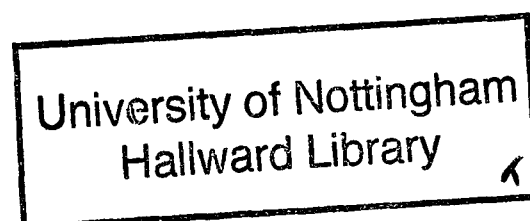


# **WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AMONG KOREAN LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

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**Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham  
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Peter A. Edwards  
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# **Willingness to Communicate Among Korean Learners of English**

## **Abstract**

Many Koreans not only feel strongly motivated to study English but they also enthusiastically pursue learning the language, and yet when real contact situations arise in which English could be used, many Koreans remain unwilling to do so. Better understanding this phenomenon could benefit not only Koreans but also other groups of people who see great value in learning a language but undercut their own efforts by avoiding opportunities to use it. Through a series of interviews leading to a large quantitative study, this research investigates some underlying factors which influence Korean learners' decision over whether to use English in a particular situation. The main findings suggest that the quality and quantity of previous contact with the non-Korean world, for example through travel and friendship, along with the presence and relative status of other Koreans at the communication event, significantly influence language use. These results generally support the theories of the Contact Hypothesis (CH) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC). These disparate theories, together in the Korean context, suggest a need for greater focus on L2 friendship and L1 status issues in language learning.

# Part I: Introduction and Literature Review

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This first chapter of this dissertation outlines how the subsequent chapters will progress through a study of Korean learners' willingness to communicate in English. beginning with the puzzle of why a nation of highly motivated, talented learners often act counterproductively in terms of their language goals. This chapter will introduce the salient theories, the data collection and analysis methods, and the key results, by mapping out the structure of this study. First, however, I will give some background information concerning why I undertook this particular project. What then is the relationship between Korean people and English?

### 1.1 Background of the Dissertation

#### *The Initial Puzzle*

Over its 5000-year history, Korea has upheld education as a respected pillar of society. Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century South Korea [hereafter, Korea] sits at the very top of the world in many areas of education: Korea consistently ranks among the top five nations of the world in the assessment of high school students' skills in mathematics, science, reading, and problem solving (PISA, 2006). The English language, as a school subject, an employment prerequisite, and a social phenomenon has captured Korea's focus for decades. Rare are Korean people of any age who do not understand the powerful importance English has on their society.

Recent years have seen a growing awareness that English language teaching in Korea has not produced great *speakers* of the language, and so more communicative approaches to teaching English have been put into policy. Still, Korean learners of English often remain hesitant to communicate in the language even when the opportunity arises. Such hesitancy, despite strong motivation toward learning English and a highly successful education system, presents a puzzle I found worth investigating.

I have worked as an English instructor in Korea since 1994 and have found many things puzzling about Korean people's relationship with English. First, I was surprised to see how ubiquitous English was in Korea. As a cultural phenomenon it appears in advertising and entertainment often more than the Korean language. English loan words pepper nearly every Korean conversation. To enter almost any school or professional workplace, an English test must be taken, even if English is not significant to the work or study. English in Korea has often been taught as a knowledge-based subject and frequently becomes a status marker rather than a tool for communication, but the trend toward communicative usage is becoming more and more noticeable.

During my years in Korea, I have seen the public school system lower the age at which children must begin their English study. However, most parents feel public schools are inadequate to give their children sufficient advantage, and so those who can afford to often enroll their children in private, after-school institutes. These “cram schools,” or *hagwons* in Korean, have reached numbers in the thousands in most cities and in the past decade Korea has overtaken Japan as the most popular country in the world for native speakers to find a job teaching English.

Korean citizens with high language ability are in great demand. Korean teachers of English work in public and private schools and also work as tutors, often earning enviable salaries (PISA, 2006). There are companies that hire people to call children on the telephone to speak with them for just five minutes every evening in English. These “telephone tutors” can each have as many as 40 clients and more tutors are always needed.

On the extreme end of this quest for English are examples of families being uprooted and separated. The “Father Goose” syndrome, *kiroeki appa* in Korean, refers to the growing trend of Korean fathers sending their families to an English speaking country. Due to few job opportunities abroad, he remains in Korea alone and sends money to his family, all in hopes that his children can learn English well and thus have brighter futures in Korea.

The “Long Distance Delivery” trend, *won jung chool san*, refers to the practice of pregnant women flying abroad, often alone, to deliver their babies in America in order to secure American citizenship for their children. This allows male children to escape Korean mandatory military service, but the family’s other goal is to allow their daughters and sons easier and cheaper access to education in English.

Perhaps the most extreme example of this English mania is surgical mutilation. Known medically as frenulotomy, an unknown but probably small number of desperate parents and unscrupulous doctors believe that surgically removing a portion of children's under-tongue will help them pronounce English better and thus heighten his or her future advantage (The Korea Times, 2004). Of course this is despite the fact that ethnic Koreans raised in English speaking countries have no problems with English pronunciation.

Clearly there is a strong desire among many Koreans to learn English at a high level, and not only on a test-taking, grammar/translation level, but also on a communicative level. Despite this desire, I often find Korean learners hesitant and even reticent to use English when opportunities present themselves. Students shy from raising their hands, and classes must be repeatedly told to stay speaking the target language. Many Koreans have stories of seeing international visitors on the street but being too afraid to approach them. The suggestion of forming a weekly group meeting where only English is spoken is met with smiles and nods but is rarely acted upon. While true that the Korean education system may foster a passive nature in which students rarely initiate action, still, the effect this passivity has on the usage and achievement of this very highly desired language greatly interests me.

This *ambivalence* toward English, a seeming attraction to and rejection of the language, has caught and held my interest during my entire time in Korea. Another curiosity that has stayed with me and I feel may be linked to the language issue is the social/acquaintance structure, and in particular how Koreans interact with people, especially other Koreans.

Any visitor to Korea will notice over a short time that the people have many unique ways of interacting. Friendship, or perhaps more precisely "friendship potential," outlines an example pertinent to this discussion. Although now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century many longstanding aspects of Korean society are changing, Koreans traditionally only have friendships with people of their own exact age. A close acquaintance more than one year older or younger is not considered a friend (*chingu*), but either a "senior" (*sumbae*) or "junior" (*hubae*), and these distinctions dictate behavior, discourse, and attitude among people. If a group meeting takes place in a restaurant, for example, the youngest present must run out to get needed cigarettes, while the oldest must pay the bill for dinner. No discussion of this among the party is ever necessary.

When Koreans meet they quickly sort out their age differences so they know how to proceed with each other. However, another social characteristic is that, Korean strangers will rarely start a conversation with each other without having first been formally introduced by an intermediary. Furtive glances and awkward silences often precede desperately needed introductions.

As my years passed in Korea, I became increasingly interested in whether an important connection existed between Koreans' ambivalence toward using English for communication and Korean society's rather strict rules for social interaction. My curiosity led me to social psychology's *Contact Hypothesis* [hereafter, CH], which has "friendship potential" at its core, and then later to the communication theory of *Willingness to Communicate* [hereafter, WTC].

### *The Uniqueness of Korea*

Many of the ideas and findings presented in this dissertation focus directly on Korea without mentioning how similar or different Korea may be from other, especially East Asian, countries. The first and foremost reason for this is that this study was not meant to be comparative in nature but rather a deep exploration into Korean social factors significant in their effect on Korean learners WTC. That being said, both the literature review and my qualitative data collection touch on China and Japan in terms of both potential similarities and differences with Korea.

The literature review will mention research from China (most notably Wen and Clement, 2003), which discusses, among other topics, the *other-directedness* of Chinese society. That is to say, individuals in China make many behavioral decisions based on questions such as, "How will other people respond to and evaluate my actions?" Many of the findings of this dissertation, especially those focused Koreans' sensitivity to other Koreans around them, obviously mirror those Chinese findings. In Japan, the field of WTC is currently being led by Yashima (2002, 2004) who coins the term *International Posture*, which has key similarities with *Intercultural Complex* developed in this research.

In terms of my own data collection and analysis, I selected one Japanese and one Chinese interviewee who had both lived for years in Korea in order to hear their own perspectives on the similarities and differences between Korean society and their own. Also, over decade or so that I have lived in Asia I have visited both China

and Japan and met with countless nationals from both countries in my classrooms and elsewhere. I have also discussed the three countries with Koreans and non-Koreans who have spent time there. Chapter 8 will highlight some of the outstanding differences that I have found, but as a general statement it is my opinion that Korea, China, and Japan have a great many similarities in terms of social forces which may affect L2 WTC, and perhaps the major differences are mainly of degree.

### *Overview of the Research Project*

To research this issue, I first took a qualitative approach with a series of interviews that would allow a variety of Korean learners of English to speak for themselves about their thoughts and feelings concerning their relationships with English. Second, after observing patterns in my interviewees responses, I created a questionnaire, focusing on select factors in learners' willingness to use English in different contact situations and administered it to 4000 students in two universities' mandatory freshman/sophomore English classes. To go about solving this ambivalence puzzle I asked several broad questions:

- What are the experiences and attitudes of above average Korean learners of English?
- What effect might a global event such as the 2002 World Cup have on Korea, and on Korea's relationship with English? Also, who might volunteer to speak with international visitors during these games?
- What are the background demographics, especially concerning travel and friendships made through English, of a large cross-section of Korean learners in terms of their contact with English, and what correlations with WTC exist?
- What contact conditions, especially concerning the status of the audience present at a communication event, seem to most lower the learners WTC in English?

Hopefully this investigation will shed light not only on Korea's particular relationship with English, but also on how the social structures of any group of people may influence an individual's pivotal decision of whether to speak in their second language at a specific linguistic moment.

## 1.2 The Structure of the Dissertation

Although this dissertation includes theories from different fields of research and both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, I hope to present it as one story divided into eight chapters in three main parts:

- Part I: Introduction and Literature Review (chapters 1-4)
- Part II: Methodology (chapter 5)
- Part III: Results and Discussion (chapters 6-8)

Through this dissertation I hope to tell the story of Korean people's complex relationship with the English language and the forces that influence it.

### *Chapter 1: Introduction*

This chapter introduces the topic of this dissertation by giving some background information on Korea and its puzzling relationship with English. Also, this chapter gives some background on why this puzzle interests me and how I set on this research project. Finally, chapter 1 outlines the structure of the entire dissertation.

### *Chapter 2: Windows on Korea*

This chapter situates this research project within the Korean context. It begins with sections on surface facts about Korea such as geography, economy, and history. Next, a collection of quotes from non-Koreans who have traveled or worked in Korea give an outsiders perspective on the country with both positive and negative comments on experiencing Korea. Next, the chapter looks deeper under the surface of Korea by reviewing scholarly literature written by both Korean and non-Korean researchers concerning such topics as ethno-nationalism, kinship practices, and unique aspects of Korean communication. The following section focuses on English in Korea as a social phenomenon and a final section looks at the Korean education system with its roots in Confucianism and its concentration on English. Special attention is given to the mania around the university entrance exam in which English plays a significant role. Because the result from this exam determines so much of the future life of

young Koreans, much of the present-day Korean world revolves around this one-day test.

### *Chapter 3: Willingness to Communicate*

This chapter explores WTC from its origins in first language communication research to its present role in second language acquisition study. The first section places WTC within the Korean context by explaining the puzzle of Korean learners' hesitancy to speak in English. The next section goes through the evolution of WTC by reviewing the pertinent literature. Because until recently most WTC research had been carried out in western countries, the next section explores WTC in the context of China highlighting the concept of *the other-directed self* and *desire vs. willingness*. A section is then devoted to WTC in Japan where current research shows great adaptability to the Korean context. Chapter 3 concludes with WTC research that has been carried out in Korea, highlighting the concept of *moment-to-moment WTC* which corresponds well with the findings of this dissertation.

### *Chapter 4: The Contact Hypothesis*

This research project began with many of the ideas found in the social psychological literature of the CH. The chapter starts with an explanation of the metaphor of language learning and prejudice and then explores the evolution of CH with its roots in social psychology's attempt to lower prejudice between different ethnic groups. I was curious initially whether the contact conditions found to lower prejudice may also raise WTC. Among the CH conditions *authority support*, *equal status* and *friendship potential* stand out as very applicable to the investigation of Korean WTC.

### *Chapter 5: Methodology*

Part II of this dissertation explains the methodology I used to investigate Korean WTC. Chapter 5 begins by outlining the research design for this project starting with a section on the justification of using both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The overall research questions are also outlined. The



next section explains the different groups of participants, which include two groups of interviewees who have above average WTC, and some of who took part in the 2002 World Cup event, which was a historical occurrence in Korea and a major meeting of the Korean, and the non-Korean worlds. Although this study began as a qualitative research project and primarily remains one, quantitative data was also collected from 4000 questionnaires distributed to students at two Korean universities. Due to very different national rankings the two universities have very different students with different experiences and academic achievements. However the uniformity of some of their behavior concerning English is one of the key findings of this dissertation. The next chapter sections explain the instrument and procedure used in this research and the methods of analysis used to reach my results. Chapter 5 concludes with an account of the limitations of the methods in this research.

### *Chapter 6: Intercultural Complex*

Part III of this dissertation begins with a chapter on the first of the two factors I found to have a major influence on Korean WTC. After Parts I and II have set the backdrop for the discussion of this study's results, I thought it best to begin with a step-by-step explanation of the logic of my argument. Therefore chapter 6 begins with an *opening argument* section, which introduces those two key factors, *Intercultural Complex* [IC] and *L1 Audience Sensitivity* [L1AS], defining them and outlining the roles they play in Korean WTC.

Chapter 6 then presents the results that pertain to IC beginning with the quantitative data and analysis. Because IC concerns the "collision" that occurs when the Korean and non-Korean worlds contact each other, the questionnaire data in this chapter concerns the attitudes and behaviors of the participants in relation to that collision. For example data showing the relationship between travel abroad or international friendships and WTC is presented here.

Chapter 6 then moves on to the qualitative data and the interviewee's stories fill in the details and processes behind the quantitative results. One section shows interviewee perceptions of the Korean world highlighting the often-repeated themes such as historical shame and feelings of national inferiority. The next section outlines how many of the respondents feel a similar lure from the non-Korean world and English in particular, recurrently stemming from a desire for difference and even

escape. However, many stories also tell of conflicts in the relationship with English and the non-Korean world. Other sections go on to describe the interviewees' experiences with non-Korean people and travel abroad. Resulting reappraisal of themselves and the Korean are also shown through the interview extracts. Chapter 6 lays much of the foundation for the results discussed in chapter 7 and is thus significantly longer.

### *Chapter 7: L1 Audience Sensitivity*

As in chapter 6, this chapter begins with the quantitative results that pertain to the main theme it covers. L1AS, unlike IC, concerns only the Korean world; specifically how Korean people interact with each other. It is the nature of this interaction, I argue, that influences how Korean people use English when other Korean people are present. The first quantitative results concern WTC when no L1 audience is present and are then contrasted with results when an L1 audience is present. The results show with great uniformity across the more than 4000 participants that the addition of the L1 audience significantly lowers WTC, especially when there are major differences in social status and perceived English competence between the speaker and the audience.

Chapter 7 then goes on to present the interview data, which helps to better understand the power behind L1AS. The participants tell stories that explain how Korean people interact with each other and themes such as face, filial piety, and the fear of being ostracized recur frequently. Korea as a very *other-driven* society emerges strongly from the interviews, which show how and why the participants care so much about how they are seen by other Koreans. Chapter 7 then shows what happens when English in particular plays a role in Korean relationships. The interviewees all spoke English well enough to conduct long interviews but uniformly they perceived their ability to be low, and their stories reflect how such perceptions play a significant role in L1AS. Some additional data from an article I co-wrote documents the "communication paralysis" that occurs among many Korean learners of English, and then interview extracts from this study explain how L1AS can be modified with the help of experiences under the proper contact conditions.

## *Chapter 8: Summary and Conclusions*

The final chapter of this dissertation offers a summary of the main findings of this study. The key results are presented to show an understanding of the complex relationship between Korean people and the English language. This story is meant to show a clear link between a unique society built up of rules and practices over 5000 years and a precise linguistic moment when a potential L2 speaker from that society must decide whether or not to communicate in the L2. Chapter 8 then offers the possible contributions this study may advance. It is my hope that the ideas presented in this dissertation, most specifically the power of IC and L1AS in relation to WTC, may contribute to this area of second language acquisition. Chapter 8 also suggests areas for future research, which may help unlock this complex puzzle, bringing not only theoretical advances but also practical help to Korean and perhaps other second language learners.

## *Appendices and References*

The appendix to this dissertation includes the WTC questionnaire that was used in the quantitative portion of this study and also sample questions from the English section of the university entrance exam. References for the sources cited in this dissertation are listed. Interview transcripts are included in a separate volume.

## CHAPTER 2 WINDOWS ON KOREA

A nation with both a long history of intense foreign influence and a distinct, often strict, internal social world creates a context which inevitably shapes many of the intentions and practices of its people. The influence of this context will be especially powerful when the external and internal worlds collide. The Korean world, if it could exist in a vacuum, would have its own unique complexities. However this complex world must always also interact with the non-Korean world, which tugs at the internal framework and serves to further complicate the Korean context.

The focus of this thesis is to explore the direct link between Korea's social world and the linguistic reality which exists within it. I will, therefore, investigate Korea's social world and how that world affects Korean communication practices. This chapter will give a brief description of some of the unique and salient characteristics of Korea to help prepare the reader for a clearer understanding of the analysis and discussion of my research findings.

The two factors which I isolate through my data I term, *Intercultural Complex* and *L1 Audience Sensitivity*. The first refers to how Korean people relate to the non-Korean world, including not only non-Korean people, but also products, media, and global reputations. The second term focuses on how Koreans relate to each other within the Korean world. More specifically, *L1 Audience Sensitivity* points to how Korean people feel when they speak English while other Koreans can hear them, and all the background factors that complicate this moment. This chapter then will go into extended detail about the context from which Korean learners of English emerge. Although this study is not primarily an anthropological one, it is vital to present many salient elements of Korean society. In this short space I will not attempt a comprehensive explanation of the entire society, but instead will limit this discussion to elements which I feel have a significant effect on how Koreans learn and use English, and elements that at the same time seem to be rather unique to the Korean context. More specifically this chapter will attempt to explain the background for the two factors this dissertation isolates.

I will begin the chapter with a section that gives a brief overview of present day Korea, as perhaps seen by a first-time visitor to the country. Then I will go into more detail about the history which should help explain why Korea is indeed like it is today and specifically how and why this *International Complex* developed. Next I

explore the roots of my second factor, *L1 Audience Sensitivity* by sketching some of the guiding principles that affect most Koreans and their interactions with each other, whether they unconsciously follow them or consciously reject them. I will discuss certain elements of the Korean language that also strongly affect how Koreans interact. I will then end with two sections, one that outlines the Korean education system and how all Koreans are formally introduced to English, and a final section highlighting some points of interest in the Korean nation's relationship with English.

I begin with an overview of Korea, which outlines possible impressions of a visitor to the country, and which makes a few comparisons to other countries that may be more familiar to the reader.

