

The Intelligibility and Comprehensibility of World Englishes to Non-Native Speakers

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The aim of this study is to investigate which pronunciations of English are difficult or different from one's first language, as well as to explore which factors are crucial for communication with people from other cultures when English is used as one of the World Englishes. Ninety-one undergraduate students (85 females and 6 males) from two different Korean universities participated in this study. A survey was conducted to determine their background information and to find out their attitudes toward World Englishes. This study was based on two concepts: 'intelligibility' (focusing on words) and 'comprehensibility' (focusing on meaning) when communicating with people from different countries'. For attaining intelligibility, one must overcome such factors as pronunciation, stress, intonation, and the vowel and consonant sounds of English. On the other hand, for achieving comprehensibility, there are other factors predominate such as grammatical, cultural, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects. Thus, in order to avoid intelligibility and comprehensibility problems, EFL/ESL students should learn all the common varieties of English used between native speakers and non-native speakers (NSs-NNSs) and between two non-native speakers (NNSs-NNSs). Additionally, students should consider and respect different situations and different cultural backgrounds to establish successful intelligibility and comprehensibility.

Key Words: intelligibility and comprehensibility, pronunciation, stress and intonation of English, cultural, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects

1 Introduction

English is used as a common international language that is regarded as 'world Englishes' which describes a language serving as a regular means of communication between different linguistic norms and different cultural backgrounds all over the world. People from different countries using the same medium, English, may be able to accommodate to all different modes of expression by using particular varieties of idiom for achieving successful communication. In order to establish intelligibility (focusing on words) and comprehensibility (focusing on meaning), EFL/ESL students should learn all

common varieties of idiom between native speakers and non-native speakers (NSs-NNSs) and between the two non-native speakers (NNSs-NNSs). The main difficulty the EFL adult learners face to learn a foreign language is to learn new speech sounds and pronunciations consciously, because the speech habits are generally acquired in childhood naturally. Accordingly, many Korean students feel it difficult to perceive non-native speakers of English; even though non-native speakers who use English as a second language, such as in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines, speak English fluently, the non-native speakers like Korean, Japanese or Chinese may feel it difficult to understand their pronunciations of English clearly due to them affecting their distinct accents and mother tongue; it may be reasonable to begin the study with sounds that are quite different from those of their mother tongue. Hence, the methods and steps for speaking and listening skills to learn a foreign language must be applied differently in order to achieve successful intelligibility and comprehensibility. That is a major consideration in why this research has been conducted.

The aim of this study is to examine which pronunciations of English as 'intelligibility' are different from their first language as well as to investigate which factors as 'comprehensibility' are imperative to communicate with people from other cultures when English is used as a medium of world Englishes. Also this study attempts to provide English teachers and EFL learners with a desire for future instruction of teaching methods to avoiding miscommunication.

In the present study, 91 undergraduate students (85 females and 6 males) from two Korean universities participated. A survey was conducted to determine their background information and to find out their attitudes toward 'World Englishes'. This study focused on two concepts: 'intelligibility and comprehensibility' when interacting with people from different parts of the world. For establishing intelligibility, some factors needed to be overcome such as pronunciation, stress, intonation, and the vowel and consonant sounds of English. On the other hand, besides pronunciation problems, other reasons of comprehensibility seemed to create misunderstandings related to cross-cultural pragmatic issues of, English fluency, and grammatical, cultural, and socio-linguistic aspects. Thus, EFL/ESL students should consider and respect different situations and social norms in order to attain successful intelligibility and comprehensibility.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Intelligibility (Focusing on words)

The approaches of English pronunciation teaching instruction

The fact that English all over the world has been used by many people inevitably means that the language is changing and varying, as people

correspond with each other in the way that they find the easiest. Teaching pronunciation through diverse and creative activities helps EFL learners to be successful in learning English pronunciation. Jenkins (2000) gathered data to establish which aspects of pronunciation cause intelligibility problems and to draw up a pronunciation core from interactions among non-native speakers of English when English is spoken as an international language. And Field (2005) noted that intelligibility has been recognized as an appropriate goal for pronunciation instruction, yet remarkably little is known about the factors that make language learners' speech intelligible. The present study attempts to determine which pronunciations EFL students find difficult to adjust to in an international community in order to overcome intelligibility problems: students need to consider which pronunciations differ from their first language.

There are previous studies in the area of English pronunciation instruction, including the approaches of English pronunciation teaching and factors affecting English pronunciation (Kim, 2005; Kim, 1996; Kim, 2005; Silviria, 2002; Yeo & Park, 2006). Silviria (2002) stated that the process of teaching pronunciation instruction has been changed as different approaches to second language teaching develop from direct approaches to communicative methodologies. Yeo & Park (2006) noted that teaching English pronunciation is enhanced when students learn through various interesting activities suited to their learning levels: songs, chants, rhymes, stress move, ask and answer, back-chain information gap. And Sifakis & Sougari (2005) referred to teachers' viewpoints regarding pronunciation-specific issues and the possible links between pronunciation teaching, English as an international language, and the sociocultural identity of nonnative speakers of English. Also Pavel, Patsy, Randall & Hyojin (2009) reported the beneficial effects of comprehension practice for the development of L2 pronunciation. Hence, several previous studies noted that the instruction of pronunciation should be taught as interrelating with all the elements of pronunciation as well as communicative skills.

