periphery. The core is the Inner Circle of B. Kachru (1989). The periphery is subdivided into two categories: those countries that require English for international purposes (e.g. Korea, Japan) and those countries that require English for intranational purposes (e.g. India, Singapore), which were former colonies. Inner Circle Englishes may be spoken of as *norm-providing* and Expanding Circle countries accept the norms (*norm-accepting*) from Inner Circle. U.S. English in Expanding Circle is considered the prestige model (Baik and Shim, 1995) and Outer Circle countries are in an ambivalent situation as norm-developing, rather than simply accepting norms from the Inner Circle (Kachru & Nelson, 2006). In this light, accents serve as the first point of gate-keeping in order to obtain a

membership from the community to which language learners desire to belong.

Lippi-Green (1997) defined standard language ideology (SLI) as “a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class” (p. 64). This is written based on the belief of a general statement of Standard English. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (tenth edition, 1993), which proclaims itself The Voice of Authority provides the definition of Standard English as following:

Standard English: the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood.

(cited in Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 53)

Lippi-Green (1997) asserts that this statement assumes that the written and spoken language is equal in terms of the usage and the way it should be used. She argues that it indicates that Standard English is the language of the “educated”, which does not clearly define who they are in this statement. However, it implies that there exists an opposite to the educated, which is the uneducated, or less educated to the authority of educated in terms of written and spoken language and that Standard English is acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood. Other definitions from Cambridge International Dictionary also generalize about Standard English and they make the specific subgroup of the educated, as “most announcers on the BBC speak Standard English”. Chambers Dictionary (1994) defines Standard English as “the form of English taught in schools”. (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 54)

Various approaches to Standard English have been attempted and is beginning to emerge as a language “with no regional accent; who reside in the Midwest, with more than average or superior education; who are themselves educators or broadcasters; who pay attention to speech and are not sloppy in terms of pronunciation or grammar; who are easily understood by all; who enter into a consensus of other individuals like themselves about what is proper in English.” (ibid, p.58) As it is shown, there is an interesting conflict in the assumption of Standard English. That is, according to the assumption, people who live in the Midwest, speak Standard English, but not those who live in southern Texas or Kentucky. Nevertheless, people who live in southern Texas or Kentucky have the same educational background and intelligence as those in Ohio or Colorado. Therefore, it is these assumptions that have conflicting points in terms of dividing people into educated vs. uneducated, having accents vs. no accents, sophisticated vs. sloppy, etc. This judgmental dyadic relationship divides people into superior and inferior, normal and

abnormal, domination and subordination. Lippi-Green defined Standard Language Ideology as a bias which is maintained by dominant institutions, drawn from the spoken language of the upper middle class, and permeates individuals who are socializing themselves to the larger social groups.

### *English accent and L2 learner's identity*

Social identity theory suggests that people show a preference for the language which is associated with the most salient in-group. Speaking with a foreign accent identifies the other as a member of an out-group and is likely to evoke negative stereotypes. Thus, a desire to have as minimal a foreign accent as possible may stem from the wish to be judged as a competent member of the target culture. As shown in Lippi-Green (1997), this reveals the clear explanation for the popularity of accent reduction courses in the United States, which is, "Accent reduction courses make an implied promise: Sound like us, and success will be yours. Doors will open; barriers will disappear." (p.50)

Wenger (1998) considered identity as a nexus of membership to become a competent member of the target community. Learning a language is a process of becoming a member of that certain community (Sfard, 1998) and is a reconciliation of identities and obtaining a voice in the target community as a competent member through the process of learning. As Kramsch (2000) argued, language learning is a process which involves cultural identity, social role, and a discursive voice under the notion of learner identity.

English accents of language learners are keenly interrelated with social, cultural and regional identity. The choice of model accent of language learners is not independent of the socio-cultural context. It is closely interwoven with sociopolitical power struggles. Thus, in the next section, I will introduce a pilot study which examines Korean learners' identity as English learners by investigating the perception of English accent including their own.

By exploring how Korean learners perceive accented English and how they posit themselves at the site of language learning and by examining their perception and attitude of various accented English, I intend to explore Korean learners' identity as individuals along with their group identity.

### III. Korean Learners' Perception of Accented Englishes in the U.S.

Based upon what I have reviewed from literature, I have developed research questions to investigate how Korean learners perceive and react to the various accented English they encounter in the U.S. By examining their perception and intelligibility to the various English accents, I intend to investigate their preferences for the accented Englishes, according to their sex, duration of stay in the U.S, age, and their majors of study.



1. How do Korean learners perceive Korean speakers' English in various accents, i.e., a strong Korean-accented English speaker; fluent English speaker with no Korean accent; and a Korean-American native English speaker?
2. How differently do Korean learners perceive GAE (General American English) speakers who belong to different racial groups (African-American, Caucasian and Asian)?
3. How do Korean learners perceive the various accented Englishes, which are common in the U.S., such as AAVE (African American Vernacular English), Spanish-accented English, Chinese-accented English and Indian-accented English?

For the first question, I will examine how the Korean learners perceive their own accented English and how they react to the Korean-American native English speaker and Korean-born, fluent English speaker. For the second question, I will look into their racial stereotypes and attitudes reflected in their perception of GE (General American English) for the three different racial groups. For the third question, I will investigate Korean learners' perception of different accented English speakers of four different ethnic backgrounds: AAVE (African American Vernacular English), Spanish accented English (Columbian-accented English), Chinese accented English (Mandarin-accented English) and Indian accented English.

## Method

### *Participants and Site*

Twenty-two Korean students who enrolled in a Mid-western U.S. university participated in this study. They were undergraduate and graduate students and were in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties in age. All students were born in South Korea and learned English as a foreign language in secondary school for at least six years; their English proficiencies are intermediate on average. Also, their durations of stay in the U.S. vary from 6 months to over 6 years.

### *Materials*

I created a webpage for the survey of an NITD intelligibility Checklist. Participants downloaded the survey from the webpage (<http://juhik.com.ne.kr/accentsurvey>) and filled out the survey after listening to 10 differently accented English speakers.

