The Local Experience of "Real" English

*An Ethnographic study of Conversational English Class
in a South Korean University*

"진짜" 영어의 지역적 구성과 경험
한국의 한 대학에서의 영어회화 수업에 대한 민족지적 연구

2012년 8월

서울대학교 대학원

인류학과 인류학 전공

정 나 리

The Local Experience of "Real" English

An Ethnographic study of Conversational English Class in a South Korean University

지도교수 정 향 진

이 논문을 인류학석사 학위논문으로 제출함.
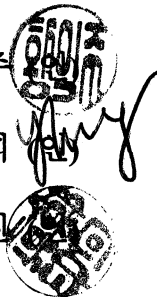
2012년 4월

서울대학교 대학원

인류학과 인류학 전공

정 나 리

정나리의 인류학석사 학위논문을 인준함.

2012년 6월

위 원 장 황 익 주

부위원장 강 윤 희

위 원 정 향 진

Abstract

Nary Chung
The Department of Anthropology
The Graduate School
Seoul National University

This is an ethnographic study of the conception of "real" English, socially constructed and practiced in South Korea. "Real" English is conceived by students as a source of personal fulfillment and freedom, distinguished from what is framed as conventional "English for tests". Through "real" English, students imagine "real encounters with foreigners" and show a strong desire to communicate and empathize with "foreigners". "Real" English is consumed as a critical element for managing and developing the self, fit for a more global setting as well as for local success.

Conversational English classrooms show how the concept of "real" English is structurally designed and actually practiced by both students and teachers. In the classroom, English comes to life, providing students with the possibility of global encounters and firsthand experience of communicating in English. Lessons taught in class are by and large dominated by culture-specific knowledge and guidelines for interacting with "foreigners", often visiting the border between the self and other. However, the speech of students and teachers observed in the classrooms show a distinct discrepancy between the ideal construction of "real" English and the English practically spoken in the local setting. In the process of pursuing "real" English, students go through certain affective experiences, related to the shaping and positioning of the self in the local social topography as well as the historically constructed sense of other.

This thesis, therefore, explores three prominent affects - fear, confidence and apathy - which are widely expressed by the students. Students often imagine a powerful unfamiliar other through English, by which fear is provoked. "Real" English also provides students with new promises, boosting them with a positive feeling of confidence, by way of successful management and transformation of the self. Apathy is another prominent affect which can be observed although not overtly expressed. The apathetic attitude towards English indicates that some students in the semi-periphery find English as something irrelevant, distancing themselves from the social implications of English. Ultimately, this thesis attempts to shed light on the local experience of "real" English, constructing a more balanced view on the issue of English in South Korea.

Keywords: Conversational English Class, "Real" English, Self, Other, Affect, Local/ Global

Student Number: 2007-20138

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

1. Purpose of Study

This thesis attempts to analyze the conception of "real" English rigorously pursued and practiced in South Korea.   A recent shift towards the spoken form in the English education sector has developed concomitantly with a deep seated yearning for a native-like fluency and the popular self-imagery of globalized Koreans.   By focusing specifically on a provincial university setting as a significant point on the contours of English, this thesis sets out to examine the local experience of "real" English, observing mandatory and elective conversational classes at the university language center, and interviewing students with diverse English experiences.

An increased sense of connectedness of the world, occurring in conjunction with key social actors such as the government, the formal education system, and major employers in the job market has created a social structure in which individual agents are propelled to constantly mold themselves using English for the project of producing "global human capital".   Students in this thesis, therefore, find themselves conceiving and pursuing the notion of "real" English as a source of personal fulfillment and freedom.   This is juxtaposed to what is framed as conventional "English for tests".   Students seek "real" English, postulating "real encounters with foreigners" in addition to meeting the demands exerted upon them by society.   Strong desires to communicate and empathize with "foreigners" go hand in hand with the consumption of the concept of "real" English as a crucial element for transforming the self into

something closer to the discourse of "global human capital" within the social structure.

Conversational English classrooms illuminate how the concept of "real" English is structurally designed and actually practiced by both students and teachers. Observing what is taught and how students and teachers communicate in the classroom reveals an aspect of "real" English experienced in the local setting.

Self and other in relation to the students' affective experience of "real" English is a significant axis of analysis. A powerful unfamiliar other is often provoked in English and it generated fear among students. The perceived danger felt by the self by this conceptual other was believed to be vanished only through mastering the language through hard work and interacting with more foreigners, minimizing the problem into a mere matter of the self alone. Confidence is a positive emotion attached to English, encouraging students with new promises. Confidence is claimed by reclaiming the legitimacy of the self through its growth or expansion through English. For the students, self is an object for managing for which "real" English plays a significant role. Apathy or indifference was not overtly expressed but could be observed in one particular classroom. The apathetic attitude towards English indicates that some students in the semi-periphery find English not as attractive or horrific, distancing themselves from the "English frenzy" and the social implications of it.

By exploring the students' ideas and experiences in the practice of "real" English, this thesis aims to sketch a picture of the current English landscape and underline the affective dimensions rising from the historical and socio-economic conditions in which South Korea is situated. Ultimately, this thesis aims to provide a local perspective on the issue of English.

2. Ethnographic Background

1) English Education in Korea

English is a hot topic in South Korea.   A barrage of English-related information competes for people's attention.   From commercials advertising "revolutionary" techniques for memorizing English vocabulary to articles expounding the dangers of pressuring children with too much English[1], diverse class-based interests and language ideologies are plastered in the media on a daily basis. Throughout the modernization of the Korean nation, English has come to hold an exceptional position in Korean society.   At the beginning of the 20th century, along with Christianity, English represented a rising power (Kang 2007: 52), through which people could access personal freedom, wealth, and a new kind of prestige[2].

English has long been a part of modern education in Korea.   Jeong (2004) states that emphasis on the written form, which later developed into the grammatical knowledge test, started in the 1920s and lasted - largely in the same format - until the early 1990s. Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, English was a core subject in the secondary school system, alongside mathematics and Korean.   English was considered important enough that students' grades were taken into consideration when applying for universities.   It was not until the late

---

[1]

http://www.pressian.com/article/article.asp?article_num=30120514001918&section=03&t1=n (May 15, 2012)

[2] The enthusiasm for English is described by Kang (2007: 88).   There was an incident in the early 20th Century where students lined up in front of a missionary school *Baejae Hakdang* in the early 20th Century with the hope of learning English.   After hearing that English was not going to be taught, however, everyone went home, thoroughly disappointed.

1980s and early 1990s when the spoken form of English started to be given more weight in Korean education. The 1993 educational reform adopted a new university entrance exam and shifted the emphasis to listening and reading comprehension. 1997 marked the first year English was taught as a regular subject in primary schools. These educational reforms with regards to English reflect the political and economic transformations that Korea was experiencing throughout the 1990s. International trade and travel became increasingly important and popular and in the 2000s, prompted by the IMF crisis, Korean education sector also opened itself to the neoliberal reforms (Park 2012). Communicative proficiency and "real", usable, practical English became the new focus of English education in Korea, preparing "Korea" for the "global market". Individuals were to be competitive as "global human capital" on the world stage. One immediate outcome of this new thrust in the direction of "real" English was an unprecedented number of upper and middle class Korean parents sending their children to English speaking countries to gain the upper hand in the race for fluency, compensating, it was believed, for that which Korean education was thought unable to provide.

The perceived inability of Korean students' to confidently speak "real English" in "real situations" after having studied it as part of the secondary school curriculum came to be regarded as a serious social problem. It was believed this reflected a serious failure in the education system, one with possible long term consequences as Korea continued to improve its global standing, thus increasing the need for improved communication. The solution, it was believed, would be found in placing "native" speakers in the classrooms in addition to organizing more time slots for English classes in primary and secondary schools. To this day, there continues to be ongoing debate on the efficiency and the degree of English education in Korea.

2) Globalization and the Role of English

The question of why English came to mean so much in Korea cannot be discussed without examining the popular rationale for the highly influential and extremely elusive concept of globalization.   Globalization is often perceived to be something new, powerful and irreversible, associated with the new era in which we live.   Eriksen (2007), however, notes that the globalizing process is nothing new, rather people's "awareness" of the interconnectedness has increased due to the development of technology.   Moving from a concrete to an abstract community, Eriksen argues that the new consciousness creates a "sense of opportunities and vulnerability" and English seems to locate itself at the heart of it all as an "inherent element of the global".   English thus promises opportunities while exposing vulnerability in those who participate in the globalizing project.   Students see great opportunities for overcoming social impositions through English, a language symbolizing mobility and freedom, and at the same time, they feel vulnerable and overwhelmed, constantly in fear of falling behind the competition (Park 2009; Ableman and Park 2004).

Eriksen also describes globalization as "a way of organizing heterogeneity", not "the production of global uniformity" (2007:10).   The heterogeneity organizing process occurs within the context of the post-colonial world.   Within this, a particular locality becomes the unifying standard for all while English and the Anglophonic hegemony claims a central role.   Vandana Shiva (1993: 149-150) writes,

> The 'global' in the dominant discourse is the political space in which a particular dominant local seeks global control, and frees itself of local, national and international restraints.   The global does not represent the

universal human interest, it represents a particular local and parochial interest which has been globalized through the scope of its reach.

English, that which was once a local language akin to any other, has come to play the role of a global language, dominating the international political, economic and cultural scenes and assuming the task of overseeing all local languages. Pennycook (1998: 19) traces the history of English Language Teaching (ELT) back to Western colonialism. In applied linguistics and ELT related disciplines, however, the link between English language teaching and the colonial legacy are not usually at the forefront of things and there is a tendency to leave the uncomfortable "past" behind, thus presenting English as a "neutral", "global" language. She asserts that,

> ELT is a product of colonialism not just because it is colonialism that produced the initial conditions for the global spread of English but because it was colonialism that produced many ways of thinking and behaving that are still part of Western cultures.

In the same light, Norber-Hodge(1996) argues that [modern] education in the third world trains students to become "narrow specialists in a Westernized urban environment", removing them from the context in which they live and preparing them for an imagined space, also known as "the globalized world".

The reorganization of heterogeneity out of localities happens both in the realm of imagination as well as in the tangible world. Hannerz (1996: 27) says that what is real and unreal in people's experience can vary and are not necessarily dictated by locales. He proposes a flexible sense of habitat, "habitats of meaning" in the globalized era where the media contributes to creating communities for individual agents. What is real and unreal becomes

obfuscated as the scope of "imagination" becomes more affluent. This does not mean, however, that the local is rendered meaningless, as the local provides continuity, repetitive everyday life, and practical, fact-to-face interactions.

Eriksen also adds, "The local continues to thrive as globalization localizes people, for people get obsessed with their locality" (2007: 10-14). Locality becomes more significant because with globalization, localities become more visible and accessible. With this "intensified awareness" and an increasing understanding and experience of "other" localities, attachment to a locality becomes diversified into something primordial, accidental or optional. For the students in this thesis, locality is de-valued and it is also strongly retained while the teachers' locality becomes the very standard students are encouraged to learn about in school.

This thesis is situated in the context of the "globalized" world as concretely structured by the government and the market, and experienced and imagined by students in a specific locality. The "ideal" and completely integrated global system may not exist (Kim 2000), but the imagery of a "global human capital" is immediately imagined as a person in a global arena, not restricted by geographical or political boundaries. In the same vein, English is imagined as "a shared abstract standard valid for all person at all times", something that Eriksen (2007: 23) sees as an effect of globalization, a universal standard that everyone can be measured by. Thus English, in Korea, often considered to be a crucial tool for globalization, was inseparable with the government led internationalization project of the 1990s (Park 2007). The role of the state has not diminished with the growing connectivity of the world, continuing to exert a strong power in major decision-making processes (Kim 2000). Producing "global human capital" is a state project, manifested in education policies and closely linked to the national economy which is itself

embedded in the late capitalist system of production and consumption. To offer a more concrete example of this process, we should look to Singapore. According to Spring (2004:27), Singaporean educational ideology aims to develop "world citizens of Singapore". He observes that through education, the state nurtures Singaporean citizens for "a global society" where physical boundaries become less threatening and identity based on "people and nation" becomes stronger. While allowing for "diversity", English serves as a unifying medium for the Singaporean state and the economy. For Korea, however, the state project of producing "global human capital" especially through English, remains highly ambiguous, placing a strain on students who are expected to become globalized through learning the language.

Recent studies in sociolinguistics focus on the neoliberal practices and personhood with regards to English and meanings people attach to it. Individuals navigating the global sphere by practicing neoliberal principles and commoditizing themselves as "marketable resources" through their linguistic and cultural capital are portrayed by many scholars (Park and Lo 2012; Cho 2012; Block 2012). They are critical of the effects of neoliberalism, which works to sustain the illusion that overcoming structural barriers through English is possible for neoliberal selves (Park and Lo 2012:158). This thesis draws specifically on Park(2011)'s analysis of English as a form of border crossing. Park (2009) identifies the problem of English in South Korea, stemming from the ideology of monolingualism reproduced by the process of externalization and self-deprecation. English is the language of the other, which has no living space in everyday life, while this self-deprecation prevents Koreans from ever being as fluent as they believe they should be. English, according to Park, situates Koreans in a "liminal space" where they are trapped between a sense of longing and belonging which creates pain and anxiety.

Students in this thesis find themselves in a popularized wave of globalization both structurally and personally. The construction of "real" English is viable only through the imagined global encounters and English plays a pivotal role mediating individuals and their wider surroundings. Especially, the notion of self and other is the source of various affects, making "real" English an essential part of the perception and the development of the self in the neoliberal backdrop. This thesis examines, through "real" English, how students construct and locate their selves in the world as an object of development and management.

3. Research Setting

1) Yehan[3]

Yehan is a small city with a population of 170,000, located in a southern Province of South Korea. Agriculture, livestock and food- related businesses are the main regional industries. A former native English teacher/resident of Yehan describes it as following:

> "Yehan is a very traditional area; this has its advantages and drawbacks... In the last few years a lot of *hagwons* (private institutions) have opened up, meaning there are a lot more foreign teachers there. So you can find some friendship, although a lot centers around drinking at bars with the same old people doing the same old thing. The Korean people are very traditional, but they have retained a lot of traditional values such as honesty and warm-heartedness[sic]. On the downside, don't expect many modern or fresh views in Yehan. There is not much to do I am

---

3 Pseudonym.

afraid, it can get boring. Unless you are a total nature freak, there is only so much wandering around the countryside looking at temples and Confucius[sic] schools that you can do.[4]

The uneven development of modern Korea resulted in a quarter of the population clustered in the capital city, its surrounding areas drawing in the major economic and socio-cultural resources. Local developments outside Seoul and a few other large-scale cities have, on the whole, been slower and without the same systematic planning. This has meant that the geographical peripheries and often now considered as hollow and undesirable in comparison to the capital and its outlying areas. As is the case for many rural areas in fast-modernizing countries, these peripheries sometimes ended up losing their own raison d'être, with residents feeling alienated in their homes and disempowered in the face of rapid change. Yehan is a city on the periphery, struggling to put itself on the global map, actively re-establishing its identity in order to become a more marketable and desirable destination for tourism and a more stable and leisurely place to live for the residents.

Modern Yehan represents the image of pre-modern Korea in the popular discourse. The national development plans included Yehan in a "tourist attraction" role, making it as one of the main industries of the region. As one of the main historic cities in Korea, the meanings people attach to Yehan are still very much dictated by the historical background surrounding the lives and achievements of old noble families and scholars.[5] Yehan, in its heyday, was at

---

4 http://forums.eslcafe.com/korea/viewtopic.php?t=3924 (April 17, 2011)
5 For example, one of the much celebrated historical tales in Yehan is how the prominent local clans managed to gain access to central power since the Goryeo Dynasty (University Museum). One famous story is related to the locals giving aid to the King who was seeking refuge from foreign invasion. This story is reenacted as a form of popular game (*Notdaribalgi*) at local events even today.

the heart of the Confucian culture during the Chosun Dynasty and produced a large number of court officials, second only to Seoul. *Yangban*[6] culture flourished for centuries in Yehan, while Christianity has shown a strong presence since the beginning of the 20th century (Im 1997:48). There have been grassroots efforts for the rejuvenation of the city as a modern community with traditional values, although much of these past glories have faded.