However, Kim (2005) and Kim (1996) stated textbooks are crucial factors to learn pronunciations. Also Kim (2005) noted that a pronunciation textbook is a very important and basic device in the learning process of a foreign language, but there are few textbooks for just pronunciation learning; so considering the EFL situations, the instruction of pronunciation should be taught as interrelating with all the elements of pronunciation as well as communicative skills. Further, Jenkins (2004) noted that pronunciation teaching should consider teaching natural pronunciation of supersegmentals. Jenkins (2004) stated that pronunciation teaching research began to move on both sophisticated approach to interlanguage phonology taking universal development and supersegmental features along with segmental. In the present study, many students thought pronunciations can be a barrier to communicate with people from different parts of the world. If we cannot catch specific pronunciation and sounds, miscommunications can occur at

anytime. Therefore, teaching English pronunciation should take place by both recognizing the accurate production of isolated sounds or words and understanding the meaning of dialogs or conversation in order to avoid problems in corresponding with other cultures.

Factors affecting pronunciation

Research has shown crucial correlations for improving the ability to identify accents, stress and pronunciation for understanding between stress and pronunciation teaching. There are previous studies regarding accent and stress in English (Low, 2006; Riney, Takagi & Inutsuka, 2005; Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu, 2006). Low (2006) noted known information is often de-accented and new information that is usually accented in most varieties of English. And Riney, Takagi & Inutsuka (2005) noted that some of the phonetic parameters that correlate with non-native speakers' (NNSs) perceptual judgments of accent in English and investigated NNS listener perceptions of English from a World Englishes point of view. However, Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard & Wu (2006) stated that there are no strong correlations between the ability to identify accents and the amount of time spent in the United States, nor time studying English. On the contrary, there is an almost perfect correlation found between the accent voted easiest to understand and the one that participants preferred. In addition, Derwing & Munro (2005) noted that empirical studies are essential to improving our understanding of the relationship between accent and pronunciation teaching. In the present study, many Korean students thought the factors of intonation, stress, and accent of English make it hard for EFL learners to understand what non-native speakers said because for all of them English is different from their first language.

There are other factors affecting English pronunciation such as external aspects, including regions and environments, and internal aspects, including personal information. Joh & Lee (2001) stated that the relationship of improving pronunciation depends on individual differences in learning strategies and preferences such as personal attitudes. Considering the EFL contexts, Korean students' personality and cognitive system may be related to their pronunciation. If students were of an outgoing character, it might be easy to mimic native speakers' pronunciation. Especially, academic achievements and interest in English study are correlated with their pronunciation, so their external background and internal motivation are also related to their pronunciation. Most of all, each person has their own accent, stress or pronunciation of English and each region also has its own pronunciation, so there are many different variables despite pronunciation problems. Therefore, in the present study, in order to attain comprehensibly, several factors are discussed: grammatical, pragmatic, and socio-linguistic aspects.

2.2 Comprehensibility (Focusing on Meaning)

The varieties of English and intercultural competence

Despite pronunciation problems, other aspects of comprehensibility seemed to have had misunderstandings related to cross-cultural pragmatics and so on. According to Kachru and Smith (2008), in order to attain comprehensibility (understanding of a possible meaning), people should consider cultural competence as well as speech act functions. There are previous studies related to cultural aspects and intercultural competence and learning. Heuser (2007) stated that intercultural learning and learning communities allow learners to increase students' intercultural competence and language fluency. However, as some acknowledge (Morgan, 1998, O'Dowd, 2003 & Otten, 2003, cited in Heuser, 2007), intercultural competence and language proficiency do not automatically occur by simply bringing together students from different cultures, so it needs proper methods and materials to improve intercultural competence. Nault (2006) also suggested that the concept of intercultural competence can also act as an educational aim. Hence, in the present study, in order to avoid miscommunications with other cultures, students may need to improve cultural aspects and intercultural competence when learning a foreign language. There are other examples in the debate on cross-cultural issues (Ballard & Clanchy, 1997; Liddicoat, 1997; Phan, 2001). Moreover, the proper instructions of teaching and learning materials to learn a foreign language may be needed to develop learners' cultural aspects and intercultural competence since among non-native speakers of English, learners may perceive diverse varieties of English from different cultural backgrounds.