### Webpage for the Survey of Different English Accents

The participants visited the web page (<http://juhik.com.ne.kr/accentsurvey>) in their own convenient place and downloaded the Personality Checklist from the webpage (Appendix 1). They were guided to follow the directions of the web page to listen to recorded samples of ten different English speakers and to fill out the given checklist. After they filled out the checklist,

they sent it to the researcher by email (Appendix 2).

| Category                       | Speakers  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Korean Speakers of English     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong Korean-accented English speaker with the title of 'Korean Speaker A' on the screen (Item #3)</li> <li>2. Korean speaker in fluent English proficiency with the title of 'Korean Speaker B' on the screen (Item #5)</li> <li>3. Korean-American, native English speaker, with the title of 'Korean-American native speaker' (Item # 1)</li> </ol> |
| General American English (GAE) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. African-American Speaker with a photo on the screen (Item #4)</li> <li>2. Caucasian speaker with a photo on the screen (Item #7)</li> <li>3. Asian speaker with a photo on the screen (Item # 10)</li> </ol>  |
| Variously Accented English     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spanish-accented English (Item # 2)</li> <li>2. Indian-accented English (Item #6)</li> <li>3. Chinese accented English (Item #8)</li> <li>4. African-American English (Item#9)</li> </ol>   |

Table 1: Ten Differently Accented English Speakers for the Perception Checklis

All speakers in this survey are graduate students in a Mid-western university in the U.S. In order to control the variables of the speakers' English proficiency while maintaining their own accents while recording, they were asked to read a script about 'Eye Contact' from the book, *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, written by H. Douglas Brown (1993). (Appendix 3)

The voices of two female Korean graduate students were recorded for item numbers 3 and 5. In order to remove the possibility of different accents of native English speakers in the United States, one female English native speaker recorded the voices of three GAE speakers along with a Korean-American native speaker who was born in a Mid-western, American state. A Spanish-accented English sample was recorded by a male, international, graduate student who was born in Columbia and is a native speaker of Spanish. The Chinese-accented English sample was recorded by a female, international, graduate student who was born in China and is a native speaker of Mandarin. The Indian-accented English sample was recorded by a female, international, graduate student who was born in India. The African-American English was recorded by a male, African-American, graduate student who was born in Jamaica and is a native speaker of Jamaican English. He is fluent in African-American Vernacular English, Jamaican English, Jamaican indigenous language and Spanish. For this recording, he read the script in African-American Vernacular accent to remove any bias from the different syntactic and

semantic feature of AAVE.

| Item | Recording sample  | Speaker   | Occupation                     |
|------|---|---|--------------------------------|
| 1    | Korean-American native English Speaker (title on the screen)                        | American female native English speaker (born in a Mid-west, U.S.)   | Graduate Student               |
| 2    | Spanish-accented English Speaker  | Native Spanish male Speaker (born in Columbia)  | International Graduate Student |
| 3    | Korean-accented Speaker (title of 'Korean Speaker A' on screen)                     | Native Korean female speaker (born in Korea)  | International graduate student |
| 4    | GAE speaker with the photo of female African-American female                        | American female native English speaker (born in a Mid-west, U.S. state)   | Graduate Student               |
| 5    | Korean Speaker in a fluent English proficiency (title of 'Korean Speaker B' screen) | Native Korean female speaker (born in Korea)  | International Graduate Student |
| 6    | Indian-accented English Speaker   | Native Indian female speaker (born in India)  | International Graduate Student |
| 7    | GAE speaker with the photo of female Caucasian                                      | American female native English speaker (born in a Mid-west, U.S. state)   | Graduate Student               |
| 8    | Chinese-accented English Speaker  | Native Chinese female speaker (born in China)   | International Graduate Student |
| 9    | African-American Vernacular accented English  | Male native speaker of Jamaican English, Jamaican language, fluent in African-American Vernacular English, GAE, and Spanish | Graduate Student               |
| 10   | GAE speaker with the photo of female Asian  | American female native English speaker (born in a Mid-west, U.S. state)   | Graduate Student               |

Table 2: Speakers for the Survey

#### Personality Trait and NITD Intelligibility Checklist

The Personality Trait checklist and Intelligibility Checklist (Bresnahan, M.J. et al.,2002) were employed (Appendix 2) for the survey with the ten, recorded samples of differently accented, English speakers. The participants listened to the recorded samples and answered the survey displayed below.

\* How difficult is it to understand the message that you just heard?

- a) The message cannot be understood at all.
- b) The message is mostly unintelligible.
- c) The message is difficult to understand; however, the gist of the content can be understood.
- d) The message is intelligible with the exception of a few words or phrases.
- e) The message is completely intelligible.

|                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                   |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Unpleasant           |   |   |   |   |   | Pleasant*         |
| Unattractive         |   |   |   |   |   | Attractive        |
| Not Self-confident   |   |   |   |   |   | Self-confident*   |
| Unlikable            |   |   |   |   |   | Likeable          |
| Not Fluent           |   |   |   |   |   | Fluent            |
| Unreliable           |   |   |   |   |   | Reliable          |
| Insincere            |   |   |   |   |   | Sincere           |
| Unambitious          |   |   |   |   |   | Ambitious         |
| Unfriendly           |   |   |   |   |   | Friendly          |
| Unintelligent        |   |   |   |   |   | Intelligent       |
| No Leadership Skills |   |   |   |   |   | Leadership Skills |
| Uneducated           |   |   |   |   |   | Highly Educated   |
| Low Status Job       |   |   |   |   |   | High Status Job   |

Table 3: Intelligibility Checklist and Personality Checklist

*Data Gathering and Analysis*

The participants were asked to visit the webpage, <http://juhik.com.ne.kr/accentsurvey>, to listen to the samples. They would then download the survey sheet and reply to the checklist. The students were directed to click 'next' in order to listen to the next sample, continuing until they finished all ten samples. After completing the survey sheet, they emailed the survey sheet to the researcher.

The data were analyzed by MS-EXCEL for descriptive statistics. The intelligibility and the Personality Checklist of each recorded sample were analyzed by calculating the mean of the 22 respondents. The mean of each item was analyzed for comparison in terms of three categories: Korean speakers of English, General American English (GAE), and the remainder of the accented Speakers of English. The detailed analyses with respect to the respondents' sex, major, age and their duration of stay in the U.S. were carried out by the comparison of mean of each item. For the comparison in terms of sex, major, age and the duration of staying in the U.S., I focused on the items which exhibited a difference in mean of more than 0.5 point, which is a half value of the checklist point scale.