Yehan is now well-known for its traditional dance festival and traditional villages, which generates a sense of pride and belonging in the locality. However, Moon Okpyo (2000: 91) argues that old villages, houses, temples and the traditional dance have all become alienated from the everyday life of local residents, as these cultural expressions were brought back by experts to be consumed by tourists. This cultural renewal has come to define and revitalize Yehan, reinforcing a local identity based on one particular aspect. It is no longer a holistic system of meanings; first and foremost, it performs a commodity role. Yehan, thus, is often objectified and captured in the "othering gaze" of the central discourse of the Seoul-Jigan dichotomy. Kim Kwangok (1996) argues that the strong local-central dichotomy is a product of the history of nationalization. He states,

> The local is a conceptual reality constructed by the centralist idealization of the state. The centralists stigmatize the locality as lacking autonomous ability and having a decentralizing tendency so that it is counted as a negative for the national integrity. On the other hand, the local is developed as a political resource by the local people themselves as their strategy to establish their own space for autonomy and a more

---

6 The highest social class of the Joseon Dynasty
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/651812/yangban (June 26th, 2012)

advantageous position in their dealings with the centralizing power of the state. (Kim 1996) (My translation)

A sense of deprivation and self-devaluation is prevalent in the popular discourses of Yehan and the people. The typical image of Yehan encompasses both positive and negative portraits, it is often described as closed, conservative, backward, provincial, homey, and traditional. This city always has the task of having to explain itself, where it is located and what national treasures it has, in relation to the center, justifying its existence to itself as well as to outsiders.

On the other hand, by distinguishing itself from the center, Yehan positively re-creates its self-image as the essence of Korea and as such, something worthwhile holding on to. Reed-Danahay (1996:20) has analyzed how, in France, in the Laviallois, residents of a rural village, exert an influence on formal education and resist the central hegemony. She argues that the Laviallois formed a distinct cultural identity in opposition to the dominant, mainstream French culture. To outsiders, Laviallois people demonstrated their identity by folklorizing their culture, they placed themselves at odds with and yet positively within the national narrative, saving themselves from devaluation through a kind of self-distancing. Yehan differentiates itself from the outside world and actively holds onto the image of being a city of *yangban*, and keepers of a traditional spiritual culture, the very opposite of what the fast-changing, materialistic, modern, big cities claim to be. This in turn justifies Yehan's existence as encompassing an indispensable "essence" of Koreaness, something that is also fit for globalization and which gives it all the more reason to advocate itself in the language of the global - English.

With these particularities in mind, Yehan, in this thesis, represents small-sized cities in Korea as opposed to large-scale cosmopolitan areas where

major socio-economic resources are concentrated.   The contrast between central and local areas in terms of geography, implies a hierarchical relationship of the center to the peripheries.   What is commonly referred to as Jibang (provincial) has certain implications for young individuals and therefore directs the construction of their realities.   Youth placed in a geographical periphery also requires attention.   By narrowing the scope to the English language, a "saturated sign" (Abelman and Park 2004) in Korean society, this thesis observes how English and English education shape the realities of youth in this particular locality.

2)   University Language Center

The university setting in this thesis is a national university located in the city of Yehan.   A university of about 7,000 students and 250 full-time teaching staff, plays a significant role in keeping Yehan vibrant and attracting the younger population. It enjoys a mid-ranking position as a national university in the region, while in terms of nation-wide popularity, it is exposed to the disadvantages of being located in the periphery.

It is now common for universities in Korea to have an institution solely for language teaching operating outside each language department.   The goal of the Language Center at the university is to nurture students in becoming fit for the global stage and train students in foreign languages. The dean writes in his welcome speech on the university website that "In this fast-changing competitive environment, it is the university's duty to raise confident and respected world citizens."[7]   For that purpose, the university offers exchange programs and assists

---

[7] University Website (April 2011).

13

students in studying abroad so that "students can overcome hardships facing the youth today and become global leaders."

The University Language Center first took off as a Language Research Center in an old language laboratory run by the Department of English Education in 1984. The Language Research Center published an annual journal and organized English related regional events such as an English speaking contest and local English teacher training courses. In 1996, it expanded and became an independent institution within the university. According to one of the first teachers, in its heyday, the number of teachers reached 20. Recalling the excitement, he referred to that time as the "golden age", when they had a great team of teachers with innovative educational technologies. The internet had just started being employed as a research tool and the teachers adopted task-based and student-centered activities which were, at that time, quite new in the field. Getting students to speak in English all the time in class and conducting the class entirely in English was a considerable challenge, although these days it is a widespread practice in major universities, not only in English classes but also in classes for other majors.

The new Language Center building was completed in 1998. The second and third floors were for classrooms and the administration office. The fourth floor was for seminar rooms and offices for the director, and other managerial offices. The fifth floor had 22 offices, a common room, two public bathrooms and two shower rooms, designed exclusively to fit foreign instructors. One spacious office per instructor, it was believed, was originally planned to be used as both office and living space. However, in 2001, the university constructed a four-story apartment building for foreign instructors and guests 10 minutes off campus and since that time all teachers have been accommodated in this building. '"Real" professors in other departments expressed discomfort regarding these

"lowly" foreign teachers occupying such big office spaces', reminisced one teacher, who added that his fondest teaching memories were of Yehan.

The Department of English Education at the university is mainly responsible for running the Language Center. On offer are credit and non-credit courses on English, Japanese and Chinese languages taught by Korean and native teachers for both the general public and university students. However, a variety of English classes make up the main business of the Language Center providing students with classes such as, conversational English, practical English, Job seekers' English, English writing, TOEIC, and a handful of others. Currently, 13 English teachers from abroad are teaching English along with 12 Korean instructors at the Language Center[8]. At the time of fieldwork, 5 Americans, 3 Canadians, 1 British, 2 Australians, and 2 overseas Koreans were teaching at the Language Center.

My personal experience as an English instructor at the institution was a great motivation for the conception and the writing of this thesis. Every day I was confronted with the desires for and the resistance to English in class and I did not know what to make of it. Feeling uncomfortable being caught up in all the emotions, I wanted to trace the cause of the commotion and make some sense of it all. This thesis is an attempt to put to rest some of the confusion that has troubled me and many other Korean students of English.

---

[8] One or two Chinese native teachers from China are invited to teach Chinese each year and four Korean instructors teach Japanese at the language center.

4. Methodology

1) Interview

I started interviewing students at the end of 2010 on a variety of subjects as part of a class assignment. Initially, the interviews centered on university life and social relations on campus as it was my intention to understand student life in general. I started interacting with the teachers and students from the Intensive Winter English Camp in January 2011, while observing two English language classes. I conducted interviews with 3 teachers and 2 student assistants from the camp. During February 2011, 3 interviews with English instructors or former instructors and an interview with a Yehan student studying in Seoul were conducted. This is when I formed the specific questions asked in this thesis.

During the first semester, 8 students and 4 teachers were interviewed in formal and informal settings. 9 additional interviews took place during the next two semesters. The teachers I interviewed came from different Anglophone countries and I contacted them through friends and co-workers (Appendix A). I also approached the students by similar means, with most students, however, I conducted interviews in Korean.

2) Participant Observation

How students actually use English could only be observed in class, as it is rare to see these students interacting in English in situations outside of the institutional environment. Observing in-class activities after the pilot study was significant especially because the comments received from students during the interviews would occasionally be contradicted by their actions in class. In addition, many students had difficulty explaining themselves as to how they feel and what they think with regards to English. Short answers like, "I don't know", or "Maybe",

showed me that I had not, at that stage, built sufficient rapport. More importantly, more immediate, bodily and emotional responses indicating their dedication and feelings about English were more visible in class.

i. Intensive Winter English Camp

I observed a 3 week intensive winter camp in January 2011 for the purpose of exploring the matter of English and its impact on student life. "Intensive Winter Camp", offered to students at the university, was termed as a project for producing global assets. About 80 students moved into the dormitory for three weeks and the program was designed for the participants to spend as much time speaking English as possible, supervised by native teachers hired specifically for the camp. Organizers attempted to provide an environment closest to that of study abroad programs. I observed two classes, one advanced level and one beginner level class, one hour each, every day for three weeks. The particular classes I observed were taught by Beatrice and Josh, teachers from Seoul, originally from the US and Australia respectively.

ii. Freshman Conversational English

Freshman Conversational English was first convened in 1997 as a mandatory language course that every first year student had to take in order to graduate. It needs to be pointed out that it is a mandatory course, not an elective. Completely institutionalized in the national educational curriculum, students cannot graduate without learning to converse in English. This is the case in other national universities as well.

The main objective of these conversational English classes is to help students feel comfortable using English in everyday situations. Confidence, comfort and ease are the most important states that students need to achieve, as

laid out in the syllabi. Fluency is less emphasized, partly because these are basic level courses. The assumption underlying this objective is that students do not feel confident or comfortable in situations where they have to interact in English.

What the instructors teach in the classes is generally aimed at "improving students' English abilities." But teachers themselves readily admit that "there's only so much you can achieve" within the limited teaching hours. Their ultimate goal, instead, is to teach a "self-sufficiency" or "self-confidence" which will eventually facilitate further language learning in the future. However, the act of teaching English conversation is sometimes not taken too seriously, referred to by one instructor as "talking bollocks for an hour.". Indeed, despite being provided with a textbook, there are no set criteria in regards to how to teach students with different levels of proficiency. Teachers are often left to develop their own materials. Textbooks are available, but teachers often dismiss them as not representing the true reality of the English-speaking culture. Instead, teachers find that using their own experience is the best way to get students' attention and enhance their performance. Class content is therefore highly subjective, depending on individual teachers' preferences, their personal philosophies and educational background. The routines in an English class generally prepare students for conversing with people in simple, casual English, talking about non-intrusive, easy-to-relate topics. Conversational English class exists, as is often stated both by students and teachers, to help students get used to conversing with "foreigners" and rid them of the fear of having to speak to them in English.

I observed two classes in March 2011 and finished class observation in the beginning of June. Two classes, one advanced and one for beginners, were observed for 40 hours each over the course of one semester. Amanda, responsible for the advanced level humanities majors, came from the United

States and had been teaching in Korea for just over a year. David's students were elementary level art/music and physical education majors. He had been teaching for more than 30 years, in a number of countries around the world and he had been working at this institute for 10 years. Teacher strategies and student responses differed depending on diverse factors; however, these two classes represent typical conversational English classes in the Language Center.

As conversational English is a mandatory course for first year students, the description of classroom scenes at times is incongruent with the interviews with older students. And as there are rapid developments in English education, student proficiency ranges from elementary to advanced and the overall atmosphere changes every year. Attitude towards English differed greatly, depending on which class students were in.

iii.   English-related Events on Campus

Notes from English-related events on campus, for example, the Annual Student Speech Contest or the English Talent Show were used as data for analysis. Students' opinions and ideas tended to be more formal and refined in these official occasions compared to the semi- structured interviews I conducted.

3) Survey

I conducted a survey during my first participant observation at winter camp and a second survey was distributed towards the end of my fieldwork in 2012. The first questionnaire consisted of 11 open-ended questions on the reasons for studying English and their affective experiences. 74 out of 75 were collected for pilot research while the second survey was conducted of 107 students. The second set of questions were 9 multiple choice questions, it was devised after conducting interviews and getting some idea of what students' answers roughly

fall into. To leave some room for personal opinion, section number 5 or 6 was usually left blank for comments (Appendix B).

CHAPTER TWO

Student Rationales For "Real" English:
From "English for Tests" to "Real" English

English has certainly become one of the most important and much talked about subjects for the students in Yehan as well as in the rest of the country.   From an early age, Korean students are introduced to English as a key subject within the formal education system and a great deal of weight has come to be placed on it. As is the case with many issues of social consent, students are often unaware as to why they are studying English and what they want from it.

> Teachers kept telling us that English is important over so many years. I think that is why I have come to believe that it is important.   (Survey)

To ponder this matter and to discuss the meaning of English spurns further questions on the matter of their own life strategies and the trajectory of the self in the world.   Self and English are closely intertwined in student rationales.   Self becomes an object to manage and, out in the market, English is an element that perfects and makes the self desirable by society.   Furthermore, self as an independent entity with its own subjectivity, pursues the notion of "real" English which enables true global encounters and brings inner fulfillment.   This chapter will depict the ways in which students understand and rationalize English, embedded in their social realities by looking at how "real" English is constructed and desired on a conceptual level.

1. Self Out In the Market

The most immediate and "practical" motivation for studying English comes from the fact that the job market requires English test scores (Graph 1).   More than 50% of students replied that they study English for employment.
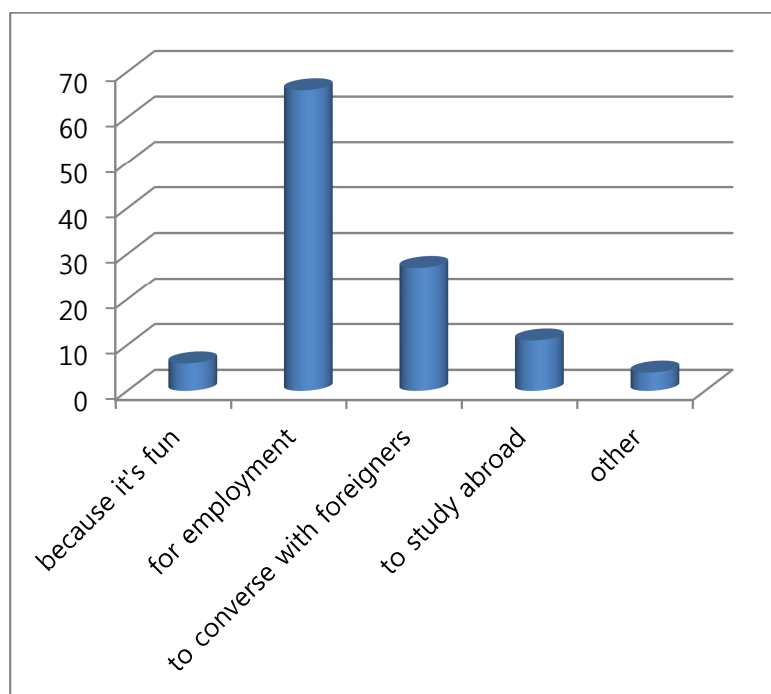
Graph 1.   Why are you studying English?

English is imbued with a social value and regarded as an element indispensable to the member's growth and acceptance in society.   There are things that you can or cannot do and English is commonly perceived to open most doors. English is directly associated with survival, a means to make a living, and a necessity.

> In Korean society, to get a job, you need both a good TOEIC score and speaking skills. My friends and I talk about how there would be no problem making a living if you know English. If you are good at English, at least you won't starve.
>
> (Seungbo, 4th yr history major, 1/17/2011)

Seungbo makes a weak distinction between a good TOEIC score and competent speaking skills. Inevitably, however, for Seungbo, both of these concepts fall under what it means to "know English". They are both part of the broader idea of "knowing English". Students realize that the self equipped with any kind of English will be more marketable out in the market.

English is mostly described as "unavoidable" but the idea of English as "common knowledge" is not altogether received with open arms, and leaves room for doubts and anger.