There are previous studies related to varieties of English. Phan (2005) noted that there are varieties of English, such as Singaporean English, Indian English, African English, Australian-English, American-English, and British-English, but it is still arguable that international norms and rules of the language are not set by all these Englishes, nor even negotiated among them. Most of all, Park & Nakano (2003) noted that one can hear Koreans, Japanese, Indians, Phillipinos, and Singaporeans speaking English other than the British and the Americans, so in order to engage in successful communication with non-native speakers, learners need to understand the varieties of English from different cultures. And also Lee (2003) noted that non-native English speakers need to acquire stylistic variation in order to adapt to various contexts and situations. Thus, many non-native English speakers need to learn the varieties of speech sounds and styles of English in order to avoid miscommunications with other cultures. According to this study, recognizing different cultural aspects and norms helps EFL students understand people from other countries more easily and also understand the target cultures more profoundly. In general, cultures of non-native speakers are different from some Asian, European and American cultures. If EFL learners knew more background knowledge of other cultures, they might avoid

communication problems easily. Therefore, non-native English speakers need to acquire variation of English and different cultural aspects in order to adapt to various contexts and situations. In addition, many non-native English speakers need to learn different cultural aspects and intercultural competence as well as the varieties of speech sounds and styles of English in order to avoid miscommunications with people from other cultures.

World Englishes and sociolinguistic competence

English has been used with the status of a world language, an international language, or a lingua franca. And also English is used as a global language, a world language, and a medium of intercultural communication (Crystal, 1997; Seidlhofer, 2003; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; McKay, 2003; Lurda, 2004). With the growing globalization of the world, it seems that world Englishes has evolved as better means of communication that where people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds can now communicate with each other. English is currently regarded as world Englishes, as a result of which there are now more exchanges between non-native speakers of English (NNSs-NNSs), than between non-native speakers and native speakers (NNSs-NSs). There are further factors related to non-native speakers' communicative competence, which may be understood as socio-linguistic and pragmatic competence for using the English language appropriately. Kasper (1984) stated that the procedures activated in pragmatic comprehension constitute a part of the learner's communicative competence. Other reasons of comprehensibility seemed to have had misunderstandings related to socio-linguistic and cross-cultural pragmatics (Kim, 2002; Nault, 2006; Nation, 2003; Yu, 2006). Kim (2002) noted that the problems of international students studying abroad arise from cross cultural communication breakdown, triggered by cross-cultural differences that cannot be easily reconciled. And also Nault (2006) noted that specific teaching techniques can improve students' English abilities while simultaneously enhancing their cross-cultural skills and contributing to their personal growth. Yet, Yu (2006) noted that internal sociolinguistic aspects such as structural, functional, and discoursal rules help learners to acquire a new language: second language learning. In addition, Nation (2003) noted that research shows that the first language has a small, but important role to play in communicating meaning and content. Therefore, in the present study, in order to attain comprehensibility, there are several factors to discuss such as the cultural, linguistic, socio-pragmatic aspects and so on. Moreover, many previous studies informed that learners' communicative behavior, due to a lack of socio-linguistic and pragmatic competence, may cause many cross-cultural misunderstandings as there is a gap between what is done in a real life and what is learned.

3 Methodology

3.1 Participant

Ninety-one undergraduate students (85 females and 6 males) from two Korean universities participated in this study. Seven students used English as a first language; 39 students used English as a second language; and 45 students used English as a foreign language. It seems that several students did not understand the distinction between second and foreign languages because most of them used English as a foreign language except for a few students. Sixty-eight students were majoring in Natural Science; 19 students in English language and literature; two in Accounting; and two in the Division of International Studies. Sixty-two students were freshman; 12 were sophomore; 13 were junior and four were senior. Three students were at a high-level overall English proficiency; 56 students were at an intermediate level of proficiency; and 32 students were at a low-level proficiency as shown from self-evaluation. As Table 1 shows, 44 students had studied English frequently or sometimes while 45 students had rarely studied English. Most students (44) focused on studying their speaking skill, but a few students (17) wished to improve their reading skill.

Table 1. Students' Linguistic Information

Overall English Proficiency (self-evaluation)						
	High	Intermediate	Low			
N	3	56	32			
Use of English Currently?						
	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Others		
N	7	37	45	2		
What is the focus of your study?						
	Vocabulary	Grammar	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
N	8	7	8	44	17	7

3.2 Instrument

A Survey: A survey was administered to understand students' intelligibility and comprehensibility toward 'World Englishes'. The survey was conducted at two different universities in order to get various students' opinions about world Englishes. There are two sections in a questionnaire: section one is

¹ "N" refers to the number of students.

about background information, and section two is about intelligibility and comprehensibility (see Appendix I). The questionnaire is written in English; on the other hand, participants can answer in both English and Korean.