**Results***Subject*

The participants of this study are twenty-two Korean international graduate students who are currently enrolled in a Mid-western, U.S. University. The participants were classified by the four categories of Sex, Duration of Stay in the U.S., Age, and Major as shown below in Table 4. Their answers were analyzed within those categories with the following criteria:

|                              |                    | Number | %   | Total |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-----|-------|
| Sex                          | Female             | 11     | 50% | 22    |
|                              | Male               | 11     | 50% |       |
| Duration of Stay in the U.S. | Fewer than 2 years | 11     | 50% | 22    |
|                              | More than 2 years  | 8      | 36% |       |
|                              | No answer          | 3      | 14% |       |

|       |                 |    |     |    |
|-------|-----------------|----|-----|----|
| Age   | 25-30 years old | 15 | 68% | 22 |
|       | 30-40 years old | 6  | 27% |    |
|       | No answer       | 1  | 5%  |    |
| Major | Education       | 11 | 50% | 22 |
|       | Engineering     | 7  | 32% |    |
|       | Statistics      | 1  | 5%  |    |
|       | MBA             | 1  | 5%  |    |
|       | No answer       | 2  | 9%  |    |

Table 4: Participants of this Study

*The Mean of Intelligibility and Personality Checklist*

The means of Intelligibility of GAE speakers and the fluent Korean, English speakers were shown to be over 4.0 on the 1 to 5 point range. The means of the Personality Checklist were revealed to be the same preference from the Korean respondents, which is over 4.0 and similar with those of the Intelligibility Checklist.

In the first category of Korean English speakers, the strong Korean accented speaker (item 3) obtained lower points, 3.3, in the Intelligibility Checklist and 2.7 in the Personality Checklist, while the fluent Korean, English speaker (item 5) and the Korean-American native English speaker (item 1) received scores of about 4.0 in both checklists. In the results for item 5 and item 1, it seems interesting that the Korean-American native speaker (item 1) received 0.2 point less than the fluent Korean, English speaker (item 5) in both the Intelligibility Checklist and the Personality Checklist.

| Category                       | Item | Intelligibility | Mean of Personality Checklist |
|--------------------------------|------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Korean Accented Speaker        | #3   | 3.3             | 2.7                           |
| Korean, Fluent English Speaker | #5   | 4.5             | 4.0                           |
| Korean-American (NES)          | #1   | 4.3             | 3.8                           |

|                          |     |     |     |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| GAE with Black Photo     | #4  | 4.6 | 4.1 |
| GAE with White Photo     | #7  | 4.6 | 4.0 |
| GAE with Asian Photo     | #10 | 4.6 | 4.2 |
| Spanish Accented Speaker | #2  | 3.3 | 2.9 |
| Indian Accented Speaker  | #6  | 3.2 | 2.9 |
| Chinese Accented Speaker | #8  | 3.0 | 2.7 |
| AAVE Accented Speaker    | #9  | 3.3 | 2.9 |

Table 5. The Means of Intelligibility and Personality Checklists of the survey

In the category of GAE speakers (Table 5), the three speakers of the different racial groups showed the same score, 4.6, on the Intelligibility Checklist. However, in the Personality Checklist, the GAE speaker with the Asian photo showed the highest points, 4.2; the GAE speaker with the African-American photo showed the next highest points at 4.1, and the GAE speaker of the Caucasian photo indicated a 4.0. It is interesting that the Korean, fluent English speaker obtained higher points than the Korean-American speaker (Native English speaker) in its category.

The speakers of the third category (Table 5) showed less than 3.5 on both the Intelligibility and the Personality Checklist. The Chinese, accented, English speaker, especially, reported the lowest points in both checklists compared to the other three accented, English speakers as well as the strong Korean accented speaker.

### Sex

Among the twenty-two respondents, eleven were female students. In Table 6, of the first category of Korean English speakers, the female respondents gave 0.5 point less than the male respondents to the Korean, accented English speaker (item 3) of *High Status Job* on the Personality Checklist. For the features of *Reliable* and *Sincere* on the Personality Checklist, the female respondents gave at least 0.5 point more to the Korean American English native speaker than the male respondents. Here, the preference of the Korean Native pronunciation is revealed. The other features did not exhibit any critical differences between male and female respondents. The female respondents are shown to be more sensitive to the Korean accented English, especially of the *High Status Job* than male respondents and also showed more *Reliable* and *Sincere* to the native English speaker accent.