## **2.1 Korea on the Surface**

Having resided in South Korea for so long, I have more than ten years of observations which shape my impressions of the country. However I will attempt to always substantiate my opinions with reliable source material. The CIA's online Factbook (2005) offers weekly updates of information on the world's nations and many of the demographic facts below are from that source at the time of this writing in spring 2005. I will sometimes compare Korea with England both to give a clear point of reference and because the two countries have some similarities that might be unknown to those unfamiliar with Korea. The comparisons also point to some identity issues that Koreans have in terms of feeling that their nation is often unfairly compared with other countries.

The following sections give a brief overview of Korea today in a way that is meant to simply orient the reader who knows little about the peninsula. I have chosen geography, population, government, economy, religion, military and a brief historical background because I feel these aspects of Korean society provide a solid foundation for this discussion without attempting to describe everything about this complex and ancient culture. Later in this chapter further elements will also be explored. The economy section is somewhat longer than the others not only because of Korea's phenomenally rapid success in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also because the economic present and desired future have a great effect on the country's identity.

## *Geography*

The Korean peninsula juts off the Northeast edge of China's mainland and is bordered to the west by the Yellow Sea and to the east by the Sea of Japan (known as the East Sea in Korea). Including both North and South Korea, the peninsula has a land area of around 220,000 sq/km, which is quite comparable to Great Britain's 230,000 sq/km. In terms of population, South Korea alone and England alone both hover around 49 million. Because England is somewhat larger than South Korea it has a lower population density, 383 people per sq/km, than South Korea's 425 per sq/km. Still England's density is more than three times that of the European average of 117 per sq/km (America's number is 22). Among the other nations of the world, both England and South Korea can be characterized very similarly as a lot of people packed into a small space, bordered to the east, west, and south by water. Koreans describe their land as mountainous and their four seasons as generally temperate with a short rainy season in the summer. Visitors may first notice hazy air over the large cities and heavy vehicle and pedestrian congestion.

## *Population*

Despite the crowdedness of almost 50 million people in a relatively small area, Korea's population growth rate has recently stayed around zero and few modern families have more than two children. Both infant mortality and life expectancy rates are comparable with the rest of the developed world. Except for around 20,000 Chinese, Korea is extremely homogeneous and there are no other significant ethnic groups (the 37,000 U.S. military troops notwithstanding). The capital city of Seoul has a population of over 10 million and is the fifth most populous city in the world. Just under half of Korea's population states no religious affiliation; with one third being Buddhist and the other one third Christian. Amazingly, and due to the famously simple alphabet system, nearly one hundred percent of all Koreans can read and write.

## *Government*

The South Korean government is a republic which is a mix of European and Anglo-American systems, along with elements of traditional Chinese philosophy

(CIA Factbook, 2005). The president and prime minister head the government, with the president elected by popular vote to one five-year term, then appointing a prime minister. Five major political parties vie in every election. A supreme court and a constitutional court lead the judicial branch with all justices appointed by the president.

### *Economy*

Korea does not possess great natural resources and its main industries are electronics, telecommunications, automobile production, chemicals, shipbuilding, and steel. Beginning in the early 1960s South Korea's economic growth took flight to become a high-tech modern world economy (Kim, 1992; Amsden, 1989). At the end of the Korean War average per capita income was under \$100. By 1977 it hit \$1,000, and by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it had topped \$10,000. The CIA Factbook (2005) lists the current GDP per capita purchasing power parity of almost \$18,000 (the European Union average is about \$25,000). Korea is usually counted as the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> largest exporter and the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> largest importer in the world. Only 4% of the population now lives below the poverty line, in contrast to the UK's 17%, and America's 12%. Both the inflation and unemployment rates are under 4%. Though not a global powerhouse, Korea enjoys a rather comfortable economic situation. In terms of its economic relationship with the United States, Korea represents America's seventh largest trading partner and sixth largest export market.

Modern cars and buildings and new construction sites fill the many large cities in Korea with bullet trains zipping between these cities. An important aspect of the Korean economy is the overpowering influences a few conglomerates, or *Chaebol*, have that dominate much of Korean business. The major *Chaebol* companies include Hyundai, Samsung, SK, LG, and Daewoo. Despite government attempts to break their hold, the *Chaebol* continue to have great influence on Korea and have successfully put Korean products in households around the world.

Song (2003) shows present day Korea as a country whose economy paints a picture of its past and its Intercultural Complex:

Today Korean products such as automobiles and electronic goods seem to form an important part of Korean identity...image advertisements convey

discourses that posit the nation as a family, Japan as a national enemy... and a vision of the Korean nation as an ultra-superpower... [also] national uniqueness sovereignty, independence and prosperity. (p. 83)

This desired image is extremely prevalent and visitors to Korea will quickly notice that Korean television and film holds only a slight resemblance to the reality they see everyday. There seems to be some wishful thinking that Song explains quite clearly. Song (2003) goes somewhat deeper into Korea's relationship with Japan which could be extended to other countries as well: "[Korea's] anti-Japan discourse contains inherent contradictions... Korea is indebted to Japan for today's industrial development... an inevitable ambiguity towards Japan as... both model and enemy, a negative and positive 'other'" (pp. 77-78). Similar contradictions will reappear in this discussion of the Korean context. Indeed the two factors that I find most affect Koreans' relationship with using English, both grow from contradictions.

### *Religion*

Koreans practice a variety of religions with little government interference. The native religions stem from shamanism, but roughly a third of the population is Christian, another third Buddhist, and the rest either involved in the small groups of the world's other religions or non-affiliated (for overviews see Rhie, 2002; Lee, 1984). Korea's recent history with Christianity is worthy of special mention both for its uniqueness in the world and its connection with language learning. Although Christianity was introduced to Korea in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, its recent growth has been unprecedented. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially the last three decades, Christianity has exploded across the country, growing from insignificant numbers to some 15 million. Seoul alone has over 10,000 Christian churches including the five largest protestant churches in the world. Rhie (2002) attributes this explosion to the similar monotheistic roots of shamanism and Confucianism leaving a void in terms of the afterlife that Christianity readily filled. Important to my study is that Christianity spurs many Koreans to think about the non-Korean world, and to specifically want to learn English for evangelical purposes.



## *Military*

South Korea maintains an army, navy, air force, Marine Corps, and coast guard (CIA Factbook, 2005). Able-bodied men have ten years of compulsory service from age 20, with 24-28 months of active duty. Women make up less than 1% of the total military personnel. Because so much of life in South Korea is somewhat defined by the presence of North Korea and its military threat, it deserves some mention in this section. North Korean military information remains largely secret but it is often rumored that the North has the largest ground force in the world with a manpower availability of nearly six million. For more than half a century the North, the South, and American forces have exchanged small hostilities and the major reason for the US presence in South Korea, along with the major function of the Korean forces, is protection from the possible escalation of those hostilities.

## *Historical Background*

Although differing opinions persist, it is generally agreed that the history of the Korean people on the Korean peninsula is approximately 5000 years old (for overviews see Hastings, 1987, and Savada & Shaw, 1992). The first true dynasty, Tan'gun, lasted from 2333 to 1122 BCE. During the Three Kingdoms period from 37 BCE to 935 AD, both Confucianism and Buddhism flourished, and the next several centuries were marked by attempts at unity, a suzerain relationship with China, and periodic cultural and military invasions by both Asian and Western powers and the Christian church. From 1905 through 1945, Japan formally annexed Korea until the end of World War II. Tumultuous years after the war culminated in the Korean Conflict from 1950 to 1953, which has left the peninsula divided ever since. Heavily influenced by America but still struggling with democracy, South Korea modernized over the next decades. Since the 1988 Seoul Olympics, Korea has generally been regarded as a developed, democratic country with a growing economy, while the North remains an isolated communist state with severe economic troubles but still a military threat to world peace.

## 2.2 Visitor Perspectives--Desperate or Lucky?

After several sections of objective information, instead of detailing my own subjective views about Korea, I will take a more editorial role and use my years of observation to select some opinions from others who have a visitor's perspective on the country. The quotes below are from a very popular website, Dave's ESL Café (Sperling, 2005) which offers information on teaching English around the world but has specific forums for its single most talked about country, Korea.

I scanned the discussion boards, finding thousands upon thousands of comments about living in Korea, mostly from native English speaking teachers who came to Korea in search of employment. The opinions here are often incongruous with each other but they represent a cross section of the most common statements on the site and statements I myself hear with great frequency. Later sections of this chapter will offer more academic views on Korean society but I feel the following quotes are valuable in their raw emotionality from people who have immersed their lives in Korean society.

While organizing the following subsections, the metaphor of a houseguest seemed to fit for visitors to Korea who have a variety of encounters including the amenities of the house, the hospitality of the hosts, and how the hosts themselves interact with each other. I include both the positive and negative comments that seem to typify visitors' experiences. There were comments such as, "You must be mad or stupid or desperate to come here," and others such as, "We're incredibly lucky to be living here!" Within this wide range, I found that the comments centered on the following categories of topics: extremeness, oneness, accessibility, and hospitality. I will give examples from each, and later sections of this chapter will go into depth about these phenomena that visitors to Korea often notice.

### *Extremeness*

By extremeness I refer to comments through which visitors to Korea address how they see Koreans going to remarkable limits in such areas as education, emotionality, and even cruelty to others. The following are some representative comments:

- Some people take things too personally. I can't get a decent conversation without arguing. Koreans are too emotional.
- The acceptance of [frequent] drinking and getting drunk.
- My [high school] students have gray hair; can barely keep their eyes open because they go to academy until 12 or 1 in the evening. I see signs of exhaustion and stress everyday.
- Koreans' inability to accept criticism of Korea in any form, but their equal love to criticize my country and other non-Korean countries. I always disliked the "Korea is a victim" attitude. Everything bad that happens to Korea or Koreans is blamed on someone else.
- Cruelty toward the weak [and submissiveness] toward the strong.
- Androcentrism of fragile minds--Korean women are strong. They simply deserve better than this. While western men aren't perfect.... Men here seem to do NO housework much less EVER help with children.

From the spiciness of the food to the aggressiveness of drivers, visitors often comment on the extremeness to which Korean people often go. Although visitors may understand the concept of collective societies, much of Korean behavior seems baffling.

### *Oneness*

The next quotes I put under the category of “oneness” because they speak to the observations that Koreans seem to have a pull towards homogeneity.

- [Korea] is stymied by the blind need to conform... [and yet have a] total disregard for safety or regulations/laws of any kind.
- If you disagree with some work related issues then you are now an enemy.
- I don't like the fact that age is so damn important... People here will kowtow to a senior even when they are wrong or doing something illegal. Merit is not always important. Age [and] who you know is often more important.

- The herd mentality! If you are different you are WRONG. Period. It kills me sometimes I see some flamboyant creative behavior by a student and watch it being systematically squashed by friends and even Korean teachers.
- The belief that if you are not Korean you are somehow tainted. Koreans [think they] should only marry and procreate with other Koreans.

Phrases such as "the blind need to conform" are very common among western teachers who come from more individualistic countries. The "Korea is a victim" comment points directly to *han* and may factor Intercultural Complex. Visitors to Korea often feel that Koreans have a "chip on their shoulders," and blame foreign influences for their problems. The importance of age and staying within the mainstream frustrates many visiting teachers who hope to engender creativity and individuality in their students. Deprivation of sleep among Korean students is evident in almost every classroom, bus, and subway. The final two comments point to the common subject of Korean blood. Although there are exceptions, it is common to hear that Korean families neither approve of international marriages nor adoption. Purity of blood is an often-discussed issue.

### *Accessibility*

The following quotes speak precisely to why many people do decide to extend their stay in Korea despite (or because of) the extreme differences they find with their home countries. Many visitors comment on how easy life can be in Korea because big cities are a patchwork of tiny, almost self-contained villages which provide access to many of life's essential. Some visitors find this claustrophobic or boring while others find it simple and peaceful. The comments below reflect some of the more positive attitudes:

- Things to see and do; there's plenty of national parks, beaches, waterfalls etc. Good day trips if you [get out of the cities].
- Transportation! Inexpensive taxis everywhere. Buses are cheap and prompt; the subway is the same, and well signposted in English.
- Imitation goods: you can pick up anything including all the fake brand names relatively cheaply.

- Internet access- everywhere!
- Gadgets: wonderful! You can get a hand phone with email, camcorder and large photo storage capacity for only 300.000 won [\$280].
- Private lessons: easy- go make yourself a fortune!
- Dentists here are professionals. They do such a good job compared to ones back home [in Europe].
- Food; its tasty and inexpensive to eat out, and the diet is healthy!
- Almost complete lack of crime: your things don't go missing even when you leave them accidentally.
- You are unlikely to be hassled or intimidated by [weird people on the street] unlike many western cities.
- The people! Koreans are generally helpful and generous once you get to know them.

Visitors often comment on how easy it can be to live in Korea, even without learning much of the language. This leads to the next section on the hospitality many visitors feel they are greeted with in Korea.

### *Hospitality*

Many visitors talk about the warm hospitality they feel from their Korean hosts. However I will begin this final list of quotes with some negative comments to show the contrasting views that are held.

- What is unworthy of such people is that they seem incapable of developing manners that will not find them reviled by most people on the planet. The spitting [on the street] has to go... Learning how to enter and exit a simple doorway or an elevator seems beyond their capacity for courtesy. [And] their driving habits!

On the more positive side:

- Friends and students link arms with me when we are walking.

- The vast majority of people are supportive--and forgiving-- of me when I speak Korean, even though I make mistakes.
- Enthusiasm rather than indifference from my students.
- Random acts of kindness by strangers. I had to buy an umbrella and some guy insisted that he walk me from the supermarket to my bus stop so that I didn't get too wet.
- How people have such enduring friendships here and how it is easy to gather a large group of Korean friends and get together.
- That none of my students have thrown desks/chairs/anything they can get their hands on, at me yet! Like back home.

An above commenter mentioned that Koreans are "too emotional," while others feel the emotion as warmth and tenderness. I would venture to say that every visitor to Korea would state that the people tend to exhibit great emotion. Many visitors are initially surprised by this sometimes-fiery emotion if they arrived in Korea with the notion that all Asians are always quiet and reserved.

Whether with positive or negative comments, most visitors seem to state that Korea is uniquely different from other places they have lived and visited. I hope the above comments help depict the multifaceted yet distinctive Korean context. The interview extracts presented in chapters 6 and 7 will offer the Korean perspective and an interesting comparison with the above comments from non-Koreans. The following sections delve deeper into the academic investigation of this context.

### **2.3 Under the Surface of Korea**

After glancing at some surface facts about Korea and some perspectives from visitors to the country, a deeper look at the hows and whys of Korean society will inform the later discussion of Korea's relationship with English. The "extremeness" and "oneness" discussed in the previous section both result from many aspects of Korean society that have developed over centuries.

### 2.3.1 Roots of Ambivalence

Visitors to Korea will often hear of the country's 5000-year history marked by a strong and consistent identity and bloodline. "One blood" is a common term used to unify the spirit of Koreans across the peninsula, the world, and throughout history. Also, the word "traditional" is very often used to describe everything from medicine to furniture to thought and social patterns. Korean folklore is filled with stories of gods, talking animals, and heroic humans that cavorted millennia ago resulting in a people that have remained basically unchanged since those mythical days. At the same time however, visitors will hear how often the peninsula has been invaded and the overwhelming influences other cultures have had. This begs the question: *When in these 5000 years did a Korean identity actually form?* The following sections will sketch an answer.

#### *The Development of Ethno-Nationalism in Korea*

John Goulde, in *Tracing the Historical and Cultural Roots of Korean Ethno-nationalism* (1999), provides an overview how and when Koreans began to consider themselves Korean (for other perspectives see Robinson, 1988; Duus, 1995). His basic stance is that:

Caught between the competing imperial powers of China and Japan, Korea has struggled again and again to maintain its territorial independence. At the same time Koreans have constructed and reconstructed their ethnic identity in support of their territorial claims.  
(p. 23)

Thus Goulde contends that Koreans have formed their identity in ways that would help them secure their homeland. Certainly almost all Koreans will agree about the struggles for territory but, as with perhaps any group of people, there will be disagreements over ethnic identity and its construction.

City-states on the peninsula began to arise in the late Bronze Age around 1350 BCE, developing into distinct kingdoms by the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Gould, 1999). Warring kingdoms then fought for dominance for centuries, often under China's suzerain blanket, but true unity was not achieved until the Silla kingdom conquered

both the Paekche and Koguryo kingdoms in the mid-seventh century A.D. Not until circa 926 AD, under the Koryo dynasty (built on the foundations of united Silla), was there a near complete unification of the peninsula. From this time the first primordialist folklore emerges, creating a national identity with ancient roots. Gould goes on to say that a pure primordialist form of Korean ethnic historiography appears in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in an attempt to break from China as a source of identity. Interestingly, these arguments still survive today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as debates with both China and Japan rage over different accounts of East Asian origins. So according to Goulde, among many others, Koreans over the centuries have tried to carve out a national identity which is both distinct from their neighbors' and legitimizes their claims on the peninsula. Goulde concludes his article in this way:

19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century ethno-national ideologies based on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century developments define Korean ethno-national identity by proposing the notion that all Korean are and always have been a single race (the Han race), speaking a single language (the Han language), sharing a single origin... and what is most modern, having a single and unique mentality (the Han mentality) (p. 39).

It is this "single and unique" *Han* mentality that visitors to Korea will feel as strongly as most Koreans do. Perhaps, more accurately, it is the belief in this mentality, in this "Korean way" of doing things that seems so prevalent and so influential across the society. The sections below will go into further detail about how this *Han* mentality works in Korean society and ultimately how it significantly influences the relationship Korean learners have with English. First, however, a section on the Korean War will help explain a crucial factor in today's Korean society which is also indicative of the dualities that play such a role in what it means to be Korean.

### *The Korean War*

In addition to World War II ending Japanese colonization, the Korean War, a few years later, marked another pivot point in the history of the peninsula. In America the Korean conflict is often referred to as the "forgotten war" because it is



rarely the subject of popular books or films, or even discussion, as are so many other of America's wars<sup>1</sup>. Still the Korea War had a great significance on many nations and resulted in the arbitrary division of the peninsula.

Many war historians have taken great interest in the importance of this war. For our purposes here, Peter Lowe's *The Origins of the Korean War* (1997), offers a useful and recent account that also helps provide background for some of the phenomena pertinent to our discussion. He argues that the intervention of America and China into the conflict in Korea was terribly dangerous to world peace and therefore should have and could have been avoided. He labels the conflict as both a civil war and an international war involving, at least, Japan, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States, as well as the divided peninsula. As the world was recovering and rebuilding from World War II, Lowe states that Korea remained unstable due to long-standing internal social divisions and external pressures (Lowe, 1997).