> Sometimes I think how crazy all this is. Learning a foreign language for more than a decade, and studying some more abroad paying a lot of money, I think to myself whether this is an American Imperialist colony[sic], and that maybe I should rather study my major or enjoy leisure activities with the time instead. In the name of the global age, we invest too much effort and money onto it. I think it's not right to judge people's diligence and intelligence based on an English score.
>
> (Chai, 3rd year folklore major 2/8/2012)

Students show discomfort and frustration towards the situation where they have to study English despite obvious anguish on their part. While Chai refuses to be judged based on her English score, Ujin justifies English as something that she is learning to enjoy.

> It must be convenient for people in English speaking countries. Not

23

only Asians but everyone around the world is trying to learn English realizing its importance.   English is becoming a common knowledge.   Of course I feel bad that it has to be English, not Korean, but I have to do it anyways, so I am willing to enjoy studying English.   Not a problem.   (Ujin, 3rd year folklore major, 3/22/2012)

For both Chai and Ujin, the reasoning, at one point, leaps to the matter of the self. Students are suspicious of and bitter about what is expected of them, but somehow, English continues to operate as an indicator for the state of the self out in the market.   Through English, self is properly managed, perfected and made desirable.

I have to be a diligent person. I study English every day.

If I speak English well, I would be the kind of person that large companies want.

English skills reflect one's diligence, in their university life and career.
(Survey)

Students comply with what they recognize as social requirements.   At the same time, however, as Ujin points out, the desire to learn English also comes from within.   She reflects on her ambivalent attitude toward the popular perception of English as a must.

I don't think that you become a better person studying English as you are required in the job market.   However, when I come across friends with terrible TOEIC scores, I get extremely worried about them.   I think to myself, what are they thinking?   What are they going to do? In Korea, people think that one cannot survive without English.   I don't particularly like the idea but I partly agree with it.   It is contradictory

> but I feel that I learn English out of my own volition and at the same time, I am just following social requirements, I think that those two aspects co-exist.   (3rd year folklore major, 3/22/2012)

Even after the study period for exams or employment is over, many students wish to keep studying English as a hobby or a form of self-development, improving their pronunciation, watching American TV shows or enrolling in conversation classes.   Students see English as a hobby and a life-time achievement for improving the self and consciously take interest in English and related activities.   A part of this internal drive can be found in their perception of the global.

2.   Imagining Global Encounters

Students' perception of the world globalized is immediately directed to the necessity of English in all aspects of life.

> These days, whatever you do, it's not only confined to Korea.   Reading a book, the media, in all aspects of life, if you speak English, things will be more convenient- meeting people, traveling overseas, everything. The world is now in the global age and English has been selected as common language.   English helps to get things done in most countries. If you don't know English, you will fall behind in the age of internationalization.   (Survey)

The global and English are inseparable entities for the students.   They see English as an essential part of the global, and the global is omnipresent first and foremost in the form of English in their immediate and future lives.

It is taken for granted that the world is highly globalized and in order to survive in it, one needs to study English, the legitimate global communicating tool. Students often imagined a "global space/community" in which everyone speaks English. The global was increasingly becoming "one" and English seemed to be an element that qualifies someone to be part of it.

Jian:	I love to speak English. I want to travel and talk to foreigners.
Researcher:	Who do you exactly mean by foreigners? Americans? Chinese? Mexicans?
Jian:	People who speak English. I want to make foreign friends who use English. Wherever you go, you have a better chance of communicating with people if you know English. And if I speak English, I could help foreigners who are lost in Korea.

Foreign experiences out of the familiar have become widely accessible through diverse channels and have become a crucial part in the construction of the self and their view of the world. For example, Chai's experience in Australia had changed her attitude about exploring the unfamiliar.

> I used to be the kind of person who only watches Korean movies and listens to Korean songs. I could not understand people who choose to go abroad just to go through hardships and waste precious time of their short lives. But after I came to Australia to study English, although it's only for 5 weeks, meeting a lot of people studying in a foreign country, I started to think maybe it's not a bad experience studying in a foreign country if it's only for a while. (Chai, 3rd yr folklore major, 2/8/2012)

What she used to consider as "hardship" has now become something worthwhile pursuing for self-development. Students show powerful desires to experience

the global first hand.   Miok has a specific imagery in mind:

> I study English because I want to go backpacking and walk the streets
> with cool foreign friends showing off my fluent English.   Most people
> are hung up on English because it's related to employment but I would
> choose to study English even if it's not, because I have that dream.
> Also, my aunt married a Canadian and I want to go see her there.
>
> (Survey)

Miok's personal dreams appear achievable through English and she envisions herself among foreign friends speaking the language with ease.   She sets herself apart from those who study English merely to get a job.   She shows a genuine interest in a real global experience, not tainted by secular purposes such as a TOEIC score or employment.

Students also strongly express wishes to communicate and interact with "foreigners". Ujin, fresh with memories of time spent in New Zealand over the winter vacation explains,

> A good thing about learning English is that, I liked the experience of
> interacting with foreigners, reading foreign books, and the whole foreign
> experience.   Directly listening to what they think, communicating with
> them.

The sheer joy of interacting with "others" and sharing ideas and feelings beyond the locality were dreamt through English.   The desire to go beyond the comfortable and familiar local zone was often juxtaposed with a feeling of being trapped.   The desire to "stand in the middle of the world" prevailed in student interviews and traveling overseas was one way of satisfying the desire.   The English language, again, played a symbolic and functional role in this journey.

> My mentor told me, you should have wild dreams.   Even if you are in a small town, think you are in the middle of the world.   If so, the town is not so small for you anymore.   Seoul isn't as big as you think.   I wasn't good at English.   But I thought I would like to be a butterfly.   I believed that I could do it.   I realized the way to stand in the world is English and I studied harder and harder.   (Speech Contest)

Metaphorically, English enables the transformation of the self into a butterfly, offering the chance to take on a new identity after a long and arduous struggle. Once the change has occurred, a person is free of the boundaries of the locality, able to fly anywhere in the global.   Muyong also said he wants to travel the world and live with no financial problems.   English, he muses, is the answer to both these desires.   English is a solution to many things.   English is a stepping stone for a better job inside Korea but it entails something bigger, which encompasses the global.   With this, students see a possibility of escaping the local, going beyond the parochial restraints placed on them.[9]

3.   From "English for Tests" to "Real" English

> In university, I first studied conversational English which focuses on speaking skills and I felt like I was starting it all over again and thought that all the English that I learned until then was just useless.
>   (Sunghyun 4th yr information statistics major 3/4/2011)

---

[9]   Abelman and Park(2009) have argued that there are two different levels in the discussion of English, one expressing a desire to be incorporated into the global (to converse with foreigners and to travel and work abroad) and the other to secure a position in Korean society (a stratifying tool).

The conventional English examination focuses more on the written form and is considered by some students to be insufficient. Students connect "real" English with the "right" kind of English. The right kind of English here is English that is spoken comfortably, not simply a recollection of memorized passages from a TOEIC practice sheet. Students who are able to achieve this status and even those who claim to be working towards this "real" English, stake out a moral superiority based on their personal choice.

> I went to a *hagwon* and they were teaching skills on getting the answers right in TOEIC. I felt quite skeptical about it and didn't go back the next day. This kind of English, is it right? *Anyone* can get high TOEIC scores. It's just a matter of memorizing grammatical rules, and patterns of the questions. The person who is really good at English진짜 영어를 잘하는 사람 is someone who can *speak* fluently.

Sungmin identifies two different kinds of English. He says English you learn at school is "textbook English" and the kind of English that native speakers of English speak is "everyday English". He said he realized this when he conversed with foreigners from India or Philippines whose mother tongue is not English. He says,

> They [English-speaking foreigners from non-Western countries] speak in a more textbook English, saying hi, hello, how are you, knowing the difficulty you might have with English, whereas those whose first language is English, speak effortlessly easy but we don't understand them because they speak fast, and they don't speak at our level, they talk like, "hey, what up?"- everyday English. They think it's easy but it's not textbook English so we have trouble understanding them. Everyday English is hard to learn unless we actually have a chance to interact with foreigners because we have to see, listen and feel it first

hand to learn that kind of English. In fact, maybe textbook English is more practical for us, sending business e-mails and for reading books. Talking with foreigners from English speaking countries, we won't really have to speak with them in everyday English. Rather, textbook English might be more useful to us.

(Former engineering major 5/12/2011)

Sungmin draws a line between what he calls "everyday English" and "textbook English" and thinks it might be better for him to settle with textbook English because crossing the line will not be necessary for him. Public discourse on the critical side of English education and the "English Frenzy" in Korea also centers around the distinction between the kind of English that is spoken in the "field" 현지영어 and "Korean style" English 한국식 영어, which is associated with tests.

Students, after extensive training and studying experience abroad, still go to *hagwon*s to study "Korean style English" upon returning to Korea. They are fluent in "field English" 현지영어, practical English, but they fail to get high scores in TOEIC tests. They go to foreign mass on Sundays, take phone English with instructors from Philippines and take writing courses at the British embassy to retain their English skills picked up in the field… For the tests, the only useful thing was the native pronunciation that they learned… (My translation)[10]

Students in Yehan also demonstrate a similar take on the English that they have learned so far and make a distinction between different kinds of English. They strongly long for "real" English, English that is distinguishable from the kind of English demanded in tests.

---

[10] http://cnews.mt.co.kr/mtview.php?no=2012051016593857016&type=2
MONEYTODAY (May 10, 2012)

> I had no dreams, no interest in my major. But all I had hoped at that time was that I wanted to be an influential person, I knew that I didn't want to be an average Joe. So I decided to learn English, but not for the score. (Survey)

Studying English for the score was looked down upon by some students and they distinguished themselves from others who study English only to gain higher scores, refusing to be merely organized within the social hierarchy.

> I hate that everyone has to do exactly the same thing, get a job, working in a company, all lined up. I want to go on a working holiday to Australia for a year and undergo hardships and come back with really fluent English, not just fluent, so fluent that English would come out with a button pushed. I think then, I would be able to do anything in the world. (Kwanghoon 4th Engineering Major, 2/7/2011)

Kwanghoon believes that after going through a painful quest in Australia, English will be such a vital part of him that if someone "pushes a button on him", English would automatically come out. He pictures himself as able to accomplishing "anything" once empowered by English.

> To succeed, you'd have to be different. You would basically need *spec*. I am resisting it all though. I think TOEIC is rubbish. What is the use of cramming for two months and getting a 900, if you can't even speak a word? I learn English because I like it.
> (Minjo, 4th yr European language and Tourism major 3/8/2011)

English will, it is believed by many, enable them to go beyond the regional and national confines and "real English", as opposed to "English for tests" is what sets them apart and sets them free from the obligation of society, getting them ahead of the competition and perfecting the self.

Desiring the transformation of the self that takes place through acquiring "real" English, a new identity, based on global encounters is pursued by the students.   Global encounters, as imagined by students, and the neoliberal requirement that individuals fend themselves without undermining the unequal structure are intertwined through the pursuit of "real" English.   As observed by Park and Lo (2012), the essentialist ideology of language as an inherent part of individual identity coexists with a neoliberal notion of language as a commodity that can easily be acquired so as to enhance one's capital.

Drawing on the "real" English that students conceptualized and made an object of desire, the next chapter will discuss the local experience of "real" English.   By observing conversational English classrooms, the practice of "real" English, as laid out by the formal education system will be examined.

CHAPTER THREE

In the Classroom: A "Mock" Environment for "Real" Encounters

Despite the great amount of emphasis placed on the necessity of English, it is not easy to find a space where people speak English for purposes other than education. "The domains of language use" in Korea, Park (2008) observes, is dominated by the "monolingual image" of Korea. The widespread use of English - whether the use of Konglish words or random English expressions used in the media - is mostly incorporated into everyday Korean and not recognized as English. And for the students in this study, conversational English class is almost the only place where English is actually spoken on a regular basis (Graph 2).

Graph 2.   In which environment are you most often exposed to English?
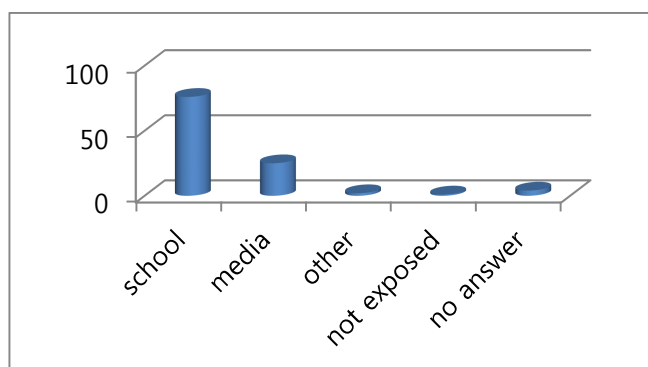
What is taught in conversational English classes and how it is taught represent ways in which these classes shape students' perception and experience of "real" English.   Along with the discourse of "real" English premised on the idea of

"global encounters", students pictured a specific time and space that these "encounters" in "real" English will take place (Graph 3).

Graph 3. Where do you think you will be speaking English in the future?
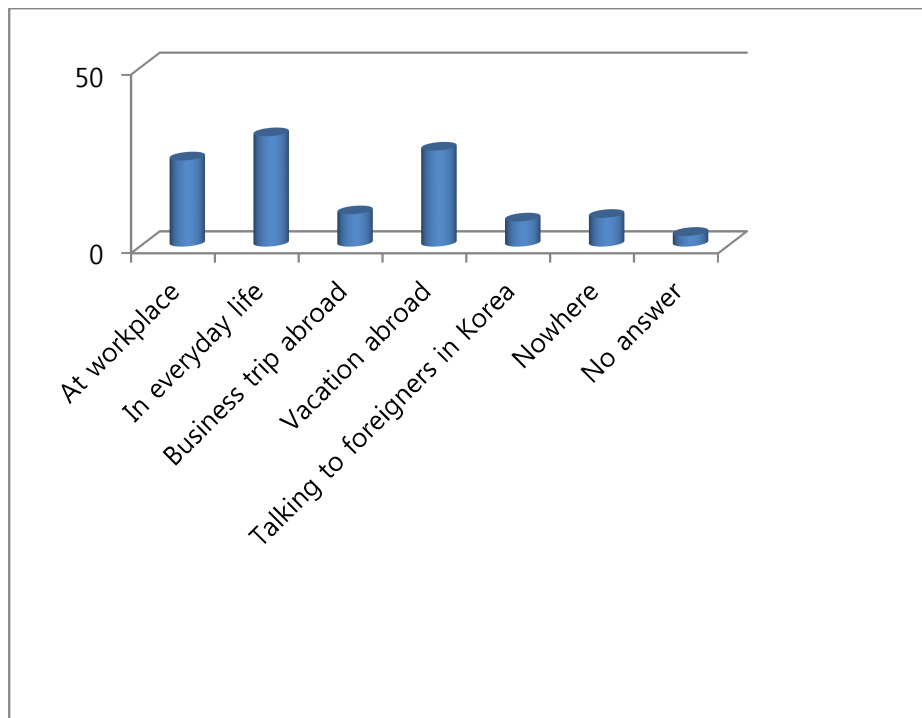
Ujin discusses these ideas in regards to the summer English camp,

> At the summer English camp, we had a tough schedule. From 9 AM to 10 PM, most classes were taught by foreign teachers and we had to use English all day in the building. But none of us weren't very good, we couldn't follow the rules all the time. When the teachers and TAs weren't around, we spoke Korean. But I thought that through practicing at camp, I would be able to speak when I am in *a place where there are more "real" foreigners*.