| Speaker          | #  | Sex | Intelligibility | pleasant | attractive | self-confident | likeable | fluent | reliable | sincere | ambitious | friendly | intelligent | leadership | highly educated | high status job | Mean |
|------------------|----|-----|-----------------|----------|------------|----------------|----------|--------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------|
| Korean-accented  | 3  | F   | 3.4             | 2.7      | 2.5        | 2.4            | 2.8      | 2.2    | 2.5      | 3.1     | 2.6       | 3.0      | 2.9         | 2.0        | 2.8             | 2.5             | 2.6  |
|                  |    | M   | 3.3             | 3.0      | 2.4        | 2.5            | 2.8      | 2.0    | 2.7      | 3.4     | 2.5       | 3.1      | 3.1         | 2.5        | 3.4             | 3.1             | 2.8  |
| Korean fluent    | 5  | F   | 4.6             | 4.0      | 4.2        | 4.2            | 4.3      | 4.4    | 4.2      | 4.1     | 3.7       | 4.0      | 4.5         | 3.7        | 4.2             | 3.8             | 4.1  |
|                  |    | M   | 4.4             | 4.1      | 3.9        | 4.2            | 3.9      | 4.1    | 3.9      | 4.1     | 3.6       | 4.0      | 4.3         | 4.1        | 4.3             | 4.1             | 4.0  |
| Korean American  | 1  | F   | 4.6             | 4.1      | 4.2        | 4.3            | 4.3      | 4.7    | 4.2      | 4.3     | 3.4       | 4.0      | 4.2         | 3.5        | 4.3             | 3.9             | 4.1  |
|                  |    | M   | 4.1             | 4.1      | 3.5        | 4.1            | 3.7      | 4.5    | 3.8      | 3.6     | 3.4       | 3.4      | 4.1         | 3.1        | 3.9             | 3.5             | 3.7  |
| GAE with black   | 4  | F   | 4.8             | 4.5      | 4.5        | 4.3            | 4.3      | 4.9    | 4.3      | 3.9     | 4.0       | 3.8      | 4.3         | 3.8        | 4.2             | 3.9             | 4.2  |
|                  |    | M   | 4.4             | 4.0      | 4.0        | 4.4            | 4.1      | 4.8    | 4.4      | 3.9     | 3.6       | 3.5      | 4.3         | 3.5        | 3.9             | 3.9             | 4.0  |
| GAE with white   | 7  | F   | 4.8             | 4.2      | 4.2        | 4.5            | 4.2      | 5.0    | 4.5      | 4.4     | 4.0       | 4.2      | 4.5         | 3.6        | 4.2             | 4.0             | 4.2  |
|                  |    | M   | 4.3             | 4.5      | 4.3        | 4.2            | 4.2      | 4.6    | 3.9      | 4.0     | 3.5       | 4.3      | 3.7         | 3.4        | 3.5             | 3.6             | 3.9  |
| GAE with Asian   | 10 | F   | 4.9             | 4.5      | 4.3        | 4.5            | 4.4      | 4.8    | 4.7      | 4.3     | 4.0       | 4.1      | 4.5         | 4.1        | 4.5             | 4.3             | 4.3  |
|                  |    | M   | 4.3             | 4.3      | 4.2        | 4.4            | 4.4      | 4.7    | 4.3      | 4.3     | 3.5       | 3.9      | 4.1         | 3.9        | 4.2             | 3.7             | 4.1  |
| Spanish Accented | 2  | F   | 3.5             | 3.1      | 2.9        | 3.2            | 2.7      | 2.9    | 3.0      | 3.2     | 2.8       | 3.0      | 3.5         | 2.8        | 3.5             | 3.3             | 3.1  |
|                  |    | M   | 3.1             | 2.6      | 2.3        | 2.8            | 2.8      | 3.0    | 2.9      | 3.1     | 2.5       | 3.0      | 2.9         | 2.2        | 2.9             | 2.9             | 2.8  |
| Indian accented  | 6  | F   | 3.3             | 2.6      | 2.5        | 2.9            | 2.5      | 3.1    | 2.8      | 2.9     | 2.8       | 2.6      | 3.0         | 2.5        | 3.2             | 2.9             | 2.8  |
|                  |    | M   | 3.1             | 2.8      | 2.5        | 3.0            | 2.7      | 3.4    | 2.9      | 3.2     | 3.1       | 2.7      | 2.9         | 2.9        | 3.4             | 2.9             | 3.0  |
| Chinese accented | 8  | F   | 2.9             | 2.4      | 2.2        | 2.6            | 2.4      | 2.6    | 2.5      | 2.8     | 2.6       | 2.7      | 3.1         | 2.6        | 3.1             | 2.8             | 2.6  |
|                  |    | M   | 3.1             | 2.9      | 2.5        | 2.9            | 3.0      | 2.5    | 2.5      | 3.0     | 2.9       | 2.8      | 3.2         | 2.5        | 3.2             | 2.9             | 2.8  |
| AAVE             | 9  | F   | 3.5             | 2.8      | 2.7        | 3.2            | 2.8      | 3.3    | 2.9      | 2.7     | 2.7       | 2.5      | 3.2         | 2.9        | 3.1             | 2.9             | 2.9  |
|                  |    | M   | 3.1             | 2.9      | 2.6        | 3.2            | 3.3      | 3.2    | 3.0      | 3.3     | 3.2       | 2.4      | 3.3         | 2.7        | 3.2             | 2.9             | 3.0  |

Table 6: The Mean of Intelligibility and the Personality Checklist between the Male and Female Respondents

In the second category, the female respondents gave higher points on the Intelligibility to the three GAE speakers than the male respondents. Also, they gave 0.5 point more in the five features of *Reliable*, *Ambitious*, *Intelligent*, *Highly Educated*, and *High Status Job* of the Personality Checklist to the GAE speaker with the Caucasian photo than the male respondents. For the GAE speakers with an African-American photo, the female respondents gave 0.5 point more to the three features of *Pleasant*, *Attractive*, and *Ambitious* of the Personality Checklist than the male respondents; and to the GAE speakers with an Asian photo, they gave to the two features of *Ambitious* and *High Status Job* of the Personality Checklist 0.5 point more than the male respondents.

It seems interesting that for the feature of *Ambitious*, all the female respondents gave to the GAE speakers 0.5 point more than the male respondents. But for the feature of *High Status Job*, they gave 0.5 point more to the GAE speakers with Caucasian and Asian photos than the male respondents and gave the same points to the GAE speaker with the African American photo with the male respondents.

In the third category, of various accented English speakers, the female respondents gave 0.5 point lower for the two features of *Pleasant* and *Likeable* on the Personality Checklist in response to the Chinese accented speaker than the male respondents. To the AAVE speaker, they



gave 0.5 point lower to the three features of *Likeable*, *Sincere*, and *Ambitious* of the Personality Checklist than their male counterparts. On the other hand, to the Spanish accented speaker, they gave 0.5 point higher to the six features of *Pleasant*, *Attractive*, *Self-confident*, *Intelligible*, *Leadership*, and *Highly Educated* of the Personality Checklist than the male respondents.

In summary, the Korean accented speaker obtained 0.5 point less from the female respondents than from the male respondents for the feature of *High Status Job*, while Korean-American native English speaker obtained 0.5 point more for the two features of *Reliable* and *Sincere* from the female respondents than from the male respondents.

In the cases for the GAE speakers, they obtained higher points for the feature of *Ambitious* from the female respondents than from the male respondents. GAE speakers with the Caucasian and Asian photos scored the highest points for the feature of *High Status Job* from the female respondents. It is interesting to see that the GAE speakers with an African-American photo did not show any differences in given scores between the male and female respondents. Overall, the GAE speakers with Caucasian photos obtained 0.5 point higher from seven features, and GAE speakers with Asian and African-American photos were given 0.5 point more on three features from the female respondents than the male respondents. The preference for the GAE Caucasian speaker by the female respondents is revealed from this result. In comparison with the replies of the male respondents, the female respondents gave higher points to the three GAE speakers for the feature of *Ambitious*.

Additional differences between the male and female respondents are seen in the order of the means of the three GAE speakers. The male respondents gave points to the GAE speakers with African-American, Caucasian, and Asian photo in the order of 3.98, 3.94, and 4.06 respectively, while the female respondents gave them in the order of 4.17, 4.20, and 4.32. The female respondents gave similar points to the African-American and Caucasian speakers and higher points to the Asian speaker, while the male gave points in the order of Caucasian, African-American and Asian.

