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교육학석사학위논문

Effects of Non-American Accents on  
Korean High School Students'  
English Listening Comprehension

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# Effects of Non–American Accents on Korean High School Students’ English Listening Comprehension

by

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# ABSTRACT

## **Effects of Non-American Accents on Korean High School Students’ English Listening Comprehension**

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Rapid spread of English as an international language has led to an explosive increase in NNS-NNS interactions along with the emergence of a variety of World Englishes. Accordingly, ‘multidialectal listening skill’, an ability to understand different varieties of English, has become a must-have language skill for successful international communication. This new movement has created the need for including multiple accents in listening assessments in order to better represent test takers’ actual language use domains. However, this may cause the matter of fairness for those who are not familiar with speech varieties selected for the test. The present study explored the impact of unfamiliar English accents especially to Korean learners, namely, non-American accents on Korean high school students’ listening comprehension.

Six groups of students were randomly assigned to each of the six test conditions recorded by speakers from six countries: US, UK, India, Malaysia, China and Indonesia. While the first half of all the six types of the tests were recorded by one American speaker, the other half was different across the type depending on the accent of the speaker. In the process of testing the

effects of non-American accents, both speakers' degree of accents and students' listening proficiency were considered as potential factors.

The results of this study revealed that non-American accents in general did have negative effects on students' listening comprehension. Students received significantly lower scores when the speaker of the listening stimuli changed from native American speaker to all the other non-American speakers. However, interestingly, there was no correlation between degree of non-American accents and students' listening scores. In other words, how much certain speech variety deviates from standard American English did not affect students' listening comprehension. Moreover, there was no differential effect of non-American accents on students' listening proficiency level. In every proficiency group, no significant mean difference was observed between groups who heard all different accents.

These findings, once again, confirm how much Korean learners of English have received American English-centered education so far. At the same time, they suggest the importance of getting exposed to different varieties of English in the form of classroom activities or any type of assessment to be a successful communicator in today's globalized world.

**Key Words:** L2 listening comprehension, Non-American accents, Degrees of accents, World Englishes, Multidialectal listening assessment

***Student Number:*** 2008-21562

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# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The present study investigates the effects of non-American accents on Korean high school students' listening comprehension. The first section introduces the motivation and purpose of the current study. The second section presents the research questions, and the last section outlines the organization of the thesis.

## 1.1 Background and Purpose of the Study

With rapid spread of English as an international language, English is currently used by a lot more non-native speakers than native speakers. According to Crystal (2008), the number of non-native speakers including Outer Circle and Expanding Circle outnumbered that of Inner Circle by more than five times<sup>1</sup>. It is also predicted that this trend toward rapidly increasing number of L2 speakers is likely to continue (Jenkins, 2000) while that of native speakers will be fairly stable (Graddol, 1997). Moreover, Expanding Circle which includes more than half of the English speaking population is becoming the most dynamic sector of English speakers due to its changes in public policy

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<sup>1</sup> Kachru (1985) described the spread of English in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle represents historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in regions where it is now used as a primary language. The Outer Circle includes countries where English is not the native tongue but is important for historical reasons and plays a part in the nation's institutions, either as an official language or otherwise. The Expanding circle contains countries where English has no official status and is learnt as a foreign language.

and public interest (Graddol, 1997). Jenkins (2009), in order to capture this widespread use of English among speakers from Expanding Circle, used the term 'English as Lingua Franca (ELF)'. In these circumstances, it is very natural to expect that more interactions will occur between non-native English speakers than between native speakers and non-native speakers.

In addition, the rapid spread of English across the world has resulted in the emergence of different English varieties, called 'World Englishes (WE)'. The term 'World Englishes' basically refers to localized or indigenized varieties of English that have developed around the world. As WE are gaining more stature and international recognition, it became generally accepted that the ownership of English language is not restricted to the native speakers of English any more. According to WE, anyone who speaks English could be the owner of the English language. Additionally, as Dimova (2018) pointed out, WE claims that "the focus on native-speaker (NS) norm in international communication is now inappropriate since it undermines the multiplicity of English varieties encountered in real-life communicative situations" (p.49). Accordingly, in today's world, being 'multidialectal' became prerequisite of English proficiency for successful international communication (Dimova, 2018). According to Canagarajah (2006), this does not mean that one needs an ability to produce all the varieties of English. The passive competence to understand new varieties can also be a part of this multidialectal competence.

Meanwhile, these new perspectives on the use of English as an international language along with the growing acceptance of World Englishes

suggest the need for an important shift in English testing and assessing practices. The main critique of current testing practices is over-reliance on traditionally standard varieties (e.g., Received Pronunciation [RP], General American [GA]). A growing number of scholars have argued that English tests should now adopt an English as an international language (EIL) approach instead of using a few dominant English varieties in order to realistically represent diverse English speaking contexts (Brown, 2014; Canagarajah, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Lowenberg, 2002; Taylor, 2006).

Especially relevant to this new movement is the assessment of listening skills (Kang, Moran & Thomson, 2019). As already pointed out, listeners are likely to encounter not only native varieties but also a wide range of non-native speech varieties in their actual language use contexts. This strongly suggests the importance of ‘multidialectal listening skills.’ Accordingly, the issue of speaker accent in listening assessment has become a controversial question. A number of researchers have expressed concerns about the use of only one selected English accent for assessing second language listening comprehension. (Abeywickrama, 2013; Brown, 2014; Harding, 2011; Jenkins & Leung, 2013; Taylor & Geranpayeh, 2011). They emphasize the need of including multiple accents in a listening assessment in order to represent diverse English varieties found in target language use domains. Harding (2012), supporting this view, claimed that inclusion of L2 accents is warranted on “the bases of enhanced authenticity, a more accurate representation of the listening construct and the potential for positive

washback” (p.164).

On the other hand, researchers have pointed out the potential drawbacks of including a variety of accents as well. For example, some test takers who are not familiar with selected accents may be unfairly disadvantaged (Elder & Davies, 2006; Elder & Harding, 2008; Taylor, 2006; Taylor & Geranpayeh, 2011). Researchers also expressed concerns about its practicality. That is, it would be realistically impossible to include every type of English accent that could be encountered by test takers (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Ockey & French, 2016). Given this dilemmatic situation, it seems necessary to strike a balance between domain representation and reliability of the test in order to achieve a fair, ecologically valid English assessment (Kang, Moran & Thomson, 2019).

As an attempt to find a compromise, Ockey and Wagner (2018) suggested to use a few English varieties that are somewhat different than standard variety, but at the same time, close enough to standard variety to avoid unfairness due to familiarity. Some global high-stakes English tests such as TOEFL and IELTS, reflecting this new movement, have recently begun to include non-RP and non-GA accents (e.g., Canadian, Australian, New Zealander varieties) in their listening sections. In the same context, Korea where American Standard English takes dominant position in English education partially adopted British accent of English for nationwide listening assessment since 2013. However, in spite of these attempts, there is still criticism that these tests limit their accent input to Inner Circle varieties

(David & Carsten, 2019). As Kang, Moran and Thomson (2019) pointed out, “it seems unlikely that these few varieties are representative of the majority of English communication in international contexts” (p. 59).

A review of previous studies on the effects of accent on listening comprehension, though it is not conclusive, gives meaningful insight regarding this matter. As Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta and Balasubramanian (2002) pointed out, the relationship between accent and listening comprehension is not clear due to the complexity of listening construct itself and many individual factors affecting comprehension. Yet, a large number of studies have reported that accented speeches, by and large, contribute to comprehension difficulty. Specifically, unfamiliar accents to listeners were likely to cause difficulty in comprehension (Adank, Evans, Stuart-Smith & Scott, 2009; Kim, 2007; Ockey & French, 2016; Oh, 2011).

On the other hand, there was also a case where accented speeches had positive effects on L2 comprehension especially when listeners shared their native languages with speakers, which is so called ‘shared-L1 advantage’ (Harding, 2012; Kang, Moran & Thomson, 2019; Major et al., 2002; Smith & Bisazza, 1982). Bent and Bradlow (2003) explained this phenomenon with the term ‘Interlanguage Speech Intelligibility Benefit (ISIB)’, a theory that posits that non-native listeners may better understand English spoken by a person with the same L1 since they share ‘same interlanguage process.’

In general, the findings of previous studies are indicating that while shared-L1 is not always advantageous to L2 comprehension, familiarity (especially

through exposure) to certain accents does have facilitating effect. However, these two factors do not seem to be completely distinct fields. Given that shared-L1 effect is largely due to the fact that those who share the same L1 are likely to be familiar with the L2 speech of that L1 (Ortmeyer & Boyle, 1985; Smith & Bisazza, 1982; Tauroza & Luk, 1997), it is familiarity, after all, that explains shared-L1 effect (Ockey & Wagner, 2018). Therefore, it seems that familiarity factor plays a key role in understanding any L2 speeches. This is what exactly researchers have been worried about with regard to using multiple accents in a listening test.

For Korean EFL learners, it is obviously American accent of English that is the most familiar to themselves. It's also the most-preferred English variety as well (Ahn, 2011; Choi, 2007; Jung, 2005; Oh, 2011; Ryu, 2015). In Korea, American Standard English has been considered as a norm since 1950s and it's still maintaining its influential position in every English classroom of Korea. Accordingly, Korean learners rarely have a chance to get exposed to speeches produced by non-American speakers, and as a result, they are likely to feel difficulty in comprehension when encountering non-American accents. Related studies conducted under Korean EFL context confirmed this fact, showing that Korean learners' comprehensibility level dropped with listening input spoken by non-American speakers (Ahn, 2015; Kim, 2007; Oh, 2011).

Current study aims to shed further light on how non-American accents exert their influence on Korean EFL learners' listening comprehension, particularly under testing context. If 'multidialectal listening assessment' is a

more suitable type of listening test to meet the demands of the age, it is necessary to figure out to what extent non-American accents affect listening comprehension of Korean learners who have been exposed to American English exclusively. One remarkable aspect of this study is that it considers both foreign speakers' degree of accent and students' listening proficiency level in examining the effects of non-American accents. These two variables were often overlooked in previous studies examining the effects of accents (Abeywickrama, 2013; Adank et al., 2009; Major et al., 2002; Tauroza & Luke, 1997). While the former tries to identify whether the degree of difference from American English (which is considered as 'standard' in Korea) is actually reflected on students' test scores, the latter seeks to find if there is any differential effect of non-American accents depending on students' listening proficiency.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) Do non-American accents impede Korean high school students' listening comprehension?
- 2) Does the effect of non-American accents of speakers vary depending on the distance of their accents from American English?
- 3) Does the effect of non-American accents of speakers vary depending on Korean high school students' listening proficiency?

### **1.3 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is composed of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the motivation and research questions of the present study. Chapter 2 reviews how accent has been defined and operationalized along with some major findings of experimental researches on the effects of accent on listening comprehension. Chapter 3 describes the research method of the main experiment including participants, test material, procedure, and data analysis. Chapter 4 and 5, based on the qualitative results of the study, discuss interesting findings and related issues. Chapter 6 summarizes the major findings and concludes the study with pedagogical implications, limitations and suggestions for further studies.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research aims to examine the effects of non-American accents on Korean EFL learners' listening comprehension. Given that the current study considers degree of accent as one variable in determining the effects of non-American accents, first two sections start discussion with the definition of accent and how it has been operationalized in previous studies. Section 2.3 presents some of the major findings of the previous studies examining the effects of accents on listening comprehension. The last section discusses some issues not fully addressed in the previous studies.