It is generally agreed that the Japanese, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, felt that Korea falling into the hands of China or perhaps Russia--countries with which Japan had had recent wars for regional dominance--would represent an unacceptable threat. Japan's efforts to prevent that resulted in their colonization of the peninsula. Hapless Korea could do little to protect itself from any of these nations. Harsh Japanese rule, which included the now infamous "comfort women," (Hicks, 1995) brought certain "benefits" to the peninsula such as economic infrastructure, but also the fetters of colonization. Certain segments of the population capitulated with the Japanese while others resisted, splintering the Korean people amongst themselves. By 1945, Lowe sums up:

Korean communism was divided into those loyal to Moscow, to Yen-an (the Chinese Communist Party's capital), indigenous communists led by Pak Hon-yong, plus those identified with Kim Il-sung [the soon to become dictator and father of the current leader of North Korea]. ...[These] factions had striven to undermine Japanese rule and had not compromised with Japan, as had so many of the conservative nationalists with the exception of Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku. (p.12)

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<sup>1</sup> The one popular book, movie, and television series, *M\*A\*S\*H*, set during the Korean War is often

Kim Il-sung in the North and Syngman Rhee in the South emerged as opposing leaders, and, with the help of whispers and ultimately intervention from powerful and interested nations, provoked each other into war by June 1950. The total number of casualties for this complex, “forgotten” war is estimated between 4 and 5 million. It also resulted in the arbitrary division of the peninsula at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, which tore apart the nation and countless Korean families. The war has yet to be officially ended, and hostilities have continued over the decades. The area around the “demilitarized” zone between the two Koreas is the most heavily militarized boarder on earth. Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Kim Jong-il, the son of Kim Il-sung is considered by many to be the number one threat to world peace.

### *Reunification*

The infinitely complex issue of North-South relations on the Korean peninsula can scarcely be broached in this chapter. All I will mention here is that it seems every South Korean has some dream for a united Korea, but few agree on how that can be done. Fewer still believe that now is the time for an attempt. Most people still consider the North to still be a threat, but daily life is not at all characterized by a dread of imminent war.

This section has attempted to show some of the complexities that have affected the Korean peninsula throughout history. Internal and external strife has left the Korean people with struggles over land and identity, which often pull them in opposing directions. Present day Korea has many gaps and a resultant “duality” in many aspects of its society. The social forces that affect Koreans today will be explored in the following sections.

#### 2.3.2 Social Forces

The previous section discussed Korea trying to carve from history a distinct, legitimate and unified identity. The Korean War, at the crossroads of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seems to have resulted in a split personality for Korea, dividing families and ideologies. This section argues that this “split” concept has many manifestations in what was termed the *Han* mentality, even for the Korean second language learner.

The Korean War, with division as its core characteristic, is a telling event in that much of the character of Korea today remains split between various opposites. These divisions result in an ambivalence among Koreans that reaches to the level of language learning. I believe investigating this ambivalence will bring us closer to understanding a direct link between social psychology and the linguistic moment.

This section will focus on some guiding principles that I feel underlie much of Korean thought and behavior. More specifically these social principles influence the psychological processes, which affect how Korean learners of English communicate. What may seem puzzling to the outside observer actually has roots which are deeply embedded in the nation's culture, and if better understood can shed light on some elements of Koreans' L2 behavior. Few empirical studies focus on the issues that are pertinent to this discussion, and fewer still are written in English. However, some exist and those cited below do well to sketch an understanding of the phenomena discussed in later chapters.

I began my investigation into Koreans' relationship with English after observing what seemed to be great ambivalence toward the language. On the one hand Koreans seemed to have a great attraction toward English, but on the other they seemed to often reject it. As I continued my research, patterns emerged that suggested that this ambivalence extended beyond just a second language. It seemed that many Koreans have strong mixed feelings toward not only other nations but also their own society and these are rooted in the national identity.

In discussing literature, the writer Chong Kwari noted that Korean writers often reflect the duality or ambivalence in Korean society as "an oscillation between temptation and fear in response to foreign powers" (p. 169, in Wells, 1995). This oscillation runs deep among Koreans, has manifold causes and effects, and sums up well what I call *international complex*. "Complex" seemed to me an apt word which could allow "temptation" and "fear" to coexist as they seem to in many Koreans' minds. Those opposing emotions do indeed fit what I often observe in Koreans' attitudes toward non-Korean people, places, things and ideas. The following sections explore a variety of social forces which may account for the duality and oscillation that runs deep in Korean society.

### *Kinship and Friendship*

Korean society has a very precise and complex kinship system in which relatives are considered separated by certain numbers of units known as *chon* (for overview see Rhie, 2002). Without getting too lost in the complexities, spouses are considered zero *chon* apart, children are one *chon* from their parents, and your father's elder sister's grandson would be five *chon* distant. All Koreans must be acutely aware of this system in order to know how to relate to family members. In fact given names are rarely used in family discourse. Gender and *chon* dictate how people should be addressed.

Friendship in Korea also has a very unique characteristic. In order to be considered friends, or *chingu*, people must be of equal status, based on age, hometown, and/or school association. Otherwise, no matter how close the relationship, people are either junior or senior, not friends. In order to be considered of equal age people must have been born in the same lunar calendar year. Terms such as *hyo* and *jung* are used to describe and prescribe proper behavior and emotions involved with kinship and friendship. Following the rules of personal interaction is taken with great seriousness.

### *Regret and Ostracism--Han and Wangtta*

Two characteristics of the Korean people that are vitally important to understanding almost anything about the society are *han* and *wangtta*. Koreans very often use these terms when they discuss their own character. *Han*<sup>2</sup> is perhaps best translated as "regret," and refers to the feeling many Koreans seem to have toward both their history and their present situation in the world. Koreans often comment on how misfortune has fallen on their nation for many centuries. *Han* is the manifestation of that misfortune, affecting Korean people's attitudes toward both themselves and other nations. Chul (1995), in discussing the history of Korean attitudes toward other nations, stated: "We can... find tangible expression of such a negative character of national awareness in the attitudes of the [Korean] elite toward... westerners" (p. 63). Chul goes on to say, "Korean society today is torn

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<sup>2</sup> This term *han* must be differentiated from the *Han* of "*Han* mentality" mentioned previously, which is almost synonymous with "Korean." In Korean both words are pronounced the same but stem from different Chinese characters.

between persisting loyalty to the Confucian tradition and the strong challenge posed by the contemporary world" (p. 85). This points out the clash of the Korean and non-Korean worlds and speaks to the concept of *han* because Koreans seem to feel on the losing side of the clash. However, *han* can also be used as positive energy as Clark (1995) states: "[some Koreans] get their energy from *han*... that *han* comes from being victimized by oppressors" (p.92). Thus *han* is also credited with inspiring Koreans to persevere. So it has a dual role for Koreans as both regret and inspiration, and in both instances it bonds Korean people in shared feelings.

*Wangtta* refers to the act of ostracizing or out casting of certain people who do not stay immersed in the mainstream, or perhaps more specifically it refers to the individual who becomes the "outcast." Stepping outside of the mainstream can have disastrous results. Although this may exist in most societies to varying extents, in Korea, being different carries very strong consequences. From wearing out of style fashion or not having the latest gadget, to raising your hand in a classroom when nobody else knows the answer, being different pulls you into dangerous waters. A Korean proverb warns, "the highest nail gets hammered."

Even in fast-changing modern Korea, *wangtta* is a serious matter. Eruptions of violence and suicide have recently become more commonplace in Korean schools when certain students do not fit in (Kim, 2005). Making great effort to avoid being labeled as *wangtta* is not only popular but also perhaps prudent. As with *han*, *wangtta* also unites Korean people in how similar feelings are shared.

### *Social Gaps*

This final part of the social forces section is the most lengthy in order to explain the complex gaps that I believe lie under Korean society and strongly impact Korean communication practices. Resulting from many of the forces discussed above, I see three important gaps: between the older and younger generations (with a dividing age around perhaps 40), between explicit and implicit social norms, and between ingroups and outgroups within Korean society. The following paragraphs will detail these gaps, relying on research from the literature as well as personal experiences from my past decade in Korea.

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As my years in Korea continue, I am often amazed at the rapidity of change on the surface of the country. In 1995 on the campus of my university, most everyone had the same color hair and almost all of the male students had the same severe haircut. Students wore jeans but never those which were faded or had rips. Dating couples would sit on campus benches, staring silently forward, rarely daring to make physical or even eye contact in such a public place. Campus life today can hardly be compared: a rainbow of hair colors, blue jeans with more holes than denim, long hair and earrings on the young men, and public displays of affection are not uncommon. Western societies took many more years to produce such changes.

In university classrooms students are bolder, and primary and secondary school teachers often complain of a new trend of disrespect that has erupted following recent rules against corporal punishment. Still I have also felt that the core of Korea has not changed drastically, even though I often hear my students complain of a cavernous "generation gap." This gap merits special attention because status lies at the root of Korean communication practices and age lies at the root of status. Any gaps between age groups will significantly impact how Koreans communicate in each other's presence.

Some research (for example, Inglehart, 1997) finds Korea's generation gap to be the largest in the world, citing the accelerated shift from modernism to post-modernism. Other studies (Choi, 1997, and Na and Min, 2000) bring up the issue of implicit and explicit norms as the cause for the gap between the generations. These differences in norms also constitute my second gap. In their article, Na and Min (2000) discuss what they term the "dual structure of Korean society" (p. 114) and what they feel is the powerful significance of Korea's generation gap<sup>3</sup>. They outline a framework that goes a long way in explaining many contradictions:

In Korean society, a great discrepancy is often found between (1) the structure of explicit norms (such as laws, rules, and codes) and (2) the implicit norms or behavior principles that are not readily apparent. The prevalent view is that such duality has originated from the rapid modernization process where only explicit norms have been

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<sup>3</sup> Na and Min (2000), find that the older generation suffers from duality while the younger generation has more consistency, but lacks the power to make significant changes in society. The difference between duality and consistency adds to the generation gap and lowers trust among all Koreans. I argue that this low trust manifests itself in low L2 WTC in the presence of other Koreans.

modernized while, inwardly, the vestige of traditional Confucian values still remain. (p. 114)

Na and Min argue that the laws and rules are new but the old ways of social interaction often persist. Cha (1994) also digs at the heart of this: "[Korean] behavior patterns are harder to change than beliefs/attitudes because the former is more closely related to the 'hard reality' than the latter"(p. 115). In my later chapters we will see this played out again and again when my respondents tell of knowing that it would be better or more logical to act in a certain way, but yet they feel compelled follow the path of the hard reality of Korean society.

In May of 1997, the Han-gyeorae newspaper conducted, "Special Opinion Poll: Analysis of the Duality of Korean People (Separate thoughts and Behaviors: Two Faces of Koreans)." One example from this poll shows how a large percentage of Korean parents strongly disagree with the private academy system<sup>4</sup> but send their children to academies so they will not fall behind. Attitudes and beliefs are often altogether different from behavior patterns. This poll not only showed how prevalent duality is among Koreans, but also how aware most Koreans are of it. However, awareness and dislike of the phenomena does little in the face of hard reality.

Na and Min go on to dig deeper into this issue, and agree with Hofstede (1980, 1991) that more collective societies such as Korea often place much more importance on interpersonal relationships than on tasks. Thus the task of improving one's English for example may remain subordinate to the maintenance of proper relations among all people present in the situation.

Na and Min point out that a backlash often arises in collective societies such as Korea's where communication is so focused on maintaining certain propriety. Members begin to "doubt the intentions of [others]... therefore, social trust is extremely difficult to establish in [this] opaque dualistic structure" (p. 116). People in the society realize that others are concerned first with the maintenance of certain social norms, therefore, their true intentions may often be masked. To use the above example, who will "trust" the words of parents who say they disagree with academies and yet enroll their children in them?

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<sup>4</sup> Extra schooling to supplement primary and secondary school students' regular classes. The majority of college bound students attend such academies to help prepare them for the university entrance exam.

Other than the lowering of social trust, another of the many consequences of this hard reality of social interaction is the establishment of different boundaries between the self, one's ingroup, and other outgroup members, which constitutes a third social gap. Na and Min (2000) explain it as:

Without the reference to one's ingroup... it is practically impossible to define one's identity. The self identifies with the ingroup to the extent that the boundary of what constitutes "I" as an "individual," as opposed to a member of a collective, is quite ambiguous... [Meaning] "I" and "we" are not clearly differentiated, [because] "I" is equated with "we." [However,] and at the same time, "we" and "they" [outgroup members] tend to be too readily distinguished. (p. 121)

Individuals in Korea only vaguely separate themselves from their ingroup members but a large gap clearly separates their ingroup from different outgroups. The inclusivity of one's ingroup varies from situation to situation but the basic unit is the family.

A personal story here may well illustrate this identity-boundary phenomenon. For over eight years of my time living in Korea, I have had an older woman visit my home to help with cooking and cleaning. When we first met I asked her how I should address her. She replied in Korean, "Dong-whan's mother," in reference to her daughter. Several times I asked what her exact name was but she always just shook her head and laughed as if I were asking for some ridiculously unimportant information. Eight years later, I know neither her given name nor her family name. She is very proud of her daughter and from that mother-daughter relationship she seems to get the essence of her identity.

This story exemplifies the concept of *hyo*, or filial piety, which is seen by some as a cornerstone of the Korean understanding of Confucianism (Choi, 1997) and is the source of the gap between ingroups and outgroups. Many life decisions and much daily behavior are significantly influenced by *hyo*, and in essence the basic unit of Korean society is the family and not the individual. Thus the I/we melds as the ingroup identity and a large gap emerges between this and any outgroups.

It must be remembered that *hyo* is taken with the utmost seriousness and anything may be sacrificed for the family. *Hyo* is an obligation that can reach



burdensome levels such as allowing senior family members to dictate choices about career, home owning, childrearing, and even childbearing. Due to this heavy obligation, a very distinct gap appears between ingroup and outgroups, just as lines blur between ingroup and self. Decisions many non-Koreans may assume to be the individual's are often family decisions in Korea. By the same token, *hyo* draws a very distinct line between those for whom an individual has such obligations and others. However it should be noted that *hyo* can extend beyond family to friends, coworkers, or other group members.<sup>5</sup>

Na and Min, [along with others, most notably Park, (1996)] assert that communication is significantly affected by these identity boundaries in such a way that "the amount and quality of within-boundary communication [surpasses] that of between-boundary communication by far" (Na and Min, 2000, p. 123). Visitors to Korea may begin to notice this strange phenomenon, as they hear Koreans using their voices with great vigor and volume at times, while at others they seem timidly silent. The observant may notice that the vigorous communication is usually ingroup communication and the timidity comes out when outgroup members are in the immediate audience.

I frequently find myself between two Koreans who both know me but not each other. Even if they have weak English skills, they will speak only with me before proper introductions. They may even repeatedly refer to the other person standing next to them in the third person without ever speaking directly to them, "Is she a friend of yours?" "Does she live in this city?" If by chance I step away for a moment, the two Korean people may remain silent until I, the foreigner, return to introduce them and allow them to communicate directly. These communication boundaries lay at the heart of what I term *L1 Audience Sensitivity* because it seems that Koreans have a profound effect on each other when they speak a second language. Later chapters will show that these strict communication rules, although they are changing over time, affect L2 WTC.

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<sup>5</sup> The term *hyo* is usually used exclusively for blood family. When these close ties extend beyond the family it is usually referred to as *jung*. Actually, however, *hyo* is often considered to be a subcategory of *jung*, and "*jung*" can even be used in reference to family ties.

### 2.3.3 Communication in Korean

The manner in which Korean people talk with each other in their L1 is directly dependent on the social relations between interlocutors. This manifests itself linguistically and becomes ingrained in Koreans' manner of communicating. It does not seem difficult to imagine that this system would have an effect on their L2 communication, especially when a Korean speaks the L2 in the presence of others. The intricacies of the honorific system also provide a useful framework for how we will look at the elements that affect Korean L2 WTC.

#### *The Honorific System*

Yu, (2003), provides not only a fine summary of the Korean honorifics system but also an analysis of how it is changing and how different scholars view the transition. For our purposes here I will simply sketch an outline of how honorifics are used and how the system may influence L2 communication. Korean speakers must make a constant variety of syntactic choices that all require agreement with each other. More than just a linguistic issue, Korean honorifics show deep insights into the society which is the focus of this study. Yu sums up the honorific system in this way:

Korean politeness can be provisionally defined as the speaker's respect for the other (the interlocutor or a third party) and the speaker's self-deprecation. The speaker's humility and the speaker's respect for the other party or the third party are linguistically realized by honorifics and terms of address (pp. 109-110)

It is important to note Yu's repetition of the word "respect" here, through which she emphasizes that for the Korean person speaking their own language, linguistic adjustments must be made in order to show respect to others and that includes the idea of "self-deprecation," or the lowering of oneself. As we will see, these adjustments are both complex and subtle and therefore need great care. The Korean speaker must always be acutely aware of subtle differences in people's status in order to communicate appropriately. It is also significant to our discussion that this

awareness must extend beyond the interlocutor to any third parties. That is to say that the Korean speaker remains aware of the status of people even to whom they are not directly speaking. The idea, as I argue, that when Korean's speak English they also remain attentive to the status of third parties seems to fit well with the rules of politeness and respect in their own language. We will see in later chapters how this necessity to "lower oneself" manifests when the Korean speaker is confronted with the opportunity to communicate in English.

Yu explains that this honorific system is encoded in the sentence final suffix and that it is based on three possible kinds of relationships between the hearer and the speaker:

1. The speaker [S] is senior to or higher in status than an addressee [A]:  
S>A
2. The speaker is junior to or lower in status than an addressee: A>S
3. The speaker and an addressee are equal in age and social status: S=A

In the case of (1) and (3), the use of addressee honorification is optional but in the case of (2) it is almost obligatory. (p. 111)<sup>6</sup>

Without going into depth about exactly which suffixes are used in this honorific system, it will suffice here to state that the social factor of "power," that is the combination of age and status, determines how a Korean speaker communicates with another Korean speaker. However this system is further complicated, as Yu points out, by a second social factor, "solidarity," or the closeness of relationship between the speaker and the addressee. That is to say that the level of *familiarity* between the speaker and the addressee also determines the sentence final suffix. For example, any teacher/student relationship would have the same "power" relationship, but if the teacher and student have known each other well for years, then they would have stronger "solidarity."

Table 2.1 gives a rough idea of the structure of this dual factor system:

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<sup>6</sup> I would like to note here that this speaker/addressee system as outlined by Yu provided the basis of many items on the questionnaire used in this study's quantitative data collection. That is to say, I

**Table 2.1**  
**Korean Honorific System**

|       |     | Solidarity |          |
|-------|-----|------------|----------|
|       |     | Formal     | Informal |
| Power | S>A |            |          |
|       | A>S |            |          |
|       | S=A |            |          |

Thus, the power relation determines at which level the speaker must communicate with the addressee, and how well the speaker knows the addressee will determine whether the formal or informal variant will be used. Speakers then must choose among six possible final suffixes (represented by the six blank cells in the table) with every sentence they utter. This choice is a task unrelated to the content of the utterance, depending instead on the listening audience.