#### *Duration of Stay in the United States*

Eleven respondents out of the twenty-two have been here in the U.S. for fewer than two years while another eight respondents have been in the U.S. more than two years. Three respondents did not indicate their duration of stay, however. From Table 7 those who stayed in the U.S. more than two years gave 0.5 point lower score to the Korean, fluent English speakers on the Intelligibility and to the two features of *Self-confident* and *High Status Job* on the Personality Checklist. The mean score of the all features of the Personality Checklist shows only 0.12 point difference between those who have been here more than and those who have been here fewer than two years. However, in the specific features of the checklist, those who stayed fewer than

two years exhibited more preference for the Korean speaker who has a fluent English accent than to the Korean-American native English speaker.

| Speaker          | #  | Duration | Intelligibility | pleasant | attractive | self-confident | likeable | fluent | reliable | sincere | ambitious | friendly | intelligent | leadership | highly educated | high status job | Mean |
|------------------|----|----------|-----------------|----------|------------|----------------|----------|--------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------|
| Korean-accented  | 3  | <2yrs    | 3.6             | 2.9      | 2.5        | 2.5            | 3.0      | 2.3    | 2.6      | 3.2     | 2.8       | 3.2      | 2.9         | 2.2        | 2.9             | 2.6             | 2.8  |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 3.1             | 2.9      | 2.4        | 2.6            | 2.6      | 2.0    | 2.6      | 3.5     | 2.5       | 3.0      | 3.3         | 2.5        | 3.5             | 3.1             | 2.8  |
| Korean fluent    | 5  | <2yrs    | 4.7             | 3.9      | 4.0        | 4.4            | 4.0      | 4.4    | 4.1      | 4.2     | 3.5       | 3.8      | 4.4         | 4.1        | 4.2             | 4.3             | 4.1  |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 4.2             | 4.0      | 4.0        | 3.9            | 4.0      | 4.2    | 3.9      | 3.8     | 3.6       | 4.1      | 4.4         | 3.8        | 4.2             | 3.7             | 3.9  |
| Korean American  | 1  | <2yrs    | 4.3             | 4.1      | 3.9        | 4.2            | 3.9      | 4.5    | 3.9      | 3.9     | 3.5       | 3.5      | 4.0         | 3.3        | 4.3             | 3.7             | 3.9  |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 4.3             | 4.0      | 3.8        | 4.1            | 4.1      | 4.7    | 3.9      | 3.9     | 3.2       | 3.8      | 4.3         | 3.5        | 4.0             | 3.7             | 3.9  |
| GAE with black   | 4  | <2yrs    | 4.8             | 4.0      | 4.2        | 4.2            | 4.2      | 4.7    | 4.5      | 3.9     | 3.5       | 3.5      | 4.2         | 3.5        | 4.0             | 4.1             | 4.00 |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 4.4             | 4.4      | 4.3        | 4.6            | 4.0      | 5.0    | 4.1      | 3.9     | 4.3       | 3.6      | 4.5         | 4.0        | 4.3             | 3.9             | 4.15 |
| GAE with white   | 7  | <2yrs    | 4.6             | 4.3      | 4.2        | 4.2            | 4.2      | 4.8    | 4.3      | 4.3     | 3.5       | 4.3      | 3.9         | 3.5        | 3.8             | 3.9             | 4.08 |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 4.4             | 4.4      | 4.3        | 4.5            | 4.0      | 4.8    | 4.0      | 4.0     | 3.9       | 4.1      | 4.5         | 3.8        | 4.0             | 3.9             | 4.08 |
| GAE with Asian   | 10 | <2yrs    | 4.6             | 4.4      | 4.0        | 4.4            | 4.3      | 4.8    | 4.5      | 4.3     | 3.5       | 4.1      | 4.4         | 3.9        | 4.5             | 4.0             | 4.18 |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 4.5             | 4.3      | 4.4        | 4.4            | 4.4      | 4.6    | 4.4      | 4.3     | 3.9       | 3.8      | 4.3         | 4.3        | 4.5             | 4.1             | 4.18 |
| Spanish Accented | 2  | <2yrs    | 3.2             | 2.7      | 2.5        | 2.7            | 2.5      | 2.7    | 2.6      | 2.9     | 2.4       | 3.1      | 2.9         | 2.5        | 3.3             | 3.0             | 2.8  |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 3.4             | 3.3      | 3.1        | 3.6            | 3.4      | 3.6    | 3.6      | 3.6     | 3.4       | 3.3      | 3.8         | 2.9        | 3.4             | 3.4             | 3.4  |
| Indian accented  | 6  | <2yrs    | 3.3             | 2.6      | 2.5        | 2.8            | 2.5      | 3.3    | 2.7      | 3.1     | 3.0       | 2.7      | 2.9         | 2.6        | 3.3             | 2.8             | 2.8  |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 3.1             | 3.0      | 2.9        | 3.2            | 2.8      | 3.4    | 3.2      | 3.1     | 3.0       | 2.7      | 3.1         | 3.1        | 3.5             | 3.1             | 3.1  |
| Chinese accented | 8  | <2yrs    | 3.0             | 2.6      | 2.3        | 3.0            | 2.8      | 2.5    | 2.6      | 3.0     | 2.9       | 3.0      | 3.3         | 2.6        | 3.3             | 2.9             | 2.8  |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 2.9             | 2.6      | 2.4        | 2.8            | 2.6      | 2.8    | 2.5      | 2.9     | 2.8       | 2.6      | 3.1         | 2.8        | 3.1             | 2.9             | 2.7  |
| AAVE             | 9  | <2yrs    | 3.3             | 2.7      | 2.5        | 3.2            | 2.8      | 3.3    | 2.9      | 3.0     | 2.9       | 2.3      | 3.2         | 2.6        | 3.2             | 2.9             | 2.9  |
|                  |    | >2yrs    | 3.4             | 3.1      | 3.1        | 3.4            | 3.5      | 3.5    | 3.3      | 3.3     | 3.3       | 2.9      | 3.6         | 3.4        | 3.4             | 3.1             | 3.3  |

Table 7: The Mean of Intelligibility and the Personality Checklist between the Duration of Stay in the U.S. of the Respondents.

Those who have stayed more than two years in America gave 0.5 point higher to the GAE speaker with an African American Photo for the three features of *Fluent*, *Ambitious*, and *Leadership* of the Personality Checklist. Also, those respondents gave only 0.5 point higher to the feature of *Intelligent* to the GAE speaker with a Caucasian photo, which is a same score of GAE with an African American photo. Both groups show almost the same preference to the GAE speaker with an Asian photo.