The conversational classes, in this study, are observed as a significant space on the contours of English. In the classrooms, students' actual use of English can be observed in the context which is hypothetically close to the realm of "real" English. A "real" production of English language occurs in the classroom. The classroom is a "mock environment" which prepares students for "imagined encounters", and yet, somewhat paradoxically, this is where real interactions and communications occur and genuine feelings are generated. The following, therefore, will explore how conversational English is taught, experienced "as real" and contested in the classrooms as part of the formal education system.

1. English Really Works?

One of the first student reactions to conversational class is an eye-opening shock over how English is a language through which they can directly communicate with foreigners.

> Conversational English class was fun. More than anything, it wasn't a demanding class. With other classes, you have to write reports and they are hard to keep up with, you actually have to work hard, but English class was fun. And for someone like me who was always bad at English, using English was a real novelty. In middle school and high school, I didn't go to *hagwon*s and I was always behind. I never thought foreigners would actually understand me, should I ever say something, but the teacher understood me and it was just amazing.
>   (Eunyoung, 2nd year art major, 1/18/2010)

In class, students encounter "foreigners" up close and speak English that they

used to think would be unintelligible to native speakers and is only for passing tests.

> Going through conversational class, I thought, "Wow it works!   This is not some outer space language, invented to torture me."   It might be different with younger generations because they learn from native teachers early on.   The teacher would kid around with us, which made it easier for us to get closer to him and helped us concentrate.   So we even made jokes in English.   (Muyong, 1st year history major, 3/7/2011)

For many students, these conversational classes were the site of first close interaction with "foreigners".   This had the effect of making English come alive. Students were excited to have a moment of realization and confirmation of what they had been studying was not something completely useless.   They were pleasantly surprised that "their" English actually worked with foreigners, developing a confidence that they lacked before the encounter and opening the possibility for further encounters.   English becomes alive for the first time. Through this experience, global encounters are reified and students can easily imagine the self's bodily encounter with "foreigners".

2.   Conversational English Class as Cultural Encounters

Through class activities, students develop and reinforce an understanding of "foreignness", which may promote a kind of familiarization, gleaning an understanding of the unknown.   Cultural differences were specifically highlighted in class partly for the purpose of teaching students to be culturally sensitive.   Lessons often start with "In America", "In Korea", "In Australia" and

end up exploring the similarities and differences. 'Asking personal questions' (Table 1) is a lesson in the textbook, explicitly addressing the differences between Korean conversational topics and Western topics. Amanda went through the lesson twice over the semester[11].

Table 1. Asking Personal Questions

Question	In Korea	In the West
Is it OK to ask people if they are married?	Young people-O.K. Older people- No. Some people are ashamed of being single.	Yes, always OK- No shame in not being married or divorced.
Is it OK to talk about music?	OK. Not personal.	Same
Is it OK to talk about God?	OK- Koreans don't care- but nobody likes it in the subway.	No. People fight over religion, war breaks out because of it.
Is it OK to ask how old people are?	Sometimes- young people OK, older people, especially women, no.	Same. People want to be young, skinny and beautiful everywhere in the world.
Is it OK to ask people how much money they make?	No. Personal (Students responded it's OK to ask rich people)	No.
Is it OK to ask what people do?	Sometimes- if you know they are rich. (Students said, OK to ask the question to doctors)	OK. (You can't ask somebody how much money they make, but it's OK to ask what they do and then you know if they are rich or poor)

Students' answers vary, and teachers' opinions are not uniform regarding what is acceptable. According to Amanda, religion, money and appearance are the three

---

[11] After the mid-term test, Amanda realized that students did not fully understand the lesson and went over it again, asking students to take notes the second time.

conversation topics you should definitely avoid because these are "personal" and will evoke conflict and hurt people's feelings[12].

Such English lessons serve as specific guidelines to interacting with "Westerners". Based on their personal experience or research, teachers assume a typical Korean behavior and teach students what not to do when conversing with "foreigners" in English. Being "mono-cultural" as Korea is assumed to be in popular discourse, is considered to be highly problematic and "diversity" or "cross-cultural awareness" is pursued in these classes. A lot of comparisons between Korean culture and Anglophone culture occur in class. Through comparison, what is Korean and what is Western are brought to the surface and students develop a sense of "the other", discovering what "we" constitutes. The "Personal Questions" exercise allows students to experiment with the soft boundaries of self and other, getting a taste of something different.

A student in Amanda's class mentioned the American TV show "Gossip Girl" in her conversation with Amanda on whether Western culture is too open and free. She distinguished herself from the "free" world of Gossip Girl, differentiating herself and claiming moral superiority. Another student, however, said that he was surprised by how similar Western and Korean cultures are from the personal questions lesson. He said his impression of the West was very uncertain but the lessons taught him that the West and East are not so different, in fact quite similar. Even if students do not learn specific pieces of knowledge, their sensitivity with regards to the border being raised, effects their ability to reinforce or change their existing idea of self and other.

---

[12] Jocelyn also discussed the same topic in her winter class. She had a different opinion and said that age, religion and marriage are things that should not be talked about in the Western context but often Koreans cannot resist themselves to rudely ask about these topics because they are widely regarded in Korea as important social indicators.

In Suarez-Orozco's "Formulating Identity in a Globalized World" (2004:179), she states, "If there is little contact with the mainstream middle class in any form other than media representations encountered on TV or in movies, identifying with the host culture becomes something of an abstraction". Students are expected to learn English through picking up elements of culture-specific knowledge.   How it is presented in the classroom hints at whether the classroom experience could become something other than an abstraction that students feel as alienating or as something real and appealing that students feel incorporated into.   For students in Amanda's class who have never heard of or celebrated St. Patrick's Day, it is a piece of abstract knowledge associated with English.   Some students find it hard to relate to this topic, while for others it is interesting.   Seonhwa, a student in Amanda's class said that listening to Amanda's stories about America is fun and stress-free.   She relates what she has seen on TV or movies with what the teacher talks about in class. Imagining and reconfiguring of images, information and experience occurs on a conceptual level and the lessons provide one link.

There has been an ongoing discussion on whether English language affects students' self-identity.   Kim Jung Kang (2002)'s study stresses the "Cultural and ideological elements of the US" embedded in English lessons and argues that they might affect identity construction of Korean youth, who he views as agents of change.   Kim goes on to suggest methods of devising culturally appropriate content.   Kim (2007)'s thesis, however, indicates that there is no meaningful correlation between native teachers and the cultural knowledge acquisition of students.   Her study supports the idea that the cultural contents taught in English class remain rather abstract and irrelevant to students. Liz, a former English instructor, also pointed out that "giving directions" is one of the lessons that puzzled her when teaching English.   The way Koreans

describe locations are very different from the way Westerners give directions because they have different street organizations.   Teaching students to use expressions such as "go down this street two blocks and turn right on Symonds St." is not relevant or useful to Korean students, she says.

As stated earlier, individual students grasp and reconfigure the "foreign" elements that they are exposed to through diverse channels.   What is more apparent from these lessons is that the border between the self and the other is more often visited, thus providing students with an opportunity to understand for themselves what is beyond the border- whether it presents itself as glorious and powerful or unfamiliar and alien.

3.   Learning "How to Face Foreigners"

In addition to what to talk about, how to talk with foreigners is another important part of teaching conversational English.   The way people behave when speaking English is the element that gives students the illusion of being in a foreign setting.   The teachers' own upbringing embedded in its own cultural and ideological context from home is taught as if it is the kind of attitude and set of knowledge that students are required to learn when speaking English.

> [In class,] the answer to my teacher's question is in my head in Korean but when I am actually answering, my thoughts are blocked and I panic. I want to fix it.   I want to be trained, not to be fluent but as a university student, when asked, I want at least to be able to answer questions without any hesitation.   I am very much interested in English and I want to be good at it.   I have no problem listening, but whenever I try to speak, appropriate words don't come up, and I panic.   I want to be

taught not to panic, when put in awkward situations.   There are no rules on what to do in certain situations, but please teach me how to confidently face foreigners in different situations.   (Survey)

In addition to teaching the responses to all possible questions and discussion topics, teachers also expect students to be more "natural" and true to themselves when speaking English.   This means not being as formal and respectful as they are when they speak Korean.   One needs to be effortlessly friendly, casual and egalitarian in their speech and actions.   Jocelyn, an instructor at Winter camp, also emphasized that when introducing yourself with foreigners, you need to give them your first name, like "call me Misun" or "call me Jocelyn", not "I am Mr. Kim', because the latter is inappropriate and distancing[13].

Critical thinking is another recurrent issue in speaking class.   Amanda stated that her goal is to teach "Western style critical thinking" to higher level students, while with lower level students, her focus is more on teaching basic tourist conversational English.   She therefore, covers things like counting numbers, buying tickets and ordering food so that students can at least get by when necessary.   What she does for all her students, regardless of their level of proficiency, she says, is get everyone to talk independently.   She asks everyone the same questions one after another so that each student gets to state their own opinion and get a chance to speak.   In Amanda's class, her message of "being

---

[13]   According to Moffatt (1989:43), in the individualistic American tradition, between the private world of the true self and the real world of the manipulative social self, "friendliness" has its place as a third behavior, closest to the "properly egalitarian American" archetype. Acting friendly gives "abbreviated performances of the standard behavior of real friendship", so acting and talking formally means you are not revealing your true self, masking yourself, which is an inappropriate and "un-American" form of interaction.

independent thinkers" is practiced through the class activity, giving opinions. Students are asked to break out of their usual classroom behavior and be more active.   Relying on friends and copying other answers is discouraged.

<Lesson on Giving Opinions >

Amanda: You need to tell me your own opinion and support it. You have to be able to support your opinion really well. I will keep asking you why? Why? Why? And you will have to explain why.

At first, students dreaded this ritual, but after a few weeks they got used to it, and on the whole, had no problem coming up with a unique answer.   During class time, every single student is asked to express their thoughts, utilizing target language and expressing individuality.   Amanda observes,

> What is difficult for me, is trying to get them to think individually, creatively, not to copy each other.   It surprises me how shy they are, how hard it is to get them out of their clique and that bothers me…

   This is quite different from how students were trained outside the classroom, where verbal expression of individual opinions have little place.   Not only are students exposed to the abstract knowledge out of context or within an imagined context, they are also asked to experience the attitude and internalize the message in class.

4.   Discrepancies with the "Real" English

As languages are always undergoing changes, it is no surprise that the relocation

of English to different places in the world has transformed the English used in each of these localities[14]. The scenes and discussions from the classroom present a discrepancy between the ideal and the practice of "real" English. "Real" English is conceptualized and taught as something that exists in a pure ideal state of speaking, thinking and carrying oneself and that which has to be learned, felt and embodied through close contact with "foreigners" who speak English. Nate criticizes how English is represented in the textbook and makes claims for the existence of a kind of "real" English. He argues,

> This is not how people really speak English in the US. People don't speak like that back home. It's ridiculous.

However, contradicting Nate's idealized "real" English, teachers in general use a more simplified English, indicating characteristics of "global babble" (Eriksen 2007) and actively utilize their knowledge of Korean to aid with student comprehension in their classrooms. In the classroom, both teachers and students alter their speech for the purpose of communication. Students, in turn, often help each other deciphering teachers' speech and constructing sentences, reassembling the words and grammatical rules in their heads.

Observing how English is actually spoken by the teachers and students in class can help us understand real communication between participants. Teachers end up practicing what Eriksen (2007: 54) characterizes "EFL as the

---

[14] Multiple agents are involved in the surge of "world Englishes" and English keeps changing to the point where "authentic" English practitioners can find themselves unable to claim exclusive ownership of the language and even experience alienation from the various usages. This represents a form of linguistic "pluricentricity" (Bhatt 2001).

medium of globalbabble", "disembedded", and simplified to be efficient[15]. Eriksen notes that English as a foreign language should be distinguished from English spoken by natives, which contradicts the common Korean assertion that the perfect form of English, as used by the natives should be taught.   Teachers strategically simplify their language to get points across by omitting articles, switching word orders to make them fit the Korean sentence structure, or simply by speaking in incomplete sentences.   Ben says,

Ben:	I speak on their level.
Researcher:	But you understand them. They use English words, only the word order is sometimes incorrect.
Ben:	Yeah, the words are English but they wouldn't survive in an English country and that's their maximum goal.
Researcher:	So the English they speak is not proper English? Or English you teach in class?
Ben:	No, it's English only useful in Korea.

English is digested the way students find it easier to understand and speak in the classrooms. The "real" English, fervently pursued by many, is changing in these real interactions in the locality.   Ben adds,

> They [students] assume everyone speaks Korean.   They speak Korean to me.   The other day, they came to tell me that they are going to miss the class because of an event at the department.   They kept saying "event next week, absent" so I said, *"hangsa juseyo* [행사 승인서 Permission slip, please]".

Teachers themselves envision a "real" English, that is proper for the survival of

---

[15] For example, David would say, "Two students together, question 1 answer!"

individuals in an English speaking environment.

> Researcher: What would you consider proper English?
> Josh: When somebody can make a complete sentence with a subject, a verb and an object, that's proper English for me. Even my good students would say "I go party yesterday" and it's pretty frustrating that nobody has corrected them for 10 years."

Rick is more tolerable with common mistakes Koreans students make. He says,

> Konglish is fine as long as I can understand it. They mix English and Korean, especially lower level students… I don't like it, I don't recommend it. But what can you do?

On the contrary, Leslie is disturbed when students beat themselves up for their "poor" English or "Konglish".

> My students often say "sorry teacher, my English is Konglish", but I say "it's OK. I understand you, that is the most important thing, it's real, it's what you speak, and I understand you"

Communication between the teachers and students can be a difficult task for a number of reasons. Lessons continue with empathizing, guessing, misunderstanding, and disconnecting. When asked what she does when students do not understand her, Amanda replied:

> I think it's my fault. I understand more now of what they are capable of. I change, use a different approach, simplify the lesson. With lower level classes I repeat and slow down, simplify my language, use shorter

sentences, emphasize, massive amount of repetition. But slowing down's not going to help them in real situations. People just don't talk like that.

Although students are worried about misunderstandings and embarrassment, students and teachers were not entirely bothered by the disjuncture in communication. The following shows how students are playing with words both in English and Korean. Sometimes the teacher understands this and other times, she is alienated.

(Class is playing a quiz game where teacher asks a question and each team sends someone out to the board to write the correct answer first)

Teacher: This last weekend was a holiday weekend. What holiday was it?
Student A: 장애인의 날 아니가? [Isn't it the Day for the disabled?]
Student B: 노동의 날? [Labour day?]
Student C: 지구의 날! Earth Day!!
Student D: 부활절이 영어로 뭐지? [What's *buhwalgeol*(Easter) in English?]
Student E: Egg Day!
                (Student F searches on his i-phone and comes out to the board and writes "Easter Sunday")
Teacher: On Christmas, Santa comes to your house with presents. Who comes to your house on Easter?
Student G :   루돌프! [Rudolf?]
Student H: Jesus!
Teacher: (Laughing) Jesus does not come to your house! Who comes and bring you presents?
Student I: Rabbit!
Student J: Daddy!
Teacher: No~
Student K: Ghost!
Student L: Zombie!   (class laughs)
Student M: Mommy?
Teacher: What's another word for rabbit?

46

Teacher:	Nobody calls it the Easter rabbit? Another word for rabbit!
Student H:	(playfully) Bunny바니? (And doesn't think it's the correct answer.)
Teacher:	You just said it. The Easter bunny brings a basket and it's filled with eggs and chocolates. I am 40 but my mom would still give me an Easter basket. Next question, what religion is Easter from? I love how you say it and you don't stand up and write the answer…
Student H:	바니바니바니바니당근당근(Students giggle)
Teacher:	What is it?
Student H:	Game.
Teacher:	Drinking game? (Teacher and class laugh) OK. What's the next Korean holiday we'll get the day off? In Mexico, it's called Cinco De Mayo.
Student H:	(playing with the word mayo)Chicken Mayo치킨마요? (class laughs)
Teacher:	It's a big Mexican holiday.
Student H:	아, 그래서 치킨마요 먹는구나 (Students laugh) [Ah, that's why people eat chicken mayo. (A popular takeout dish from Hansot Takeaway)]
Teacher:	(doesn't understand) What?
Student:	No.