English speakers may understand this system on a very basic level when thinking about whether to address someone with a title followed by a surname, or by just a given name. A person of lower status would rarely be so bold as to address someone of much higher status by his or her given name without having first been invited to do so. However in the Korean system the status differences are far subtler and the linguistic realization occurs in almost every utterance, not just with direct address. Furthermore, the consequences of linguistic impropriety are more severe. It is important to mention that while some disagreement exists among scholars about the precise structure of this Korean honorific system, all seem to agree that recent years have shown an evolution in the system and that in the future it will have another, probably simpler, form. In essence, the transformation is that informal forms are taking the place of formal ones and thus the three-leveled system that is represented above is evolving into a two-level system. This reflects how Korean society in many ways is becoming more horizontal (Yu, 2003).

The Korean language is one in which feelings toward social interactions are so directly realized linguistically that the language acts as a social barometer. For our discussion here, I simply want to emphasize how acutely aware any Korean speaker must be of the power and solidarity relations between themselves, an addressee, and even a third party. The social forces discussed in previous sections of this chapter

will play a significant role in any Korean communication. I feel that that awareness is not likely to be abandoned in second language communication, especially if other Koreans are present to remind the speaker of the Korean "rules" of communication. Also, the practice of "lowering oneself" in order to be polite and preserve good relations is of particular significance and will be further explored in the next section which focuses more directly on how Korean culture has affected the communication of Korean speakers.

### *The Korean Perspective on Communication*

A Korean proverb states, "One can understand ten when one hears just one." This could be taken to mean that in such a homogeneous culture many people say similar things; perhaps also due to rules of politeness. However, the proverb also suggests a de-emphasis on the content of communication. Many researchers discuss this de-emphasizing and Kim (1997) goes as far as to state that:

Koreans have no need to explicitly articulate their viewpoints... consequently, there [has been] no pressing need to develop Western-style argumentations, logics and rhetorics... the main role of communication activities in Korea have been geared toward promoting bonding rather than enhancing information exchange and persuasion. (pp. 212-213)

These few words could demystify a lot of what a visitor to Korea is likely to experience. A lot of conversation does seem to amble around topics, never quite achieving a point, and yet is peppered with bursts of hearty agreement. If the visitor understands that the point of the conversation is often simply to establish relationships and maintain politeness within those relationships, rather than just to exchange information clearly, settle a point, or complete a task, Korean communication practices make more sense.

The main focus of my study is Korean learners' lack of WTC in an L2 and so a deeper understanding of the Korean perspective on communication in general and its links to Korean culture will help untangle some of that puzzle. Kim (1997) gives a helpful overview which points to Confucianism as the main sculptor of Korean

communication, but also notes that the roots go back further to the agricultural origins of Korea. The knowledge and experience of elders in a farming society commanded unquestioned respect and was vital to social order and cooperation.

So for Kim, acknowledging and preserving social order has deep roots in Korea that go back through the millennia. The importance of both hierarchy and harmony in Korean society and specifically Korean-style communication remains to this day. In fact it seems that in Korean society hierarchy equals harmony which brings a hope of stability to a peninsula repeatedly threatened with instability.

Agriculture and both internal and external strife are not the only roots of the Korean hierarchy as both Confucianism and Buddhism solidified these principles. Kim points out that human relationships under Confucianism must follow five codes: "the loyalty between king and subjects, closeness between father and son, distinction between husband and wife, order between elders and [youth], and trust among friends" (p. 217). Evidence of the power of all of these codes appears everywhere in Korea, even when, as explained in the above discussion on duality, individuals do not personally agree with the code. Buddhism also has affected Korean communication with its general distrust of the spoken word, lauding silence as a higher virtue (Kim, 1997). Again, this reflects the low social trust of others' words discussed above.

Respect, harmony, or other important concepts can often be communicated non-verbally through behaviors or even simply common understanding. For example, visitors to Korea will quickly notice how often they are bumped into on the street with rarely an apology. I have heard Koreans say that since the bumping was obviously unintentional and regretted, there is no need to state the obvious. The assumed common understanding of the situation communicates everything so verbal communication is seen as unnecessary.

Kim also discusses the specifics of ingroup communication: "[Due to] Korea's [longtime] unstable political and social environment marked by power struggles and foreign invasions... strong bondage among trusted family members and friends [is needed] to cope with unstable and uncertain situations" (pp. 220-221). Communication often remains an ingroup affair and not just an individual endeavor. For example, the possessive pronoun, "my" often sounds very awkward, if not rude, in Korean. A Korean husband may introduce his wife with, "*Urijip saram imnida*," which translates as "This is our wife," not "my wife." Using "my" expressions does

not suggest the inclusiveness that is of great importance in Korean custom. Family relationships, as stated above, which constitute the core ingroup, actually extend beyond the family to the other important ingroup ties. Friends and coworkers usually address each other not by their individual given names, but instead with "elder sister," "younger brother," and the like. This inclusive "familism" is seen as warm and respectful. This all points again and again to the importance Koreans put on including and respecting others while communicating.

This imperative inclusiveness, although often perfunctory, seems to obfuscate both communication and productivity at times. For example, in the business world, as Kim notes, "There are no clear-cut job descriptions assigned to each member of the group"(p. 225) in order to *include* everyone. In my years of employment in Korea I have often seen things left undone because a task was given to *everyone* in an office but to no individual. The goal of inclusiveness is achieved but the task at hand is not. I find this strikingly similar to what happens in many second language classes. The goal of including everyone and respecting their proper statuses is reached, while the aim of communicating in and thus improving the target language remains secondary, and often undone.

### *Korean Politeness Strategies*

Along with inclusiveness, modesty also must play a role in all Korean communication. Another Korean proverb illustrates this important concept: *Pyoneun igulsurok kogaereul suginda* (as rice grows, it bows its head; i.e. modesty is a sign of growth in a person). Koreans use several communication strategies<sup>7</sup> to achieve modesty (Kim, 1997), and because many of them appear when Korean learners communicate in English, I will list some of them here:

- Modesty qualifiers as *maybe, seems, perhaps, and likely*.
- *Binmal* (blank statements) such as, "I have prepared nothing but enjoy this dinner."
- Lowering oneself: "I don't know anything, please teach me."
- Avoid saying "no," "you are wrong," or anything else unpleasant by saying *chal morugesmnida*, "I don't know well" or the like.

- Indirect communication, for example, instead of asking someone to open a window, saying, "It is very warm today," or "Are you hot?"
- Omitting the subject "I" in sentences.

Considering the importance of modesty, it becomes clearer why a skilled Korean English learner may attempt to downplay or in fact conceal their language skills, especially in front of those of higher status and lower ability. Not doing so risks committing grand impropriety.

### *Chemyon--Korean "Face" in Korean Communication*

A concept mentioned by many of the participants in my qualitative research is *chemyon*, often translated as "face," but as Kim (1997) correctly points out, "the West's concept of face mainly focuses on the individual's reputation whereas the Korean's concept of face extends to the reputation of the group they belong to" (p. 228). Thinking about the abovementioned avoidance of the word "my," the concept of "saving face" must be understood as "saving *our* face" in the Korean context, and not "saving *my* face." This can extend to a wide variety of ingroups and does not necessitate an audience to be triggered. Kim states that many, "conservative Korean husbands are unwilling to help their wives with [housework] worrying that they injure their face as males" (p.228). While today many non-Koreans and Koreans as well, may take this as a flimsy excuse, it does remain prevalent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century [for more discussion on gender roles in Korean communication see Shin, (2003)]

### *Harmony in Korean Communication*

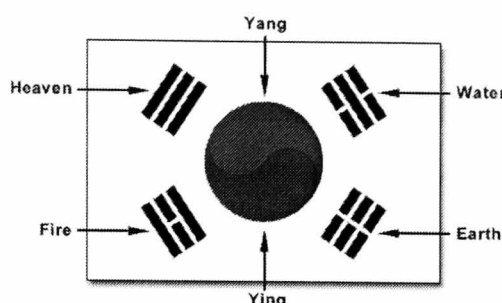
Non-Koreans may wonder how Koreans cope with such duality and contradiction, but I believe it is often accepted as something natural if not somehow desirable. The South Korean flag in Figure 2.1 is symbolic of many aspects of Korean culture. The "ying/yang" symbol, known as "*um/yang*" in Korean, as well as the elements of nature depicted by the four trigrams, all represent opposites in dynamic harmony, and this principle often emerges in Korean culture and communication. For example, the term *umbuchamo* refers to having a harshly strict

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<sup>7</sup> Although Kim uses the term "communication strategies," "politeness strategies" may be more



father and a warmly benevolent mother, and is considered the ideal parental environment (Kim, 1997) more so than a happy medium. This balance of the extremes of strictness and benevolence is seen as the best way to raise a child, and it is an exceedingly common description of my students' families.



**Figure 2.1**  
**Korean Flag**

An example of this harmony of *um* and *yang* more directly connected with language is the Korean use of *bano* "the language of paradox." As mentioned above, much of Korean food is very hot both in terms of serving temperature and due to the amount of spicy red pepper used in cooking. Kim points out that as a compliment to the chef, and as an expression of appreciated harmony, "Koreans satisfactorily utter *siwonhada* (feels cool) when they are eating hot soup" (p. 230). The use of *bano* and the fact that there is this common label for the language of paradox speaks not only to the dualism inherent in Korean society, but also to the fact that Koreans see it as quite natural and even ideally harmonious like the symbolism of the national flag. The next section explores further dualism that is apparent in Korea's system of higher education, especially the college entrance exam and the history and hysteria behind it.

## 2.4 English in Korea

Career status and its benefits carry incredible weight in Korean society. For men, and increasingly for women as well, the qualities of people's jobs seem to reflect the quality of their lives. Regardless of any truth to this belief, graduation from a prestigious university is certainly a very influential step toward a successful career, especially in recent economic times. For this reason only the rare parents do not push their children toward the S.K.Y. (the top-rated Seoul National, Korea, and

Yonsei universities). The role of English in Korea stems from these beliefs about achieving success in life.

The importance of the college entrance exam serves to emphasize the importance of English, which is a big and often pivotal part of the exam. This results in a social mania for learning English in Korea, though perhaps not always for communicative purposes. Even for those who do not enroll in the top schools, and anyone who wants to advance ahead of the masses, English, often in the form of high scores on TOEIC, TOEFL, etc., remains a key to success and status.

From a less academic and career perspective, English decorates much of Korean society, appearing with great and growing frequency in mass media, entertainment, advertising and casual conversation among Koreans. English is ubiquitous in Korea and there is even political debate about making it the second national language.

Many studies have focused on this growing social phenomenon. Specific to the study of English, Michael Seth (2003) notes that:

English was always a concern for parents; it was a major subject in middle and high school, on the college entry exams and on the exams given by prestige companies... Half of all students of elementary school age were enrolled in private English language schools in 1997, although only 4 percent had been in 1990. (p. 51)

It is vital to note that speaking has rarely been a part of these exams that focus on grammar and translation. Therefore parents, teachers, and the students themselves feel a great deal of pressure to concentrate on study that will directly help their performance on an exam and so the English classrooms in Korea are rarely communicative.

Seth also mentions a positive side to the entrance exam in that, "South Korean secondary students score close to the top in math and science [worldwide] (p. 53). Seth sums up the mania like this: "South Korea has created one of the most costly and high pressured education systems in the world as well as a highly literate, competitive, and disciplined workforce" (p. 53). My experiences in the Korean education system concur with this summation and I note that this high pressure to

perform well only on the grammar and translation side of English obviously takes attention away from the communicative side of learning the language.

### *Attitudes toward English*

While a later section will detail the system of teaching English in Korea, I will mention here some of the attitudes Koreans seem to have toward learning English and generally toward the language itself. Having lived for over a decade in South Korea, traveled throughout the country, count mostly Koreans among my friends and colleagues, and having had several thousand Korean learners and teachers of English in my classrooms, I would like to begin with some personal observations.

A student of mine once said that English is like George Bush *and* like his girlfriend (Edwards and Kim, 2005). Sometimes he hates it but it's powerful and therefore important. Sometimes he loves it but it's so difficult it drives him crazy. My observations of Koreans' complex attitudes toward English can almost all fit within my student's insightful metaphors. On the streets I will pass a group of school children then hear a few English words followed by eruptions of laughter. Taxi drivers who know a few phrases seem to delight in using them. In my classrooms I am met with a strong but still odd mix of eagerness and shyness about speaking English. Student essays repeatedly state, "My English is so poor but I really want to improve it." Not a few Koreans have told me that English represents as escape from the confines of Korean society through travel, or a key to a better career within the country.

I cannot be as succinct or clever as my student but I would sum up the general attitude Korean people have toward English is that improving English could significantly improve their lives, regardless of whether or not they are happy with that fact or productive in that endeavor. Other than, or in addition to, this English is seen as something Koreans use to decorate their lives because it is cool, trendy, intellectual or western, sometimes regardless of linguistic meaning.

Although not a lot of literature can be found on the specifics of motivation among Korean learners of English, some research has been conducted which can help bring together much of what has already been discussed in this chapter.

In a rather large study, Cha (1999) surveyed 826 university aged learners of English and conducted interviews with many of them. Many insights into the minds of Korean learners of English that Cha found coincide with what I have seen and heard in my years in Korea. The quantitative data from Cha's study is quite pertinent to this study and so I will cite several of his conclusions here:

- In the category of 'Integrative Motivation,' undergraduates learn English because English will enable them to meet and communicate with more and various people.
- In the category of 'Instrumental Motivation,' undergraduates learn English because English is regarded to be economically important in today's world.
- No statistically significant difference between male and female undergraduates in motivation is shown.
- The university entrance examination that is currently enforced is strongly criticized by undergraduates for its lack of communicative aspects.
- Students' view on the teaching methods used at their universities indicate that there are [few] teaching methods appropriate to improve students' level of English.
- Students want their English to be taught in the form of free-talking, by English native-speaking instructors.
- Some cultural dissimilarity between Korean and English speaking countries is found to be still deep-rooted, which, however does not cause perceived difficulty in Korean students learning English.
- Korean students consider [native English speakers] more open-minded [and] possess a more positive way of thinking.
- [Those] who have experience of visiting English-speaking countries do not necessarily show more positive attitudes towards learning English than those without such experiences... [However those] with British or American acquaintances are more positively motivated than those without them.
- Undergraduates' religions positively affect their English study, particularly in case of Christian students through reading English Bibles and future needs and ambitions for spreading the Gospel in other societies.

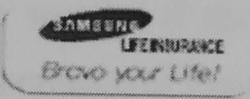
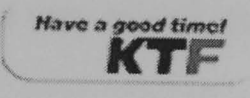
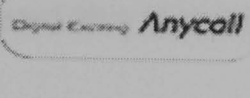
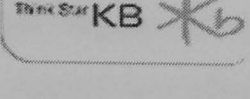
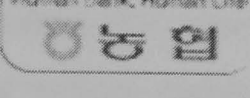

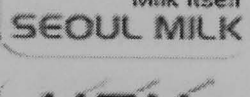
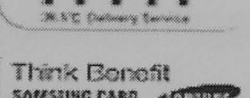
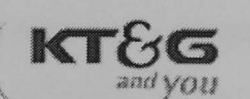

Cha's conclusions paint a picture of Korean learners disgruntled with their learning experience, desirous of less traditional teaching methods, and hopeful of personal benefits from English. This seems to sketch a learner who would have high WTC. However many of the other social factors discussed in this chapter hamper that willingness in many situations.

### *Konglish*

By no means is Korea the only nation to "butcher" another language and in fact, language melding seems a natural part of language evolution (Pinker 1993, Bragg, 2004). However, the phenomenon of English words being mixed with Korean syntax and sensibility is worthy of a small section of this chapter because it speaks to Koreans' relationship with English. *Konglish* is "caused" by ignorance of, misunderstanding of, or overgeneralization of the rules of grammar and usage. Many people cite poor teaching and the fact that English is an SVO language while Korean is SOV (Kosofsky, 1991). The few examples presented here are not meant to ridicule but instead to show the complexity of this relationship.

A website [<http://efl.htmlplanet.com/Konglish.htm>, 2005] dedicated to the collection of interesting *Konglish* phrases defines *Konglish* in two ways: a Korean-English mix that consists of grammatical or usage errors, or Korean lexical items consisting of loan words from English that have been nativized into Korean. A recent article in one of Korea's English language newspapers (Kim and Reuben, 2005) lists advertising slogans from some of Korea's biggest companies:

## Inadequate English Usage

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|    | → | Gramatically incorrect.<br>Bravo is not a verb.<br>Should be Bravo to You.                    |
|    | → | Has nothing to do with phones.<br>Boring.   |
|    | → | Word order is strange.<br>Should be Digitally Exciting<br>or Digital Excitement.              |
|    | → | Sounds bad. Why star?<br>Think about a star or think<br>of yourself like a star?              |
|    | → | Sounds zoologically terrifying.<br>Sounds like blood bank<br>or organ donation.               |
|   | → | Digital needs a noun next to it.<br>The term "humanism" is<br>too abstract to be in a slogan. |
|  | → | Sounds gross. Strange meaning.<br>Sounds suggestive.  |
|  | → | Does not make sense.<br>Hot delivery?   |
|  | → | Does not make sense.<br>Should be Think of All the Benefits.                                  |
|  | → | The firm's name does not make sense.<br>Tomorrow and Global don't match.                      |

**Figure 2.2**

### Konglish in Korean Advertisements

(Retrieved from the World Wide Web=<http://efl.htmlplanet.com/Konglish.htm>, 11.25.2005)

Perhaps the most egregious example of carelessness toward English that I have encountered was the misspelling of the word *terminal* in the recently built, billion-dollar Incheon International airport. In the age of spell check, one has to wonder about the attitude toward English that allows such a lack of concern toward its usage in such an international showplace.

Usually, however, I find *Konglish* teeters on the poetic. Student copybooks are often adorned with phrases such as: "Enjoy life. Somewhere profoundly to be glorious. Love alike hidden a dawn start. It's love which fell like dying." And: "Sweet Time. What don't come to me not to dislike meeting but to be afraid of going." Again, the importance of *Konglish* is not in its humorousness but in what it

shows about Koreans' relationship with English. It fluctuates between a vital necessity and simply an ornament or plaything.

I often wonder if the cavalier-ness of *Konglish* reflects some resentment toward the importance of English. As with so many other things in Korean, I suspect the feelings are very mixed, even within individuals.

## 2.5 English and the Korean Education System

Although largely set up by the Japanese during the time of colonization, then shaped by the Americans after World War II, Korean education has evolved into its own unique system (for overviews see Diem, Levy, & Van Sickle 2005;--updated and the current website maintained by the Korean Ministry of Education; Kwon, O., 2000). Although private education exists, I will focus this section mainly on public education through which the majority of the population goes. A small section at the end will briefly describe private academies and tutoring that often supplement public education. The details given below have import not only to describe the Korean context, and specifically English learning, but the education system both mirrors and shapes Korean society, which is such a focal point of this entire study. Therefore this section will attempt to present many factors in the Korean education system that seems to have salience to my research. Much of the information presented below is common knowledge or has come to me through my many years working as a teacher trainer for both primary and secondary school English teachers in the Korean public school system.