3.3 Treatment

Table 2. The Treatment of the Study

Treatments	Features
Intelligibility	Pronunciation, Stress, Intonation, Vowel sounds, Consonant sounds
Comprehensibility	Grammatical aspects, Cultural aspects, English Fluency, Socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects, Linguistic aspects

This study was based on two aspects: 'intelligibility and comprehensibility' related to communication with people are from other countries: between non-native speakers and native speakers (NNSs-NSs) and the two non-native speakers (NNSs-NNSs). As Table 2 shows, for achieving intelligibility (focusing on words), students should recognize pronunciation, accents, stress, and intonation of English on each word. With vowel and consonant sounds of English it is also important to make the sounds of the words exactly. On the other hand, for achieving comprehensibility (focusing on meaning), there are several factors such as grammatical, cultural, linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects, as well as English Fluency.

3.4 Procedure

Table 3. The Procedures of the Study

Steps	The Procedures of the Study
Step 1	A survey was conducted at two different universities
Step 2	A questionnaire was analyzed Aspects of intelligibility in a questionnaire were collected Aspects of comprehensibility in a questionnaire were collected Aspects of intelligibility and comprehensibility were analyzed
Step 3	All questions in a questionnaire were again checked by a second rater

As Table 3 shows, first, a survey was conducted at two different Korean universities to collect various students' ideas and thoughts toward 'World Englishes'. Second, a questionnaire was analyzed to find out the factors causing difficulty and the considerations required when interacting with people from different cultures. And then, aspects of intelligibility and comprehensibility in a questionnaire were collected and analyzed to determine which factors should be considered in order to overcome miscommunications with each other. And finally, all questions in a questionnaire were again checked by a second rater in order to make it reliable.

4 Data Collection and Results

4.1 Intelligibility in a questionnaire

In order to avoid intelligibility problems, EFL adult learners should consider aspects of English such as intonation, stress and, pronunciation when corresponding with people from different parts of the world. There are several ideas related to ‘intelligibility and comprehensibility’ that students proposed.

Table 4 Intelligibility (Focusing on Words)

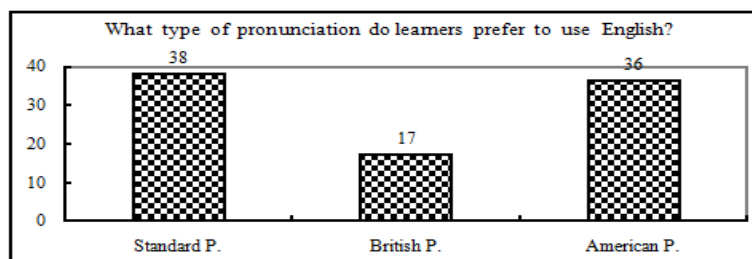
What type of English pronunciations do EFL learners prefer to use?						
N	Standard P.	British P.	American P.			
	38	17	36			
What are factors affecting Asian English pronunciation? (choose two)						
N	Mother T.	Cultural A.	Economic A.	Educational A.	Occupational A.	
	38	28	5	54	6	
Whether pronunciation can be a barrier to communicate with other cultures or not?						
N	Yes			No		
	50			41		
Which aspects of English are the most different from your first language?						
N	Pronunciation		Stress		Intonation	
	33		27		31	
Which English pronunciations are difficult or different from your first language?						
N	r	l	z	f	v	th
²	38	4	18	18	6	41

4.1.1 What type of English pronunciations do EFL learners prefer to use?

As Table 4 and Figure 1 show, most students (38) preferred to use Standard English and many students (36) wanted to use American English, but only some students (17) preferred to use British English. However, Standard Language is not a standard language, which is changing continually with variety and dialects. Especially, American English has become more accepted as an international means of communication, and it has become more important and influential in Korea, so the people who already speak American English share a social prestige above those using a common, Standard English. Further, American English is used in all schools and other public offices, and so there are people who already speak American English as Standard English. Accordingly, most of the students prefer to use and to learn American English.

² "N" refers to the number of students

Figure 1. The preference of pronunciation



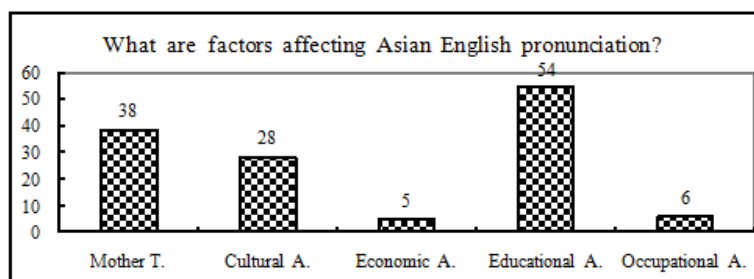
3

However, in Korea, from a few years ago, the pronunciation of listening sections in TOEIC and TOEFL testing has been used as multiple pronunciations such as Australian, Canadian, British and American pronunciation, so the Korean people's way of thinking is changing from American pronunciation of English to multiple pronunciations of English

4.1.2 What are factors affecting Asian speakers' English pronunciations?

As Table 4 and Figure 2 show, most students (54) thought educational factors were affecting Korean speakers' English pronunciations. And also many students (38) considered their mother tongue influential; while several students (28) thought a cultural aspect is one of factors affecting pronunciation. On the other hand, a few (11) thought economic and occupational aspects are the main such factors.