### 2.1 Definition of Accent

There is no single agreed definition of 'accent' among different scholars. However, there is relative agreement on what constitutes a 'foreign accent'. 'Foreign accent' is generally defined in terms of how much L2 deviates from a target variety based solely on listeners' perception. For example, Kennedy and Trofimovich (2018) defined it as "how closely the pronunciation of an utterance approaches that of a native speaker" (p.46). Similarly, Issacs and Thomson (2013) defined foreign accent as "how different the speaker sound from a native speaker" (p.141), while Jukowska and Cebrian (2015) defined foreign accentedness as "the listeners' perception of how closely the pronunciation of an L2 speaker mirrors the pronunciation of a native speaker

of a given language" (p.212). Meanwhile, Derwing and Munro (2009) focused on comprehensibility of foreign accent, listeners' perception of how easy or difficult to understand a speaker's speech, as well as its salience (how it is different from the local dialect). They viewed L2 speakers' accent as "the ways in which their speech differs from that local variety of English and the impact of that difference on speakers and listeners" (p. 476). In this study, adapted from the first half of Derwing and Munro's definition of foreign accent, accent is defined as "the degree to which an individual's speech patterns are different from local variety." Here, local variety is equivalent to General American English (GA), the most familiar speech variety to majority of Korean EFL students.

## **2.2 Accent Measurement**

Scalar ratings are the most common way of measuring the degree of accent in most accent-related researches (Dewring & Munro, 1997; Isaccs & Thomson, 2013; Kang, Moran & Thomson, 2019; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2008; Kraut & Wulf, 2013; Munro & Derwing, 1995a, 1995b; O'Brien, 2014; Ockey & French, 2016; Ockey, Papageorgiou & French, 2016). However, the size of scale differed, varying from 5-point to 9-point scale depending on each researcher. Since none of them explicitly explained why they used slightly different size of scales, it seems there is no special rationale for doing so. Nevertheless, there was a tendency for the selection of which size of scale to

be used. Researches where the accent evaluation itself was the ultimate goal of the experiment tended to use 9-point scales (Dewring & Munro, 1997; Isaacs & Thomson, 2013; Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2008; Munro & Derwing, 1995a, 1995b; O'Brien, 2014). In these studies, eliciting judgement of non-native speech is the endpoint of the study. On the other hand, some of the recent pronunciation studies including accent rating for the purpose of selecting speakers have employed 5-point Likert scale which is considered to be more effective to elicit impressionistic judgement from listeners (Kang, Moran & Thomson, 2019; Ockey & French, 2016; Ockey, Papageorgiou & French, 2016). Meanwhile, Ockey and French (2016) developed their own strength of accent scale which included both scores ranging from 1 to 5 and their descriptors based on three criteria: 1) salience 2) comprehensibility and 3) processing time. In the current study, though the purpose of accent measurement is to select the speakers with a range of accent strengths, 7-point Likert scale was determined to be used instead of 5-point Likert scale in order to give more detailed options to raters.

There are two main ways in which accent has been operationalized in previous researches: one is through extemporaneous type of speaking task such as picture narratives and spontaneous interactions (Hansen Edwards, Zampini & Cunningham, 2018; Isaacs & Thomson, 2013; Munro & Derwing, 1995a; O'Brien, 2014; Saito, Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2016; Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012) while the other is more controlled way of speaking task like reading-aloud (Julkowska & Cebrian, 2015; Kang, Moran & Thomson, 2019;

Ockey & French, 2016; Ockey, Papageorgiou & French, 2016). Though the former type of speaking task is more representative of real world speeches, the current study decided to adopt a reading-aloud task for eliciting participants' verbal outputs, since the focus of the current study is solely on phonological aspects of different varieties of English.

## **2.3 Effects of Accent on Listening Comprehension**

### **2.3.1 Previous researches on effects of accent focusing on shared-L1 effect**

A large body of research on the effects of accent on listening comprehension has been conducted focusing on 'shared-L1 effect'. It assumes that test takers will have advantage when listening to L2 speakers of English who share their own native languages. Related studies to date have shown very inconsistent findings regarding this matter.

First, there are some studies indicating that there does not exist any shared-L1 advantage at all. For example, Tauroza and Luk (1997) examined the effects of accent differences on the listening comprehension of Hong Kong-accented versus RP-accented English among Hong Kong secondary school students. They found no significant difference in the degree to which L2 listeners comprehended two varieties. The findings of this study are given additional strengths due to the problems relating to the comparability of two

groups in the experiment and the listening inputs they heard. First, the subjects who heard Hong Kong-accented English were slightly more proficient in their listening ability than those who heard RP-accented English. Second, the speaking rate of Hong Kong speakers were slower than that of RP-accented speakers, suggesting that listening inputs by Hong Kong speakers were relatively easier to understand.

Similarly, Abeywickrama (2013) had Brazilian, Korean, and Sri Lankan English learners take a multiple-choice test in which the input was delivered by a Chinese, Korean, Sri Lankan and American speaker. The findings showed that different English varieties did not impact test takers' listening comprehension, and more specifically, they received similar scores across the four test conditions regardless of their L1. In other words, test takers did not show any significant score changes even when the speakers shared the same native languages with themselves, which implies that there is no any shared-L1 effect.

Meanwhile, some studies testing the potential for shared-L1 effect showed somewhat mixed results. Major et al. (2002) conducted an experiment in which TOEFL PBT mini-talk lectures were delivered in English by speakers with Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Spanish L1 backgrounds. Tests were then administered to listeners who shared the same L1 backgrounds. The results indicated that both native and non-native listeners scored significantly lower on listening comprehension tests when they listened to non-native speakers of English. With respect to shared-L1 advantage, interestingly, while Spanish

listeners scored significantly higher when listening to Spanish-accented English, Chinese listeners received significantly lower scores when listening to Chinese-accented English.

More recent research of Harding (2012) has also found that though possible, shared-L1 advantage is not prevalent in all circumstances. Two hundred and twelve second-language listeners (including 70 Mandarin and 60 Japanese L1 listeners) completed three versions of listening tests which featured an Australian English, a Japanese-accented English, and a Mandarin-accented English. Results from Differential Item Functioning (DIF) analysis showed that Japanese L1 listeners benefited from a small number of items on the test featuring the Japanese-accented speaker, but these were balanced by items which favored non-Japanese L1 listeners. On the other hand, Mandarin Chinese L1 listeners were clearly advantaged across several items with the Mandarin accent. Thus, the shared-L1 advantage was strongly supported for the L1 Chinese speakers, but much less so for the L1 Japanese speakers.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that it is not necessarily the shared-L1 that relates to higher comprehension, suggesting the superior importance of 'familiarity through exposure' in comprehension of accented speeches. In a similar vein, Harding (2012) pointed out that "some L1 groups find their own accent more comprehensible because the sociolinguistic milieu dictates that their own variety is the most familiar, while for other L1 groups, a particular native speaker variety might be equally as familiar as a shared-L1 accent" (p 166). A substantial body of studies regarding the effects of

accent in relation with familiarity factor (or the degree of exposure) indicated highly positive correlation between familiarity and comprehension (Adank et al., 2009; Adank & Janse, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Gass & Varonis, 1984; Ockey & French, 2016; Smith & Bisazza, 1982). That is, the more familiar you are with certain speech variety, the higher your comprehension level will be with that speech variety.

### **2.3.2 Previous researches on effects of accent under Korean EFL context**

Results from studies on the effects of accent under Korean EFL contexts have been quite consistent. They are in line with findings from researches examining the interaction between degree of familiarity and comprehension. In Korea, standard American English has been regarded as a norm since 1950s. As a result, students, in majority of cases, are being taught and tested by American English. In other words, American accent is the most familiar English variety to almost every Korean student. Accordingly, most of the studies, though they were slightly differed in terms of testing material, types of accents and target participants, showed that Korean listeners scored the best when American accent was used as listening stimuli in a test.

For example, Ahn (2015) explored the comprehensibility of Korean high school students toward four types of English accents: American, British, Singaporean and Indian accents. A total of 120 top-ranked second year

students participated in this study and they were randomly divided into four groups. Each group took four versions of listening test which were exactly the same except for the voice of the speakers, and the test consisted of two types of monologic questions adapted from College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) listening section. The results showed students got the highest score when they listened to American speaker and the lowest score when listening to Indian speaker.

Additionally, it was found that there was a significant gap between the scores from tests recorded by Inner Circle speakers and those from tests recorded by non-Inner Circle speakers through Tukey HSD post analysis. Given that two Inner Circle accents were reported to be more familiar to students than the other two non-Inner Circle accents in pre-survey, it seems that familiarity did play a critical role in students' comprehension of different accents in this study.

Similarly, Oh (2011) aimed to investigate the effects of three different English accents including both Inner and non-Inner Circle speech varieties. In her study, 340 female high school students completed three versions of listening tests recorded by three speakers from America, Malaysia, and Korea at one-week interval. The results showed that participants significantly performed better on American-accented and Korean-accented English tests than Malaysian-accented test, which is in line with Ahn's (2015) research findings. Moreover, there was no interaction between students' general English proficiency level and accent. That is, both high- and low-level

students gained significantly lower scores when they took the test recorded by Malaysian speaker, compared to the other two types of the tests.

Kim (2007) also investigated the effects of accent considering learners' English proficiency level as one variable. A total of 257 university students were divided into four groups and each of them took a listening test recorded by speakers from America, New Zealand, India and Philippine. As the researcher expected, the participants scored the highest when they listened to American accent of English followed by New Zealander accent and Pilipino accent. These findings, once again, show that familiarity to certain English variety leads to better understanding of that variety. Meanwhile, participants' proficiency level showed a strong association with their comprehension scores. Students categorized as 'high proficiency level' were much better at comprehending all four English accents than those of 'low proficiency level.'

Unlike studies mentioned above, there was a study which failed to find any difference between comprehensibility of native and non-native accents. Kim (2008) focused on comprehensibility of three non-native accents of Asian people: Korean English, Chinese English and Japanese English. In this study, a total of 280 first-year high school students were equally assigned to four treatment groups (Korean-accent listening group, Chinese-accent listening group, Japanese-accent listening group and American-accent listening group), and each group was divided into two proficiency levels, 'High' and 'Low'. During the six-week experimental period, a multiple-choice listening test recorded by four different accents were delivered to each group. Regarding

the effects of native versus non-native accents, it turned out that there was no any significant difference between the mean score of American-accent listening group and that of the other three groups. This goes contrary to general findings of all the other studies that learners performed significantly better with American-accented listening test. Moreover, there was no interaction between students' proficiency level and speakers' native/non-native accents in this study.

### **2.3.3 Previous researches on effects of accent depending on its degree of accent**

All the previous studies listed above did not seriously consider speakers' degree of accent used in their experiments. Therefore, it is not clear to what extent each foreign accent was different from the target variety (mostly American accent of English), which seems to be one of the main factors for contradicting research findings.

There are relatively small number of studies suggesting that the degree of accent can affect listeners' comprehension. Anderson-Hsieh and Kohler (1988) included one native American speaker and three native speakers of Chinese whose degree of accent varied based on their TSE (Test of Spoken English) scores. The results demonstrated that native American listeners' comprehension was lowest for the Chinese speaker with the poorest pronunciation and highest for the native English speaker. That is, the scores

on the comprehension test were not only lower for the non-native passages than for native ones, they also corresponded to the speaker's degree of accentedness.

More recent study of Ockey and French (2016) developed their own Strength of Accent Scale based on salience, comprehensibility and processing time. Subsequently, one US, four Australian, and four British speakers of English were selected based on the judgment of their degrees of accents. All the speakers were considered to have rather mild accents since none of their mean scores of rating exceeded 3 points out of 5 points. As listeners, a total of 21,726 TOEFL test takers from 148 countries participated in this study and they were randomly assigned to listen to a monologic lecture given by one of the nine speakers. In general, listeners' comprehension scores got worse as the strength of accent increased. Yet, there was a particular point where the significant difference took place. Listeners who heard speakers with accents of 2.1 and stronger attained significantly lower scores than those who listened to the US speaker. A study of Ockey, Papageorgiou, & French (2016), a replication of the former experiment using interactive lectures instead of monologic ones also demonstrated similar findings with slightly higher threshold of effects of accents.