### *Confucian Influences*

Most Koreans will quickly point to Confucianism as a great influence on many parts of Korean society, especially the education system (Lee, J.K., 2001). Lee lists some positive results stemming from Confucianism along with several problems:

In the positive aspect, Confucian ethical values and principles... brought educational adoration to the Korean people... [However] Confucian ethical values and principles afforded male dominant

culture... disseminated academic collectivism that excluded other persons who studied in heterogeneous schools... brought authoritarianism that ignored the self-action of the self-esteem of subordinates. (p. 13)

Confucianism is blamed for lowering academic freedom even to this day. The highly centralized power of the Ministry of Education [MOE] reflects much of the hierarchical nature of Confucianism. Individual regions and schools have limited power and the MOE mandates much of what goes on in Korean education. The next section provides an outline of this system that has been so affected by the ancient laws of Confucianism.

### *Overview of Education System*

This section is meant to provide a general map of the school years of Korean students at the present time. Much of the information presented here is common knowledge among those living in Korea but citations are provided for specific opinions whenever possible.

Highly geared toward the university entrance exam (Pae, 2005; Jin & Park, 2005; Jin & Park, 2004; Oh, J., 2004), Korean education is divided into three periods (for overviews see Diem, Levy, & Van Sickle 2005--updated and the current website maintained by the Korean Ministry of Education). From around age seven, children's formal education begins with six years of primary school. This time is followed by three years of middle school and then three years of high school. Primary schools are usually coeducational but still today around 90% of Korean middle and high schools are single gender.

The school year for all levels is divided into two semesters, from March to July and September through February. A total of 220 school days are required for each of the three levels. These requirements are mandated for all public schools by the Ministry of Education. The setting of the curriculum also falls under this one governmental body. This curriculum undergoes major changes every five to ten years, and as of 2000 the school year is under what is called the *seventh curriculum* which attempts to put a stronger emphasis on communicative language teaching in foreign language classrooms (Kwon, O., 2005; Kwon, O., 2000). However there are many calls for decentralization of education (Kim, C.H., 1998), and today, many local



boards of education are gaining the authority to modify aspects of the national curriculum to suit local needs (Kwon, O., 2005).

In general, discipline problems in Korean schools are rare in comparison with public schools in the West. However, after formally prohibiting corporal punishment in the mid 1990s, many teachers complain that the students are getting out of hand (Kim & Kim, 2004; Woo, 2001). Still, students, parents, and the community at large usually regard teachers with respect. In fact, teachers are often given a responsibility equal to that of parents in the development of children's minds and morals.

### *Overview of English in the Korean Education System*

Although following sections will detail much of English in the Korean education system as it explains the system in general, this brief section will state a few generalities about how English is taught in Korea. Table 2.2 provides rather comprehensive information about public English education in Korea under the current seventh curriculum in terms of when English learning begins, how many hours of instruction students have per week, and how many English words must be learned per year.

**Table 2.2**  
**Courses, Hours, and Required Number of Words of the 7<sup>th</sup> English Curriculum**

| School                   | Elementary School          |                 |                 |                 | Middle School          |                 |                 | High School                |   |                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| Type                     | Level-specific lessons     |                 |                 |                 | Stage-specific lessons |                 |                 |                            | Electives   |                  |
| Grade                    | 3 <sup>rd</sup>            | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 7 <sup>th</sup>        | 8 <sup>th</sup> | 9 <sup>th</sup> | 10 <sup>th</sup>           | 11 <sup>th</sup>  | 12 <sup>th</sup> |
| Levels                   | Remedial-Baseline-Advanced |                 |                 |                 | 7a, 7b                 | 8a, 8b          | 9a, 9b          | 10a, 10b                   |   |                  |
| Subject (hr/wk) semester | EE 3 (1)x2                 | EE 4 (1)x2      | EE 5 (2)x2      | EE 6 (2)x2      | ME 1 (3)x2             | ME 2 (3)x2      | ME 3 (4)x2      | English for Everyone (4)x2 | HE 1 (4)x2<br>Readings (3)x2<br>Conversation (3)x2<br>Writing (3)x2 | HE 2 (4)x2       |
| Words                    | 80-120                     | 80-120          | 90-130          | 90-130          | 200                    | 250             | 350             | 450                        | T 2300<br>Total 2,000<br>Total 1,200<br>Total 1,200                 | T 3000           |

EE= Elementary English, ME=Middle School English, HE=High School English  
(Data from Ministry of Education 1997, as reported in Kwon, O., 2000)

Instruction begins in the third year of elementary school with only one class hour per week in both semesters. By the end of the year students are expected to have a working knowledge of between 80 and 120 words. Students are separated into remedial, baseline, and advanced classes.

Table 2.2 also shows how instruction continues through high school when English has become very important to the curriculum, mostly due to its importance on the college entrance exam. Many more hours of instruction, a greater variety of classes, and more new words are required of students. By the end of high school, every Korean has had 10 full years of English instruction and should have a working knowledge of 3000 words.

At the end of high school, in November, most Korean students take the college entrance exam (CSAT). The decade of English instruction has primarily been to prepare students for the English portion of the CSAT, which since 1998 and the start of the seventh curriculum has contained 55 items. Table 2.3 details many of the specifics of this portion which is broadly divided into two sections of comprehension and production. The table shows how many items fall into which categories, and what percentage of the total English score they represent. It should be noted that while many items fall under the category of “production,” these are grammar-based, multiple-choice items for which the students must identify correct or incorrect usages (see Appendix B). The CSAT, for which all Koreans spend ten years preparing, does not require any actual language production.

**Table 2.3**  
**CSAT Item Categories and Test Specifications for 1998**

| Language skills   |           | Item types                    | Item        | %    |
|---|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------|------|
| C<br>O<br>M<br>P<br>R<br>E<br>H<br>E<br>N<br>S<br>I<br>O<br>N | Listening | Literal understanding         | 3           | 5.5  |
|   |           | Details                       | 4           | 7.2  |
|   |           | Communicative function        | 2           | 3.6  |
|   |           | Participant identification    | 1           | 1.8  |
|   |           | Topic/main idea               | 2           | 3.6  |
|   | Subtotal  |                               | 12          | 21.8 |
|   | Reading   | Topic                         | 3           | 5.5  |
|   |           | Title                         | 3           | 5.5  |
|   |           | Main idea                     | 3           | 5.5  |
|   |           | Types and kind                | 1           | 1.8  |
|   |           | Tone, attitude                | 3           | 5.5  |
|   |           | Details                       | 4           | 7.2  |
|   |           | Words in context              | 2           | 3.6  |
|   |           | References                    | 3           | 5.5  |
|   |           | Sentence completion           | 8           | 14.5 |
|   |           | Development across paragraphs | 2           | 3.6  |
|   | Subtotal  |                               | 32          | 58.2 |
| P<br>R<br>O<br>D<br>U<br>C<br>T<br>I<br>O<br>N                | Speaking  | Literal understanding         | 0           | 0.0  |
|   |           | Communicative function        | 3           | 5.5  |
|   |           | Main idea                     | 1           | 1.8  |
|   |           | Meaning and function          | 1           | 1.8  |
|   | Subtotal  |                               | 5           | 9.0  |
|   | Writing   | Grammar                       | 1           | 1.8  |
|   |           | Unity                         | 1           | 1.8  |
|   |           | Coherence                     | 2           | 3.6  |
|   |           | Cohesion                      | 1           | 1.8  |
|   |           | Paragraph summary             | 1           | 1.8  |
|   | Subtotal  |                               | 6           | 11.0 |
| Total Item Number   |           |                               | 55          |      |
| Total # of words in reading text                              |           |                               | 3,360       |      |
| Average words per passage (Range)                             |           |                               | 88 (53-190) |      |
| Points given to items   |           |                               | 1/1.5/2     |      |
| Total points  |           |                               | 80          |      |
| Total test time minutes (Listening)                           |           |                               | 80 (20)     |      |

(Data from Kwon, O., 2000)

Recent studies (e.g. Cho, 2004) report that Korea spends 4% of its entire annual budget just on learning English. Still discontent remains in almost every corner of the endeavor. When compared with both China and Japan, Korea often lags behind (Kim & Jeon, 2005; Kwon, O., et al, 2004; Lee, S., 2003). Korean learners are often found to be unable or unwilling to communicate in the language (Lee, S., 2003; Kwon, O., 2001). The all-encompassing entrance exam is often put to blame

(Pae, 2005; Jin & Park, 2005; Jin & Park, 2004; Oh, J., 2004). The curricula set up by the Ministry of Education are also often a culprit (Kwon, O., 2005; Kym, 2004; Kwon, O., 2000; Kim, 1998). Local teacher problems are often spotlighted (Park & Sung, 2003; Woo, 2001; Kim, C. H., 1998), especially when discussing their ability to teach English in English (Kim, S.Y., 2002; Kim, S. A., 2002) and their comparison with native speaker teachers (Ryu 2005; Lee, 2005; Kang, A., 2004). Learner motivation is cited (Kim, K. J., 2004; Cha, 1998), as is general low cultural awareness among the Korean people (Ross, 2004). Certainly the problems are complex. The following sections will attempt to give a picture of the Korean education system in general in hopes of providing some understanding what every adult Korean has experienced.

Choi, J. S. (2003) studied 361 primary school students over five years to investigate attitudes students of the 7<sup>th</sup> curriculum have towards learning English and whether starting English instruction early in a child's education may influence their linguistic identity. She concludes that the attitudes are generally favorable towards English due to the early start and those with most favorable attitudes also perceive English as powerful in their lives and their world. In answer to the question, "Do you like learning English?" 67.2% respondents answered 'yes,' and 92.4% felt that it was important their future lives. Still, 94.1% associated feelings of pride concerning Korean culture.

Several comments from the many interview quotes merit mention here as they help color in some of the other facts reported here. It should be noted that these elementary school students all came from the upper middleclass suburbs of Seoul, and had at least five years of contact with English, often in addition to their public school experience:

- *Being competent in English makes me look smart and intelligent.*
- *Because English is a necessity as an international language, English speaking countries are much better. People who live there don't have to learn English.*
- *If we speak English fluently, we'll be able to receive a good salary in the future.*
- *If I wear a foreign brand [with English words on it], I feel like a handsome boy.*

- *'Made in the U.S.A.' makes me think the product is very strong and of high quality.* (Choi, 2003, pp 129-132)

From quotes such as these, Choi surmises that the next generation of Korean learners of English may have more positive attitudes toward English than in the past, due to the increase in contact with the language. Still she warns that Korea must double its efforts to promote a Korean language identity at the same time.

Another researcher, Lee, M. B. (2003), studied 365 male and 367 female high school students to investigate how the different genders learn English differently. Lee's findings strongly show that female English learners in Korea use a greater frequency and variety of learning strategies. Not surprisingly but still pertinent to this discussion, out of all the measures strategies (e.g. memory, cognitive, affective, etc) social strategies were lowest for both male and female, yet still significantly higher for females (means 2.50 and 2.32 on a 5-point scale for females and males respectively). This of course echoes the very common statements that the Korean English education system does not lead its students toward social communicative use of English.

### *Primary School, Grades 1-6*

Typical primary or elementary schools are huge brick buildings often located near one or several high-rise apartment complexes. The school usually faces an expansive and grassless yard that doubles as both a playground and assembly area. Inside the buildings, long corridors look out onto the yards with classrooms on one side and endless cubbyholes for shoes on the other. As with Korean homes, only socks or slippers are allowed inside most classrooms. Class sizes are decreasing, and 35 is about the current average, but older Koreans have memories of up to 70 pupils in one class.

The curriculum for primary school under the seventh curriculum (for overviews see Kym, 2004; Lee, S., 2003; Choi, J. Y., 2003; Boo, et al 2003) consists of nine subjects: moral education, Korean language, social studies, mathematics, science, physical education, music, fine arts, and practical arts. In the third grade, since the year 2000, mandatory English instruction begins, but the focus is on fun rather than drilling (Kym, 2004; Kwon, O., 2000). Primary English education

focuses on motivating students to learn English, and more attention is paid to oral language (Choi, J. S., 2005). Reading and writing is not formally taught until 5<sup>th</sup> grade but still there are many complaints that teachers do not speak in English enough (Lee, S., 2005). Many primary school students are sent to private institutes, which results in a big difference with those students who do not (Kym, 2004).

### *Secondary School, Grades 7-12*

Because high school is such a significant time in all Koreans' education, I will only briefly mention middle school (for overviews see Jung & Kang, 2005; Kim, S. Y., 2002) which is mostly considered a transition period to high school which will focus on preparing students for the university entrance exam. Perhaps the most significant aspects of this transition are the addition of three more subjects of study to the curriculum, more elective courses, and unlike primary school teachers, middle school teachers specialize in certain subjects. This means the students now move from class to class, from teacher to teacher. This continues through the high school years.

There are two types of high schools in Korea. Roughly two-thirds of students enroll in academic schools while the rest attend vocational schools (Kwon, O., 2000). The primary goal of high school education is to send students to the best possible college, so teachers focus on preparation for a single test rather than any other teaching (Pae, 2005; Jin & Park, 2005; Jin & Park, 2004; Oh, J., 2004).

### *School Days*

The number of hours students and teachers have each day seems to have dramatic effect on the entire school experience (Kwon, O., 2000). For the students, they endure a school day that starts in the early morning and continues often until very late at night.

Primary school students may not have the same stresses as older students, but many of them take classes after their regular school. Private institute training for musical instruments, computers, martial arts, and English are the rule rather than the exception (Kym, 2004; Lee, S., 2003; Choi, J. Y., 2003; Boo, et al 2003).

High school students begin their studies at 8:00am and end at around 4:00pm. Class periods are usually 50 minutes; with a 50-minute break for lunch. However this is far from all of the students' day. After classes students typically spend up to an hour cleaning their classroom. Then they often go home for dinner with their families or eat at school. After dinner students usually return to school for extra classes and study hall, or go to private institutes for supplementary classes. Their day finally ends somewhere between 10:00 pm and midnight.

High school buildings have a similar appearance to elementary and middle schools and often the different schools share the same grassless field. Inside, each classroom holds about 40 students, usually clad in school uniforms. More and more schools are relaxing dress codes but uniforms still typify secondary education

The classes are usually run in a lecture style with very little question and answer time (Kim, C. H., 1998). Written assignments that must be handed in are rare and instead, textbook work is given and students are expected to be able to answer the teacher's questions when called upon (Park & Suh, 2003). Teachers who try alternate methods often meet with resistance not only from other teachers and administrations, but the students themselves often complain about the discomfort of a learner-centered style (Cheong & Joo, 2005). Students and teachers alike rarely dare to step outside of the mainstream.

First-year high school students all take the same courses but in their second year they must select among courses centering on humanities, social studies, natural science, or a specific vocation. However, for all students who intend on taking the college entrance exam, English remains of vital importance due to the weight it carries in the exam (Pae, 2005; Jin & Park, 2005; Jin & Park, 2004; Oh, J., 2004). In fact, a recent study (Cho, 2004) reports that approximately 4% of Korea's entire annual budget is currently being spent on learning English.

Teachers' hours as well play a significant role in shaping the effects of the school system. In addition to regular classes, most teachers are required to hold extra classes that are perhaps only once per week. Many teachers feel that they would be overwhelmed if written assignments were given often, and standardized midterm and final examinations are often the only opportunity teachers take to assess their students (Kim & Kim, 2004).

When students are brought into the spotlight in class it is usually to be punished or praised, and that praise often comes with its own punishment from

classmates who feel the praised student is greedy for the teacher's attention (Cheong & Joo, 2005). The school years of a Korean young adult often serve to reinforce the notion that the mainstream is the safest place to stay, while showing yourself as unique and different will usually result in some form of punishment.

### *"Examination Mania"*

This section looks into the infamous phenomenon which is Korea's university entrance exam, while highlighting some other aspects of Korean education ("Students flee exam," 2005). A non-Korean scholar, Micheal Seth (2003), offers a keen perspective on this one early morning exam that dictates much of lives of all Koreans. Because of the weighted importance of this one exam and the struggles for its reform, a historical perspective may be helpful. Seth writes:

One of the most striking features of contemporary South Korea is the enormous obsession with university entrance examinations, what the Koreans term "examination hell" (*sihom chiok*) or "examination mania" ...This emerged in the years immediately after Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945 and has only intensified over the decades, despite calls for reform. (p. 35)

Describing this obsession and tracking its causes will help fill in more of our picture of Korean education past and present, and glimpse into Korean learners' relationship with English, the language that is an important part of the exam. I will begin with a brief historical perspective which also adds a little more insight into Korea as a whole.

For centuries exams were the major recruitment instrument for government officials (Seth, 2003). With influences from Confucianism, China, and imperial Japan, the use of exams continued into the modern age. However by 1945, a great segment of the population was poor and uneducated. In South Korea a massive effort was made to improve the state of education across the nation. From 1948 to 1960, the number of secondary school students grew six fold and the number in higher education seven fold (Seth, 2003). These massive increases meant that the competition to enter the best colleges also became massive and so the weight that



was put onto entrance exams was tremendous. Seth remarks, that what drove this was not the demand “for basic literacy... [but] the desire of parents to improve the life chances of their children and to raise the family’s social status,” (p. 39). As we have already discussed, the family unit is the cornerstone of identity for Koreans, and social status is of severe importance. This mania toward education has continued over the years, across the nation, and in “1997 urban workers spent 9.8 percent of their income on education, up from 6.7 percent in 1987. In Japan, by comparison, it was 5.4% in 1997, up from 4.7% in 1987. Seth states, “South Korea has created one of the most costly and high pressured education systems in the world.” (p. 53)

Historically, English items on the entrance exam [CSAT] have not at all been communicative in nature. Many studies have been done on the problems with the test (Pae, 2005; Jin & Park, 2005; Jin & Park, 2004; Oh, J., 2004). Students need to learn to identify proper usage of certain grammar functions without ever having to produce language themselves. Non-communicative classrooms also allow students to proceed through their school years without being faced with the chance or opportunity to use English as a communication tool.

Much more could be said about Korea’s college entrance exam because it influences how parents raise their children, how teachers teach their classes, and ultimately how employers hire. Often regarded as a necessary evil, this one exam underlies much of Korea’s entire social system, as well as just the system of education.

### *Universities*

As has been discussed in previous sections, getting into a prestigious university is a big step toward future success for young Koreans. Until recently students’ entrance exam scores dictated their choice of major, causing much unhappiness (Pyo, 2005; Jang, 2004). Interestingly, many students see their university years as an island oasis between the stresses of exam preparation and job search. A lack of seriousness among students is a common complaint from university instructors (Kim, K. J., 2004; Kim, Y., 2004). Another perspective however is that the mania toward the CSAT before university is simply replaced by a mania for high scores on TOEIC, TOEFL, and other employment oriented tests after university (Cho, 2004).