Figure 2. Factors affecting Asian English pronunciation



When students talk to people from different countries, they may recognize where they come from because of their pronunciations. The results

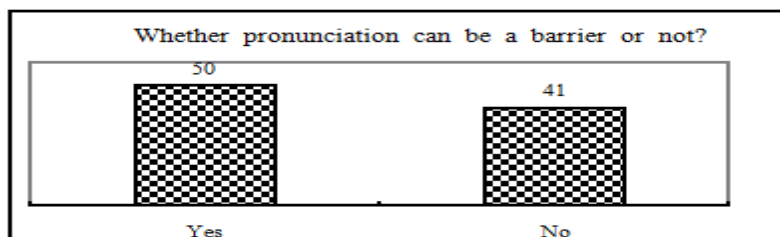
³ "P" refers to 'Pronunciation'.

revealed EFL speakers' English pronunciation and speech styles could be affected by their mother tongue, so it may be difficult to perceive speakers' English pronunciation and the variation of speech styles from other cultures. On the contrary, ironically, a few students think English pronunciations may be affected by economic and occupational factors since those who want to get a good job should speak American English.

4.1.3 Whether pronunciation can be a barrier to communicate with other cultures or not?

As Table 4 and Figure 3 show, students (50) thought pronunciation could be a barrier to communicate with other cultures while students (41) had the opposite view. Many thought different pronunciations might be hard to understand and to be understood. Accents in other countries differ from those of Korean, so it is a little bit of a barrier to understand, when the pronunciation is then different.

Figure 3. The barrier of pronunciation



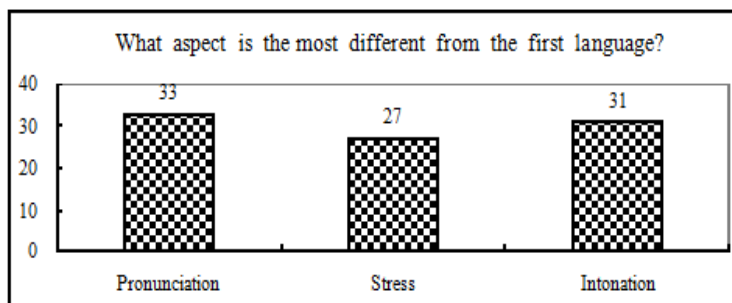
On the other hand, some students thought there was the difference between cultural background and language, so understanding other cultures could help miscommunications because students may not understand British accents well: thus, these kinds of things may make it hard to interact with people. Above all, maybe, in the beginning pronunciations can be a barrier, but some students did not think it was the issue since they thought a barrier to correspond with other cultures was confidence because the important thing was to be open-minded. Also, several students thought communication was not about pronunciations, but all about expressing oneself and understanding the other.

4.1.4 Which English pronunciations are the most different from your first language?

As Table 4 and Figure 4 show, many students (31) thought intonation of English was the most different of the factors compared with the first language, while more students (33) thought the pronunciation aspect was the most affected factor, while fewer students (27) thought stress in English was the

most different factor.

Figure 4. Aspects of the most different from the first language

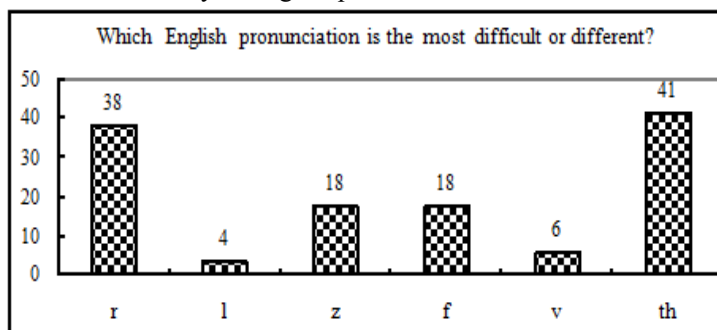


When students speak English, their pronunciations are totally affected by their first language, because the structure of Korean is entirely different from that of English; as all the factors of intonation, stress, and pronunciation of English differ from those of Korean.

4.1.5 Which pronunciations of English are the most different or difficult from your first language?

As Table 4 and Figure 5 show, most students (41) thought 'th'-sound was the most difficult and different from their first language. On the other hand, many students (38) thought 'r'-sound was the most difficult, fewer students (18) thought the 'z'-sound and 'f'-sound were the most different sound; and only some students (6) thought 'v'-sound was the most different sound. In Korean there are no sounds such as 'th, r, z, f, v,' found in pronunciations of English, so most of them feel it difficult to produce these sounds of English.

Figure 5. The difficulty of English pronunciation



All foreign language sounds may be recognized differently, so it may be a better way to begin the study with sounds which are quite different from those of the students' mother tongue. The findings could also indicate that miscommunications with other cultures may happen from the speaker's English pronunciation and speech styles as well as other aspects such as socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects. Above all, several researches have claimed that work on pronunciation need to be tied in with work on the individual's motivations and attitudes.