Another study, Kang, Thomson and Moran (2019) recruited 18 speakers from six distinct English varieties representing not only Inner Circle varieties but also both Outer and Expanding Circle varieties: three speakers each from US, UK, India, South Africa, China and Mexico. The accent strengths of

speakers from each non-Inner Circle country varied, representing ‘low’, ‘mid’ and ‘high’. The researchers had 60 listeners from the same six language backgrounds complete a listening test with questions based on 18 TOEFL texts recorded by all 18 speakers. When the speakers' degree of accent was excluded as a factor, listeners attained highest comprehension scores with American and British speakers. This might be explained on the basis of listeners' familiarity with those two accents. A more interesting finding was that listeners scored as well on listening comprehension with non-native speakers as they did with native speakers, as long as the speeches of non-native speakers were highly comprehensible. Accordingly, the researchers suggested the potential of incorporating non-Inner Circle speech varieties into high-stakes tests such as TOEFL and TOEIC.

From the studies above, it is possible to draw a conclusion as follows. First, different strengths of accent do have different effects on listeners' comprehension level. Second, foreign accents do not necessarily impede listening comprehension if only their degrees of accents are very light. The present study, with non-American speakers with varying degrees of accent strengths, tries to identify whether these findings apply to Korean high school learners of English as well.

## 2.4 Research Gap

A relation between accent and comprehension has been actively studied and discussed by numerous researchers for several decades. Nevertheless, it seems that there is still the need for a further study with some important issues not fully addressed.

Above all, the mixed results between studies under Korean EFL context suggest that it is still difficult to conclude how different accents affect Korean English learners' listening comprehension. As already mentioned, most of the studies have reported Korean learners' higher comprehensibility with American accent of English (Ahn, 2015; Kim, 2007; Oh, 2011). However, there was also a study which failed to find any significant difference in comprehensibility between native and non-native varieties (Kim, 2008).

Moreover, while most of the previous studies simply compared the comprehensibility of different English varieties including American English, the focus of the present study lies on analyzing the effects of 'non-American accents'. Given that Korean EFL learners are usually exposed to American accent of English, this study aims to examine whether non-American accents (unfamiliar accents to Korean learners) actually have negative impacts on comprehension, and if they do, whether they have differential effects depending on their accent strengths and learners' listening proficiency.

Particularly, the matter of accent degree was frequently overlooked in a lot of previous accent-related studies. However, as in the case of some recent

studies (Ockey & French, 2016; Kang, Thomson & Moran, 2019), listeners' comprehensibility level can vary depending on accent strengths of speakers who belong to same L1 background. This means that the results of accent-related researches are very likely to be dependent on the accent strength of the speakers who participate in the study. Therefore, the present study, by selecting non-American speakers with different degrees of accent, tries to figure out whether the distance from American Standard English has any relation with listeners' comprehension.

Lastly, though some of the previous researches considered learners' proficiency level as one variable in determining the effects of accent, most of them divided participants into two groups (high and low) only (Kim, 2007; Kim, 2008; Oh, 2011). Considering the wide spectrum of learners' English ability, it seems more desirable to break down the learners into more proficiency groups in order to better understand the interaction between accent and listeners' English proficiency level. Accordingly, it was determined to divide students into three proficiency groups (High, Intermediate, and Low) in this study based on their listening ability.

## **CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Speakers**

A selection process of speakers for this study required three main stages: 1) recruitment 2) recording and 3) accent rating.

#### **3.1.1 Recruitment**

Following Kachru's (1992) World Englishes model, speakers from six distinct English varieties were recruited through help-wanted ads: the United States and the United Kingdom (Inner Circle), India and Malaysia (Outer Circle), and China and Indonesia (Expanding Circle). A total of 16 speakers auditioned to participate in this study which included two speakers from US, UK, India and Indonesia and four speakers from China and Malaysia. Most of the participants were students who were taking either undergraduate or graduate course in Seoul National University, and their ages ranged from early twenties to late thirties. Care was taken to choose speakers from each circle with the same linguistic background to ensure a comparable pronunciation. For example, speakers from Malaysia were restricted to those whose first language was Mandarin Chinese. All the non-native participants were considered to be highly proficient in English based on their scores from TOEIC, TOEFL and IELTS.

### **3.1.2 Recording**

All the participants were asked to record two monologues from 2019 mock CSAT listening part which are in the form of mini lecture (about 70 seconds long). For the selection of the script to be used, monologues with too many proper nouns (e.g., names of a person or a place) were excluded so that speakers do not struggle with figuring out the correct pronunciation of them. Each participant attended in recording process individually, and it took place in a quiet place on campus. Before the recording, every speaker was guided to complete a simple questionnaire asking about their demographic information (e.g., name, gender, country of origin, language background) and whether they could participate in second recording. Then, they were given some time to familiarize themselves with two scripts. At this time, participants were allowed to practice reading the full passages and check unfamiliar vocabularies and their pronunciations.

Particular attention was paid in regard to 'speech rate'. Each speaker's speaking rate was strictly controlled to 140-150 wpm (words per minute) which falls into the category of 'moderately slow' (Rivers, 1981). If they did not fall into the acceptable range, they were asked to re-record the script with faster or slower speed. This was done in order to reduce any impact of speech rate on listener evaluations. In other words, it was conducted to control for any possible relationship between speech rate and accentedness.

### **3.1.3 Accent Rating**

Approximately 30-second clips from two recordings (script 1 and script 2) were created for each speaker (total 32 clips). The decision to use 30 seconds of input instead of full length of script was based on two reasons. First, previous researches on accent rating have shown that about 20 seconds is reasonable amount of time to make a judgment of speakers' strengths of accents. (Edwards, 2018; Munro & Derwing, 1994; Munro & Derwing, 1995a; Ockey & French, 2016). Considering the speech rate of the speakers in this study was slightly slower than those in previous researches, it was determined to use 30-second length of voice files as listening inputs. Second, speakers' strength of accent in this study was intended to be measured based on listeners' 'impressionistic judgement', which seems more available with relatively short listening inputs. Moreover, as Mackey and Gass (2005) pointed out, listeners' fatigue was considered as a threat to reliability of rating process. All 32 recordings were edited for the same level of volume using the free software Goldwave ([www.Goldwave.com](http://www.Goldwave.com)), and then, they were embedded into an on-line survey through Google Docs. In order to prevent order effect, each speech sample was designed to be played in random order.

Ten native American speakers participated in accent evaluation process. They were diverse in terms of age, job and place of residence and they all reported to have no hearing problem. Since the focus of this study is how average listeners respond to foreign-accented speeches, raters who were well

aware of various types of non-native English accents such as ESL teachers were not included. Before the judgment, participants were asked to complete a short survey to obtain their demographic information (e.g., age, gender, place of residence) and degree of exposure to each speech variety except their own accent. The original purpose of including the survey on the degree of exposure was to select native American speakers who had no or little experience with five non-American accents. However, it turned out to be practically impossible since most American participants reported quite high familiarity with British and Indian accent. Accordingly, familiarity factor on the part of the listeners was determined not to be considered in current study.

After completing a survey, participants were instructed to listen to each sound file one by one and rate the degree of accents of potential speakers using 7-point Likert scale (1-“no foreign accent”, 7-“very strong foreign accent”). As already mentioned, accent in this study means how certain English variety is different from American accent of English. It took about 30 minutes to rate all 32 speech files and the raters could participate in evaluation at their own convenience using their own laptops.

Table 3.1 shows the results of accent rating of 16 speakers who auditioned to participate in this study. As expected, four speakers from Inner Circle countries (two American speakers and two British speakers) ranked high in evaluation. Interestingly, all the non-native speakers received slightly higher score with their first recording. One possible explanation is that speakers looked quite nervous and uncomfortable with recording their voices,

particularly in English, in the beginning of the process though they quickly got used to it. Moreover, some of them seemed to struggle a lot to control their speaking rate. All these factors, combined together, might have caused more accented pronunciation with their first recording.

**Table 3.1 Result of Accent Rating of Speakers**

Gender	Country	Mean (1st Rating)	Mean (2nd Rating)	Mean of Two Ratings	Std. Deviation
M	US	1.1	1.1	1.10	.308
F	US	1.1	1.4	1.25	.550
M	UK	3.4	3.3	3.35	2.134
F	UK	3.7	3.6	3.65	2.134
F	India	3.9	3.7	3.80	1.735
F	China	5.1	3.5	4.30	1.593
F	China	4.9	4.5	4.70	1.631
F	China	4.9	4.6	4.75	1.650
F	Malaysia	5.0	4.7	4.85	1.461
M	India	5.0	5.0	5.00	1.376
F	Malaysia	5.4	4.9	5.15	1.226
M	Indonesia	5.2	5.1	5.15	1.424
M	Malaysia	5.5	5.2	5.35	1.226
M	Malaysia	6.2	6.0	6.10	1.119
M	China	6.6	6.1	6.35	.754
F	Indonesia	6.6	6.2	6.40	.681

As shown in Table 3.1, two average ratings for each speaker were quite consistent with the exception of one female Chinese speaker whose mean score of two ratings is 4.3. The difference between two ratings of this speaker is 1.6 points while that of all the other 15 speakers is within 0.5 points. Review of two speech clips of this Chinese female speaker revealed that she slightly stuttered a couple of words while reading the final sentence of the first script.

This might have had the raters to give much higher scores for her first voice file compared with the second one.

The estimation of reliability of the accent measure suggested high internal consistency with a value of  $\alpha = .937$ , which means that there was no big difference between scores from two ratings for each speaker. The standard deviation of scores tended to be low either in case where speakers' degree of accent was very mild or very strong. One thing to note is that two British speakers (in spite of their relatively mild strengths of accents) showed highest standard deviation values, possibly suggesting that listeners provided somewhat different ratings of accents. By taking a close look at the scores given by all ten raters, it was found out that two raters, somehow, very harshly judged all speeches of two British speakers consistently. Later on, these two raters confessed that their rating was thoroughly based on the definition of 'foreign accent' used in this study – "the degree to which an individual's speech patterns are different from standard American English".

From these results, six final speakers were selected from each speech variety and their degrees of accents varied from 1.1 to 5.35. Selection was largely driven by the desire to include a range of accent strengths, and participants whose tone of voice was more appropriate for academic reading were preferably selected. Chinese female speaker whose two rating scores were significantly inconsistent was intentionally excluded. Table 3.2 summarizes the demographic information of six final speakers in the order of their degrees of accents.

**Table 3.2**  
**Demographic Information of Six Final Speakers**

	Country	Gender	Age	L1	LOR	DOA
1	U.S	M	37	English	7 years	1.10
2	U.K	M	32	English	4 years	3.35
3	India	F	35	Hindi	3 years	3.80
4	China	F	25	Chinese	2 years	4.75
5	Indonesia	M	22	Indonesian	1.5 years	5.15
6	Malaysia	M	22	Chinese	6 months	5.35

*Note.* LOR=Length of residence in Korea, DOA=Degree of accent

### 3.2 Listeners

As listeners, six classes of second year high school students participated in this study (total 133 students). Each class was made up of approximately 20 female students aged between 16 and 17. Since all the students reported having no experience of studying abroad, they are generally considered to have received similar English education: three years in elementary school, three years in middle school, and two years in high school. From a pre-survey designed to assess their familiarity with different English varieties used in this study, it was found out that all the students were most familiar with American accent, the speech variety that is typically used as sole listening input in Korean EFL classrooms.

Students from each of the six classes were found to have comparable listening ability based on their scores of listening performance test which was conducted basically in the form of a dictation test. As shown in Table 3.3,

mean scores from listening performance test of each class ranged from 5.04 to 5.42, suggesting a slight difference across each group.