At the undergraduate level, in terms of English study, many problems persist including student anxiety over their proficiency and future need for English (Jang, 2004; Jang, 2003), lack of communicative teaching (Palmer, 2005; Pak, 2005; Ryu & Sung, 2005 ; Kim, Y., 2004; Finch, 2004) and lack of learner autonomy (Oh, M., 2005). Some studies cite problems with students losing their Korean identity due to the push toward English (Kim & Kennedy, 2004). Most universities offer mandatory classes for all majors in both test preparation and conversation and many now require exit exams in English (Cho, 2004). Students wishing to become English teachers themselves must usually obtain a master's degree and pass yet another test. Once again the ability to communicate holds less importance than textbook memorization.

### *Private Academies and Tutors*

As mentioned above, the importance of English in the minds of so many Koreans prompts many parents to hire tutors and/or enroll their children in private language institutes. As the children get older often a large proficiency gap emerges between those who get extra English and those who do not (Kym, 2004). Tutors are often college students with English aptitude looking for part-time work. They typically visit primary or secondary school students in their homes three or four hours per week to help them with their school work. The amount of English that is actually spoken during these meetings seems to vary greatly. Many of the native speaking teachers who come to Korea also give private lessons. Although illegal, private lessons can bring in anywhere between \$25 and \$75 dollars per hour and there is no difficulty in finding students. In fact the private lesson industry is so lucrative that many visiting teachers find their "real" jobs a time nuisance that is endured only to keep their visa.

Those "real" jobs are usually in private academies which employ both Korean and native speaking teachers. In children's academies the Korean instructors usually focus on textbooks, while the native instructors play more games and sing songs.

While changing trends in Korea definitely have recognized the importance of actually being able to communicate, English learning in Korea still follows the grammar-translation method, and despite more than ten years of formal instruction most Koreans feel less than confident in being able to hold a basic conversation.

## *The Future of Language Testing*

As mentioned above, the *examination mania* over the university exam has typically been replaced by further mania to get high scores on other standardized tests such as the TOEFL and TOEIC tests. A recent English language newspaper article (The Korea Times, 2006, February, 2; retrieved from the World Wide Web=<http://times.hankooki.com/lpage/nation/200602>) notes that language testing is having an explosive effect on Korean society as younger and younger children are driven to learn English and prepare for tests targeted at them. The article reported that:

The English proficiency tests targeting children include Primary English Level Test (PELT), TOEIC Bridge, Junior English Test (JET), and the Junior General Test of English Language Proficiency (JR G-TELP). According to statistics, the number of elementary school children who took one of the four major English proficiency tests has been sharply rising from 380,000 in 2004 to 460,000 last year. This year, more than 600,000 elementary kids are expected to take the tests.

The article goes on to state that although more communicative elements are being included in these tests, many educators feel this intensive testing will discourage young children away from enjoying English.

Another affect of this testing culture is the great expense of sending children away to learn English:

The number of Korean students studying abroad has shot up more than 10-fold over the past six years due to an increasing demand for early English education... [and] the number of students going overseas swelled to 16,446 in 2004 from 1,562 in 1998.

Children whose families cannot afford to send them overseas will certainly be at a disadvantage in the very near future and other social ramifications can only be guessed.

While language testing is not the focus of this research project, it cannot be denied that the effects of such tests on Korean society can hardly be overestimated. A great deal of research can and should be done to measure the effects of testing on WTC and other elements of language learning in Korea.

### *Conclusion*

Certainly this chapter has neither summed up Korea nor unraveled all the complexities of learning English in the Korean context and the WTC paradox. What I hope it has done is shown that Korea is a unique and complex context which will affect language learning in unique and complex ways. Later chapters will attempt to show how this context is very directly linked to a specific linguistic moment, when a Korean learner must decide whether or not to use English.

## CHAPTER 3 WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

As was hopefully made clear in the final sections of chapter two, using English communicatively has been a sought-after but long-elusive goal for Korean learners of English. In fact the issue is more complicated than just that. Not only are there myriad problems associated with implementing communicative language teaching (CLT) in the Korean English education system, but even learners who have successfully achieved high communicative competence often shy away from situations in which they could use English. Stranger still, there does seem to be great value and thus desire placed on speaking English well, and yet the unwillingness persists.

### 3.1 The Puzzle of Korean Learners of English

Does Korea as a whole see value in its people learning to communicate well in English? I hope the previous chapter has given a clear “Yes” response to that question. The time, money and energy devoted to English in Korea surely attests to that. Does Korea as a whole realize that more of a communicative approach to learning English than has been used traditionally could well be beneficial to its people’s quest to communicate well in English? Again, efforts at the government level, the business level, and the labors of individuals certainly show a clear understanding and even marked progress toward communicative approaches to learning English. Clearly it is neither a matter of Koreans not valuing English, nor a matter of them not grasping the latest methodologies. Something, and perhaps many other things are complicating this issue of learning English in Korea. Several questions emerge:

- How can Korean learners of English learn and use English communicatively?
- How can CLT programs best be implemented into the Korean education system?
- How can learners be motivated toward learning English communicatively?
- Why do motivated learners often shy away from using English communicatively?

- Why do motivated and successfully competent learners often still shy from using English communicatively?

This last question drew me deeply into this puzzle. What factors could be involved to hinder communicatively competent language learners from doing the communicating they feel motivated to do? This puzzling situation suggests that for Korean learners, just having the ability to speak English is not enough to ensure that every opportunity will be taken. Furthermore, it seems not so simple to say that if a person simply feels motivated toward speaking a second language, they will. It seems that other factors can supersede both the motivation and the ability and leave the learner still unwilling to communicate, at least under certain circumstances.

I also hope the last chapter depicted many of the very unique qualities of the Korean context from which Korean learners emerge, and where and when they may engage in English communication. The powerful and often strict norms of social behavior have a huge impact on all aspects of Korean life and so, logically, on the use of a second language. The main focus of this dissertation is to investigate the factors which are at play at the linguistic moment when a Korean learner of English decides whether or not to use the language, when they are free to make that choice. If indeed Korean learners often decline to use English, so often in fact that even motivated and competent learners may decline, it is my hope to discover ‘why?’ At the very least, I hope to discover how the forces at play interact with each other in the specific context of Korea. Luckily, a growing body of research has already made great strides in demystifying this puzzle. This chapter will review some of the literature from the second language field which has investigated the construct come to be known as *willingness to communicate* (hereafter WTC). I will begin with how second language WTC emerged from the first language communications studies into an accepted L2 construct. Then I will track how it moved from its North American origins to the context of the Far East, and how studies from China, Japan, and Korea show that the WTC concept can and must be adapted to different contexts.

### 3.2 The Evolution of WTC

#### *Early Stages in L1 Communication*

The second language (L2) field first took notice of insights from the first language (L1) communication field in the early 1990s. L1 researchers had identified an individual difference variable which they termed *willingness to communicate* (WTC; McCroskey & Baer, 1985). As far back as the 1970s, Burgoon (1976) discussed the term *unwillingness to communicate*, which described an individual's inclination to avoid speaking with others due to a wide variety of factors such as anxiety, introversion, and alienation. A body of research that stems from the L1 field of communication seems very suited to the investigation of a puzzle in which individuals may refrain from using an L2 even if they approach native-like competence. How deeply rooted and influencing must these forces be to exist within beginning learners and endure through to advanced level learners?

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw more development on the L1 side of WTC. Mortensen, Arntson, and Lustig (1977) found a consistency in individuals' "verbal behavior," and McCroskey and Richmond (1982) said that "shyness" was an individual predisposition which lowered a person's willingness to speak across situations. This L1 research clearly found that situational context was not a major factor in WTC; rather it was an individual, stable trait.

Later McCroskey and Baer (1985) broadly defined WTC as the probability of starting communication when such an opportunity presents itself. They found that non-linguistic outcomes such as anxiety and motivation seem to play a role in WTC, along with the learner's perception of their communicative competence. Later research (McCroskey & Richmond 1987, 1990) found evidence that WTC was not just apprehension toward communicating, but a synthesis of many factors that make up an individual's global orientation toward speaking. I will argue later in this chapter that for the Korean learner WTC is perhaps even more complex.

#### *WTC as the End and the Way to L2 Learning*

Before ever exploring more of the literature on L2 WTC, it seemed to me rather logical that the main reason a person would learn a second language would be to communicate through that language. Why choose to acquire a tool if not to use it?

Here I acknowledge that Korean English education is mandatory for students, but the question can also be applied to Korea on the whole: Why have an unused tool? Through my teaching career I quickly found that the students who progressed most quickly were those who took the most opportunities to use the target language. So when I discovered a body of research using the term *willingness to communicate*, it seemed that it must be seen as both the end goal of language learning and also the best method to achieve that goal.

Arriving in South Korea and meeting with such a mania toward English, I found it counterintuitive that there were not equally high levels of willingness to speak in the language. I have since sought to understand what factors construct Korean WTC and what unique form it takes within the Korean context. My search, I later found, was similar to that of Skehan (1989) who sought to find a variable that influenced learners to “talk in order to learn” or not. MacIntyre et al (2003) felt Skehan was in fact searching for WTC. Linguistic competence, for reasons discussed in chapter 2, has traditionally been the focus for Korean learners of English, and so talking to learn has remained rather foreign.

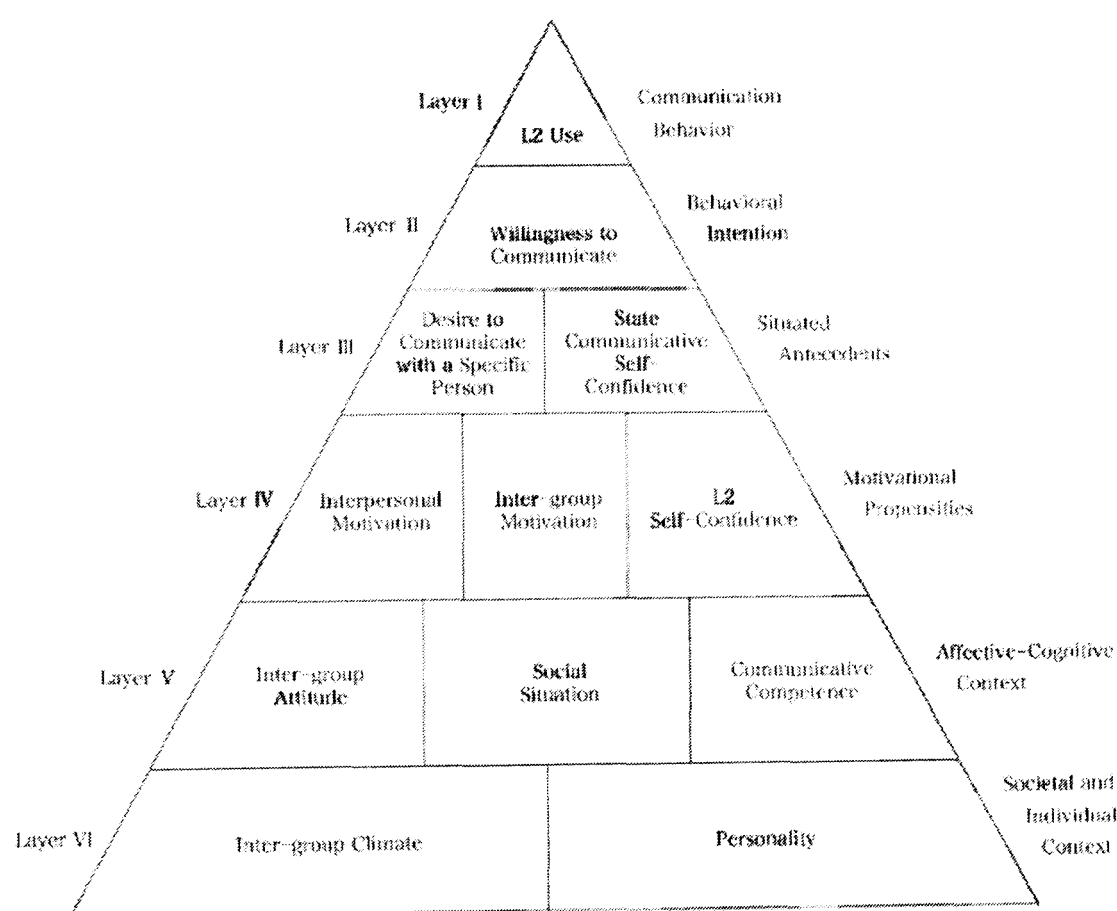
### *The Call to Communicative Language Teaching*

As mentioned in chapter 2, communicative language teaching (CLT) has been the call to arms of the Korean Ministry of Education’s seventh curriculum of English education since 1997 (Kwon, O, 2000, 2005). The curriculums from the first to the fifth were highly criticized for their focus on grammar (Bae & Han, 1994). The sixth curriculum was an attempt at a more communicative approach to language learning, as is the seventh, but problems implementing the policy have been inherent from the outset (Kim, C.H., 1998). CLT has a history over many years (Canale & Swain 1980; Krashen, 1982; Long & Crooks, 1992; Nunan, 1989) and the present broad definition centers on the idea that language can neither be learned well in isolated chunks such as grammar and functions, nor totally separated from use. Therefore the goal of language learning, and specifically CLT, should be achieving higher and higher levels of communicative competence. L2 learners’ perceptions of their own communicative competence have emerged as a great influence on their WTC, but obviously a host of other variables are at work and it became the task of researchers to begin to identify these in the hopes of improving CLT.



### *A Pyramid of WTC Variables*

Although emerging from L1 research, L2 WTC is now widely agreed to be far more complex an concept than its first language counterpart. MacIntyre et al. (1998) found WTC to be a situated construct, meaning that unlike the findings of McCroskey and Richmond (1991) WTC has not only *trait* characteristics but also *state* characteristics. MacIntyre et al. defined L2 WTC as a person's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons" (p. 547). They constructed the "pyramid" model in Figure 3.1 which now appears in much of the WTC literature.



**Figure 3.1**  
**Heuristic "Pyramid" Model of WTC Variables from MacIntyre et al. (1998)**

The pyramid model clearly shows the complexity of L2 WTC in its multi-layered construction which includes both linguistic and psychological variables, and takes the situational context into account. In MacIntyre et al. (2001) two of the scholars involved in conceptualizing the model explain that the topmost layer of the pyramid represents the final step the individual takes before deciding to speak in their L2, referring to the specific time and the persons present in that linguistic moment. They go on to say that the remaining layers of the model support this final

step with a variety of influences: behavioral intention, situated antecedents, motivational propensities, affective-cognitive context, and finally social and individual context. In other words, the tip of the pyramid represents the linguistic moment of choice about whether to speak in one specific situation, and the lower levels make up the influences that went into making that choice.

MacIntyre et al. (2001) point out that WTC, at the penultimate layer, is higher than both having the desire to communicate with a specific person, and also having the self-confidence in the ability to do so. Thus, individuals can be in a situation in which they want to speak to a particular person, and they even feel confident they can, and yet still they may have low enough WTC that they refuse the opportunity. This is precisely the situation in which Korean learners often are found, and Korean learners' behavior at the top of this pyramid is precisely the focus of this dissertation.

Moving further down the pyramid, the next three layers deal with influences not couched in a particular moment, as much as influences which endure for the individual across time and a variety of situations. The pyramid shows some rather internal individual characteristics (self-confidence, communicative competence, and personality) and some other characteristics that include intergroup issues, and finally the social situation. Thus the pyramid clearly shows how different L2 WTC is from L1 WTC because so many of the variables, particularly L2 competence and the anxiety which often accompanies it (see Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre, 1988).

Dörnyei (2005), one of the co-creators of the pyramid model, addresses some of its limitations, stating that, "it fails to describe the interrelationship and the weighting of the various components" (p. 200). Still the pyramid model remains very often cited in the WTC literature, and has been the spark for further research. Dörnyei (2005) also notes that this continued research, most notably by MacIntyre (2003) and Clément (2005), uncovered the two best predictors of WTC, communication anxiety and perceived communicative competence.

### *Theory of Planned Behavior*

As presented in chapter two of this dissertation, Koreans often feel their actions must fall in line with the many rules of their society, and individuals do not have complete freedom over their behavior. Again, the education system and the

mania over the college entrance exam greatly restrict behavior during the early years of all Koreans. Ajzen's (1988) "theory of planned behavior" states that when individuals do not feel in control of their actions, their intentions are not enough to predict their behavior. Dörnyei (2005) explains how MacIntyre et al. (2001) see WTC in light of what Ajzen coined, *perceived behavioral control*, suggesting that individuals' behavior is a combination of their intention and how much freedom they feel they have to act in the intended way.

Again, in the Korean context, this points directly to the puzzle of why Koreans have such strong ambivalence toward speaking English. From the perspective of MacIntyre's interpretation of Ajzen's theory, Koreans may have a full intention to speak English but because so much of their social behavior is governed for them by the rules of society, they may not be able to act in accordance with their intentions.

### *Some Specifics of Foreign Language Learning and Social Support*

Not only may the rules of Korean society limit English learners from fulfilling their intentions to communicate in the target language, there are also simply few opportunities for Koreans to speak English in Korea. This brings up the important distinction between foreign language learning (FLL) and second language acquisition. Dörnyei (2005) defines these as, "the former referring to school learning with no or only limited contact with L2 speakers, and the latter to language attainment at least partly embedded in the host environment" (p. 201). Obviously Korean learners in Korea fall into the FLL category quite completely. Dörnyei points to research (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000) which shows that learners immersed in the language environment display higher WTC than non-immersion students. MacIntyre et al. (2001) continued this line of research and among other things investigated the influence of social support on WTC among immersion students both inside and outside of the classroom. They defined social support as whether a particular person, such as a parent or close friend wants you to learn the target language. Parents tended to always be supportive of language learning and so the focus of the analysis stayed on other sources of support. The findings revealed that among those studied the support of friends was very important to language learning. The participants were more highly motivated to learn the target language when it was associated with

nurturing friendship. MacIntyre et al. called for future research to investigate the interpersonal relationships among language learners. In the results section of this dissertation I will look closely at this matter as it seems to bear great significance for Korean learners of English who are so influenced by those around them.

Interestingly, MacIntyre et al. (2001) point to another study (MacIntyre, Gouthro, and Clément, 1997) which asked when immersion students had the highest and lowest WTC. Overall, WTC was high when it allowed for bonding with friends or relatives, and quite low when the situation was perceived as one of performance, error correction, and formal evaluation. As one example of this bonding, some adolescent participants reported that they enjoyed using the L2 as a secret code among themselves in the presence of unilingual others to annoy them. This mischievous behavior clearly brings the L2 speakers closer together through the target language. As stated in chapter two, Koreans very often associate speaking English with evaluation and rarely with any chance to bond with other Koreans. In terms of WTC, the motivation toward friendship seems to be a greater help to language learning than a motivation toward high performance.

Following Skehan's (1989) idea of how different learners may have different levels of willingness to "talk in order to learn," MacIntyre et al. (2003) found no significant correlation between L1 and L2 WTC, indicating that there is at least some independence between the two. In the study there are different groups of students, some of whom took part in intensive or immersion language courses while others took more regular second language courses. Among the immersion students they found a strong correlation between WTC and motivation to learn the language. However among the students taking regular classes the correlation was significantly lower. MacIntyre et al (2003) thus determined that there is not a simple relation between WTC and motivation for language learning. While the immersion students seemed to agree with the notion that language learners must "talk in order to learn," the non-immersion group, while still having similar mean levels of motivation with the immersion group, did not exhibit the notion that a student motivated to learn a language will be equally motivated to speak it.