4.2 Comprehensibility in a questionnaire

In spite of intelligibility problems, there are other factors to consider, like the social, cultural and pragmatic aspects for achieving comprehensibility and to obtain an insight into how English is beneficial to most users as means of communication.

Table 5. Comprehensibility (Focusing on Meaning)

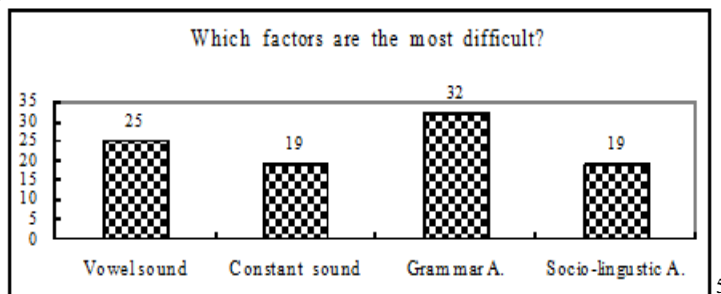
Which factors do non-native speakers feel make it difficult to communicate with people from different countries? (You can choose two)				
	Vowel sound	Constant sound	Grammar A.	Socio- linguistic A.
N	25	19	32	19
What are considerations in teaching English in EFL contexts? (choose two)				
	Cultural A.	Linguistic A.	Phonology A.	Socio-pragmatic A.
N	34	37	19	30
How much can you understand when communicating with non-native speakers?				
	100%	80%	50%	under 30%
N	4	38	40	9
Which factor is crucial to communicate with other cultures?				
	Pronunciation	Grammar	Culture	English Fluency
N	23	21	18	29

4.2.1 Which factors do non-native speakers feel make it difficult to communicate with people from different countries?

As Table 5 and Figure 6 show, most students (51) thought the most difficult factors to communicate as non-native speakers with native speakers were grammatical, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects; on the other hand, many students (44) thought vowel and consonant sounds were the most difficult factors.

⁴ "N" refers to the number of students and "A" refers to 'Aspects'

Figure 6. The most difficult factors

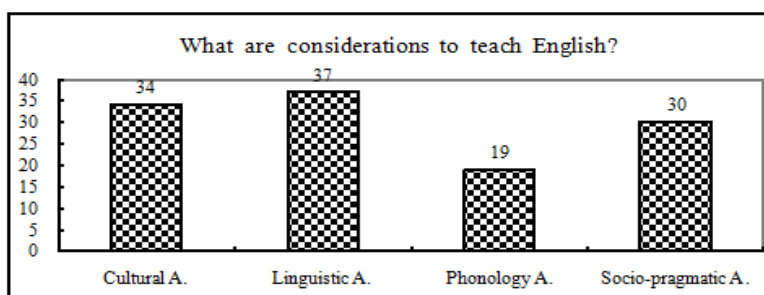


Most of students thought the grammatical aspect was one of the important factors to be achieved accurately and fluently, because English was not their first language. And also socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects are crucial factors, because language is always to be found in a social setting, which consists of social groups, communities, and other social categories. Thus, meaning within conversation is socially and pragmatically conditioned by the actual situation that provides non-native speakers with a comfortable means of assuring pragmatic acceptability as human social life is tied up with language.

4.2.2 What are considerations to teach English in the EFL contexts?

As Table 5 and Figure 7 show, most of the students' choices (64) were that most considerations to teach English in the EFL contexts were cultural, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects. On the other hand, many students' choices (56) showed that linguistic and phonological aspects were the most important considerations. Students could choose two.

Figure 7. The considerations when teaching English



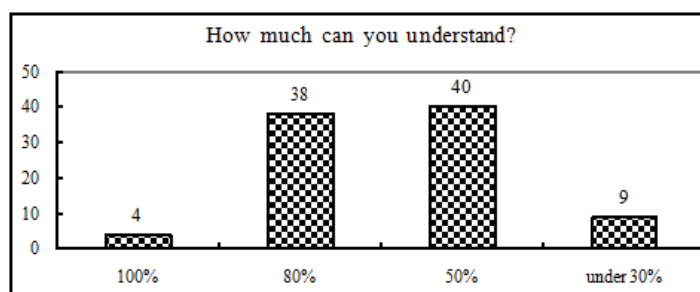
⁵ "A" refers to 'Aspects'

If students really understood other cultural, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects, they might know how language is used in communication with other cultures. Thus, when teaching English, the teacher should consider and respect other cultural, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects that allow students to understand and communicate with students from other countries easily.

4.2.3 How much can you understand when communicating with non-native speakers?

As Table 5 and Figure 8 show, some students (40) could understand about 50 percent when interacting with non-native speakers and some students (38) could understand about 80 percent. On the other hand, nine students could recognize under 30 percent; and only four students could understand fully when speaking with non-native English speakers.