**Table 3.3 Mean Scores of English Listening Performance Test**

Group	N	Mean	SD	95% Confidence Interval		Min	Max
				Low	Upper		
1	22	5.14	2.900	3.85	6.42	0	10
2	22	5.27	2.753	4.05	6.50	1	10
3	25	5.04	2.746	3.91	6.17	1	10
4	24	5.42	2.918	4.18	6.65	1	10
5	20	5.10	3.177	3.61	6.59	1	10
6	20	5.15	3.281	3.61	6.69	0	10

In order to examine if there was any statistically significant difference between mean scores of each class, one-way ANOVA was conducted. The result showed, as shown in table 3.4, there was no significant difference between each group ( $F(5,127) = 0.05, p = .998$ ). Accordingly, all six classes were regarded as homogeneous group in current study.

**Table 3.4 Result of One-way ANOVA of Six Classes**

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.203	5	.441	.050	.998
Within Groups	1110.098	127	8.741		
Total	1112.301	132			

### 3.3 Test Material

For this test, a total of 16 multiple-choice questions was selected from mock CSATs conducted between 2015 and 2017. The reason for selecting this type of listening test comes from the fact that it's the most familiar form of test to most Korean high school students, which, in turn, reduces any impact of test format on students' listening comprehension. In the same context, the total number of questions was designed not to exceed 17 which is the total number of questions in listening section of actual CSAT. It was also possible that too many questions would affect students' fatigue level, which might reduce the reliability of their listening scores.

The test consisted of four sets, with each set including three types of monologues and four multiple-choice questions. The following is how each set is organized.

**Table 3.5**  
**Organization of Each Set of Listening Test**

Type of Monologue	Form of Questions	Number of Items
Type 1	(1) <i>“Which of the following is NOT true?”</i>	1
Type 2	(2) <i>“Which of the following is the most appropriate words for the given situation?”</i>	1
Type 3	(3) <i>“Which is the main topic of the passage?”</i> (4) <i>“Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the passage?”</i>	2

As described in table 3.5, while two questions (question type (1) and (4)) ask about details of the passages, the other two questions (question type (2) and (3)) require students to find out more general information based on deep understanding of the whole context of the passages. Among the three types of monologues, the third one which is followed by two questions was played two times as it is played twice in real CSAT as well. All 16 questions and their answers were written out on students' test paper.

Six final speakers from US, UK, India, Malaysia, China and Indonesia took part in test recording. Just like the first recording, each speaker individually visited recording studio located in campus and they all had a short practice session before the main recording. Again, all the speakers' speaking rate was controlled to 140-150 wpm. Since it was their second time of recording, they seemed to feel less difficulty adjusting the time. First two sets of the test were recorded by a speaker from US, and the scores from these two sets of items (=8 items) were used as a baseline to compare how different non-American speech varieties and their degrees of accents affect students' listening comprehension. The other two sets of the test were recorded by speakers from US, UK, India, Malaysia, China and Indonesia, respectively. To sum up,

- (1) All six types of the test included exactly the same list of questions.
- (2) All conditions included two sets of the identical questions recorded by the American speaker.
- (3) The other half of the tests was different for each of the six conditions

depending on the type of accent.

Six types of the tests were finally edited using the Goldwave program (www.Goldwave.com) to meet the same condition with actual listening section of CSAT (e.g., pauses, instructions). Then, in order to verify the difficulty level of items presented in first and second half of the test, 26 second-year high school students from another school participated to take the test which was recorded by the American speaker from the beginning to the end. This was done in order to prevent any impact of item difficulty on students' comprehension scores so that the sole effect of accents can be identified. Accordingly, mean scores from first and second half of the test were compared using paired T-test.

**Table 3.6**  
**Mean Scores of Two Sets in American-accented Test**

SET	N	M	SD	Std. Error Mean
SET 1	26	6.48	1.53	0.30
SET 2	26	6.44	1.44	0.28

*Note.* SET 1 = first two sets of the test, SET 2 = the other two sets of the test  
*Note.* Every value has been rounded to one hundredth.

**Table 3.7**  
**Result of Paired T-test of American-accented Test**

Pair	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig.
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
SET1-SET2	0.04	1.11	0.22	-0.41	0.49	0.18	25	.856

*Note.* Every value, except p, has been rounded to one hundredth.

As table 3.5 and table 3.6 show, even though there was a slight mean decrease in second half of the test, this difference was too subtle to reach statistical significance. There was no significant difference in the scores for SET 1 ( $M = 6.48$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ) and SET 2 ( $M = 6.44$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) conditions;  $t(25) = 0.18$ ,  $p = .856$ .

Therefore, it can be concluded that the difficulty level of the items was quite similar across the two conditions (SET 1 versus SET 2). At the same time, it can be regarded that any difference in scores of second part of the tests recorded by five non-American speakers is attributed to the difference in accents.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

Six classes were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions and the test was administered in students' normal classroom setting on the third week of December right after their final exam. Students were briefly informed about the experiment before the test, but they could not get any information about the speakers' country of origin. As described in the test material section, all conditions included two identical sections ( $=8$  items) which were recorded by native American speaker. Scores from the other two sections (*from 0 to 8*) were used to indicate differences in comprehension of six speech varieties used in this study. The test lasted about 25 minutes and one point was given for each correct answer.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Quantitative analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS 25.0. First, in order to verify any significant effects of non-American accents in general, mean scores of SET 1 and SET 2 acquired by whole students who listened to non-American accents in SET 2 were compared using paired T-test. Then, linear regression was performed to examine the extent to which the degree of non-American accents can predict listeners' comprehension scores. For this regression analysis, each non-American speaker's degree of accent was computed as a continuous variable and students' score from SET 2 of the test as an independent variable. Next, one-way ANOVA was conducted for each proficiency group of students (low, intermediate, and high) in order to figure out whether the effects of non-American accents would vary depending on students' listening proficiency.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This chapter reports main findings for the three research questions. 1) Do non-American accents impede Korean high school students' listening comprehension? 2) Does the effect of non-American accents of speakers vary depending on the distance of their accents from American English? 3) Does the effect of non-American accents of speakers vary depending on Korean high school students' listening proficiency?

### 4.1 Overall Effects of Non-American Accents

In order to answer the first research question, all the participants were divided into two groups: 1) US-US Group and 2) US-Other Group. While the former refers to a group of students who took the test recorded solely by American speaker, the latter includes all the other students who took the test where SET 2 was recorded by five non-American speakers. The mean score of each group decreased in both two groups (See table 4.1). Yet, the degree of decrease was slightly bigger in US-Other group (US-US group: 0.05, US-Other group: 0.25). Subsequently, paired T-test was conducted for each group in order to examine whether there were significant differences in the mean scores between SET 1 and SET 2.

**Table 4.1**  
**Mean Scores of US-US Group and US-Other Group in Two Sets**

Group	N	SET 1		SET 2	
		M	SD	M	SD
US-US	20	6.30	1.66	6.25	1.62
US-Others	113	6.49	1.60	6.24	1.78
Total	133	6.46	1.60	6.24	1.75

*Note.* Every SD value has been rounded to one hundredth.

In US-US group, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of SET 1 and SET 2,  $t(19) = 0.22, p = .825$  (see Table 4.2). In US-Other group, on the other hand, a significant difference ( $t(112) = 2.07, p = .041$ , *Cohen's d* = 0.20) was reported between two mean scores (See Table 4.3). Though its effect size<sup>2</sup> is not strong, this outcome suggests that non-American accents somehow impede students' listening comprehension.

**Table 4.2**  
**Result of Paired T-test of US-US Group**

Pair	Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	df	<i>Sig.</i>
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
SET1-SET2	0.05	1.00	0.22	-0.42	0.52	0.22	19	.825

*Note.* Every value, except *p*, has been rounded to one hundredth.

<sup>2</sup> Effect size is a quantitative measure of the magnitude of the experimenter effect. The larger the effect size, the stronger the relationship between two variables. Cohen's *d* is an appropriate effect size for the comparison between two means. Cohen suggested that  $d=0.2$  be considered a 'small' effect size, 0.5 represents a 'medium' effect size and 0.8 a 'large' effect size.

**Table 4.3 Result of Paired T-test of US-Other Group**

Pair	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig.
	M	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
SET1-SET2	0.25	1.27	0.12	0.11	0.49	2.07	112	.041*

*Note.* Every value, except p, has been rounded to one hundredth.

*Note.* \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

In order to figure out what caused this difference between the two groups, the distribution of score changes in both groups was analyzed. Here, the score change means the total score of SET 2 minus that of SET 1.

**Table 4.4  
Distribution of Score Changes in US-US group and US-Other group**

Group	N	Score Difference (SET 2 – SET 1)							
		-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
US-US Group	20	0	1	0	4	9	6	0	0
US-Other Group	123	2	6	5	27	47	18	7	1
Total	133	2	7	5	31	56	24	7	1

Overall, the highest number of students (total 56 out of 133) showed no score difference between two conditions. Moreover, while 32 students attained higher scores in SET 2, the opposite occurred for the other 45 students. Looking at the data by group, almost an equal number of students received either higher or lower scores in SET 2 for US-US group with 9 students showing no change in scores. However, in US-Other group, the number of students whose score decreased in SET 2 (N=40) was a lot higher than those whose score increased in SET 2 (N=26). Particularly noteworthy

is that almost one fourth of the students who received lower scores in SET 2 (N=8) showed high degree of decrease in scores (- 3 points: six students, - 4 points: two students). This is quite contrasting with the result that most of the students whose scores dropped in SET 2 showed one-point decrease in US-US group. This different pattern of score changes between the two groups seems to support the previous claim that non-American accents in general negatively affect students' listening comprehension. Meanwhile, the fact that there are some students whose score increased by more than two points in SET 2 suggests that non-American accents can be more comprehensible for some students.

## **4.2 Effects of Non-American Accents Depending on Their Degrees of Accents**

Mean scores of each non-American accent group in the two listening sets (SET 1 and SET 2) were compared (See Table 4.5). Although there was no drastic mean difference between the two sets, a slight mean decrease in SET 2 was observed in every group (UK: - 0.27, India: - 0.20, China: - 0.09, Indonesia: - 0.32, and Malaysia: - 0.33).

The greatest mean decrease was found in MAL group, where the speaker had the strongest foreign accent (=5.35). IDN group, with second strongest strength of accent, also indicated similar level of decrease with MAL group. On the other hand, CHN group, whose speaker had accent strength of 4.75,

showed the least difference. One thing to note is that there was greater mean decrease for UK group and IND group than CHN group even though the strength of accent of the first two groups was much weaker than that of CHN group. Even between UK and IND group, slightly greater decrease was observed in UK group despite its weaker strength of accent. Consequently, it seems that there is no particular tendency of mean changes depending on non-American speakers' degrees of accents.

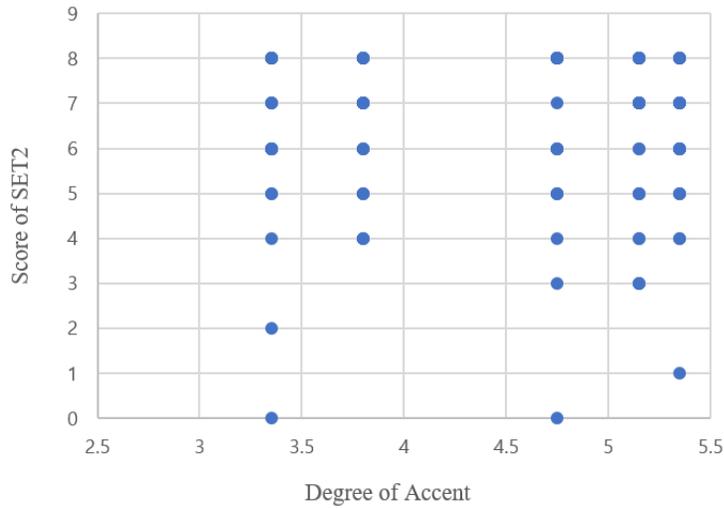
**Table 4.5**  
**Mean Scores of Each Accent Group in Two Listening Sets**

Group	Accent Strength	N	SET1		SET2	
			M	SD	M	SD
UK	3.35	22	6.32	1.78	6.05	2.01
IND	3.80	20	6.55	1.43	6.35	1.42
CHN	4.75	22	6.50	1.47	6.41	2.10
IDN	5.15	25	6.56	1.71	6.24	1.74
MAL	5.35	24	6.50	1.67	6.17	1.63

*Note.* Every SD value has been rounded to one hundredth

*Note.* IND=India, CHN=China, IDN=Indonesia, MAL=Malaysia

As the first step to figure out a relationship between speakers' degrees of accents and students' comprehension scores, all the data was plotted on a chart like Figure 4.1. A dependent variable (in this case, students' SET 2 scores) was plotted on the y-axis, while an independent variable (degrees of accents) was plotted on the x-axis. It clearly shows that there is no special relation between these two variables. Dots are scattered quite evenly regardless of speakers' accent strengths.