To be able to connect with the students and facilitate two-way communication, David often finds common denominators with his students. This inevitably requires research and experience in Korean culture. The topic that most often gains students' attention and makes them laugh involves things that are close to student life like, "soju", "MT", "University Festival" or "Yi hyo lee", a celebrity, the example below demonstrates.

David:	Two students together, question 1 answer.
Student1 :	뭐 하라는 거야? 야야, 뭐 어떻게 하라는 거야? [What is he saying? What are we supposed to do?]
Student2 :	문자만 하면 다야, 수업을 해야지! [Stop texting, concentrate on the

	lesson]
David:	Let's invite Yi Hyolee this weekend.
Student1:	Invite 가 만나는거야? [Does invite mean to meet?]
Student2:	초대[invite]
Student1:	주말에 이효리를 초대할까? [Shall we invite Yihyolee on the weekend?]
Student3:	(Wakes up) 어? 이효리? [huh? Yihyolee?]

Both teachers and students need to work to meet each other somewhere in the middle. Trying to communicate, both have to make an effort to make themselves understood. Negotiation in classrooms, says Kneller (1984:58) is the process by which teachers and students influence one another's responses.

> According to New Sociologists, students generally learn not because teachers impose their will on them but because the two sides reach an accommodation. True, the sides are unequal. By and large, teachers deliver established, theoretical knowledge and bypass the commonsense knowledge absorbed at home and on the streets. Nevertheless, teachers must concede something to the students' point of view…

Teachers and students both strategize to reach mutual understandings. David lets the covert infrastructure of the class, a realm in which students dominate and the teacher cannot penetrate due to his lack of local knowledge, rise to the surface. In the process, students engage in and end up speaking English without too much conscious effort. On the other hand, Amanda finds students chatting in Korean rude and annoying and immediately silences them. Students' mother tongue becomes illegitimate in Amanda's class. David gives students time to figure out the lessons and uses Korean words that he learned, aware that it might be the only way to get the point across. The following scene from David's class shows David and his students using both English and Korean to

teach and learn some words.

David:	Page 52 please. Resume. Difficult word because it's French. Where's your book? Korean word? You don't know? (In Korean) Yiryukseo (Minho is on his phone) In the Yiryukseo, resume, there is a name, address, (writes on the board) objective= plan for future job. Do you have plans for future job?
Minho:	(quietly) composer.
Student:	아! 직업계획, 미래계획![Aha! Career plans, future plans!]
David:	I have no plan for a future job. (goes on to explain vocabulary on a resume)And work experience. Same as work history. Last job, first job. Education… (On the board) skills= special ability. You have a skill, sports skill, sculpture skill, painting skill, drawing skill. Next, references=letter recommending you for a job. I forgot the Korean word.
혜숙:	(looking up in the dictionary), 참고, 참조.. [refer, consult..]
David:	..no..
창민:	(on his dictionary), 민증 ,증명서. [Identity card, certificate.]
혜숙:	추천하다, 추천서? [Recommend, reference?]
Students:	고등학교 갈 때 교사추천서 같은 거 그런 건가? [Is it something like a recommendation letter teachers write when you were in highschool?]
혜숙:	그러니까 추천서네 [So it is reference]
Students:	Teacher, 추천서!
David:	추천…(tries to write it in Korean on the board)
Students:	시옷
David:	추천실?
Students:	시옷! 아니 낙서금지 할 때 서! [seo as in nakseogumji!] (David finally gets it.)
Student:	(laughs) 우리가 가르치고 있다. [We are teaching.]
Student:	선생님이 나보다 한글 잘 쓰네. 진짜 신기하다. [Our teacher writes Korean better than me. It's really cool.]
Student:	야, 우리가 영어하는 거는 안 신기하고 외국인이 한국어 하는 거는 신기하나… [Us speaking English isn't amazing and a foreigner speaking Korean is?]

The idea of "real" English, English for tests, Konglish, and Korean coexist in the

classroom.   Teachers' usage of Korean is often appreciated but sometimes mocked or ignored for its clumsiness or incorrectness.   The imagining of the right kind of English comes from multiple directions and the communicative "common" language in the classroom is continuously negotiated for the sake of communication.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Affective Dimensions: Self and Other in "Real" English

English in Korean society, in particular, the pursuit of "real" English, is an affectively charged experience that involves a complex psychological process. A popular discourse on English centers around a few key words such as stress, anxiety, freedom, and confidence which are experienced individually and shared collectively, building a certain dynamics of feelings that is historically and socially constructed.

> It is stressful because people try to achieve what they cannot achieve. You can't be perfect like the native speakers.   Conversational English is different from English test scores.   Overcoming it psychologically will put you at ease and then it will be natural.   It's like, you become much more articulate when you are drunk.[16]

These affective dimensions, often popularly cast away or joked about in the realm of inexplicable psychology and petty emotions, reveal contemporary values and meanings held in regards to "real" English in Korean society and the ways in which social relations are organized around it.   The following will explore the affective dimensions of the students' experience with "real" English.

The kind of fear that the students in Yehan often expressed in regards to English is somewhat different from what Park (2011) describes as "perpetual anxiety".   Park noted that the perpetual anxiety generated by English is not a problem pertaining only to students with elementary level English skills, but to

---

[16]   An episode on English King from a TV program, "Star King", (March 17th, 2012)

fluent English speakers all over Korea as well. The emotion is embedded within the matrix of what English represents in Korea - the "glorified West" and the border between self and other. Getting closer to the border and crossing over to the other side, will not make the anxiety go away, observes Park. However, students' affective experiences in Yehan clearly hover around fear, at times lingering around indifference and shifting towards feelings of confidence.

The co-existence of these contrasting but intertwined emotions reflects how English works in students' perception of the world and the self. Centering on the three major emotions, figure 1. is designed based on Park's notion of "English as border crossing"(2011). Confidence is closest to the border looking over to the power, freedom and opportunities on the other side of the border while fear is elevated at the sight of the unknown/alien. Apathy is further away from the border, staying uninvolved and refusing to see anything promising or threatening.

Figure 1.
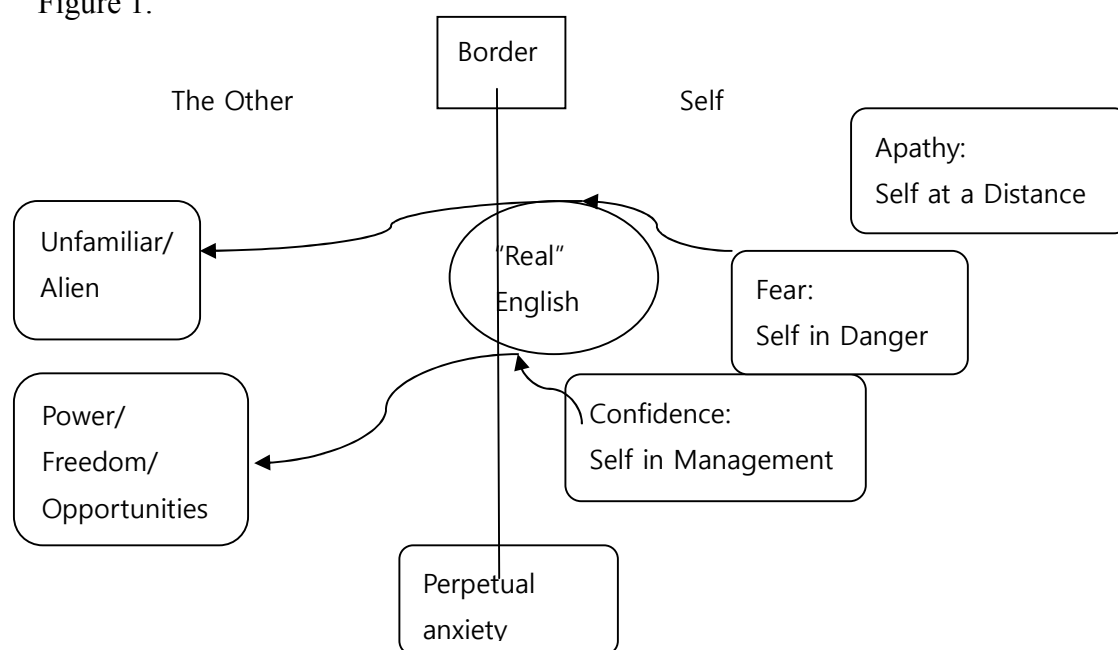
The shaping and positioning of the self in the local social topography is significant in the affective dimensions of students' experience of "real" English as well as the historically constructed sense of other. The following will investigate the prominent feelings commonly expressed among the students and analyze the wider social context in which these affects are experienced and manifested.

1. Identifying the Other: The Unfamiliar / The Powerful

1) Fear

> To think back to freshman conversational English class, I always felt ashamed and horrified. Not only to talk but to listen was a burdening task for me then and the teacher was always showering me with questions and demanding answers, I was terrified all the time, the feeling started even before going to class. I would stutter and constantly say um, um, my mind completely blank. (Survey, Jan 2011)

Students would often talk about how they get nervous in class and that they are afraid of speaking English. The most common self-explanation for the fear is poor English skills; that they don't know how to say what they want to say.

Researcher:	Are you going to keep studying English after finding a job?
Seon:	I don't want to study English further after getting a job.
Researcher:	Why not?
Seon:	English is scary.
Researcher:	Why would you say is it scary?
Seon:	Because I am not good at it.

Despite her simple explanation of blaming her own inability, the social context in which she is exposed to the consequences of not being good at English is premised along with the inexplicable feeling of fear. What, then, exactly triggers this dreadful feeling of fear?

> Researcher: Why would you feel "fearful"?
> Gubo: When I think about foreigners, the first thing that comes into my mind is English, and that they are strangers to me. If I can overcome these two facts, if I can speak English and if the person's someone I see everyday, it would feel natural, I would not feel fearful.
> Researcher: Did you go through some changes in your emotion upon taking the conversational English class?
> Gubo: Through the class, I think the feeling of excitement dissipated as well as fear.

Gubo identifies the foreignness in English and evokes the "unspeakableness" (Park 2009) of his English.   "Foreigner" is equated with English and English is something he does not feel confident speaking.   He goes on to make sense of the power of English.

> Researcher: But why English? And not any other subject or languages?
> Gubo: Because America exerts a strong influence?

The power of this unfamiliar other, eliciting a sense of fear, is a product of various imageries.   For Gubo, it was pictured as something related to America and its influence while Seon, she associated it with traveling to non-English speaking European countries.

Researcher: What does English remind you of?
Seon: Advantages in employment, American TV shows, and traveling…
Researcher: What countries would you like to travel?
Seon: Italy, France…
Researcher: Those are not English-speaking countries?
Seon: I don't really want to visit the US…

Although English is related to specific localities, what it represents to students is a mixture of personal imageries and desires.   The unfamiliarity lends them possibilities in many directions.   Whether, through English, students see the "powerful other" or "the unfamiliar other" beyond the border, they consistently identified "foreigner" as the main source of both excitement and fear in regards to English.

The primary sense of fear also generated and was generated by a variety of sub-emotions within the social setting in which the students were situated. Various shades of fear existed; these could be distinguished from a similar set of emotions such as hostility, rage, shame and guilt.   Conversational English poses extreme difficulty for some students, leading to frustration and rage.

Going to that conversational class is so stressful.   Rather than being stimulated into thinking that I want to learn English, I develop hatred towards English and I hate the day that this class is on.   I don't do much in class but I get stressed out watching others keeping up. Teacher told me not to be shy and ask questions about things that I don't know, even when she explains, I can't figure out what she's saying so I can't keep asking her.   I despair at my abject English.   (Survey)

Shame was another recurrent emotion under the larger category of fear. Students were ashamed either because they thought they were "wrong" or

because they were uncertain that they were right.   The negativity was directed at students themselves.   Park (2009) calls this "self-deprecation", which comes from the ideology of externalization.   He argues English for Koreans is a language of the other and that English spoken by Koreans can never be authentic. Students suffer from anxiety that they are making mistakes whenever they are speaking[17].   The other is a point of reference in the practice of "real" English in this unfamiliar realm.   The notion of the foreignness/other shows a strong awareness of the familiar/self and whatever is reflected onto the other through the medium of "real" English is often the main foundation of these affects.

2) Confidence

The aspect of English as "a language of the other" (Park 2009) becomes either heightened or diminished through individual students' classroom or study

---

[17] Students also felt ashamed to utter English in front of other students.   One graduate student explained the fear,

> When students say they are scared and terrified, it's nothing other than being afraid that other students might judge them and tease them.   They are ashamed.   That's why they don't pronounce R the American way, worried about what others would think, *nunchi*.

Nunchi, seems to be related to the "guilt" Park (2009:9) explained as a sense of betrayal, "siding with the other, mimicking the powerful other".   According to Park, because English is set aside as the language of the other, the act of speaking English associated with disloyalty.
　　Shame, often understood to be an emotion cultivated to fear social stigma(Fung 1999), was a factor forcing the students to remain quiet in class for they were afraid of being singled out and put under everyone else's gaze, either revealing their disloyalty or "un-diligence".   English is a visible social indicator which affects the dynamics of the student community and of the class and makes students control their English performance appropriate for the local setting.

experiences.   For those who have had a positive English experience, students show less "fear" and more "confidence".   Many students referred to a "wall", a language barrier or an emotional blockade.   Sangwoo, a graduate student, explained that in his case he had never come up against the wall.   He was able to speak English to communicate with people in the Philippines, unlike his friends who ran up against a wall each time they tried to speak to a foreigner in English.   He thought after his experience of helping foreign students on campus, the wall that separated him from foreigners had fallen away.

> I went on a language training trip to the Philippines for a month.   My friends who had higher TOEIC scores and knew more words than I did could not even open their mouths, let alone speak a word of English. With my experience as a helper for foreign students at the university, I didn't have the so-called wall or fear towards foreigners, so I blurted things out without too much worry.   My attitude was like if they don't get it, fine, no problem, and I stepped out and talked and people were watching me, but everyone was impressed and they started to take the courage to speak more. [18]   (4th year Engineering major 12/2/2010)

Teachers were often happy to see students' progress and said "at the beginning of the semester these students couldn't put a sentence together.   Now they are

---

[18] He also pointed out that the English he spoke in the Philippines, which could be considered a "real" situation, only involved basic conversation skills, which did not require complex sentence structures such as those in the tests. He continued,

> But the thing is, the English conversations we have there, we don't talk about deep serious stuff, most of the time, it's ordering food at restaurants, really trivial and basic everyday things.   Even in Korean, we don't say, "what are the differences between the ingredients in this dish and that one" in a restaurant. It would be more like "set number 1 please".

speaking English! They are communicating with me!" However, there are some doubts about the actual progress of students and what effect the native instructors have had. Kim, Hwang and Hwang (2011)'s quantitative study on middle school students shows that a sense of achievement and English score had no meaningful relation with learning from "native" teachers. In the classrooms in Yehan, however, while some students express that they have not really improved their English skills, they do gain some kind of emotional comfort, whether it be a mere feeling of confidence or picking up on the specific ways in which "Western" English speakers talk or act. As the semester progresses, both Amanda's and David's students feel more and more comfortable. They say they get used to expressing ideas and interacting in English and as a result, gain confidence. And more importantly, they say that they get used to the presence of foreigners. The sense of difference dissolves and a sense of familiarity and comfort arises. Identifying with the "other", they now feel more comfortable with the "foreignness" of English, feeling closer.