In the third category of various accented English speakers, those who have been in the U.S. more than two years gave 0.5 point higher for the eight features of *Attractive*, *Self-confident*, *Likeable*, *Fluent*, *Reliable*, *Sincere*, *Ambitious*, *Intelligent* on the Personality Checklist to the Spanish accented Speaker than those who have been in the U.S. fewer than two years. The mean score for the Personality Checklist for the Spanish accented speaker was 1.0 point higher for those having remained in the U.S. more than two years than for those who have stayed fewer than two years. Also, the long term group gave higher points to the AAVE speakers for the four features of *Attractive*, *Likeable*, *Friendly*, and *Leadership* on the Personality Checklist than those who stayed in the U.S. fewer than two years. And the mean score (3.3) of the Personality Checklist

was shown to be higher than the other group (2.9). On the other hand, for the Chinese accented English and Indian accented English speakers, the two groups did not show a wide discrepancy, which would be over 0.5 point between them.

Those who stayed in the U.S. for more than 2 years gave lower points to the Korean speaker who is fluent in English but gave higher points to the Spanish accented Speaker and AAVE speaker. In the second category of GAE speakers, those respondents showed a high preference for the GAE speakers with African American photo.

On the other hand, those who stayed in the U.S. fewer than 2 years exhibited a Mean score on the Personality Checklist to the GAE speakers with photos of African American, Caucasian, and Asian in the order of 4.00, 4.1, and 4.2 respectively, while those who stayed in the U.S. more than 2 years exhibited the order of 4.2, 4.1, and 4.2 respectively, which shows a different pattern. Both groups showed the highest preference to the GAE Asian speaker. But the respondents who stayed more than 2 years showed the next highest preference to the GAE African American speaker which is different from those who stayed fewer than 2 years. The Mean score of GAE Caucasian speaker was same in both groups.

It seems that the longer the respondents stay in the U.S., their preference of AAVE accent and Spanish accented English increases more because of the more frequent exposure to these accents in the U.S. through media or daily routine than to the Chinese accented English or Indian accented English which currently have little expression here.

### Age

Age-wise, fifteen of the twenty-two respondents are 25 to 30 years old, six are in their thirties, and one did not indicate his age range. From Table 8, those who are in their thirties gave higher points to the Korean speaker, fluent English proficiency, in the three features of *Intelligent*, *Highly Educated*, and *High Status Job* of the Personality Checklist than those respondents in their twenties. The high, mean score of Korean Speaker B (fluent English speaker) can be interpreted as a preference of those in thirties to the Korean-American native speaker.

| Speaker          | #  | Age   | Intelligibility | pleasant | attractive | self-confident | likeable | fluent | reliable | sincere | ambitious | friendly | intelligent | leadership | highly educated | high status job | Mean |
|------------------|----|-------|-----------------|----------|------------|----------------|----------|--------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------|
| Korean-accented  | 3  | 25-30 | 3.4             | 2.7      | 2.4        | 2.4            | 2.7      | 2.1    | 2.5      | 3.3     | 2.7       | 2.9      | 2.9         | 2.1        | 2.9             | 2.7             | 2.7  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 3.2             | 3.1      | 2.6        | 2.6            | 3.0      | 2.0    | 2.6      | 3.0     | 2.4       | 3.3      | 3.1         | 2.3        | 3.4             | 3.1             | 2.8  |
| Korean fluent    | 5  | 25-30 | 4.5             | 3.9      | 4.1        | 4.1            | 4.1      | 4.3    | 4.0      | 4.1     | 3.7       | 3.9      | 4.2         | 3.9        | 4.0             | 3.8             | 4.0  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 4.4             | 4.3      | 4.0        | 4.5            | 4.0      | 4.0    | 4.2      | 4.0     | 3.5       | 4.3      | 4.8         | 4.2        | 4.8             | 4.3             | 4.1  |
| Korean American  | 1  | 25-30 | 4.4             | 4.1      | 4.0        | 4.3            | 3.9      | 4.6    | 4.0      | 3.9     | 3.2       | 3.7      | 4.1         | 3.3        | 4.2             | 3.6             | 3.9  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 4.2             | 4.2      | 3.7        | 3.9            | 4.2      | 4.7    | 3.9      | 4.1     | 3.7       | 3.7      | 4.3         | 3.6        | 4.0             | 4.1             | 3.9  |
| GAE with black   | 4  | 25-30 | 4.6             | 4.3      | 4.4        | 4.3            | 4.3      | 4.8    | 4.4      | 4.0     | 4.0       | 3.8      | 4.3         | 3.7        | 3.9             | 4.0             | 4.1  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 4.6             | 4.2      | 4.1        | 4.5            | 3.9      | 5.0    | 4.2      | 3.9     | 3.6       | 3.3      | 4.3         | 3.7        | 4.3             | 3.9             | 4.0  |
| GAE with white   | 7  | 25-30 | 4.5             | 4.3      | 4.3        | 4.3            | 4.2      | 4.8    | 4.3      | 4.1     | 3.9       | 4.3      | 4.1         | 3.5        | 3.9             | 3.8             | 4.1  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 4.6             | 4.3      | 4.0        | 4.3            | 4.0      | 4.8    | 4.0      | 4.5     | 3.5       | 4.0      | 4.2         | 3.3        | 3.7             | 3.8             | 4.0  |
| GAE with Asian   | 10 | 25-30 | 4.5             | 4.3      | 4.1        | 4.3            | 4.1      | 4.7    | 4.4      | 4.1     | 3.9       | 4.1      | 4.3         | 4.1        | 4.3             | 4.1             | 4.1  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 4.8             | 4.5      | 4.5        | 4.7            | 4.8      | 5.0    | 4.7      | 4.8     | 3.5       | 3.8      | 4.3         | 3.8        | 4.7             | 3.8             | 4.3  |
| Spanish Accented | 2  | 25-30 | 3.4             | 2.9      | 2.6        | 3.1            | 2.9      | 3.0    | 2.9      | 3.2     | 2.7       | 3.1      | 3.1         | 2.5        | 3.1             | 3.0             | 2.9  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 3.2             | 2.8      | 2.3        | 2.8            | 2.3      | 2.8    | 3.0      | 3.0     | 2.3       | 2.7      | 3.3         | 2.5        | 3.7             | 3.3             | 2.9  |
| Indian accented  | 6  | 25-30 | 3.2             | 2.6      | 2.7        | 2.9            | 2.7      | 3.3    | 3.0      | 3.1     | 2.9       | 2.6      | 3.0         | 2.7        | 3.2             | 2.9             | 2.9  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 3.4             | 3.0      | 2.3        | 3.0            | 2.7      | 3.0    | 2.7      | 3.0     | 3.0       | 2.8      | 2.8         | 2.7        | 3.5             | 2.8             | 2.9  |
| Chinese accented | 8  | 25-30 | 3.1             | 2.5      | 2.3        | 2.6            | 2.7      | 2.6    | 2.6      | 2.9     | 2.8       | 2.9      | 3.1         | 2.5        | 3.1             | 3.0             | 2.7  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 2.8             | 2.8      | 2.3        | 3.2            | 2.7      | 2.5    | 2.3      | 2.8     | 2.7       | 2.5      | 3.2         | 2.7        | 3.2             | 2.5             | 2.7  |
| AAVE             | 9  | 25-30 | 3.5             | 3.1      | 2.9        | 3.5            | 3.2      | 3.5    | 3.1      | 3.1     | 3.1       | 2.7      | 3.4         | 2.9        | 3.2             | 3.1             | 3.1  |
|                  |    | 31~   | 3.0             | 2.3      | 2.3        | 2.3            | 2.7      | 2.7    | 2.5      | 2.8     | 2.7       | 1.8      | 2.8         | 2.5        | 3.0             | 2.5             | 2.6  |