**Figure 4.1 Students’ SET 2 Scores for Each Non-American Speaker’s Degree of Accent**

As shown in Table 4.6, the result of linear regression analysis also suggests that there is no significant correlation between non-American speakers’ degrees of accents and learners’ comprehension scores ( $Beta = .018, t = .192, p = .848, R^2 = .000$ ). That is, speakers’ degree of accent cannot predict how students will perform on their listening test. Therefore, it seems that native Americans’ perceived accentedness or their sense of distance from their own accent variety is not reflected in students’ listening scores.

**Table 4.6  
Result of Linear Regression Analysis**

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.052	.991		6.104	.000
Accent Strength	.041	.216	.018	.192	.848

### 4.3 Effects of Non-American Accents Depending on Students' Listening Proficiency

In order to investigate the third research question, all the participants from US-Other group were divided into three proficiency groups based on their scores of English listening performance test: High, Intermediate and Low proficiency group. The students whose scores were over eight out of ten points were assigned to High proficiency group and those whose scores ranged from four to seven were assigned to Intermediate proficiency group. The rest of the students whose scores were below three were classified as Low proficiency group. Table 4.7 shows the subject number of each group and their mean scores of English listening performance test.

**Table 4.7**  
**Mean Scores of Listening Performance Test by Proficiency Groups**

Group	N	Mean	SD	95% Confidence Interval		Min	Max
				Low	Upper		
High	30	8.73	0.868	8.41	9.06	8	10
Intermediate	48	5.56	1.090	5.25	5.88	4	7
Low	35	1.69	0.932	1.37	2.01	0	3

Subsequently, mean scores of each group acquired from SET 1 and SET 2 of the tests were compared.

**Table 4.8**  
**Mean Scores of Three Proficiency Groups in SET 1 and SET 2**

Proficiency Group	N	SET1		SET2	
		M	SD	M	SD
High	30	7.87	0.35	7.53	0.68
Intermediate	48	6.83	1.16	6.75	1.10
Low	35	4.83	1.34	4.43	1.75
Total	113	6.49	1.60	6.24	1.77

*Note.* Every SD value has been rounded to one hundredth

As shown in Table 4.8, no dramatic shift in mean scores between SET1 and SET2 was found in all proficiency groups. Yet, all three groups showed a slight mean decrease in SET 2, which implies that non-American accents hinder comprehension of any proficiency level of students (High group: - 0.34, Intermediate group: - 0.08, Low group: - 0.40). Considering the degree of mean decrease in each group, it seems that Low proficiency group is most likely to be affected by non-American accents followed by High proficiency group and Intermediate proficiency group.

To examine more closely the dynamics of score changes, distribution of score gaps in three proficiency groups was analyzed (See Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9**  
**Distribution of Score Changes in Three Proficiency Groups**

Group	N	Score Difference (SET2 – SET1)							
		-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
High	30	0	0	2	7	20	1	0	0
Intermediate	48	0	2	2	12	19	9	3	1
Low	34	2	4	1	8	8	8	4	0
Total	113	2	6	5	27	47	18	7	1

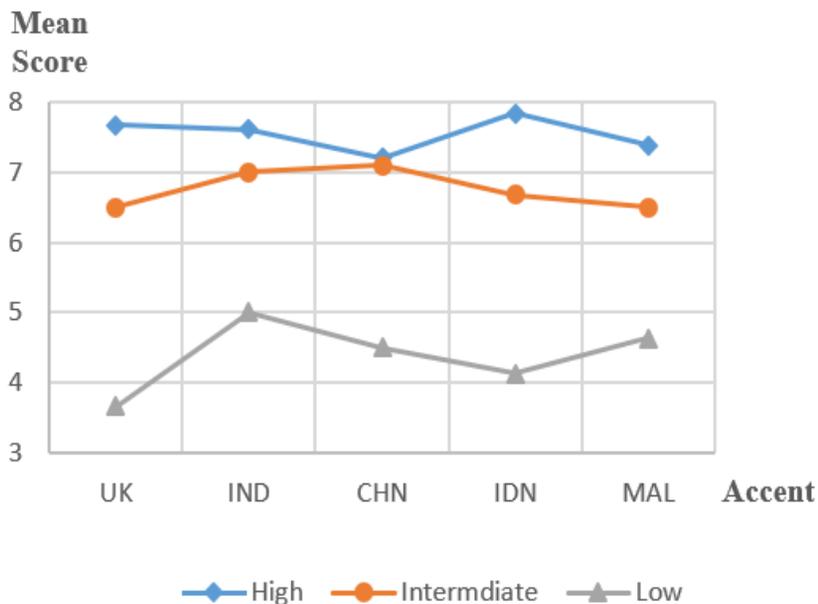
Taken all the three groups together, almost half of the students (N=47) received same score in two sets of the test. The number of students who performed better in SET 2 (N=26) was lower than those who performed worse in SET 2 (N=40).

Particularly for High proficiency group, two thirds of the students (N=20) did not show any score changes between the two conditions. This can be interpreted as indicating that those 20 students were little affected by accent changes or non-American accents. However, while there was only one student who received more scores in SET 2, all the other nine students showed either one-point or two-point decrease in SET 2 which seemingly caused overall mean decrease in High proficiency group. In Intermediate proficiency group, just like the group of high level students, the number of students who received the same score in SET 1 and SET 2 accounted for the largest proportion. One thing to note is that there was no big difference between the number of students who scored better in SET 2 (N=13) and the number of students who scored worse in SET 2 (N=16). This seems to have created relatively slight difference (=0.08 points) between overall means of two sets.

Meanwhile, somewhat different pattern was observed in Low proficiency group. Above all, there were more students who received lower scores in SET 2 than those who got the same scores or higher scores in SET 2. Even six students out of 15 students whose score decreased in SET 2 experienced huge drop in scores (- 3 points: four students, - 4 points: two students). According to this data, students of low listening proficiency definitely seem to have more

difficulty understanding non-American accents. Yet, it should not be overlooked that there were considerable number of students who scored better with non-American accents both in Intermediate and Low proficiency groups. Again, this suggests the possibility that there are some students who might benefit from listening to non-American accents.

Then, one-way ANOVA was conducted with each of the three proficiency groups in order to examine whether there was a significant score difference depending on speaker variety as an independent variable. In High proficiency group, no great mean difference was found across five accent groups (See Figure 4.2) and this difference, as Table 4.10 demonstrates, was not statistically significant as well ( $F(4,25) = 0.74, p = .574, \eta^2 = .106$ ).



**Figure 4.2 Mean Scores of Each Accent Group in Three Proficiency Groups**

**Table 4.10**  
**Result of one-way ANOVA of High Proficiency Group**

	SS	df	MS	F	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	1.425	4	.356	.740	.574
Within Groups	12.042	25	.482		
Total	13.467	29			

A similar pattern was observed in Intermediate proficiency group. There was no distinct mean difference across different accent of speakers (See Figure 4.2), and the result of one-way ANOVA (Table 4.11) also revealed that between-group differences were not statistically significant ( $F(4,43) = 0.58$ ,  $p = .678$ ,  $\eta^2 = .051$ ).

**Table 4.11**  
**Result of one-way ANOVA of Intermediate Proficiency Group**

	SS	df	MS	F	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	2.924	4	.731	.581	.678
Within Groups	54.076	43	1.258		
Total	57.000	47			

Low proficiency group showed wider range of mean scores depending on each accent compared with the previous two proficiency groups (See Figure 4.2). The difference between minimum and maximum mean value was almost 1.30 points while that of the other two groups was approximately 0.50 points. However, as shown in Table 4.12, this between group difference was not large enough to reach the statistical significance ( $F(4, 30) = 0.54$ ,  $p = .709$ ,  $\eta^2 = .067$ ).

**Table 4.12**  
**Table 4.15 Result of one-way ANOVA of Low Proficiency Group**

	SS	df	MS	F	<i>Sig.</i>
Between Groups	7.006	4	1.751	.539	.709
Within Groups	97.565	30	3.252		
Total	104.571	34			

To summarize, comparison of mean difference between SET 1 and SET 2 of all proficiency groups suggested the possibility that students of low proficiency would be more likely to be affected by non-American accents. On the other hand, when the mean scores of SET 2 were compared across five non-American speakers, students of every proficiency level did not show any significant score difference depending on accents. Students from each proficiency group received similar scores regardless of accent. That is, there was no differential effect of non-American accents on students' listening comprehension depending on their listening proficiency.

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the research findings as a response to the research questions. Section 5.1 discusses the overall effects of non-American accents on students' listening comprehension. Section 5.2 and 5.3 discuss the effects of non-American accents in terms of their degrees of accents and students' listening proficiency level.

### 5.1 Overall Effects of Non-American Accents

The results showed that non-American accents do affect Korean high school students' listening comprehension. To be precise, participants performed significantly better when they listened to American-accented speeches. This research finding has something in common with some previous accent-related studies conducted under Korean EFL context (Ahn, 2015; Kim, 2007; Oh, 2011). Though there was no direct comparison between the effects of American accent and non-American accents, all those studies have reported that Korean EFL learners scored the best in their listening comprehension test when they listened to American accent of English.

One possible reason for this result is 'accent familiarity'. To say more specifically, it is 'accent familiarity through exposure'. As briefly introduced in Chapter 2, there is a large body of research arguing that accent familiarity plays a key role in L2 listening comprehension (Adank et al, 2009; Adank &

Janse, 2010; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Gass & Varonis, 1984; Ockey & French, 2016). That is, the more familiar is a listener with an accent, the more accurate his/her comprehension of accented speech is.

Particularly some studies demonstrated that even familiarity from very limited exposure can enhance comprehension. For example, Gass and Varonis (1984) aimed to test the effects of four types of familiarity factors on native speakers' comprehension of non-native speeches: 1) familiarity with topic 2) familiarity with particular accent 3) familiarity with L2 speech in general 4) familiarity with speaker. Though it was found that familiarity with topic was the most critical factor in comprehension, the other three types of familiarity significantly facilitated the listeners' interpretation of discourse as well. Similarly, Bent and Bradlow (2008) showed native English speakers' transcription of 64 sentences produced by four non-native speakers (three L1 Chinese speakers and one L1 Slovakian speaker) got more accurate as the test progressed. Though the transcription test used in this study is focused more on the measurement of listeners' intelligibility, the finding definitely suggests the importance of exposure in L2 comprehension.

Some other researches concerning the familiarity factor on the basis of more extensive exposure to certain accents also suggested the similar conclusion. Adank et al. (2009) found that listening to unfamiliar accent resulted in poor listening comprehension for native speakers of English. In their study, British listeners who were familiar with Southern standard accent but not with Glaswegian accent received significantly lower scores in the

test with Glaswegian accent. Likewise, Ockey and French (2016) tried to examine the link between familiarity and listening comprehension with a range of non-native speakers of English as target listeners. The result showed that test takers who were familiar with British accent achieved significantly higher scores than those who were not in tests recorded by British speakers independent of speakers' strength of accent.