### *Major WTC Indicators: Perceived Communicative Competence and Communication Apprehension*

Along with perceived communicative competence, mentioned above, communication apprehension is one of the two major indicators of WTC. In the MacIntyre et al. (2003) study, a surprising result was found. Immersion and non-immersion students, while different in many ways, had similar levels of communication apprehension when it came to speaking. The researchers suggest that immersion programs may actually heighten anxiety toward speaking. Between the two variables, WTC for the immersion students was best predicted by communication anxiety, while perceived competence better predicted WTC for the non-immersion group. The researchers suggest that perhaps anxiety plays a greater role for more advanced learners, possibly because they have growing opportunities to speak, and communication anxiety is high for most people even in their L1. Less advanced students' WTC is better predicted by perceived competence perhaps because they have had fewer anxiety provoking experiences that could build up anxiety, and so their perception of their competence to speak dictates whether or not they will. The researchers suggest that teachers may need to pay more attention to the anxiety of advanced students. Perhaps this phenomenon explains part of why even advanced Korean learners sometimes shy from opportunities to speak.

So it becomes quite plausible to have a wide variety of language learners in terms of WTC. Two learners could have equal motivation toward learning a language, but due to different immersion experiences, one could strongly believe and take part in “talking in order to learn” and the other not. Also based on immersion experience, one learner's WTC could be based on his or her perceived competence while a far more advanced learner is controlled more by anxiety. This takes several steps toward better understanding Korean learners of English and their ambivalence toward speaking because so many factors could influence WTC even in the presence of motivation and competence.

### *WTC Laboratory Studies*

MacIntyre, Babin, and Clement (1999) undertook a WTC study that included some laboratory work which is useful to this discussion. The participants in the study were 226 male and female university students, and the researchers sought to better

understand the antecedents to WTC. These antecedents were investigated for the following reasons:

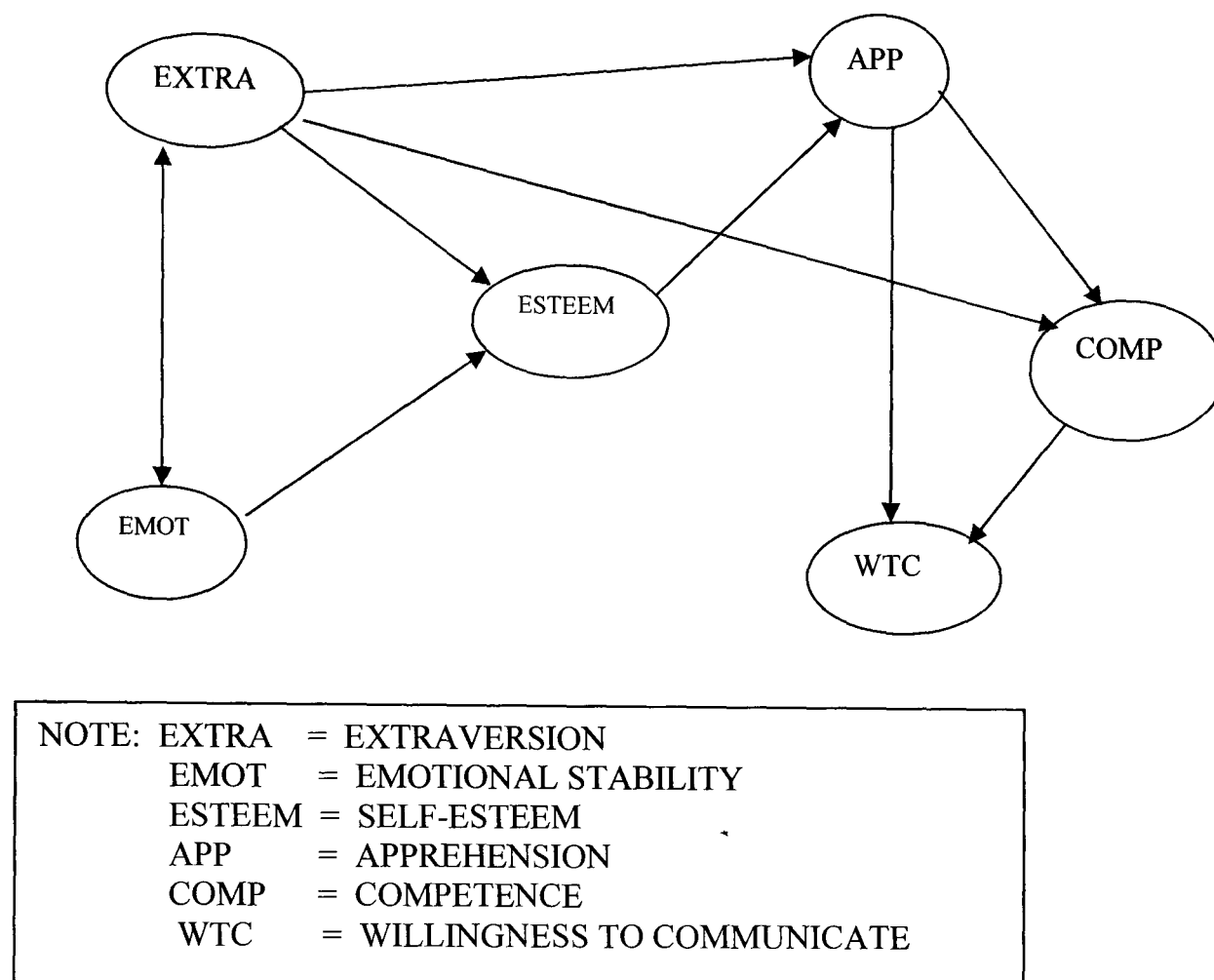
- *Introversion/extraversion.* Because extraverts need to communicate in order to have the amount of social interaction they desire, they will naturally place a higher value on communication and thus probably have higher levels of WTC.
- *Emotional stability/neuroticism.* These two terms refer to global traits concerning anxiety, insecurity, etc. levels that individuals generally feel across situations. The researchers assumed that emotional stability underlies introversion/extraversion and together contribute to self-esteem.
- *Self-esteem.* (For more on self-esteem see Brown, 2000; Dörnyei, 2005) The perception of self worth was seen to influence how susceptible individuals may be to the communication environment. In other words, a person with low self-esteem may have low WTC because the communication event may be seen as a potential negative feedback, and out of self-protection the person may avoid such threatening situations. Self-esteem then seems closely linked to communication apprehension.

The next two antecedents, communication apprehension and perceived communicative competence, as mentioned above, are generally accepted as the two variables most closely linked to WTC (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987).

- *Communication apprehension.* The researchers define this as “the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p. 217), and they find it closely linked to perceived communicative competence. Obviously the higher the apprehension, the lower the WTC.
- *Perceived communicative competence.* This refers to individuals’ own opinions of how well equipped they are to communicate in a given situation. MacIntyre et al. are quick to point out that low self-esteem or other factors could cause that self-perception to be rather inaccurate. A learner may indeed have the communicative skills for a given situation, but they may feel they do not for global reasons of insecurity. This is why, according to MacIntyre et al., perceived communicative competence is such a strong predictor of WTC.

As Dörnyei (2005) pointed out, the pyramid model from MacIntyre et al. (1998) fails to show the interaction of the variables that lead to WTC. The conceptual model in MacIntyre et al. (1999) proposes the interaction of the variables listed above (see Figure 3.2). The model is a structural equation model that depicts the personality traits and communication variables which are antecedents to WTC. The model should be read from left to right in three sections. The far left shows the two personality variables, extraversion and emotional stability. The center is the intermediate step of self-esteem. The far right show the variables apprehension and perceived competence which are directly related to communication, and the specific communication situation. The arrows show the interactive relationship among the variables, such that if a change were to occur in the variable at the base of the arrow, the variable at the tip of the arrow would also change. Therefore the researchers propose that personality variables do play a role in the formation of WTC, but through the variables of self-esteem, communication anxiety, and perceived competence. Following the model the researchers extrapolate that extraverts with emotional stability will likely have higher self-esteem.

In their study MacIntyre et al. (1999) cite another study (Zakahi & McCroskey, 1989) which looked at WTC and came in two stages, the first being a questionnaire which then asked for volunteers for the second stage, a laboratory study. Interestingly, although perhaps not surprisingly, 92% of the participants who scored high on the WTC scale from the questionnaire volunteered for the lab study, while only 24% of low scorers volunteered. The researchers in this study suggest that WTC can be a confounding variable in communication research because most voluntary participants are likely to already have high levels of WTC and thus skew any results. MacIntyre et al. (1999) also found that WTC was related to the decision to volunteer for their laboratory study as well. Finding and keeping participants for the qualitative portion of this dissertation's research was certainly a similar challenge. They proposed the following figure to illustrate the relationship among the factors influencing WTC:



**Figure 3.2**  
**Conceptual Model of WTC (MacIntyre et al. 1999)**

This conceptual model did fit the data they collected with one surprising finding. Only a non-significant path was found between communication apprehension and WTC. This goes somewhat against the findings of McCroskey and Richmond (1990) in that apprehension only influences WTC through perceived competence. MacIntyre et al suggest that this result is caused by low apprehension may necessarily raise perceived competence and thus WTC.

The laboratory portion of the MacIntyre et al. (1999) study included a segment in which the participants were asked to perform communication tasks. The oral tasks were for the participants to speak within three minutes each about an easy topic (your favorite hobby) and a difficult one (the educational system). The researchers measured the speaking time and number of different ideas communicated. The results varied in that for the easy speaking task, perceived competence predicted both the speaking time and number of ideas, but for the difficult task, it was apprehension that predicted both. The researchers suggest that anxiety may affect people's



perceptions of their own skills and that anxious speakers become so worried about their self-presentation that they may wish to avoid speaking.

Thus, the researchers conclude that WTC, in accordance with its traditional definition, does indeed predict the initiation of speaking. Those who scored high on the WTC scale were more likely to volunteer for the lab study and once there were more likely to initiate speaking. However, in the lab, once communication had already begun, it was apprehension and perceived competence that influenced communication behavior, in terms of time and number of ideas. So, WTC brings people to the communication event but apprehension and perceived competence dictate behavior once there. Furthermore, it is the trait level variables which give people the tendency to seek out communication situations, but then the state level variables predict the actual decision to start speaking.

### *WTC and the Ideal Self*

Dörnyei (2005) after reviewing the literature to date summarizes WTC in such a way as to incorporate most of the theories that have been thus far presented here. He describes it as a:

...composite ID (individual difference) variable that draws together a host of learner variables that have been well established as influences on second language acquisition and use, resulting in a construct in which psychological and linguistic factors are integrated in an organic manner (p. 202).

Dörnyei states that the research still leaves several unanswered questions including whether WTC ends at the initiation of communication or continues at every conversational turn, and how clearly can the separate processes of L2 acquisition and L2 use be linked to WTC? Although the WTC section is just a small part of the entire book Dörnyei (2005) links the construct to his main topic, the Ideal L2 Self, stating that it results from the interplay between this self and linguistic self-confidence. The following section will not only focus on WTC in an Asian context but will also show that WTC does not end at the initiation of communication but rather continues to have quite a complex existence throughout conversations.

### 3.3 WTC in China

A great number of studies on WTC have taken place in North America, particularly in Canada where the French/English proximity is so ripe for research. However in recent years the research field has broadened and spread around the world, and importantly to this dissertation, to Asia. I will first look at a study that concerns China and the influences of that country's philosophical backdrop, then Japan and the body of research from there, and finally studies concerning Korean learners. These studies all note the great importance of the context and the social background of the participants in the WTC event. Although these Far Eastern cultures are distinct from each other, they certainly share a number of commonalities, such as Confucian-based traditions, which impact social interaction and thus communication. Also, as reported in chapter 2, these three countries have many similar problems with learning English.

#### *Confucianism*

Wen and Clement (2003) noted how the MacIntyre et al. (1998) pyramid model for WTC was based on studies from the West, and thus sought a model that could fit in a Chinese context. They amended the model from a Chinese perspective, taking very much into account Confucianism in relation to the cultural values of today's Chinese people, and how those values might influence L2 communication. That study has an important bearing on this dissertation not only because of China's geographic proximity to Korea, but also because both cultures have been heavily influenced by Confucianism.

#### *The Other-directed Self and Submissive Learning*

Similar to Koreans, Chinese learners of English are known to have a solid grammar-based knowledge of English, but remain poor speakers with low WTC. Wen and Clement begin their discussion with the supposition that low WTC among Chinese learners is not so much a language phenomenon as a philosophical and cultural one. They point to two main aspects of the Chinese culture which bear on L2

WTC: *the other-directed self* and *a submissive way of learning*. Similarities with the Korean context will be evident.

By “the other-directed self” Wen and Clement (citing Gudykunst, 1998, among others) refer the power that others around them have on individuals. As with Korean *chemyon*, discussed in detail in chapter 2 of this dissertation, Chinese *jen* refers to the concept that the individual self does not really exist except in relation to others. They cite Wen (1999), noting that Chinese people learn early to “become sensitive to... social evaluation and care about their own self in relation to others... they are very cautious and mind their behavior so as to avoid disapproval” (p. 20). They list three questions that are always on Chinese people’s minds when in social situations:

- What will others think?
- What will others evaluate?
- How will others respond?

Wen and Clement go on to state that especially in L2 learning, Chinese learners would be even more sensitive to public judgment because using a second language requires a major change in behavior, which attracts more attention from others, and thus more scrutiny.

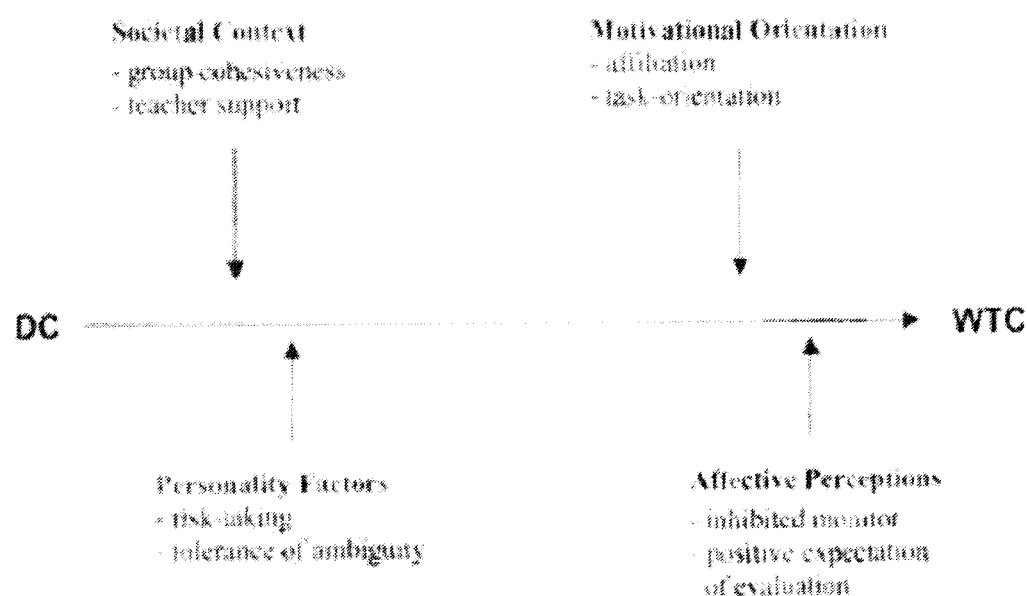
Along with this sensitivity of public judgment, Wen and Clement also focus on another phenomenon, *the insider effect*, which exists within the other-directed self and which refers to the drawing of very distinct lines between ingroups and outgroups (more on intergroup dynamics in chapter 4). The researchers comment that it is expected in Chinese culture that ingroup members be treated very differently than outgroup members who do not share unity and interdependence (they cite Wierzbicka, 1996; Carr, 1973). While this tendency seems to match Korean group dynamics there is another aspect that does not. Wen and Clement mention how the Chinese also keep a distance from outgroup culture. While this may be true of older generations in Korea, the society of recent decades seems to embrace and value much of what comes from other cultures.

In reference to *a submissive way of learning*, Wen and Clement tell stories very similar to those from Korea. Traditional education was based on the memorization of classic texts, the teacher was the unquestionable authority, and

students were mostly silent and always submissive. As in Korea, Chinese education practices have loosened but the shadow of the past times has not lifted entirely. Attempts at reform are often met with resistance from teachers and students who believe learning is not taking place when the lessons are not based on teachers' lectures.

### *Desire to vs. Willingness to Communicate*

WTC in this Chinese context, according to Wen and Clement, is far more complex than is accounted for in the MacIntyre et al. pyramid model<sup>8</sup>. Of their specific focus is the juncture between desire to communicate and WTC, which they distinguish by stating, "desire refers to a deliberate choice or preference, while willingness emphasizes the readiness to act... [Thus] Having the desire to communicate does not necessarily imply a willingness to communicate," (p. 25). Wen and Clément (2003) constructed a model of the variables which moderate this relation between desire and WTC in Figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3**  
**Variables Moderating the Relation between DC and WTC in the Chinese EFL Classroom. (Wen & Clément, 2003)**

The variables include societal context, personality factors, motivational orientations, and affective perceptions, each of which has two subcategories, and

<sup>8</sup> Clement was one of the researchers involved with the construction of the pyramid model.

they are all closely related to the Chinese context. While Wen and Clément's (2003) article represents only a conceptualization and not empirical evidence, the framework which they set down can be helpful in understanding the uniqueness of the Asian context and thereby help understand the upcoming discussions on Japanese and Korean WTC. Also the article examines the Chinese context by bringing together research from intercultural communication, social psychology, humanistic pedagogy and second language acquisition. Below, each of the four categories, a total of eight variables, will be briefly discussed.

In terms of the societal context Wen and Clement first discuss group cohesiveness in China, which they assert is based less on group members feeling personal attraction among themselves, as in a western context, and more on the attractiveness of a task that could only be achieved with the group. High group cohesiveness is thought to reduce anxiety and so raise WTC. Teacher support is the other subcategory of societal context and refers to the involvement and immediacy<sup>9</sup> of teachers in the classroom setting. Teachers in China are seen as similar to parents and are able to bring about students' positive affect and thus raise WTC.

Personality factors, in Wen and Clément's conceptualization, have two subcategories that they feel pertain to WTC. The first is *risk-taking* which they define as chosen behavior toward an uncertain outcome. In the L2 context this means taking the risk of using the language in public and risking a negative response from others. Due to Chinese learners' desire to save face, risk-takers would seem to have higher WTC. The other category is *tolerance of ambiguity*, which specifies learners' ability to cope with the novelty, complexity and unstructuredness of learning a language. Wen and Clément point out that the highly structured education system and society in general accounts for Chinese learners' typically low tolerance. Those with higher levels are suspected to then have higher WTC.