Table 8: The Mean of Intelligibility and the Personality Checklists between Age

In the second category, those who are in their thirties gave higher points to the GAE speaker with the Asian photo, especially to the features of *Sincere* and *Likeable*. On the other hand, to the AAVE speaker, those who are in their thirties gave 0.5 point lower to the 12 features of the Personality Checklist. The low preference for the AAVE accent by those who are in thirties is shown in Table 8. In addition, those who are in their thirties gave scores 0.5 point higher to the Chinese accented English speaker to the feature of *Self-confident*, and to the Spanish accented speaker to the feature of *Highly Educated*.

### Major

Eleven respondents out of twenty-two major in Education, seven major in Engineering, one majors in Statistics, and one is MBA. Seen in Table 9, those who majored in Education gave 0.5 point higher to the seven features of *Pleasant*, *Attractive*, *Self-confident*, *Friendly*, *Intelligent*, *Leadership*, and *Highly Educated* in the Personality Checklist to the Spanish accented speaker. To all of the GAE speakers, those who majored in Education gave over 0.7 point higher to the Intelligibility than those who are non-education majors. GAE speakers with a white and Asian photo obtained 0.5 higher points for the three features, *Reliable*, *Intelligent*, and *Highly Educated* from those who are in an education major. GAE speakers with a black photo obtained 0.5 points more for the three features of *Pleasant*, *Attractive*, and *Friendly* from those who are in an education major than those who are non-education majors.

| Speaker          | #  | Major | Intelligibility | pleasant | attractive | self-confident | likeable | fluent | reliable | sincere | ambitious | friendly | intelligent | leadership | highly educated | high status job | Mean |
|------------------|----|-------|-----------------|----------|------------|----------------|----------|--------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|------|
| Korean-accented  | 3  | EDU   | 3.5             | 2.8      | 2.5        | 2.3            | 2.8      | 2.2    | 2.5      | 3.2     | 2.8       | 3.2      | 3.1         | 2.1        | 3.0             | 2.6             | 2.7  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 3.2             | 2.9      | 2.3        | 2.7            | 2.8      | 2.0    | 2.8      | 3.4     | 2.4       | 2.9      | 3.0         | 2.4        | 3.3             | 3.1             | 2.8  |
| Korean fluent    | 5  | EDU   | 4.6             | 4.0      | 4.1        | 4.2            | 4.2      | 4.4    | 4.2      | 4.0     | 3.5       | 4.0      | 4.5         | 3.8        | 4.2             | 3.9             | 4.0  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 4.1             | 4.0      | 3.9        | 4.2            | 3.9      | 4.1    | 3.8      | 4.1     | 3.8       | 4.0      | 4.2         | 4.1        | 4.2             | 4.0             | 4.0  |
| Korean American  | 1  | EDU   | 4.5             | 4.0      | 4.1        | 4.2            | 4.1      | 4.6    | 4.1      | 4.3     | 3.3       | 3.8      | 4.1         | 3.5        | 4.2             | 3.8             | 4.0  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 4.0             | 4.2      | 3.6        | 4.0            | 3.8      | 4.6    | 3.7      | 3.4     | 3.3       | 3.4      | 4.3         | 3.1        | 4.0             | 3.6             | 3.7  |
| GAE with black   | 4  | EDU   | 4.8             | 4.5      | 4.5        | 4.5            | 4.4      | 4.9    | 4.5      | 4.1     | 3.7       | 3.8      | 4.4         | 3.9        | 4.2             | 4.0             | 4.2  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 4.2             | 3.8      | 3.9        | 4.3            | 3.9      | 4.8    | 4.2      | 3.8     | 4.0       | 3.3      | 4.3         | 3.6        | 3.9             | 4.0             | 3.9  |
| GAE with white   | 7  | EDU   | 4.8             | 4.2      | 4.3        | 4.5            | 4.2      | 5.0    | 4.5      | 4.4     | 3.6       | 4.3      | 4.5         | 3.7        | 4.2             | 4.0             | 4.2  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 4.0             | 4.4      | 4.1        | 4.1            | 4.0      | 4.6    | 3.8      | 3.9     | 3.8       | 4.1      | 3.7         | 3.3        | 3.4             | 3.7             | 3.9  |
| GAE with Asian   | 10 | EDU   | 4.9             | 4.5      | 4.4        | 4.5            | 4.4      | 4.8    | 4.7      | 4.3     | 3.6       | 4.2      | 4.5         | 4.2        | 4.6             | 4.3             | 4.3  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 4.0             | 4.1      | 4.0        | 4.2            | 4.2      | 4.7    | 4.1      | 4.2     | 3.8       | 3.8      | 4.0         | 3.9        | 4.1             | 3.7             | 4.0  |
| Spanish Accented | 2  | EDU   | 3.5             | 3.3      | 3.0        | 3.4            | 2.9      | 3.0    | 3.1      | 3.3     | 2.9       | 3.3      | 3.5         | 2.9        | 3.5             | 3.3             | 3.2  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 3.0             | 2.5      | 2.3        | 2.7            | 2.8      | 3.1    | 2.9      | 3.1     | 2.6       | 2.9      | 2.9         | 2.3        | 3.0             | 3.0             | 2.8  |
| Indian accented  | 6  | EDU   | 3.2             | 2.6      | 2.6        | 3.0            | 2.5      | 3.1    | 2.8      | 2.9     | 3.0       | 2.8      | 3.2         | 2.7        | 3.3             | 3.0             | 2.9  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 3.2             | 3.0      | 2.7        | 3.0            | 2.9      | 3.6    | 3.1      | 3.3     | 3.0       | 2.6      | 2.8         | 2.9        | 3.4             | 2.9             | 3.0  |
| Chinese accented | 8  | EDU   | 2.9             | 2.5      | 2.3        | 2.9            | 2.6      | 2.7    | 2.7      | 3.0     | 2.6       | 3.0      | 3.3         | 2.8        | 3.3             | 2.9             | 2.8  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 3.2             | 2.8      | 2.4        | 2.8            | 2.9      | 2.4    | 2.4      | 2.9     | 3.0       | 2.7      | 3.1         | 2.4        | 3.1             | 2.9             | 2.8  |
| AAVE             | 9  | EDU   | 3.5             | 3.0      | 2.9        | 3.2            | 3.0      | 3.5    | 3.1      | 2.9     | 2.9       | 2.7      | 3.5         | 3.0        | 3.3             | 3.0             | 3.0  |
|                  |    | N-EDU | 3.2             | 2.9      | 2.6        | 3.3            | 3.3      | 3.2    | 3.0      | 3.3     | 3.2       | 2.2      | 3.2         | 2.8        | 3.2             | 3.0             | 3.0  |