Moreover, there are some studies indicating that the more speech varieties are students exposed to, the better their understanding of another unfamiliar nonstandard variety will be (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2008; Maturra, 2007). Their findings seem particularly meaningful in that they suggest learners don't need to focus on particular one English variety in order to improve understanding of that speech variety. In other words, getting familiar with various L2 speeches in general naturally improves listening comprehension of any L2 accent.

As reported in all the studies above, it is undeniable that familiarity is one of the most critical factors in L2 listening comprehension. For majority of Korean EFL learners, standard American English is undoubtedly the most familiar variety of English. In Korea, American accent of English was first explicitly stated as the ultimate goal of English education in 1<sup>st</sup> National Curriculum<sup>3</sup> in 1950's. It is well known fact that this was largely because of

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<sup>3</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> National Curriculum (1955-1963) was legislated right after the Korean War, in an attempt to improve some drawbacks of the previous curriculum devised during the U.S. military government period. In regard to English education, it was focused more on knowledge acquisition rather than communication.

the strong political and economic connection between the two countries. Since then, it has been considered as a norm in every Korean English learning and testing contexts.

As English acquired the status of international language with rapid globalization, it began to be used not only for communication between native speakers and non-native speakers but also between non-native speakers themselves. This new trend has been partially reflected in Korean National Curriculum since 2007, putting ‘intercultural communication’ as the main objective of English education. Accordingly, textbooks used in Korean EFL classrooms began to include different cultural elements of non-Inner Circle countries (Lee, 2014) along with some proportion of vocabularies from British variety of English (Jung, 2000). However, in terms of listening, American accent of English still maintains a dominant position in classrooms. All the audio materials used in classrooms are recorded in American English, and any other extra materials provided by teachers are mostly American English-based inputs. Needless to say, students are tested by American accent of English as well.

Moreover, Korea is under EFL context which means that students seldom have a chance to communicate in English outside of classrooms. The major input comes from their classrooms. In this situation, it seems very difficult for students to get exposed to a variety of English accents. Though their awareness to certain English accents (e.g., British or Indian accent) was raised thanks to soap operas and movies from those countries compared with the

past, it is still American accent of English that Korean students are being exposed to the most. Therefore, it seems very natural that students in this study understood American accent, the most familiar one, much better than non-American accents.

## **5.2 Effects of Non-American Accents Depending on Their Degrees of Accents**

In regard to the second research question, it was found out that degree of non-American accents did not affect students' listening comprehension. Degrees of accents used in current study ranged from 3.3 to 5.5 based on 7-point scalar measurement by native American speakers. Before the experiment, it was expected that students would have more difficulty understanding accented speeches as the degree of accent gets stronger. In other words, it was assumed that the more did L2 speeches differ from standard American English, the lower students' comprehension level would be. However, it turned out that it was not the case.

This rather surprising study result contradicts with that of the previous researches examining the interaction between different degrees of accents and L2 listeners' comprehension. Ockey and French (2016), in their study with British and Australian speakers whose strengths of accents were quite mild (minimum: 1.7, maximum: 2.7), showed that listeners' comprehension

generally decreased as strength of accent on the listening stimulus increased. Specially, listeners who heard speakers with accent strengths of 2.1 and stronger attained scores significantly lower than those who listened to the US speaker, suggesting even very light accents can impede listeners' comprehension. Following experiment with different type of test items also supported their claim that different strengths of accents can affect comprehension (Ockey, Papageorgiou, & French, 2016).

These conflicting results may be partially accounted for by the type of test used in current study. As already stated in Chapter 3, test items used for this experiment were selected from listening section of previous mock CSATs. Given that all the listening questions of CSAT have relatively high percentage of correct answers (almost 90% on average), students might have felt quite easy in comprehending non-American speeches no matter how strong their strength of accent was. Additionally, students were allowed to listen to the passages twice for half of the questions, which in turn, lowered the overall difficulty of the test. This possibly diminished the effect of accent strengths on students' comprehension. As Ockey, Papageorgiou, and French (2016) pointed out, item difficulty and strength of accent could interact with each other. That is, the strength of accent might impact difficult test items more than ones that are easier.

On the other hand, Derwing and Munro's (1997) study gives another insight regarding this matter, suggesting that having a strong foreign accent does not necessarily impede comprehension. In this study, 26 native listeners

rated L2 speeches from speakers with L1s of Cantonese, Japanese, Polish and Spanish on intelligibility, perceived comprehensibility and accentedness. In each case, the accent ratings were much more negative than comprehensibility ratings, and comprehensibility ratings were even more negative than those for intelligibility. Though listeners' actual level of comprehension was not measured in this study, the inconsistency between ratings for those three constructs possibly suggests that accents of foreign speakers can be rated more harshly than their actual intelligibility or comprehensibility. Likewise, degrees of some foreign accents used in current study seem quite strong according to the perceptual judgement of native American speakers. Yet, those strong accents might not have affected students' actual listening comprehension.

### **5.3 Effects of Non-American Accents Depending on Students' Listening Proficiency**

From linear regression analysis, students' listening proficiency level in current study was found to be a strong predictor of L2 comprehension ( $Beta = -.645$ ,  $t = -9.650$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .415$ ). It is very natural that students with higher listening proficiency better understand accented speeches as well. However, in each proficiency group, there was no significant mean difference depending on accent. That is, five non-American accents used in this study

did not differentially affect students' listening scores depending on their listening proficiency. Previous researches considering learners' listening proficiency or English proficiency in general as one variable have shown diverse outcomes. While some of them showed differential effects of accents based on learners' proficiency level, some other studies demonstrated that there was no such interaction between accent and level of proficiency.

For instance, Kim (2008) found out that students with high listening proficiency tended to be more sensitive to the accent varieties. In his study, high level students scored significantly better when listening to Korean accent of English than when they listened to Chinese or Japanese accent of English. However, this difference was not observed among low level students. They all received similar scores regardless of accent. This is in line with Harding's (2011) claim that perceptions of accent-related difficulties are more salient among higher proficiency test takers.

On the other hand, Kang et al. (2019) showed that intermediate level listeners might exert more sensitivity to the accent varieties than other proficiency level listeners. In their study, Korean university students with three different proficiency levels listened to speech samples of ten speakers from different L1 backgrounds (i.e., American, British, Indian, South African, Chinese and Spanish) with varying degrees of intelligibility. As a result, intermediate listeners exhibited significant differences in their scores across speakers regardless of speakers' comprehensibility level. Interestingly, advanced listeners showed a significant mean difference between accented

varieties only with low-comprehensibility speakers while low level listeners uniformly performed poorly for all speakers.

Meanwhile, in Oh's (2011) study, Korean high school learners from both high and low proficiency level showed a similar pattern in understanding different type of foreign accents. It was observed that students gained significantly lower scores on Malaysian-accented listening test than Korean or American-accented listening test regardless of their proficiency level. Similarly, Kim (2007) also demonstrated the effects of accents including both Inner and Outer Circle speech varieties (i.e., American, New Zealander, Indian, and Filipino accent) did not differ by proficiency level of Korean university learners. There was a significant mean difference between each accent, yet, this difference was applied to both high and low proficiency groups.

It was expected that intermediate level listeners would be more influenced by different non-American accents when designing the experiment just like they did in the study of Kang et al. (2019). In this study, not only non-American accents did not differentially affect listeners of varying proficiency levels but also there was no significant mean difference between each non-American accent in every group. This is quite surprising result considering that the amount of time spent for studying English and the amount of exposure to English is generally different depending on listeners' proficiency level. In some ways, it confirms how much English education of Korea has been leant toward American accent of English. That is, difference in accents except

American one does not mean that much to students of every proficiency level. Or, as pointed out in the previous section, the test items used in this study might be the type of item which is barely affected by accents.

## **CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION**

This chapter draws a conclusion based on the results and discussion proposed in the previous chapter. Section 6.1 presents a summary of the key findings of the present research, followed by some pedagogical implications. Section 6.2 discusses the limitations of the present study and provides some suggestions for future research.

### **6.1 Major Findings and Pedagogical Implications**

The present study explored effects of non-American accents on Korean high school learners' listening comprehension considering both accent strengths and learners' listening proficiency level. The first major finding of this study is that non-American accents in general impede students' listening comprehension. It was observed that students received significantly lower scores when the speaker of the listening test changed to five non-American speakers. The second major finding is that there is no difference in effects of non-American accents depending on their degrees of accents. Students scored similarly regardless of speakers' strengths of accents. This may indicate how much certain speech variety deviates from standard American English is not a matter of importance to Korean EFL learners. The last major finding is that there is no differential effect of non-American accents depending on students' listening proficiency. In every proficiency group, no significant mean

difference was observed between groups who heard all different accents.

The findings of present study suggest some meaningful pedagogical implications. First, it is necessary to give our students a chance to get exposed to a variety of English accents in order to improve their international communication ability. English education in Korea has been centered on American accent of English for several decades. This means that students learning English in Korea do not have enough chance to experience a variety of English accents inside and outside of school. Consequently, Korean learners, when encounter non-American accents, frequently get frustrated and fail in successful communication. This was well reflected in findings of current study. Non-American accents did have negative impact on students' comprehension. Given that familiarity is one of the most critical factors in understanding accented speeches, Korean English teachers need to make various efforts to include different accents of English in their classrooms. This would help students not only raise their awareness about accented speeches in general but also acquire multidialectal listening skill which is an essential element to be a successful international communicator.

Then, what kind of accent should be introduced preferentially to learners? Regarding this matter, a considerable number of English teachers in Korea believe that it would be more appropriate to start out with Inner Circle speech varieties such as British or Australian accent for no other reason than that they are native ones. However, the findings of current study suggest that there does not have to be such priority given that how much certain accent is different

from standard American English did not mean much to students of this study. For students, any English accent, if it's not American one, seems to cause quite similar level of difficulty no matter where that particular accent comes from. Therefore, listening inputs for students do not have to be restricted to certain speech varieties that are considered to be more similar to or more different from American accent of English.

Getting learners exposed to various English accents is highly recommended in another aspect. It has very positive impacts on learners' awareness of WE. Previous studies on learners' attitude toward different English varieties (Ahn, 2011; Choi, 2007; Friedreich, 1997; Jung, 2005; Matsuda, 2002; Oh, 2011) revealed learners' strong preference to standard English, namely American or British English, over other English varieties in spite of the fact that their overall perception toward WE or EIL has greatly improved (e.g., ownership of English and ideal pronunciation). Korean learners, not surprisingly, displayed a strong preference for American accent of English (Ahn, 2011; Choi, 2007; Jung, 2005; Oh, 2011; Ryu, 2015). This American English-oriented attitude can possibly lead to devaluation of non-American accents which, in turn, hinder students from developing international intelligibility and communicational flexibility. It is also likely that students undervalue their own non-American pronunciation, which would result in a lack of confidence and low motivation in English learning (Ryu, 2015).

In this respect, classes with a range of English varieties can facilitate

students' understanding of the concept of WE and its necessity in today's world of globalization. If English classes of Korea continue to adhere to American accent of English only, it is hardly possible to change learners' attitude toward non-American accents of English.

Second, practical ways to implement the concept of WE in Korean English classrooms, along with diverse WE contents should be developed and provided systematically. At the same time, it is urgent to introduce a special teacher training program which can help Korean English teachers professionally develop and deliver classes from the perspective of WE. This can be done through both pre-service and in-service training program. A large number of English teachers in Korea, just like their students, have received American English-centered instruction for a long time and they have got so much accustomed to teaching and testing students based on American English. Consequently, not knowing how, they are hesitant to introduce different varieties of English to their students even though they are well aware of its importance and necessity. Therefore, there must be some guidance to support teachers to incorporate the concept of WE into their classrooms.