> I had 영어울렁증 (feeling of nausea with regards to English) but being in the fun and comfortable conversational class with the native teacher, it's got much better. At first, I avoided foreigners when I came across them because of the language barrier (wall) but now it's almost gone. I think I have learned how to face foreigners when I see them on streets without panicking.   (Jungeun, 3rd year biology major, 5/2/2011)

Note that Jungeun does not say that the language barrier has been completely destroyed, rather, she has learned how to "face foreigners"대응하는 자세 without panicking on the streets. The presence of foreigners is commonly imagined to be "on the street" and encounters are prepared on an emotional and attitudinal level as well. Encountering foreigners on the street is a strong imagery that

kept recurring in student interviews.　Feeling as if they were "going global" took on a more bodily sense for many students when they imagined themselves walking next to a foreigner, rubbing shoulders and speaking in fluent English.

Students generally enjoy conversational English class.　Especially, students in advanced classes have no problem understanding teachers and find it almost entertaining, excited at the foreign presence.　Students observe that foreign teachers are very expressive, compared to Korean teachers.　Foreign teachers' gestures are big, expressions are exaggerated, reactions overdone and students find their guides through the English language to be amusing, exotic and almost liberating.

A senior student at Winter Camp, is confident that learning from a "native teacher" is much more effective than learning from Korean teachers because they let him be immersed in the English-speaking context.　He states,

> Having foreign teachers in class helps get rid of the "fear" of foreigners. I try to communicate, squeezing out any random English words that I know because I can't communicate with them in Korean.　Learning English from foreign teachers is more efficient.　It feels like when mom taught me hangul when I was little.　When Korean teachers speak English to us, there is always the option to communicate in Korean, but with foreign teachers, we have to think twice in English".　　　(Survey)

Students are excited, receiving what they perceive to be a belated process of "vernacularizing" English, feeling like a baby learning its mother tongue, and not having to think in Korean.　They try hard to connect with the teacher and express themselves in English.　"When I have been able to carry out a conversation with a foreigner, I felt ecstatic and more confident" says a student from winter camp.

Conversational English with a native teacher was scary.   On the first day of class, I went in and sat in the corner.   I couldn't figure out what the teacher was saying.   It was semester two, Ed's class.   He was writing something on the board.   I didn't write it down on my notebook and he got angry and said something I couldn't understand.   But I picked up "2 points down".   OK, take it off.   I could feel that he cast me off.   But I couldn't not go to class, although I didn't really make an effort in class.   Maybe he was sorry for how things started between us, from then on, he kept an eye on me.   Towards the end, things turned out fine.   Participation-centered lessons and role plays in class were good.   Later on, I had my hair dyed and bleached and wore red shoes and he would see me and say things like you've changed your hair, it was better before.   I thought, oh, he cares.   After the semester ended, we had a beer party together.   (Gilju, 3rd yr trade major, 4/8/2011)

Through their interactions with teachers, students develop a sense of familiarity towards individual teachers, confirm the validity of their English and gain confidence in the process. The self expands through empathizing with the other, creating mutual understanding and boosting confidence.

In Ben's class, he would set grammar aside and try to understand us, that was something different.   The empathy between learner and teacher, we would have these moments of empathy.   I felt more confident as I realized that this person understands what I say.
                                                            (Chanjin 3rd yr trade major, 9/5/2011)

Going through conversational English class with a native teacher is partly a process of "familiarizing the other" or "de-othering" to many students.   Most students have studied the English language for a long time before coming to university.   It is a familiar subject and many have already formed strong feelings one way or the other towards the subject.   However, conversational

English class provides them with a more immediate sense of encounter that forces them to think of, practice and experience physically "speaking" "real" English in "real" situations.   What is unfamiliar, unknown and abstract, detached from everyday life, comes in and becomes a part of a daily routine in the university setting with the physical presence of the "foreign" teachers. There is a sense of being extended to another place.   The confidence students describe can be traced to an acquired feeling of familiarity and the possible opportunities that English appears to promise, a sign that presents a picture of the self, out of the local and national restrictions.

3) Teachers as an Embodiment of the Other

The dichotomy between the familiar and the foreign (self and other), and foreigners as the conceptual other becomes more prominent in the ways "native" English teachers are treated in Korea.

> It was a big achievement, getting rid of the fear and being able to speak, maintaining eye contact with foreigners.   I used to feel uncomfortable passing by foreigners on the street.   (Survey)

"Foreigner" was a concept vague but critical in the students' understanding of and rationale for "real" English.   It was something that connected them directly to the global.   Here, I would like to examine teachers as part of the reified conception of "the other" as associated with English.   While students are going through emotional turmoil at home, teachers cross borders without the same experiences of fear.   If conversational class is a mock environment devised for real encounters as a structure, teachers represent the "foreigner" embodying the other, "empathetically engaging students" (Cho 2012:227-228), eventually

reaching fatigue from the emotional labor of realizing the fantasies for the West in South Korea.

In the postmodern society, Bauman (1997:83-94) argues, everyone is "on the move" and we are always, in part, either displaced or out of place. The metaphors he uses for such transient people are 'tourists' and 'vagabonds'. Both are wanderers, complementing each other. Pushed from behind to wander, tourists are led to believe their actions manifest freedom, autonomy and independence, a noble practice coming from within. Vagabonds, on the other hand, wander not by their own volition, but because they are not truly welcomed anywhere. Native English teachers are constantly on the move and they are somewhere in between the two extremes of the tourist and vagabond. Out of their own localities, teachers drifted in a "global" sphere, moving from one locality to another. They embody what Korean society vigorously imagine and consume in English and physically represent a "global" presence in various localities in Korea, heightening a sense of alien while at the same time offering a connection to it.

Foreign English teachers, in this thesis, are situated in Yehan and in the English education sector. This reflects the socio-economic context which brought them to the site. First and foremost, one of the major drives for the teachers crossing borders was economic. They have become a more flexible form of commodity in which their linguistic/cultural/emotional capital is consumed. Secondly, they are pursuing an alternative lifestyle that provides them with exotic adventures, enjoying the freedom to explore the world, "going global" themselves. In so doing, they present a tangible imagery of "the other" to Korean society while they confirm "the Asian other" in Koreans as well.

The capitalist labor market is unstable and more polarized than ever. A series of recessions and a global financial crisis led to a considerable downsizing

in the United States and other English-speaking countries. There developed a greater need for cheap labor and a transnational form of production. Individuals were forced to turn to the globalized job market in search of employment. More specifically, student loans and limited job opportunities caused many college graduates to make the decision to leave their unsatisfying local situations for employment outside their country. Often desired was a situation that would provide what they consider as a more satisfying paycheck and working environment. In fact, college graduates are pouring into the Korean English education industry, almost reaching saturation point. Among non-Western countries such as China and Japan, Korea is one of the most popular destinations for such new college graduates.

Flexibility, as opposed to rationality is one of the most important characteristics of post-modernity. While more flexible production, cheaper labor and lower wages are required by capitalists to successfully turn a profit, laborers become more scattered and fragile. In addition to temporality, disposability is desired from both the employers and employees to some extent in the English language industry. The teachers themselves are always on the move and they are not necessarily attached to one specific locality. In the same vein, employers do not want these employees for anything more than a temporary period of time. Teachers' English teaching careers often start in a *hagwon*. They then move to a more organized program like EPIK (Government sponsored English Program in Korea) and in turn move up to university level positions or corporate positions which are considered to be much nicer. None of these positions, however, are permanent. Becca, a former instructor from Montana, U.S., expressed that she felt like she was treated as a "product" readily available and disposable in a six-month or year period. She clearly felt unwanted and sought something more permanent.

The value of the foreign English teacher as a commodity lies first in their embodiment of "real" English and in their "foreign-ness". "I am a walking phrase book" says Amanda, pointing out the commodity in herself. Beatrice, a Korean American teacher working at the Winter Camp, observed that native speakers get kids excited. She was also very critical of the Korean education system that she considers both brutal and inefficient. She commented, "More is better here. They value quantity over quality, appearance over substance or reality. Koreans like outward appearance and that's why white faces sell". The very presence of the phrasebook in person, presenting the imagery of the West, is the flexible and mobile commodity that sells. Native teachers of Korean descent often found themselves a victim of Korean racism, schools preferring a "white" and "authentic" features of the West[19].

Along the way, teachers often find themselves losing their individual identity, swept up in people's collectivist gaze. Jenna, a former instructor now a long-term resident of Seoul, comments,

> I was accustomed to thinking of myself as … a person who does linguistics, I am a Mac user, that defines me, I like this kind of music, that defines me, I wear these kinds of clothes, I have these kinds of friends, and those were all the kind of features I used to define myself with and when I came to Korea nobody could see that, all that mattered was that I was a foreigner. I don't have to tell you whether I am a Mac person or a PC person, a Nike person or an Adidas person those things, it is kind of freeing almost… It doesn't matter, all that matters about me is that I am a foreigner. That's so easy.

Teachers are led to feel special and alienated at the same time. As

---

[19] *"Gyopos* (Overseas Koreans) would sometimes be paid less because they have a Korean face" (From the interview with Beatrice.)

much as they feel commoditized and objectified, they get to experience the comfortable and special feeling that is hard to get at home.   Nate, an Australian teacher commented that he feels special around Koreans.   "I guess I am special anywhere but it's just easier to be special here", he mused.   Liz observed that teachers come to Korea looking for a job but they end up developing a cultural superiority after being "worshipped" day after day by random people.   Liz added, "While some teachers are comfortable, living off the general feeling of superiority, others such as herself were always busy trying to de-mystify Korean notions and fantasies of the West".

There was also a feeling of restlessness prevalent among the teachers. They would occasionally feel lethargic, stuck, unable to break away from the easygoing lifestyle that Yehan provided.   People constantly looked for opportunities elsewhere but found themselves coming back to save up for the next year which would continue being postponed to two years, three years and so on.

In fact, students are not at all intimidated by the teachers in class. However, teachers are located within the structure as a reification of the West, embodying the linguistic and cultural capital of the 'Western' concept.   As they are revered and objectified in their everyday life in Korea, the classroom dynamics and the status of teachers reflect the changing relations of Korea and the neoliberal features on the global stage.

2.   Locating the Self

The affective dimensions discussed are inevitably related to the notion of self perceived by the students themselves.   With the power to successfully locate the

self closer to the border, English places the self in a precarious position, endangered from multiple directions. Not only does English invoke an uncomfortable sense of alienation and make the self feel vulnerable, it indicates the position of the self in the social map and reveals the degree of "diligence" and "self-management".

1) Self in Management

The pursuit of "real" English is one of the very sites where managing of the self occurs. The sense of positivity and confidence plays a role in encouraging the self to manage and achieve through English, thus expanding the self. With confidence, what is across the border, the shape of the powerful other seems closer, and the self is in need of some managing.

The youth in contemporary Korea are facing a new set of difficulties as the self is under a more global-oriented setting, although many would still identify with Park;

> … the colonized who desired to be the colonizer by speaking the colonizer's language, whom Fanon was talking about, was me. I thereby learned that desiring and celebrating English in Korea comes with a price: the price of anxiety, tension, and guilt… To me, then, to have English- to know English, to speak English, to feel close to English- was to live in a liminal space; that between Korean and English, Korea and the West, between identity and alterity, between loyalty and betrayal, and between longing and belonging…Real challenge thus lies in how Koreans can contest the distinctions of identity that instill borders in their mind.   Park (2011: 9)

The older generation or upper-middle class elites might feel guilty and fragmented in a "liminal space", youth, on the other hand, especially those in the

semi-periphery, may go through a different set of experiences.

Confidence is one of the rising key words for youth in contemporary Korea. The rise of the confident and positive self as a manager of the self occurred in the context of the neoliberal turn. Abelman, Park and Kim (2009) find "neo-liberal subjectivity" in students' efforts to develop themselves. They observe that the students both "aspire and accept the neo-liberal idea of self-managing and self-styling which will eventually obscure structural inequality. Han (2012) takes it further and argues that neo-liberal selves end up exploiting themselves eventually wearing themselves out. According to Han, the postmodern self internalizes the neoliberal logics and makes it constantly achieve rather than work under constant surveillance or strict discipline. He adds that exploiting the self is more productive than exploiting others because individuals can retain the illusion of being in control as they are constantly reworking their selves.

Kwanghoon's account of his arduous work towards "real" English involves constant managing of the self.

> After my military service, my thoughts were more fixed than when I was in my first year, I realized that there is a bigger world. So I took a year off and studied only English. But it didn't work out really well. I went to Seoul and started studying for TOEFL. It was my brother's suggestion, he works for Samsung. He said, study "real English" 진짜 영어 공부를 해라. I signed up for a *hagwon* class. People in my class were all going to top universities and they had been studying since high school. And I was just beginning my race and wanting to get ahead. I knew that they had been studying in middle school and high school, what I was just beginning to learn… I stayed in a relative's place in Seoul. I put myself in the corner, I didn't eat much, I wasn't making any money. I was extremely frugal but I still needed money. I didn't sleep, I told myself, I should not sleep, I am so far behind. I went to the *hagwon* for two

months.   I had to move up to an upper class but my English didn't get any better.   So I quit going to the *hagwon* and studied alone.   *Hagwon* was not very effective for me so I stopped going.   I didn't have money for it either.   I studied alone.   I reviewed what I learned until then. Without having the foundational knowledge, it was useless being in the class.   My classmates had difficulties as well, they even had to take the same course two, three times, even after coming back from language training trips abroad.   I eventually came back to school after some wondering around with a new goal, to participate in the student exchange program.   I studied really hard but I didn't get it.   Then, I applied for an internship abroad and I got that.   I thought my life would change, perfecting my English and gaining a global experience… But it wasn't like I pictured it…   (4th yr Engineering Major, 2/7/2011)

Upon coming back to Yehan, Kwanghoon kept taking English classes and entered various student competitions winning an award.   He constantly recovers the self from the wounds and hardships by challenging himself with new opportunities that are available.   Although he thinks he is quite behind, he is in control, managing the self through English, restlessly striving for the perfection of what he thinks is close to "real" English.   The process of managing the self through English provides new opportunities and possibilities.

As Kwanghoon went on his quest for his "real" English in a *hagwon* in Seoul and compared himself with his classmates from top universities, Seokjune Hong (2003: 126) addresses the issue of *jibang* universities in the context of the Seoul/Jibang dichotomy.   He argues that as the jibang is being reproduced by the center, jibang universities are reproduced as such by universities in Seoul. There certainly is a popular notion of jibang universities, being provincial and small-scale as opposed to the more highly acclaimed universities in larger cities. The "ability" or "level" of students is discussed as if there is a distinctive group of "other" that is distinguishable from "students in Seoul".

Thus, another layer of the marginalized other emerges within the setting. Ju Hyung Il (2010) analyzed the discourse of other on the peripheral non-Seoul locations. Minju, an interviewee in his research, tries to consciously resist this marginalizing discourse while intuitively understanding the power implicit in segregating statements. She desires to free herself from the situation by studying hard and escaping the stigma in an effort to retain self- esteem (2010: 103-104). "Real" English neutralizes such distinction to some extent for students like Kwanghoon and Minju.