Table 9: The Mean of Intelligibility and the Personality Checklist between Respondents Major

#### IV. Concluding Thoughts

The Korean learners exhibited a higher positiveness to the speakers with a less noticeable accent and showed a strong preference for GAE speakers. The means of Intelligibility of the GAE speakers and the Korean, fluent English speaker were much higher (over 4.0) than the rest of the speakers. It is shown that their previous exposure to the English accent was mostly GAE in their public English curriculum.

Generally, those who majored in Education and/or are female respondents (who mostly major in Education in this study) showed strong preferences for the GAE speakers over those from non-Education departments and/or are male respondents.

It was interesting to see that the female respondents who are majoring in Education, and who have been in the U.S. more than 2 years, showed a relatively higher preference for the Spanish accented speaker than the rest of speakers. It can be interpreted that those who have been in the U.S. more than 2 years have been exposed to the Spanish accented English speaker relatively more than those who stayed in the U.S. fewer than 2 years, and have an increased familiarity with this accent.

With respect to age groups, those who are in their thirties showed a bit more preference for the GAE speaker with Asian photo in the second category. Also, an interesting result of the third category is the lower preference of those who are in their thirties for the AAVE accented speaker. Even though those who are in their twenties showed the highest preference (3.11) to the AAVE accented speaker of this third category, people who are over 30 showed the lowest Intelligibility (3.00) and the lowest mean (2.56) of the Personality Checklist to the AAVE accented speaker (Table 9). This may be interpreted as a lack of the exposure of the Korean learners who are over thirty to the AAVE accent.

In conclusion, the Korean learners are familiarized with General American Accent (GAE) and it is shown as a preference to the speakers of GAE accent regardless of their racial background. Among Korean English speakers, they showed strong preferences to both speakers, Korean-American native English speaker and the Korean, fluent English speaker, while they showed very low preference to the strong Korean accented speaker. Among the various accented English speakers, the Chinese accented English, which is the other Asian accented English in this category, received the lowest rank of preference from the Korean respondents. As it turned out in this study, the Korean learners exhibited a strong preference to the General American English accent and the lowest preference to the East-Asian accented English which were Korean accent and Chinese accent English.

## V. Discussion and Future Research

This study revealed the perception of English accents of Korean learners. The Korean English learner showed a preference for the General American English and a low preference for the Korean accented English as well as Chinese accented English. Depending on their sex, age, duration of staying in the U.S, and major, their responses showed variety. However, their preference to GAE for most Korean respondents in this study reflects the public English curriculum in Korea and the standard language ideology in which they have been immersed since the time of learning English in Korea.

Since most of the respondents are native Korean, international students, depending on the duration of stay in the U.S., the aversion toward other accented English, i.e., AAVE, Spanish accented English, Indian English, etc. was represented in different ways. But the lowest preferences for Chinese English and strong accented Korean English were the same regardless of the backgrounds of the respondents. In particular, the Intelligibility of the Korean accented English speaker was scored very low (3.3), like the other accented Englishes. However, considering that the respondents are all native Koreans, it is questionable for them to score the Korean English as “difficult to understand; however, the gist of the content can be understood”.

According to the language ideologies of English in Korea that Park (2004) identified, Korean learners are self-depreciated in terms of communication in English as poor speakers. English in Korea works as a tool to obtain prestige in a globalizing world and in this sense, English in Korea is considered as a prestigious language that has a high value in terms of *market economy*. The more highly that the prestige of English is valued, the worse the self-depreciation of Korean learners becomes. Song (2007) added two more ideologies; English in Korea as an economic commodity, and English for cosmopolitan membership. The motivation of learning English for a Korean stems from the desire to be empowered as a citizen of a globalizing world, being equipped with the language proficiency and which has a very profitable market value. However, the belief of English as some cosmopolitan membership and the desire to be promoted by the prestige of using English has depreciated Korean learners' self-perception and cultural identity as a language learner. As B. Kachru (1989) argued, Korea, as an Expanding Circle country, has been a "norm-accepting" country from the Inner Circle countries. The negative images as a poor communicator, which was reflected to the native English speakers, permeated the Korean learner's identity to evaluate one's English ability.

In order to dig into the self-perception of Korean learners for a continuing future study, in-depth interviews, narratives and observations of their interactions with other various accented English speakers should be followed. Language is a badge, indicating a membership of communities. Being a member of a certain community is significant to construct one's identity. In this regard, learning a language is a process of obtaining a new identity and building a new self-image by interacting and socializing themselves to the new community. Investigating a learner's self-perception and identity would shed light on understanding the process of second language acquisition.

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