Lastly, the current study suggests that there needs to be a change in testing practices of students' listening skills. It seems reasonable to adopt a listening test including different varieties of English departing from current standardized evaluation system which is largely focused on American English. As Kang et al. (2019) pointed out, relying on American accented speech as the sole stimuli in listening test underrepresents the variety of English accents

found in learners' actual target domain. Korean EFL learners' ultimate language use domain is not just restricted to interactions with speakers of American English. Rather, more communications appear to take place with non-American speakers, particularly with those from neighboring countries. By incorporating a bit more accents in a listening test, not only the authenticity of the test can be enhanced but also students can get a chance to be prepared for such a multidialectal language use context.

Including multiple accents in a listening test is also warranted by its positive washback effect. The washback effect refers to the influence that language testing has on curriculum design, teaching practices, and learning behaviors (Mckinley & Thomson, 2018). As Jenkins (2006) pointed out, inclusion of non-native speaker varieties in listening tests may increase the amount of exposure to those varieties in English learning. Restrictive conditions of Korean public schools, including the number of English classes a week and the exclusive focus on prescribed textbooks hardly allow teachers to cover different English varieties in classrooms unless they are actually on the test. Additionally, both teachers and learners would be reluctant to spare time for things that are not going to be tested. In this situation, changing a way of testing might be one of the most effective ways to trigger changes in classroom activities and learners' behaviors.

However, as Ahn (2015) commented, Korean learners tend to be very sensitive to evaluations. They might be concerned about getting disadvantage by any unfamiliar accent selected for a listening assessment. When British

accent of English was first partially adopted as listening stimuli for nationwide listening assessment in 2013, there was strong backlash among students and their parents against this new testing system. Moreover, related private education market has outgrown according to this new change (Ahn, 2015). Therefore, the whole process of incorporating multiple accents in a listening test must be slow, steady and systematic. Above all, it seems very important to achieve consensus among test takers regarding this issue. It would be a good starting point to implement a multidialectal listening test as a part of performance assessment or process-oriented assessment which do not have critical effect on students' overall grade.

## **6.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

A few practical limitations should be addressed to provide meaningful suggestions for further study. First, the type of test items used in this study was highly limited. Among the 17 types of test items in listening section of CSAT, only four of them which were all based on monologic speeches were used in this study. Given that there was a differential effect of accents depending on test items in Kim's (2007) study, a listening test based on interactive communications or a test including all types of items used in CSAT would lead to different results. Therefore, a further research needs to be conducted to determine if certain item types could be affected by accents or accent strengths more than others. Additionally, it would be worth examining

how different levels of item difficulty would interact with strengths of accents. As already pointed out, relatively easy test items used in this study might have blurred the effects of different levels of accent strengths.

Second, the present study employed only one speaker from each of the five non-American speech varieties in order to identify how non-American speakers with different degrees of accents affect students' listening comprehension. However, for the better understanding of differential effects of accent strengths, it would be more desirable to compare varying degrees of accents of more than one speaker within one particular speech variety. In other words, only when the type of accent is controlled, the concept of accent strength becomes clearer. Listeners in this study might have been affected not only by different accent degrees of speakers but also by unique phonological property of each speech variety.

Third, gender of speaker was not controlled in this study. Among six final speakers, four of them were male speakers and the other two were female speakers. Obviously, there was a difference in tone and pitch of the voice depending on gender. Considering a number of studies have cited sex of speaker as one critical factor affecting listeners' perception of accented speeches (Flege, Munro, & MacKay, 1995; Lambert, Frankel, & Tucker, 1966; Purcell & Suter, 1980; Tahta, Wood, & Lowenthal, 1981; Thompson, 1991), it seems necessary to control gender of the speaker when designing this type of experiment.

Lastly, the present study was conducted only with second-grade female

high school students, and thus it seems inappropriate to generalize its findings to whole Korean EFL learners. A change in target listeners (e.g., male students or younger students) might result in different outcomes. Moreover, this study had six classes assumed to have similar listening proficiency take one of the six types of test instead of one single group taking a series of listening tests recorded by speakers with different L1s due to the operational limitations. However, the second option based on completely homogeneous group appears more suitable to elicit more reliable findings for this type of experiment.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the present study is significant given that it was first empirical effort to test the effects of non-American accents in terms of both accent strengths and learners' listening proficiency level under Korean EFL context.

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# Appendices

## Appendix I. Speaker Questionnaire

본 연구에 참여해 주셔서 감사합니다!  
녹음에 앞서 아래 질문에 간단히 답해 주시기 바랍니다. 적어 주신 정보는  
연구용도 외에는 절대 사용되지 않습니다. 감사합니다. ☺  
I appreciate your participation for this research!  
Before recording, please answer the following questions. Your personal  
information will only be used for research purposes. Thank you. ☺

1. 이름(Name): \_\_\_\_\_
2. 성별(Gender): M/F
3. 나이(Age): \_\_\_\_\_
4. 출생 국가와 도시 (Country of Origin/City): \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
5. 모국어 (Native Language): \_\_\_\_\_
6. 공인영어성적(Score of any of the following English tests): \_\_\_\_\_  
☺ 해당 시험에 체크해 주세요.  
(1) TEPS    (2) TOEIC    (3) TOEFL    (4) IELTS  
\* What else? (Name of the Test: \_\_\_\_\_ / Score: \_\_\_\_\_)
7. 한국에 거주한 기간(Length of Residence in Korea) \_\_\_\_\_
8. 해외 유학 경험(Study Abroad Experience)  
• 국가(country): \_\_\_\_\_ • 기간(period of time): \_\_\_\_\_

※ The main purpose of this simple recording process is to find out potential speakers who can help me with second recording which is scheduled in late October. Second recording will be used for my main experiment, which is about the 'effects of different English accents on Korean high school learners' listening comprehension'. Would it be okay for me to contact you again later on? Please check *Yes* or *No*.

Yes

No

## Appendix II. Rater Questionnaire including Accent Rating

I appreciate your participation for this research!

Before accent rating, please answer the following questions. Your personal information will only be used for research purposes. Thank you.

1. Name:
2. Gender: M / F
3. Age (American age):
4. Country of Origin / City:
5. How familiar are you with the following English accents? Please check!

	not at all familiar	a little familiar	familiar	very familiar
British	1	2	3	4
Indian	1	2	3	4
Chinese	1	2	3	4
Malaysian	1	2	3	4
Indonesian	1	2	3	4

6. Do you have any hearing impairment? Yes / No

7. Accent Rating

### Accent Rating

You are going to hear 32 speech samples (about 30 seconds for each) from different foreign speakers. Click the 'youtube link' to play each sample and please rate the degree of foreign accent. (1-'no foreign accent', 7-'very strong foreign accent')

※ The degree of foreign accent means 'the degree to which an individual's speech pattern is different from American standard English.'

※ Please be careful not to listen to each sample more than one time.

※ Please rate the degree of accent after listening until the end of the speech sample.

---

**Speech1 \***

<https://youtu.be/pjT6PPnuRj0>

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

no foreign accent                                very strong foreign accent

### Appendix III. Listener Questionnaire

듣기 시험에 앞서, 아래 간단한 설문을 작성해 주세요.  
 설문 내용은 연구 용도 외에는 절대 사용되지 않습니다.  
 감사합니다 ☺

1. 나이: \_\_\_\_\_
2. 성별: 남/여
3. 모국어: \_\_\_\_\_
4. 외국에서 공부한 경험이 있나요? 없다면, 작성하지 않아도 됩니다.
  - 국가: \_\_\_\_\_      • 기간: \_\_\_\_\_

4. 아래 다양한 영어 억센트와 얼마나 친숙한지 체크해 주세요.

	전혀 친숙하지 않다	약간 친숙하다	친숙하다	매우 친숙하다
미국영어	1	2	3	4
영국영어	1	2	3	4
인도영어	1	2	3	4
중국영어	1	2	3	4
인도네시아영어	1	2	3	4
말레이시아영어	1	2	3	4

5. 위에 제시된 여섯 종류의 영어 억센트 중 가장 친숙한 것을 고르세요.

- |        |           |           |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| ① 미국영어 | ② 영국영어    | ③ 인도영어    |
| ④ 중국영어 | ⑤ 인도네시아영어 | ⑥ 말레이시아영어 |

## Appendix IV. Listening Test

# 영어듣기평가

※ 정답은 별도의 답안지에 작성해 주세요.

### SET 1.

1. School Sports Festival에 관한 다음 내용을 듣고, 일치하지 않는 것을 고르시오.

- ① 2년마다 열리는 행사이다.
- ② 올해는 10월 12일에 개최된다.
- ③ 총 5개의 경기 종목이 있다.
- ④ 학생의 참가 경기 종목 수에는 제한이 없다.
- ⑤ 신입생 맨스팀의 공연이 있다.

2. 다음 상황 설명을 듣고, Bill이 Rachel에게 할 말로 가장 적절한 것을 고르시오.

Bill: \_\_\_\_\_

- ① I think we should not be late for the exams.
- ② Why don't we join the student drama contest?
- ③ Let's put off practicing until the exams are done.
- ④ Please tell me when the performance will be held.
- ⑤ We'd better practice more often than you've planned.

[3~4] 다음을 듣고, 물음에 답하십시오.

3. 남자가 하는 말의 주제로 가장 적절한 것은?

- ① ways to help children enjoy learning math
- ② the role of math teachers in elementary school
- ③ difficulties parents have in teaching math to kids
- ④ reasons why children easily get into violent games
- ⑤ positive effects of cooperative learning in childhood

4. 언급된 사물이 아닌 것은?

- ① 콩                      ② 사진                      ③ 분필
- ④ 주사위                ⑤ 사과

### SET 2

5. Playground for Dogs에 관한 다음 내용을 듣고, 일치하지 않는 것을 고르시오.

- ① 시내에서 가까운 곳에 위치해 있다.
- ② 후프, 터널, 수영장이 마련되어 있다.
- ③ 자격을 갖춘 직원들이 순찰한다.
- ④ 개 한 마리당 입장료는 10달러이다.
- ⑤ 주말을 제외하고 매일 문을 연다.

6. 다음 상황 설명을 듣고, Tony가 Grace에게 할 말로 가장 적절한 것을 고르시오.

Tony: Grace, \_\_\_\_\_

- ① how about exchanging roles with me?
- ② what's the problem with the projector?
- ③ how's it going with your computer class?
- ④ would you teach me to make visual slides?
- ⑤ could you help me make copies of the handouts?

[7~8] 다음을 듣고, 물음에 답하십시오.

7. 남자가 하는 말의 주제로 가장 적절한 것은?

- ① factors influencing fish colors
- ② the history of marine biology
- ③ physical abilities of fish
- ④ diseases of marine animals
- ⑤ how fish sense threats from enemies

8. 언급된 감각이 아닌 것은?

- ① smell                      ② taste                      ③ hearing
- ④ vision                      ⑤ touch

뒷면에 계속

[전체 2쪽 중 제 1쪽]

**SET 3**

9. Eastville Book Festival에 관한 다음 내용을 듣고, 일치하지 않는 것을 고르시오.

- ① Central Park에서 열린다.
- ② 유명 작가들과 대화할 수 있다.
- ③ 어린이들을 위한 서점이 있다.
- ④ 중고 서적을 사고팔 수 있는 시장이 있다.
- ⑤ 카페에서 다양한 음료를 무료로 제공한다.

10. 다음 상황 설명을 듣고, Peter가 Stella에게 할 말로 가장 적절한 것을 고르시오.

Peter: \_\_\_\_\_

- ① You'd better take some cough medicine.
- ② What do you think about the new office?
- ③ We should cooperate to get the best result.
- ④ We need to purchase another copy machine.
- ⑤ Why don't we get some plants for fresh air?