Despite the popular dichotomy between Seoul/Jibang, Yang Dol Gyu (2003:172), having conducted research on the self-identity of jibang university students, argued that in Korea, students go through a considerable transformation during their university years and, despite what the "central" discourses might profess, provincial university students identify themselves as "university students" rather than "jibang" university students. Whether in the geographic core or the periphery, students easily relate to imageries of the prevalent discourse of globalization and thus justify English as the means to free themselves and go global. The global, in this case, represents a world that is expanding beyond local and national realms. Yang (2003: 144-156) observes that jibang university students pursue English more vigorously to overcome local disadvantages "globally". Private institutions teaching foreign languages around Yang's university are always crowded with students. These students are focused on ensuring they get a chance to study abroad, even if it means having to interrupt their university studies. In Yehan, however, there are not a lot of English *hagwon*s and students do not have any choice but to move to Seoul temporarily if they are serious about English - whether they want to raise their English proficiency test scores or chase "real" English. Students are kept at a

distance from the border, sometimes not being able to see what is beyond or refusing to find any relevant meanings they might imply.

Despite the anticipation and excitement often felt by Korean English students, Park (2009) argues that the success English promises individuals is deceptive and the fantasy of English as the "language of liberation and emancipation" and a "magic wand" (Kim 2003) merely reproduces social inequality. In other words, it will just be another criteria based on a different kind of capital, to which access is strictly controlled and restricted in the guise of fair assessment on personal competence. With the introduction of speaking tests such as OPIC (Oral Proficiency Interview Computer) and the TOEIC speaking assessment, oral proficiency is rapidly becoming just another score for which students need to learn the pattern of questions and memorize the possible answers. English contributes to reproducing the social order in which English - whether "real" or "score" - indicates one's individual "achievement" or even one's "normality"[20].

For the students in this thesis, the resistance against "English for tests", associated more with *hagwon*s, led to the pursuit of "real" English. In the case of Minjo, for example, to be free from test scores meant being free from cares about the social reward or the stigma attached to it. Minjo, denouncing the TOEIC score as "rubbish", denies a system that rewards the students with high test scores and concomitantly absolves students with lower scores. Minjo earns

---

[20] The main character in the novel, "My journey to Perfect TOEIC Score" sets out on a journey to Australia after hearing that 'to have a perfect TOEIC score these days is like saying that you have two eyes'. A perfect score in English, whether in speaking or writing, is becoming more common among students and without it, you are considered flawed. After a painstaking but much eye-opening quest, he comes back with a perfect TOEIC score, and one remaining eye. For him, "Real English" meant a "perfect TOEIC score" and vice versa.

herself an entirely different, more personal set of values, deriving from a perceived understanding of "real" English.

Students still see more of the equalizing effect of "real" English associated with the global that is distinguishable from English for tests. Ujin talks about the equalizing effect of being abroad.

> I have a longing for Seoul. After I graduate, I am going to move to Seoul of course. In New Zealand, during my 5 week language training course, I met students at big universities in Seoul and I felt inspired. They were more serious and deeply involved with the world, participating and enjoying the cultural activities that are not available in Yehan. Well, this was not a sense of inferiority because the moment we are outside of Korea, we all become Koreans. As for foreigners, I thought they would be very different because they looked different on the outside, but they were the same.
>
> (3rd year folkore major, 3/22/2012)

In the global realm, there is a possibility of overcoming the local disadvantages, this is something Ujin expresses, recounting her experiences meeting Koreans from Seoul in New Zealand. By working hard and constantly managing the self through the pursuit of "real" English for global encounters, students gain and regain confidence, building up a substance for the self that can speak English with the push of a button.

2) Self at a Distance: Apathy

Most students I interviewed were involved one way or another, with English. Whether taking a course at the university or studying alone, it was hard to find someone who is completely detached theoretically from English in the university setting. But I occasionally came across students who blatantly refused to speak

English in class either because they were shy or they had no previous experience of English, or who said that they had given up on English but were willing to start anew or try should the opportunity arise.

To offer a more cogent example, there was a constant sense of apathy running through David's class. A good number of students would show sign of neither interest nor frustration. They seemed to be occupied with what was considered as more pressing matters in their lives, like fieldtrips, class meetings, part-time work, socializing and personal interests. To these students, English or English class seemed to be an irrelevant part of life. Studying English is clearly a more conscious activity for students as the arduous process of job seeking approaches. On the whole, first year students had previous experience of English, both positive and negative, before entering college. They were already embedded in the system of English and had an idea of where they stood with regards to their English language skills.

In my observation, many students in David's class distanced themselves from the class setting, by restructuring the physical space and time in their own private ways. For example, they would sleep, chat or fiddle with their cell phones. This can be interpreted as a classic behavior of passive resistance in the classroom. In a situation where students appear to be submissive, they actually dismiss the formal demands made on them by not paying attention. Gubo, a first year physical education student explained,

> I have given up on English since middle school. Because I had to train, I couldn't attend regular classes. I kept a distance from English.

Long before coming to the conversational English class, students seemed to have developed effective ways to manage their own time in the constraints of the

structured time period.   A student in Amanda's class, always has his Chinese character workbook open during class so that he can do other work while English class progresses.   Whenever he switches off, he can go back to his workbook. Students come in and out of the lesson while doing their own thing.   They do not completely dwell on the cell phone games and text messaging, and are well aware of the teacher's movement and instructions.   They are accustomed to the class structure and are able to plan their time outside of class during the lesson. David observes,

> When I first started teaching, talking, phones, not paying attention bothered me.   I am careful not to discipline them too much.   I don't do class disciplining as long as they are not disruptive.   Students are cunning, they learn not to pay attention in other ways, they can sleep with their eyes open.   I see myself as a facilitator, give them the opportunity to grasp something new out of their life.   Rather than push things down their throat, because they will vomit it back up.   They never tell you what your problem is, cracking a whip at them will break them.

The following scene from David's class demonstrates how students keep a distance that is just manageable to them.

David: (Teaching a lesson on family words, and suddenly realizes that students
        are not paying attention)
        Are you writing?
        Do you have a pen?
        (Students busy talking amongst themselves) (David taps on a student's
shoulder and says)
        Steve is Mary's what?
Student: (turns back to the teacher and says) son (goes back to her friends and
        continues chatting)

In regards to the apathetic atmosphere, Anne, a teacher from Canada said,

> It mirrors how they feel. Some students just hate English, they have years of hate built up. The curriculum's horrible, once you fall behind, you can never catch up. So some of them just give up, don't even try.

A long time professor at Yehan associates the apathetic attitude with the internalized self- devaluation of the locality prevalent amongst the residents of Yehan and other "*Jibang*" cities in Korea. He observed that after going through primary and secondary school system, 90% of students here have internalized the dominant ideology of meritocracy and blame themselves for what they have and have not achieved in life. In fact, for many students at the university, Yehan often was a stopping point which they refused to be associated with. Anticipate the following quotes.

> I tell myself that I am just temporarily passing through. I am residing in Yehan only because of school. (Survey)

Reed-Danahay (1997) has analyzed the Laviallois youth who choose to become farmers, turning their back on the alternative lifestyle offered through the school system. She explained, "[their choices are] partly due to the "misrecognition of the objective structure of power and symbolic violence, operating through the devaluation of their cultural capital and the legitimization of bourgeois forms which they encounter at school, internalizing their failure and entering low skilled careers- thereby contributing to social-cultural reproduction". A similar pattern of reasoning appears with some students in Yehan.

I came to Yehan because I did not study.   I was frustrated, unmotivated, and I had no dreams for the future, I was just existing.   (Survey)

Many stated that they did not get a high score on the university entrance examination and that is why they are there.   It is up to them now to live with the consequences.   In regards to not being able to communicate in English with the teacher, they say they are sorry for not having studied hard enough.   The self needs to constantly work hard to obtain recognition in the form of qualifications like language skills and computer-related licenses, making it stronger and improving the chances that it will stand up to the ebbs and flows of life.   It is one's own individual responsibility to find things with which to improve their selves and one should be ready to accept responsibility for all shortcomings.

More so than just accepting their own responsibility with regards to English, as Paul Willis (1977) analyzed with the "Hammertown lads", some students "penetrate" the other side of the border, projected through English as impenetrable for them thus, meaningless.   Whatever the case, those students end up contributing to the reproduction of the current social order, by rejecting or disengaging with the "border crossing" act.   Jeon (2012:250), in her analysis of overseas Koreans as temporary migrant workers in rural Korea, argues that "the status of rural students as 'local' is reified through conversational English classes such as TaLK (Teach and Learn in Korea), devised especially for rural students. She states that the transformation of the students into the "imagined global speaker" does not occur as promoted by the government.   Rather, the distinction the Korean/Asian global elites such as *jogiyuhakpa* or *saldaonsaram*[21] (See Block 2012; Kang 2012) make in regards to those who lack such

---

[21] Early study abroad/ the elite transnational South Korean returnee(Lo and Kim 2012: 257)

economic/cultural/linguistic capital deepens. Concomitantly, however, categories of linguistic competencies diversify (Lo and Kim 2012).

Dongwoo and Hyekyung discuss their "longing" for the global and admiration for people with a more global experience. Hyekyung, a former student studying to become a public servant says,

> I don't want English for employment. Eventually, I want to be able to speak English with comfort. I don't have a particular reason for it but I have an admiration동경 for people who speak English well and I enjoy a social atmosphere that encourages English as a [linguistic] basis for the international age. I am trying not to fall behind. I have a longing because English skills are something that I don't have. I love that I was born in Korea and it's not bad that I am Asian, but I sometimes wish that my parents had taught me when I was little so that my oral structure 구강 구조 is not limited to Korean. (Hyekyung, former student 3/11/2011)

She recognizes her admiration for the linguistic capital that she lacks and regrets not having attained in her childhood the "flexible" linguistic ability, partially blaming her parents, recognizing the class-based accessibility to fluent English. Dongwoo, on the other hand, is certain that it is not an admiration or longing he feels in regards to others who are proficient in English.

> I don't admire those people. It is just that they have experienced foreign cultures and environment that I have not, I don't admire the fact they are good at a language. I first learned English in middle school and when my friends use English, I guess they looked pretty cool and rich (잘 나보이고 있어 보이고). But it is definitely not something to be longed for. (Dongwoo, former student 3/11/2011)

Despite the fact that "Real" English emerged as a tool for social distinction and has since been analyzed by many as "a powerful mechanism for instilling and internalizing a desire for the Western Other (Pennycook, 1998)", it continues to be something that some students strongly turn away from.   Rather than reaching out for the global, these students attempt to firmly ground themselves in what they are most familiar with.   For them, maintenance of the self, as opposed to the acceptance of or incorporation into the other, means a partial rejection of "real" English as a representation of something foreign and irrelevant.

CHAPTER FIVE
Conclusion

This thesis addressed the issue of English and English education in Korea, a country where the English language industry continues to grow larger, more sophisticated and more incorporated into people's public and private lives. To understand how the students relate to the conception of "real" English and the ways it is integrated into student life as they experience it, this thesis observed how university students in a provincial city study conversational English. This thesis offered particular attention to their thoughts and feelings with their experience of English. Yehan, a typical "jibang" city with its own particularities was the background in which this discussion was set. The national university Language Center in this city was the site where the ideology of "real" English was observed as being deep-seated on an institutional level, bringing the students and native English teachers together for the practice of English.

Situated in the local context, the ways in which "real" English operates were related to what English represents in the minds of students. While "real" English, a concept that was often distinguished from the conventional "English for tests", was presented to students in the form of a mandatory subject of "Conversational English" by the education system, students themselves developed their own rationales and desires for or against the prevalent idea of "real" English. The students understood the self as being in preparation for the competitive market, forced to be on a path towards either success, or, in worst cases, failure. Within this, English was the medium for survival, English was the tool which could elevate the self and raise one's chances of breaking through the

constraints of the local. The major rationale for studying English lay in the practical goal of finding a place in the job market. The oppressive nature of the structure in which students found themselves, however, dissipated and was often replaced by a self-generated aspiration for and excitement about global encounters. Many students longed for the possession of "real" English that promised a more immediate encounter with the "foreigner".

For the students, English, was closely connected to imageries of the global. Students also imagined being able to relocate themselves in the "global" realm through English, thus moving beyond the local confines. "Real" English, on a conceptual level, was created and reaffirmed through students distinguishing themselves from others who only studied English for tests. By pursuing "real" English, students rejected subjugation to the "othering" gaze of the center.

Conversational English class was observed as a mock environment reproduced to prepare students for "real" future encounters. There were misunderstandings and indifferences at times but conversational class generally had a fun, casual atmosphere, making English come alive for the students. Lessons were imbued with cultural and ideological elements, emphasizing the similarities and differences between self and other. Aspects of the Western other were also conveyed and reified through the teachers' own background and cultural performance. Contrary to the ideology of "real" English as ideally constructed by both teachers and students, teachers often use simplified English, indicating characteristics of "global babble" (Eriksen 2007) and on occasion, utilized their knowledge of Korean to aid with student comprehension. These aspects revealed a clear discrepancy with the ideal. Students also mixed English and Korean, not strictly distinguishing the two conceptually, focusing, rather, on practical communication.

Layers of "others" crisscrossed the field of English in Yehan. The other in English was a complex concept encompassing individual and collective constructions of the world. For example, native English instructors were tasked with the role of representing an aspect of the other to which students would often give ambivalent reactions. They were revered as the exotic and knowledgeable other while at times consumed merely as a language learning kit. Native English teachers also presented cultural and socio-economic aspects of English as a form of capital. They embodied English as the Western other, a concept to be glorified and commoditized. Teachers led a lifestyle made possible mostly by the socio-economics of being "English teachers in the non-West", creating a new group of "world travelers", located between Bauman's (1998) spectrum of "tourist" and "vagabond".

"Real" English was premised as something that should and could be "learned" through interaction with the people who possess it. This idea was related to the traditional language ideology in which language is firmly attached to one's intrinsic identity. However, as knowledge of grammar and cultural customs can also be taught through books or "non" native teachers, the significance of the "native" speakers of English is also linked to the contrasting neoliberal idea of language as a commodity that can be acquired (Park and Lo 2012).

In the process of carrying out the arduous quest of perfecting their language skills, students expressed several prominent emotions associated with English. This thesis has explored the affective dimensions of their experience of "real" English, as embedded in the socio-historical aspects of Korean society. A number of students described that they felt fearful, and even terrified having to speak English. The fear was mostly based on their unfamiliarity with the "other". Faced with the unknown other, students often felt blocked and

80

panicked, not knowing how to react.   This fear, for some students, then turned into a positive feeling of "confidence", but only after going through the conversational English class.   The "other" was then perceived to be closer to the self and even, in some cases, became a part of it.   This contributed to the feeling of confidence by expanding the boundaries of the self.   Through English, students imagined and explored the borders that the language and the teachers who taught it represented.

The self was often found to be destabilized when English was involved. Especially with regards to "real" English, students were forced to constantly manage the self.   However, a sense of apathy also tended to prevail, with students feeling emotionally detached and regarding English as something irrelevant, thus distancing the self.

In sum, this thesis attempted to focus on local student's ideas and experiences of "real" English and construct a more balanced view on the intricate workings of English in the Korean semi-periphery.   By understanding how competing concepts of English mediated the self and other, thus forming a complex dynamics of emotions, it was possible to gain an understanding of the implications of English learning to both university students and the wider Korean society.

REFERENCES

Bauman, Zygmunt
  1998 *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Block, David
  2012 Commentary: Transnational South Korea as a Site for a Sociolinguistics of Globalization and the Distinction of Global Elites. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 16/2:277-282.

Bhatt, Rakesh M.
  2001 World Englishes. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 30: 527-50.

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland
  2007 *Globalization: The Key Concepts*. Oxford and NY: Berg.

Hannerz, Ulf
  1996 *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. London and New York: Routledge.

Jeong, Young-Kuk
  2004 A Chapter of English Teaching in Korea: In Seoul, from a Publisher to a Graduate School of English. *English Today*. 78, Vol. 20, No. 2: pp40-46.