Figure 8. The percents of understanding English

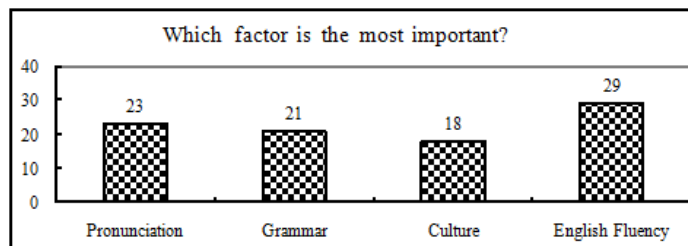


Learning the listening skill is a basic step to learn second or foreign language. Without understanding what people are saying, there cannot be communication between two non-native speakers (NNSs-NNSs) and between non-native speakers and native speakers (NNSs-Ns). So listening and understanding skills are essential to communicate among native or non-native speakers smoothly.

4.2.4 Which factors are crucial to communicate with other cultures?

As Table 5 and Figure 9 show, many students (29) thought English fluency was one of the most important factors to be able to correspond with native speakers while several students (39) thought grammatical and cultural aspects were the most important factors. Most of all, a number of previous studies have claimed that work on pronunciation needs to be considered with work on the individual's motivations, attitudes and socio-cultural schemata and so forth.

Figure 9. The important factor of communications with other cultures



The Asian speakers' speech sounds and styles could be different from their normal speech sounds and styles; however, the speakers' speech styles may not be much different between the two situations. Thus, the most crucial factors to correspond with other cultures are having confidence and a true mind, adjusting to culture, and understanding each other as well as distinguishing the pronunciation, intonation, and stress in English. Most importantly, the results revealed that the most important thing is that many thought the factors of comprehensibility were evidently more difficult or important than those of intelligibility to interact with people from different parts of the world.

5 Discussion

5.1 Considerations

Cognitive Considerations: Cognitively, many previous studies have claimed a strong argument that the critical period of language acquisition is early and when it makes it easy for children to learn a second and foreign language, especially, the pronunciation of a second/foreign language. There are some cognitive considerations to enhance development of students' pronunciations of English. First of all, a number of studies have supported the idea that children may have an advantage over adults in learning the pronunciation of a second and foreign language, so it may be a constraint for non-native speakers to generate pronunciation of English like native speakers. Second, EFL students should know it may be easy to have intelligibility problems between the two non-native speakers (NNSs-NNSs) or between native speakers and non-native speakers (NSs-NNSs). And lastly, after years of hearing their mother tongue, EFL adult learners acquire their speech habits naturally and unconsciously, so the methods and steps to learn a foreign language must be applied differently between children and adults given the EFL contexts. However, according to Ausubel (1964, cited in Brown, 1994), adults could benefit from certain grammatical explanations and deductive thinking about obviously for learning a second and foreign language while with

children it would be pointless to do that. Most of all, in the cognitive domain, adults can have meaningful leaning that allows such students to create their ideas and to increase deep thoughts, so it may be easy for EFL learners to attain comprehensibility over children. Thus, it may be possible that mature cognition can be a liability to gain successful second and foreign language acquisition.

Affective Considerations: It may be logical to look at the affective (emotional) domain for the most significant answers for the differences between first and second language learning. There are some affective considerations to boost students' motivation. First, the affective domain to learn second and foreign language includes factors such as inhibition, imitation, empathy, self-esteem, anxiety, attitudes and so forth, which may affect the acquisition of L2 related to interaction with native speakers. Second, learning other factors such as wider socio-cultural and general variables allows EFL students to establish comprehensibility easily. Second/foreign language teaching methods should more fully address the issues of motivation and exposure by creating socio-linguistic situations and an intercultural awareness to communicate with students from different cultures. Third, in particular, given the EFL context, students have to consider different pronunciations as well as different linguistic norms, rules, and cultural backgrounds in order to gain successful intelligibility and comprehensibility. And lastly, more importantly, when students learn a second/foreign language, they reflect on their attitudes, personality, learning styles and cultural backgrounds, thus, many students thought that the most important factors to communicate with other cultures are having confidence, adjusting to different cultures, and understanding each other.

Linguistic Considerations: The second/foreign language teaching may rely on two basic assumptions about the acquisition of second language phonology: first, it may be virtually impossible for EFL adults to acquire native-like pronunciation in a foreign language based on the critical period hypothesis, so when corresponding with different countries, students should appreciate this situation. Above all, normally pronunciation of English is affected by their mother tongue: accordingly, in order to avoid intelligibility problems, students should consider cognitive and linguistic considerations. Second, according to Krashen (1982, cited in Brown, 1994), pronunciation is an acquired skill and that focused instruction is at best useless, so it may be difficult for EFL learners to learn the pronunciations of English as a second/foreign language like native speakers because pronunciation is not a learned skill, but an acquired skill, so common features of Asian English as world Englishes are needed to set rules and norms for world Englishes in order to avoid miscommunications. Finally, the best method of language teaching is to integrate two language skills, for instance, reading and writing or listening and speaking are taught in concert with other skills, not as

separate entity, and focusing on communicative skills. In particular, student-centered learning and communicative language teaching may provide EFL learners with more chances to develop and train their language skills.