[11~ 12] 다음을 듣고, 물음에 답하십시오.

11. 남자가 하는 말의 주제로 가장 적절한 것은?

- ① benefits of playing with toys for children
- ② necessities of getting enough playing space
- ③ types of toys developing children's creativity
- ④ impacts of musical toys on children's character
- ⑤ ways of producing environmentally friendly toys

12. 언급된 장난감이 아닌 것은?

- ① 퍼즐
- ② 블록
- ③ 장난감 피아노
- ④ 장난감 전화기
- ⑤ 야구 장난감

**SET 4**

13. Amazona Zoo에 관한 다음 내용을 듣고, 일치하지 않는 것을 고르시오.

- ① 800종이 넘는 동물을 보유하고 있다.
- ② 1년 중 하루를 제외하고 매일 개장한다.
- ③ 입장은 폐장 시간 30분 전까지 가능하다.
- ④ 10세 미만의 아동은 성인과 동반해야 입장할 수 있다.
- ⑤ 온라인으로 입장권 구매 시 할인을 받을 수 있다.

14. 다음 상황 설명을 듣고, Helen이 Tom에게 할 말로 가장 적절한 것을 고르시오.

Helen: \_\_\_\_\_

- ① Okay, I'll cancel the tickets online.
- ② Good! It's the perfect season for a trip.
- ③ Don't worry. I can go with someone else.
- ④ Well, it's not easy to be a musical singer.
- ⑤ Why not? I'll check the theater reviews now.

[15~ 16] 다음을 듣고, 물음에 답하십시오.

15. 남자가 하는 말의 목적으로 가장 적절한 것은?

- ① to explain how to improve memory
- ② to give tips for effective studying
- ③ to help students reduce exam anxiety
- ④ to introduce how to use digital devices
- ⑤ to emphasize the importance of note-taking

16. 언급된 물건이 아닌 것은?

- ① study planner    ② notebook    ③ pencil
- ④ textbook        ⑤ smart phone

※ 듣기 평가가 끝났습니다. 수고하셨습니다.

## **Appendix V. Scripts of Listening Test**

### **Set 1**

**1.** Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Mr. Patrick, your P.E. teacher. I'd like to remind you about the upcoming School Sports Festival. As you know, this festival is held every two years. I'm glad to tell you the sports festival will take place on October 12 this year. There will be five competitions: basketball, soccer, volleyball, 100 meter run, and 400 meter relay. Each student can take part in a maximum of two events. Freshmen dance teams will show their dance performances that day. I hope it'll be a good chance for students to relieve stress and build friendship. If you have any further questions, please contact the P.E. department.

**2.** Bill is a member of his school's drama club. One day, the club members decide to join the local student drama contest that will be held next month. So, Rachel, the leader of the club, tells the club members that they'll have a practice session twice a week starting tomorrow. However, their exams are in a week, and Bill is worried about the schedule. He thinks that not many members will like the practice sessions because of the coming exams. Now, he wants to suggest to Rachel that they start practicing after the exams so that they can have enough time to study. In this situation, what would Bill most likely say to Rachel?

**3-4.** Hello, parents! I'm John Brown, a professor of mathematics at Pacific University. Today, I'd like to give you some tips to help your children learn math in a fun way. First, use the things around you. You can give them a handful of tiny things like beans and let them count. You can also ask them to compare the numbers of pictures on the walls in each room of your house. Second, play board games with your kids. Board games with two dice instead of one can be a good way to learn basic addition. Third, make math an enjoyable daily activity in real life. For example, at the grocery store, ask your kids how many apples they could buy with ten dollars. With this kind of activity, they can learn how to apply basic math to real life. By following these three tips, you can help your children enjoy learning math early in their lives.

## Set 2

5. Are you looking for a special place for your dog? Then, I have good news for you! The Playground for Dogs opens on October 2nd. It's located close to downtown, so it's convenient for you to bring your dogs to run and play. The park includes hoops, tunnels, and pools for dogs to play in. Since our qualified staff will patrol the park, you don't have to worry about your dog's safety. Entry to the park costs ten dollars for each dog. It's open every day, even on weekends. In the Playground for Dogs, you will see your dogs playing freely. For more information, please visit our website [www.playgroundfordogs.com](http://www.playgroundfordogs.com).

6. Grace and Tony are high school classmates. They're preparing for a partner assignment for social studies. For the project, one student will present, and the other student will make visual materials. Grace is supposed to take the role of presenter. At first she thinks that she can do it. However, Grace is getting worried about presenting in front of the whole class. Tony starts to realize her concern. Also, he knows she is good with computers, so she can make better visual materials. He wants to tell Grace that she can make the visual materials, and then he'll present instead of her. In this situation, what would Tony most likely say to Grace?

7-8. Hello, everyone. Welcome back to my marine biology class. In the last class, we talked about the behavior of fish. Today, we'll learn about some abilities fish have that allow them to live in their marine environments. First of all, smelling is one of the best-developed abilities of fish. Some fish can detect smells a million times better than humans can. Second, many fish have a sense of taste. They often use their sense of taste to test the quality of the food they're chewing. Next, some fish species have developed sophisticated systems of vision. These systems enable fish to see in low-light conditions, in dirty water, and sometimes even over long distances. Lastly, fish have a sense of touch, which works mainly through their skin. It's possible that fish may use their mouths as touch sensors. Isn't it surprising fish have special abilities just like humans do?

### Set 3

**9.** Hello, visitors! I'm Jasmine Adams, director of Eastville Library. I'd like to introduce Eastville Book Festival. The festival will be held in Central Park, on the 25th and 26th of November. You can talk with famous authors about their books. We also have a bookshop especially for children. There's a market where you can buy and sell used books. We'll also open a café where you can buy a variety of drinks at a lower price during the festival. You can get the festival brochure at the information desk in the library. There's no admission fee, so come with your family and enjoy the festival.

**10.** Peter and Stella are working in the same office. Their office is packed with computers, copy machines and other office supplies, so there's always lots of dust in the office. They used to open the windows for some fresh air several times a day, but nowadays they can't because of severe and frequent fine dust. Because of this, Stella suffers from chronic coughing, so Peter tries to think about how to improve air quality in the office. One day, Peter finds out that some plants help purify the air. So, Peter wants to suggest to Stella that they put plant pots in their office. In this situation, what would Peter most likely to say to Stella?

**11-12.** Hello, I'm Jim Patrick, chief of the Center for Children. Today I'm going to tell you about the benefits of toys for your child's development and growth. There are various toys available that provide necessary support for your child. So here is a list of some toys that are proven to be beneficial. First, puzzles promote hand-eye coordination. Children learn to solve problems by playing with puzzles. Second, block toys are the most educational toy for kids of all ages. They help in gaining the ability to understand different spatial concepts like dimensions, shapes, and how they work together. Third, toy pianos offer kids a chance to learn about how objects work and the outcomes. Finally, baseball toys help in balance and coordination. Toys are not just for fun, but also help children learn about themselves and the world around them. So make sure your kid has lots of time to play with toys.

## Set 4

**13.** Hello, everyone. Amazona Zoo will finally reopen this Saturday after its renovation. Now, our zoo has over 800 species of animals, making it one of the largest collections in the United States. Our zoo is open every day except Christmas Day. And the operating hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Remember, last admission is one hour before closing time. Some animal exhibits may close up to 30 minutes before closing time. Children under 10 will not be admitted without an adult. You can enjoy a 5% discount when purchasing admission tickets online. Please visit the Amazona Zoo website for more information. Thank you.

**14.** Helen and Tom are good friends who like to see musicals. One day, Helen finds out the musical *Cats* will be playing the next week. The musical is one that they really wanted to see but missed last time. Helen and Tom agree to watch the musical together, so Helen books two tickets. However, the day before the performance, Helen gets a call from Tom saying that he won't be able to go to the musical because of an urgent business trip. Tom says he's very sorry that he can't go with Helen. Helen doesn't want him to feel bad and wants to tell him that she can see the musical with another friend. In this situation, what would Helen most likely say to Tom?

**15-16.** Hello, students! Have you ever felt frustrated when you want to get good grades but don't know what to do? Today, I'm going to tell you a few things to help you with your study. First of all, you should use a study planner. It should include your study schedules and learning goals. It'll be helpful to draw up a timetable, and you should revise it when necessary. Another thing to consider is creating your own notebook. Write notes using charts, graphs, and mind maps so that you can memorize the information systematically. Next, read your textbook until you can thoroughly understand what it says. What you need to know about a subject is in the textbook and it's the best basic material for studying. Lastly, make sure you won't be disturbed by anything while you're studying. For example, smart phones are the biggest distraction to your studies. Just turn off your phone when you study. Good luck!

## 국 문 초 록

오늘날 국제어로서의 영어 사용이 급증하면서, 비원어민들간의 의사 소통이 그 어느 때보다 활발해졌다. 이와 함께 세계 각 지역 고유의 언어적 특색이 반영된 다양한 세계영어가 등장하였으며, 그 위상이 날로 높아지고 있다. 이에 ‘다중언어듣기능력’은 국제 사회에서 성공적인 의사소통을 위한 필수 능력으로 급부상하였으며, 듣기 평가 영역에 있어서도 다양한 액센트를 포함시킬 필요성이 제기되었다. 본 연구는 미국 영어에 익숙한 한국인 고등학생들을 대상으로, 다양한 ‘비-미국인 액센트(non-American accents)’가 학생들의 영어 듣기 이해에 미치는 영향을 살펴보았다.

본 실험을 위해 미국, 영국, 인도, 말레이시아, 중국, 인도네시아, 총 여섯 국가의 화자가 시험 녹음에 참여하였다. 시험의 전반부는 미국인 액센트, 후반부는 각기 다른 여섯 종류의 액센트로 녹음되었으며 시험 문항은 모두 동일하였다. 총 여섯 학급이 듣기 시험에 참여했으며, 각 학급은 임의로 하나의 시험 조건에 배정되었다. 이 때, 녹음에 참여한 외국인 화자들의 액센트 강도(미국 표준 영어와 얼마나 다른지)와 학생들의 듣기 능력 수준을 미리 측정하여 비-미국인 액센트의 영향을 분석함에 있어서 이 두 가지 요인과의 상호작용을 함께 살펴보았다.

주요실험결과는 다음과 같이 요약된다. 첫째, 듣기 평가의 화자가 미국인 화자에서 비-미국인 화자로 바뀌자 학생들의 성적이 유의미한 하락을 보였다. 반면 시험 전반부와 후반부가 모두 미국인 화자에 의해 녹음된 시험을 치른 학생들은 유의미한 성적 변화를 보여주지 않았다. 둘째, 비-미국인 화자들의 액센트 강도는 학생들의 듣기 이해도와 그 어떠한 상관관계도 보여주지 않았다. 즉, 특정 액센트가 대부분의 한국인 학습자들이 가장 익숙하다고 느끼는 미국 영어와 얼마나 차이가 나는 지는 학습자의 듣기 이해도에 영향을 주지 않았다. 끝으로 비-미국인 화자들의 발화를 이해하는데 있어서 학생들의 듣기 수준에 따른 차별적인 효과는 관찰되지 않았다. 각 수준(상, 중, 하)에 속하는 학생들은 비-미국인 액센트의 종류에 상관없이 비슷한 성적을 획득했다.

본 연구는 오늘날의 국제화 시대에서 성공적인 의사소통을 위해서는 미국 영어 뿐만 아니라 다양한 영어 액센트에 노출될 필요가 있음을 다시 한번 입증하고 있으며, 단계적이고 체계적으로 다중언어듣기능력을 평가할 수 있는 방법이 도입되어야 함을 시사하고 있다.

주요어: 비-미국인 액센트, 다중언어듣기능력, 세계영어, 액센트 강도, 제 2 언어 듣기 평가

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