Jeon, Mihyon and Lee, Jiyoon
  2006 Hiring Native - Speaking English Teachers in East Asian Countries: A Review of a Vast an Complex Recruiting Progam. *English Today*. Vol 22., Issues 04: pp53-58.

  2009 Globalization and Native English Speakers in EPIK (English Program in Korea). *Language, Culture and Curriculum.* 22: 231-243.

  2012 Globalization of English Teaching and Overseas Koreans as Temporary Migrant Workers in Rural Korea. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 16/2: 238-254.

Kang, Yoon Hee
    2012   Singlish or Globish: Multiple Language Ideologies and Global Identities among Korean Educational Migrants in Singapore. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16/2: 163-183.

Kim, Jung Kang
    2002   *"Globalization and English Language Education in Korea: Socialization and Identity Construction of Korean Youth"* PhD Diss., New Mexico State University.

Kneller, George F.
    1984   *Movements of Thought in Modern Education*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Moffatt, Michael
    1989   *Coming of Age in New Jersey: College and American Culture*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Norberg-Hodge, Helena
    1996   The Pressure to Modernize and Globalize. In Mander, Jerry and Goldsmith, Edward.*The Case Against Global Economy*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Olivio, Warren
    2003   "Quit Talking and Learn English!": Conflicting Language Ideologies in an ESL Classroom. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, Vol 34, No1, pp.50-71.

Park, Joseph Sung-Yul,
    2008   Two Processes of Reproducing Monolingualism in South Korea. *Sociolinguistic Studies*. Vol 2(3): 331-346.
    2009   *The local Construction of a Global Language: Ideologies of English in South Korea*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
    2011   The Promise of English: Linguistic Capital and the Neoliberal Worker in the South Korean Job Market. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism.* 12(4): 443-455.

            English as Border Crossing: Longing/Belonging in the South Korean Experience. In Vaughan Rapatahana and Pauline Bunce(eds.), *English Language as Hydra*. Clevedon: Multilingual

Matters. To Appear.

Park, Joseph Sung-Yul and Lo, Adrienne
  2012   Transnational South Korea as a Site for a Sociolinguistics of Globalization: Markets, Timescales, Neoliberalism. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16/2: 147-164.

Park, So Jin, Abelmann, Nancy
  2004 Class and Cosmopolitan Striving: Mother's Management of English Education in South Korea. *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No.4, pp.645-672.

Park, Abelmann, Kim
  2009 College Rank and Neo-Liberal Subjectivity in South Korea: The Burden of Self-Development. *Inter-Asian Cultural Studies*, Vol 10, No. 2, pp.229-247.

Pennycook, Alistair
  1998   *English and the Discourse of Colonialism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Reed-Danahay, Deborah
  1996 *Education and Identity in Rural France: The Politics of Schooling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shiva, Vandada
  1993 The Greening of the Global Reach. In *Global Ecology: A New Arena of Political Conflict*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books.

Spring, Joel
  2004 *How Educational Ideologies are Shaping Global Society: Intergovernmental Organizations, NGOs, and the Decline of the Nation-State*. New York and London: Routledge.

Suares-Orozco, Carol
  2004 Formulating Identity in a Globalized World. In Suarez-Ororzco, Marcelo M. and Qin Hiliard, DisereeBaolian(eds). *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Willis, Paul
    1977   *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs.* Surrey: Gower Publising Complany Limited.

강준만
    2007   <한국 근대사 산책 3권: 아관파천에서 하와이 이민까지> 서울: 인물과 사상사.

김광억
    1996   '지방'의 생산과 그 정치적 이용. <한국 문화 인류학> 29(1): 3-35.

김경근, 황나영, 황여정
    2011   원어민 영어 수업이 중학생의 영어 성취에 미치는 영향.<한국교육 사회학회>발표자료.

김유경
    2007   <원어민 교사가 학습자들의 문화학습에 끼치는 영향연구> 아주대학교 석사학위논문.

문옥표
    2000   관광을 통한 문화의 생산과 소비: 하회마을의 사례를 중심으로. <한국 문화 인류학> 33(2):79- 110.

박휴용
    2007   '세계화 시대의 영어학습' 열기에 대한 비판적 담론 분석: 사회적 기호화 과정(Social Symbolization) 의 탐색. <사회언어학> 제 14권 2호

심재천
    2012   <나의 토익만점수기> 서울: 웅진 지식하우스.

양돌규
    2003   지방대생 '친구' 이야기. <당대비평>27(9): 144- 156.

양성은
    2003   지방대학생의 자아 정체감에 관한 연구. <한국 가정관리학회지> 제 23권 5호. 171-180.

주형일
    2010   지방대에 대한 타자화 담론의 주관적 수용의 문제: 자기민속지학 방법의 적용. <미디어, 젠더 & 문화. 13호 pp75-114.

한병철
    2012   <피로사회> 서울: 문학과 지성사.

홍석준
    2003   '지방대'에서 바라본 서울중심주의. <당대비평> 27(9):125-143.

Online Resources

Dave's ESL Café, http://forums.eslcafe.com/korea/viewtopic.php?t=3924(Apr 17, 2011)

University Language Center Website　(Apr 17, 2011)

돈 들인 만큼 효과 별로, 조기유학 확 줄었다
http://news.kukinews.com/article/view.asp?page=1&gCode=kmi&arcid=0004622656&cp=du(Aug 7, 2011)

영어유치원 10곳 생기면 소아정신과 1곳 생긴다": '사교육 중독', 이젠 빨간불, 김승현 사교육 걱정없는 세상 정책실장 인터뷰
http://www.pressian.com/article/article.asp?article_num=30120514001918&section=03&t1=n Pressian(May 15 2012)

영 유학 1 년반 했는데, 토익이 700 점이라니…
http://cnews.mt.co.kr/mtview.php?no=2012051016593857016&type=2
MONEYTODAY (May 10, 2012)

원어민 교사제 '3000억 예산에 효용 글쎄',
http://www.mt.co.kr/view/mtview.php?type=1&no=2011092311153549098&outlink=1 (Aug 7, 2011)

APPENDIX A
List of Interviewees [22]

No.	Name	Occupation	Major	Gender	Interview Date
1	Jocelyn	instructor		F	1/12/2011
2	Beatrice	instructor		F	1/16/2011
3	Josh	instructor		M	1/17/2011
4	Seungbo	student/4th	History	M	1/17/2011
5	Eunyoung	Student/2nd	Art	F	1/18/2011
6	Kwanghoon	student/4th	Engineering	M	2/7/2011
7	Nate	instructor		M	2/9/2011
8	Jenna	former instructor		F	2/25/2011
9	Liz	former instructor		F	2/16/2011
10	Sunghyun	student/4th	Information	M	3/4/2011
11	Muyong	student/1st	History	M	3/7/2011
12	Minjo	student/4th	European Culture	F	3/8/2011
13	Dongwoo	former student	Engineering	M	3/11/2011
14	Hyekyung	former student	Engineering	F	3/11/2011
15	Gilju	student/3rd	Trade	M	4/8/2011
16	Sungmin	former student	Engineering	M	5/12/2011
17	Anne	instructor		F	3/25/2011
18	David	instructor		M	4/5,24/2011
19	Amanda	instructor		F	5/11/2011
20	Ben	instructor		M	5/16/2011
21	Pete	instructor		M	9/7/2011
22	Rick	instructor		M	4/2/2012
23	Chanjin	student/3rd	Trade	M	9/5/2011
24	Seon	student/grad	Trade	F	9/7/2011
25	Gubo	student/1st	PE	M	11/5/2011
26	Sangwoo	student/grad	Engineering	M	12/2/2011

---

[22] All the names of the interviewees are pseudonyms.

27	Ujin	student/3rd	folklore	F	3/22/2012
28	Chai	student/3rd	folklore	F	2/8/2012
29	Jian	student/3rd	Trade	F	5/2/2012
30	Jungeun	student/3rd	Biology	F	5/2/2011

APPENDIX B

Survey 1

1.영어공부를 통해 성취하고 싶은 목표가 있습니까? 영어를 공부하는 개인적인 이유가 무엇입니까?

2. 선택을 할 수 있다면 대학과정에서 영어 과목을 선택하여 공부하시겠습니까? 즉, 취업과 같은 목적과 직접적인 관계가 없다면 영어를 선택하여 공부하시겠습니까?

3. 이때까지 영어공부를 하면서 가장 어려웠던 점은 무엇이며 그 원인이 무엇이라고 생각하십니까?

4. 영어공부를 해오면서 가장 즐겁거나 기뻤던 순간들이 있다면 무엇입니까? 즉, 영어공부나 수업을 통해서 느끼게 된 긍정적인 감정이나 영향은 어떤 것들이었으며 어떤 상황에서 발생하였습니까?

5. 영어수업을 할 때 특별히 느끼게 되는 부정적인 감정들이 있다면 어떤 것이 있으며 주로 어떤 상황에서 그런 감정들을 느끼게 됩니까? (예를 들어, 답답함, 부끄러움, 짜증, 공포감, 무력감 등)

6. 영어를 배우는 과정에서 미국이나 영국 등의 서양의 문화와 가치관을 접하게 된다고 생각하십니까? 그렇게 노출된 서구 문화와 가치관에 대해서 특별히 이상하다고 느끼거나, 괜찮다고 느낀 점이 있습니까? 어떤 점들인지 적어주십시오.

7. 원어민 선생님과의 수업에서 문화적 차이를 직접적으로 느낀 적이 있습니까? 있다면 구체적인 예나 에피소드를 적어주십시오. 없다면 어떤 점에서 한국 문화와 비슷한 점을 발견한 것이 있습니까?

8. 원어민 선생님들의 태도나 수업방식에 있어 고쳐야 할 점이 있다면 무엇을 지적하고 싶습니까? 원어민 선생님과 미묘한 갈등이나 작은 마찰/오해가 있었던 적이 있다면 그 또한 적어주십시오.

9. 캠프에서 가장 재미있었던 수업은 어떤 수업이며 왜 재미있었습니까?

10. 캠프에서 가장 많은 것을 배웠다고 생각되는 수업은 무엇이며 왜 그렇습니까?

11. 캠프를 통해 배운 것 중 가장 기억에 남는 표현이나 단어가 있다면 세 가지 정도 적어주시고 그 표현이나 단어가 어떤 수업, 어떤 상황에서 나오게 되었는지 설명해 주십시오.

Survey 2

A.영어 공부를 하는 이유가 무엇입니까?

    1. 영어가 재미있고 좋아서
    2. 취업 과정에서 요구되니까
    3. 글로벌 시대에 외국인과 대화하고 싶어서
    4. 외국 유학을 위해
    5. 기타_____

앞 질문에서 3번을 택하셨다면, "외국인"이란 자세히 얘기하면 어느 나라 사람들을 뜻합니까?

B.진짜 영어를 잘 하기 위해 가장 중요한 요소는 무엇입니까?
    1. 단어
    2. 말하기
    3. 듣기
    4. 문법
    5. 쓰기
    6. 두가지 선택 _____ _____

C.가장 배우고 싶은 종류의 영어는 어느 것입니까?
    1. 미국식 영어
    2. 영국식 영어
    3. 호주식 영어
    4. 인도식 영어
    5. 필리핀 식 영어
    6. _____

D.영어를 가르치기에 조금 더 적합하다고 여겨지는 사람은?
    1. 미국/영국 출신 원어민
    2. 호주/뉴질랜드/남아프리카공화국 출신 원어민
    3. 필리핀, 싱가포르, 인도 등 영어사용 국가의 아시아계 원어민
    4. 한국계 미국인/영국인/호주인
    5. 한국인 선생님
    6. _____

E.자신의 영어 능력은 어떠하다고 생각하십니까?
1. 훌륭하다– 어디서든 내 생각을 표현할 수 있다.
2. 괜찮다–약간 어려울 때도 있지만 의사소통 가능하다.
3. 그저 그렇다– 기본 이해능력은 되지만 그 이상은 어렵다.
4. 문제가 많다– 영어를 해야 할 상황에 당황하고 만다.
5. _____

F.자신이 가장 향상하고 싶은 영역과 이유는?
1. 말하기–
2. 듣기–
3. 단어–
4. 문법–
5. 쓰기–

G.자신이 영어에 노출되는 환경은 주로 어디입니까?
1. 학교– 구체적으로 무슨 수업?
2. 미디어–영화/드라마/음악
3. 모임/단체– 구체적으로 어디?
4. 그 외 _____
5. 없다

H.영어공부는 언제까지 할 생각이십니까?
1. 계속 할거다– 이유는?
2. 완벽할때까지
3. 취업할때까지
4. 학교 졸업할때까지
5. 기타– _____

I.자신이 훗날 영어 사용을 어디에서 하고 있을 거라 생각하십니까?
1. 일터에서
2. 일상에서
3. 외국 출장중
4. 외국 여행중
5. 한국에 여행온 외국인들과
6. 안할 것 같다.

국문초록

이 논문은 한국의 한 대학 영어회화 수업 현장에서 학생들이 구성하고 경험하게 되는 "진짜" 영어에 대한 민족지적 연구이다. 최근 십여 년 간 급격히 늘어난 "영어 회화"에 대한 개인적, 사회적 관심과 열망은 제도 교육, 특히 대학 과정에 필수 교과목으로 깊숙이 자리하고 있다. 시장, 정부 그리고 교육이 "글로벌 인재"를 요구하는 전지구화의 큰 흐름 안에서 학생들은 "외국인"들과의 조우를 상정하며 "진짜" 영어를 지향하는 경향을 보였다. 전통적인 문법 및 문어체 위주의 "시험을 위한" 영어와 대조적인 의미를 갖고 있는 "진짜" 영어는 대개의 경우 개인적 충족 및 해방감과 연관되어 나타났다.

이 논문에서는 이렇게 구성된 "진짜" 영어가 대학 영어회화 교실에서 어떻게 경험되는가를 살펴보았다. 관념적 "서구"에 대한 물적 재현으로써 "소비"되는 강사(원어민)의 회화 수업은 "외국인"과의 대면에 의연하게 "대처"할 수 있는 방법을 습득하고 연습하는 장이었다. 영어권 중심의 관습, 지식, 태도 및 소통방식이 그 주요 학습내용이었지만, 교사-학생 사이의 실제적인 소통은 그들이 정의하는 "진짜" 영어와는 간극을 보였다.

"진짜" 영어의 학습과정에서 보이는 학생들의 감정적 경험을 자아/타자의 관념을 중심으로 살펴보았다. 영어는 그 자체로 강력한 타자를 연상케 하였고 그것은 학생들에게 종종 "두려움"을 유발하는 원인이 되기도 하였다. 자아는 이 다소 불명확한 관념적 타자로 인해 스스로 위험을 인식하였다. 이러한 양상은 보다 넓은 사회경제적 맥락과 함께 구성된

"진짜" 영어가 단지 개인의 문제로 축소되게 하였다. 또한 "자신감"은 새로운 미래에 대한 약속으로 학생들을 고무하는 긍정적인 감정으로 작용하였다. "진짜" 영어를 통해 획득한 자신감은 더욱 성장하고 확장되는 자아의 개념으로 연결되었고, 이와 같이 "진짜" 영어는 자아의 관리 및 경영에 매우 중요한 요소였다. 그리고 직접적으로 표현되는 경우는 드물지만 "무관심"은 또 하나의 특별한 감정이었다. 결국, "진짜" 영어는 관념적 타자와의 경계 주변의 각각 상이한 곳에 위치한 감정지점을 통해 경계 넘나들기의 주체인 자아로 직결되었다.

진짜 영어의 의미와 경험을 회화 수업에 대한 참여 관찰 및 인터뷰를 통해 분석한 이 논문은 현재 한국 사회의 영어 지형을 특히 한 대학의 학생들의 입장에서 조명하여 보다 균형 있는 시각을 제공하고자 하였다.