5.2 Limitations and suggestions

Limitations: The teaching methods and task types could be changed continually to be based on the limitations and suggestions of many research findings. From the findings of this study, a desirable model of English pronunciations and speech styles for the future instructions may be suggested for EFL learners. There are some challenges to attain intelligibility and comprehensibility when corresponding with people from different countries. First, the results may be different depending on students' level proficiency. If some students were at a high level of proficiency, they might never be problems in communicating with other cultures. In contrast, if some were of low level proficiency, they may find it hard to overcome their linguistic ability in the short term. Hence, in terms of the level of proficiency, the outcomes would be different. Second, when people have incorrect pronunciation of the words, even though they know how to produce the words correctly, it may be difficult to change their pronunciation and speech style since it is always from their habit of speech formed in childhood unconsciously and naturally. Most of all, it can be fossilized as bad speech styles and incorrect pronunciations. Lastly, the results may be different between written English and spoken English. Considering the EFL contexts, many students are good at competence (e.g., receptive skills such as reading and listening) of their L2, but they tend to be poor at their performance (e.g., productive skills such as speaking and writing). Thus, it may be difficult to estimate students' language ability by their output.

Suggestions: Suggestions are made for the future production of materials that incorporate activities more fully addressing the communicative dimensions of pronunciations. There are some suggestions to achieve intelligibility and comprehensibility. First, students need to have more chances to be in contact with native speakers or non-native speakers through the Internet such as emails, chat rooms, the bulletin boards, and videoconferencing. Second, most students started to learn English beyond their puberty, so the teaching methods for productive skills should be different between their first language and second/foreign language: for instance, using authentic texts and visual methods may help EFL students stimulate their motivation to learn more and to apply it to a real life more easily, particularly, for listening and speaking skills the methods and steps of teaching and learning a second/ foreign language in the EFL context should use different learning strategies within different contexts. And lastly, most of them have a lack of confidence about their pronunciation, so they need to know meaningful communication is more

important than such pronunciations. Most of all, students should consider miscommunication with people from other cultures may occur anytime and anywhere due to different pronunciation and speech styles as well as wider socio-cultural and general variables.

6 Conclusion

This study is based on two aspects: intelligibility and comprehensibility when interacting with other cultures. In order to achieve intelligibility (focusing on words), there are several factors: intonation, stress and pronunciation of English. The teaching methods for a second/foreign language are not that pronunciation should be ignored, but that pronunciation teaching methods should more fully address the issues of motivation and exposure to input from authentic materials. Hence, it may be that the influence of learners' mother tongue on their pronunciation is not really stronger than on other areas of language use. Also, the results of this study reported that the most important thing is that evidently many students thought the factors of comprehensibility were more difficult or significant than those of intelligibility, so they need to know meaningful communications are more important than such pronunciations. On the other hand, in order to attain comprehensibility (focusing on meaning), there are also several factors: linguistic, cultural, socio-cultural and pragmatic aspects, and so forth. Miscommunications with people from different countries may occur due to a variety of pronunciations of English and different sounds and speech styles as well as wider socio-cultural and pragmatic competence and general variables. Hence, the most important factors when communicating with people from other cultures are to have confidence, to adjust to different cultural norms, and to understand each other. Additionally, in order to establish successful intelligibility and comprehensibility, students should consider different situations and respect other cultures where people have different linguistic rules and social norms at any given time.

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Appendix I

SURVEY: World Englishes

SECTION 1: Background Information

This section of the questionnaire deals with your personal background. In each case, please indicate your answer by ticking the letter (a, b, etc.) or by writing it out.

1) Students' Background Information

1. Gender
a. Female b. Male

2. How old are you?
a. Under 21 b. 22-29 c. 30-39 d. Over 40

3. Is English your first, second or foreign language?
a. First language b. Second language c. Foreign language

4. What grade are you in? (if you are a student)
(Please specify) _____

5. Field of studying?
(Please specify) _____

2) Students' Linguistic Information

6. Overall English proficiency (self-evaluation):
a. High b. Intermediate c. Low

7. Use of English currently:
a. Frequently b. Sometimes c. Rarely
d. Others _____

8. What is the focus of your study?
a. Vocabulary b. Grammar c. Listening d. Speaking
e. Reading f. Writing g. Others _____

SECTION 2: Intelligibility and Comprehensibility as World Englishes

1. Intelligibility (Focusing on Words)

9. Which English pronunciation do you prefer to use?
a. Standard pronunciation b. British pronunciation
c. American pronunciation