In terms of motivational orientation, Wen and Clément point to affiliation and task orientation. The former is simply the preference to be with others than alone, and this togetherness tends to lead to interpersonal communication. The latter is contrasted with *ego-involvement*, or behaving in order to improve one's competence. So task-involved individuals, Chinese learners on the whole, behave more in order to gain positive public recognition. Thus, behavior is often swayed by the perceptions of public judgment.

The fourth and final moderator of the relationship between desire to communicate and WTC in Wen and Clément's (2003) Chinese conceptualization is *affective perceptions*, which they divide into *inhibited monitor* and *expectation of a positive evaluation*. The first term is an extension of Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model, which addresses learners' tendency to self-correct. Chinese students typically over-monitor to the point of impairing communication because of their great respect for the authority of rules and order. The second term concerning evaluation, takes into account that Chinese individuals typically base their self-worth on the remarks of others, and therefore learners will tend to be much more willing to enter communication if they expect that they will receive a positive evaluation from others for that.

The eight variables discussed above represent for Wen and Clément, the key contributors to a positive communication environment which could allow the smooth transition from desire to communicate to the actual willingness to do so. The variables also outline, as a theoretical framework, the unique qualities of WTC in a Chinese context. In general, the article points out both the distinction between the desire and the willingness to communicate, and how specific cultural aspects, such as a strong Confucian tradition, should be taken into account when investigating WTC.

### 3.4 Japanese WTC

#### *Adapting the WTC Model for Japan*

Since the late 1990s Yashima and her colleagues have taken the study of WTC to Japan (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004), leading the way for others (Hashimoto, 2002; Matsuoka and Evans, 2005), and confirming how the construct which came out of western literature can also be applied to the very different context of the Far East. Essentially, Yashima (2002) constructed and tested a model for Japanese WTC which was based on both the WTC model (MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998) and the socioeducational model (Gardner, 1985), but adapted for the Japanese ethnolinguistic context. From MacIntyre (1994) a path model was set out for L1 communication which proposed that high perceived communication competence along with low communication

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<sup>9</sup> Involvement refers to teacher/student interrelation, while immediacy refers to behaviors that reduce

anxiety would lead to WTC and then higher frequency of communication. Then MacIntyre and Charos (1996) adapted the model for L2 communication finding that competence and anxiety still predicted WTC, but L2 WTC was not considered a simple extension of L1 WTC, partly because in the L2 many intergroup issues must be taken into account. Yashima then describes the pyramid model (described earlier in this chapter) from MacIntyre et al. (1998) and the famous socioeconomic model from Gardner (1985), which is based on the two attitudes *integrativeness*<sup>10</sup> and *attitudes towards the learning situation*. Yashima points out that many researchers have questioned the applicability of Gardner's model to the EFL context where members of the L2 community are rarely encountered. She then mentions that in Yashima (2000) she found Japanese college students' orientations for learning English was to acquire a lingua franca more so than the language of one specific community. She labeled this *intercultural friendship orientation*, and cites Dörnyei (1990) noting that English learners are often not likely to have affective reactions to specific groups, but the media must certainly play a role in influencing attitudes toward American and other English speaking communities.

### *International Posture*

The major new concept Yashima (2002) brings to her model of WTC in the Japanese context is what she terms *international posture*, which takes into account learners' individual differences in their attitudes toward the international community. She describes English as something of a bridge for Japanese learners to the outside world around Japan and international posture refers to individuals' interest and attitudes toward what English symbolizes for them. This could include such things as "foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and one hopes, openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures," (p. 57). Clearly this expands the concept of WTC from what it would need to be in an ESL context such as Canada, without negating the earlier models.

Yashima (2002) brings in research from the field of intercultural communication (specifically Gudykunst, 1991; Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; Kim, 1991) to help frame

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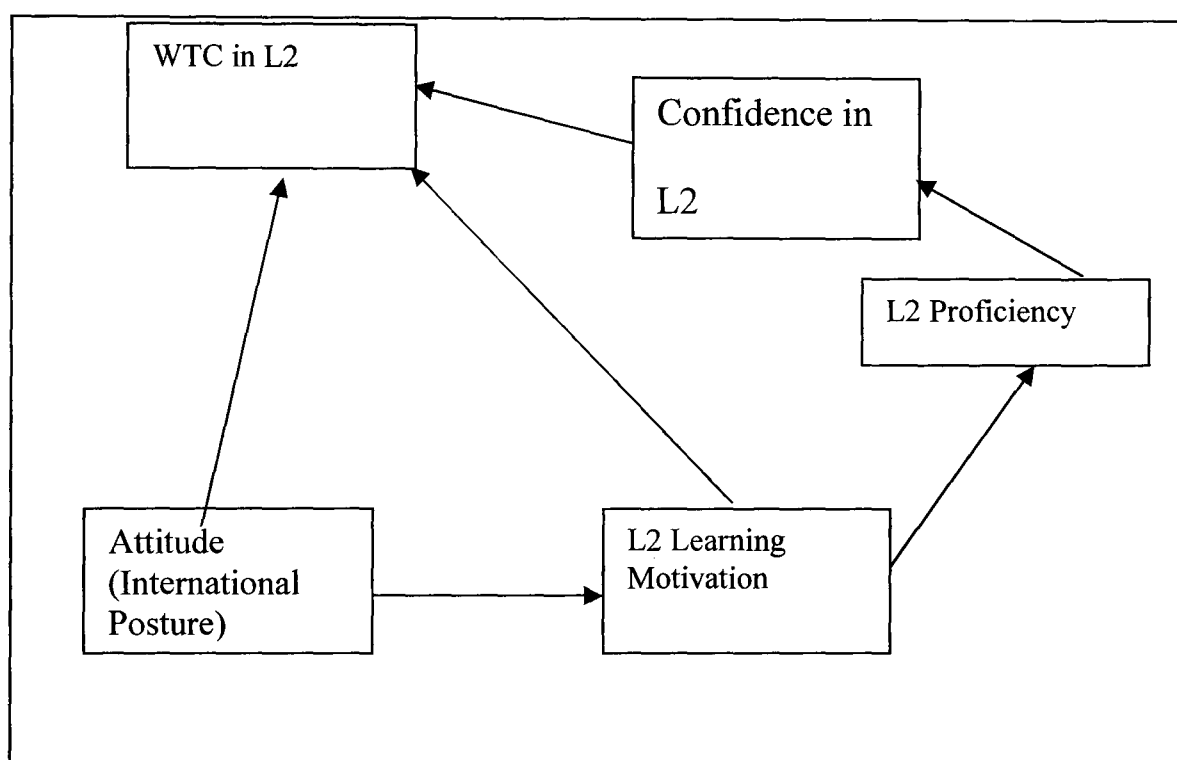
distance between teachers and students.

<sup>10</sup> Integrativeness refers to "the desire to learn a L2 in order to meet and communicate with members of the L2 community" (Yashima, 2002, p. 56).

the concept international posture. Two concepts, *tendency toward approach-avoidance*<sup>11</sup> and *ethnocentrism*<sup>12</sup> she found most valuable. The Yashima study thus examined the relationship between L2 learning and communication, presuming that international posture:

Affects the level of motivation, which, in turn, affects L2 proficiency...Proficiency in a L2 presumably affects L2 communication confidence, whereas the level of motivation influences willingness to communicate... In addition, international posture or attitude toward the international community directly affects WTC in a L2. (Yashima, 2002, p. 58)

Figure 3.4 shows the model that was tested in Yashima (2002).



**Figure 3.4 Yashima's (2002) L2 Communication Model to be Tested**

The participants in the study were 389 Japanese university freshmen majoring in information science, who had selected English as their primary foreign language. All had studied English for the past six years of their secondary schooling, and about one third of them had taken some extra English lessons before studying at school. All

<sup>11</sup> "An individual's tendency either to approach or to avoid interaction with people from different cultures" (Yashima, 2002, p. 58)

<sup>12</sup> "A tendency to interpret and evaluate others' behavior using our own standards... [or] a bias toward the ingroup that causes us to evaluate different patterns of behavior negatively, rather than try to understand them," (Gudykunst, 1991, pp. 66-67), resulting in limited outgroup interaction.



the participants took the Institutional TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) as a measure of their proficiency, and then questionnaires, in Japanese, were administered to measure attitudes, motivation, and communication tendencies.

### *The Fit of the Japanese Model*

In the findings of Yashima (2002), the socioeducational model was replicated “in that attitudes influenced motivation, which, in turn influenced achievement,” (p.62). However international posture emerged as a latent variable as the attitudes were not toward a specific community but rather the non-Japanese world in general. The WTC model was also replicated in that “a lower level of anxiety and perception of L2 communication competence led to a higher level of WTC. In terms of proficiency, it was expected that higher proficiency would bring higher levels of confidence, but instead no significant path was found. This finding is very significant to what will be discussed in the results section of this dissertation, in that my data supports the notion that proficiency may not be such a significant influence on WTC because the proficiency of one individual seems to fluctuate greatly depending on the situation. Finally, the Yashima findings found a significant but not strong path from international posture to WTC.

In summary, Yashima (2002) brought WTC to the Japanese context and found that earlier models were still applicable, and that the concept of international posture does play a role in WTC and thus language learning in general. This study represents strong empirical evidence that the conceptual “pyramid” model (MacIntyre et al., 1998) works in an East Asian context; still that context must be taken into account. What this study does not measure empirically is the possible direct effects the L1 community may have on L2 WTC. Later chapters of this dissertation will attempt to investigate such influences in terms of the Korean context.

### *Other Studies on Japan*

Following the study discussed in the previous section (Yashima, 2002), Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) embarked on another study along the same lines of testing the WTC model in the Japanese context. This time however the participants were adolescents in junior and senior high schools as opposed to the university students in the previous study. The Japanese education system in general

and the importance of English on the college entrance exam in particular, have many similarities to the system in Korea, not in small part because the Japanese set up the basis of Korea's education system during the period of colonization. An understanding of WTC in this Japanese context can bring many insights into understanding WTC in Korea. The article begins with a statement that could just as easily be made about Korea:

Recently, teachers seem to be caught between society's demand for improving practical communicative skills, on the one hand, and pressure to prepare students for entrance examinations, on the other, which mandates a continued focus on grammar/translation. (p. 121)

The aims of this study were quite similar to the 2002 study, i.e. testing the WTC model and the significance of the concept *international posture*. However two new factors were present in this study because the participants were of only 15 or 16 years of age, and a portion of the participants<sup>13</sup> had taken part in a study abroad program, which allowed investigation into communication behavior outside of the classroom and with authentic intercultural contact. This article cites an earlier study conducted by Yashima as part of her doctoral dissertation (Yashima 2002), noting a quote from one Japanese high school student that studied abroad in the United States that speaks to some communication differences across cultures: 'If I'm quiet in Japan, my friend will talk to me and say, 'What happened?' But here they will think 'She is quiet, so she doesn't want to speak to us.' So I've got to talk to them' (pp. 121-122). Thus, Yashima (2004) investigates the factors that could inspire such students to change their behavior and raise their WTC.

The first investigation yielded results that fit the WTC model and show that students with higher levels of WTC did indeed initiate communication both in and out of the classroom, and that self-confidence, which was defined as a mixture of perceived communication competence and low communication anxiety, is a crucial factor in promoting WTC. Also those who were more internationally oriented tended to have higher motivation toward L2 learning.

The second investigation focused on a group of students who participated in a one-year student exchange program that began with a three-week host family stay.

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<sup>13</sup> This study was actually conducted in two separate investigations with the second part involving participants who had studied abroad.

Questionnaires were given prior to leaving for the U.S. and at the end of the three-week host family stay. The findings showed that those students with high WTC spoke with their hosts more frequently and for longer periods of time, and they also felt less difficulty in making friends and more satisfaction in general with interpersonal relationships.

The researchers feel that together the two investigations show that WTC relates L2 usage in and also outside of the classroom. They also note that students who seem able to visualize their own “English-using selves” (p.143) tended to be more motivated to learn the language. On this point they cite Dörnyei’s (2003) work with *possible* and *ideal selves* (more thoroughly examined in Dörnyei, 2005), and hypothesize that learners who can visualize themselves using English in specific situations may indeed achieve higher WTC and in fact engage in more interaction using English.

Another study which tested the applicability of the socioeconomic and WTC models to the Japanese context was Hashimoto (2002), and again the models fit the findings. Matsuoka and Evans (2005) also points out the importance of context when studying WTC around the world, especially in East Asia, and finds similarities between the Chinese and Japanese contexts.

### **3. 5 The Korean Context**

Although chapter 2 of this dissertation went into depth about the Korean context and the specifics of English learning in Korea, a few articles have spoken quite directly to the subject matter of this chapter, and so will be mentioned here. It will be hopefully made clear that Korea shares many characteristics with the Chinese and Japanese contexts, but also that these contexts very directly bear on WTC.

#### *An Autobiographical Study of Success Despite Education*

Lim (2004) takes an autobiographical approach to investigating why Korean learners struggle with such ambivalence toward English. Lim cites attribution theory and specifically the work of Weiner (1979, 1980, 1986) to support the idea that individuals may put less effort toward a goal if they feel there are influencing factors beyond their control. Lim also points out that mere desire to learn a language is often not enough to be successful. Although an autobiographical approach may have many

disadvantages due to its limited scope, this study by a Korean learner of English who is also aware of the literature of language acquisition, may offer some insights.

Not an uncommon story, Lim studied English from 1981 to 1986 in the Korean public schools and also at a private English institute two hours a day, five days a week for two years. She then studied English in university, and all the while she engaged in self-instructional activities such as English movies, music, and reading to enhance her learning. After graduating from college, she taught English in Korea for a time and ultimately received her PhD from an American university. One thread in most of her formal English study in Korea was that of perfection, “I was told that perfect pronunciation and sentence structure were essential to being fluent... I remember that I spoke more freely [at first] and later became more hesitant because the more I spoke, the more mistakes I made,” (p. 99). It was only during a trip alone to Australia that she learned that perfection was not necessary for communication, which bolstered her confidence, and she said,

I could reach my goals without being perfect,” (p. 100). Of her time in America Lim notes, “I was frightened that I would not be understood... [but] to my astonishment no one ever complained... we got along quite well. I stopped focusing on ME and MY problems. At that moment, my English abilities and confidence soared. (p. 101)

This soaring confidence helped Lim achieve her primary goal, which was to be able to speak with native English speakers and learn about a culture very different from Korea's. For the most part, Lim's experience learning English runs counter to Gardner's (2001, cited in Dörnyei and Schmidt, 2001) idea that the learning environment must be a positive one. She states:

I couldn't trust my English teachers. I didn't like the materials that I had to use. However, I continued to try to study hard because (a) being good in English was valued very highly in school and (b) we learned that obeying authority and fulfilling responsibility were important in all situations... [I] never lost interest in learning English, just in studying in the school system [which] seemed to take me further away from my primary goal. (p. 102)

Lim notes that she may be in the minority because she feels most Koreans learn English in order to get a good job, and perhaps one that does not require communication in English. She attributes her success to having goals outside of the educational system, not based on the rewards given by others. Although the accounts of just one person, the Lim study reflects many of the issues brought up in chapter 2's discussion of the Korean education system and echoes many of the comments found in my own interview data. The way English is learned in Korea is often more of a hurdle than a boon to achieving communication goals.

### *A Comparative Study of Korean and British Language Learning*

In a study by Mitchell and Lee (2003), the perspective of a Korean English teacher is shown, and in comparison with a British French teacher. The aim of the study was to see how good language learners developed in primary schools from two very different contexts. The study focused both on how the communicative approach was implemented and what were the perceptions of a good language learner. An attempt was made to examine whether the stereotype of Anglo-American vs. Asian approaches to language learning held up. That is, did the so-called individual society indeed differ from the collective society in the ways which are commonly thought?

In terms of the communicative approach many similarities between the two spotlighted teachers were found: "the main priority for both teachers... was to equip their students with a predetermined body of everyday expressions and vocabulary, usable in conversational interaction," (p. 55). Also, neither classroom was especially student-centered, and the researchers were struck by the similarities more than any differences. The outstanding differences emerged in the areas of "group versus individual activity, and the degree of differentiation expected in student behavior," (p. 56). Comparatively the Korean teacher rarely used the target language for classroom management and kept more closely to the scripts provided by classroom texts. Whereas the British teacher often insisted even squabbles among students be settled in French, the Korean classroom was filled with the Korean language to facilitate activities and confirm meaning. The following excerpt from a class transcript shows how immediately Korean was used, to the point of not really needing to understand or use much English at all (everything presented in brackets was spoken in Korean):

TEACHER: OK, Kim Sang Mee, [where did she go?... where]

STUDENT 1: shopping center

TEACHER: shopping center, OK, very good. What did she buy? [What did she buy?]

STUDENT 1: new bag

TEACHER: new bag.. new bag... Hong Sang Keun... how much was the bag?

STUDENT 2: (silence)

STUDENT 3: [she is asking you how much the bag was]

TEACHER: How much was the bag? [How much was the bag?]

The only question that was not initially translated by the teacher was never answered by student 2, and only a sparse four words were actually produced by student 1.

Another marked difference was that as opposed to the more egalitarian, equal treatment, approach of the British teacher, the Korean teacher often singled out the more able students to be models and leaders:

Group leaders were nominated from among the most active and highest achieving students. These group leaders often responded on behalf of their group... [The teacher] explained her view of these students as 'little teachers', who could provide good language models for their peers, and should be called on preferentially for this purpose" (p. 52).

However, this approach allows for a high number of students in a class to rarely if ever have to actually communicate. Hierarchy and unequal status, perhaps not surprisingly, begins early in the Korean school system and quite possibly leaves a lasting effect on WTC because language competence is so highly spotlighted and performance anxiety must certainly play a role. This could result in only the best students having regular opportunities to speak in class, and high performance anxiety for most students. The Mitchell and Lee study shows a glimpse of what actually takes place in Korean classrooms.

*Security, Excitement, and Responsibility: A Study of Moment-to-Moment WTC*

Kang (2005) takes qualitative data from four male Korean university students studying English in the United States, to examine situational WTC as a construct that changes moment-to-moment based on interacting psychological conditions. The findings resulted in a proposed new definition of WTC as:

An individual's volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables. (p. 290)

The purpose of the study was to examine situational variables and their relation to WTC and to track how WTC changes during communication. The use of "stimulated recall," in which participants commented on their own WTC while watching videotape of themselves was an interesting aspect of the data collection in this study. The many similarities this study has with this dissertation make it seem reasonable to focus closely on its structure. The individual psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility, and security combined with situational variables such as interlocutor, topic, and conversational context. Brief detail will be given below to salient aspects of this study.

In terms of security, interlocutors seemed to be the most determining factor, in that strangers who did not know the participants level of proficiency raised their anxiety. One participant stated, "I feel insecure and reluctant to speak English in front of people who do not know my English proficiency," (p. 283). Kang goes on to raise an issue that is central to this dissertation, the L1 audience:

Among unfamiliar interlocutors, the participants tended to feel less secure about making mistakes and were more reluctant to speak English in the presence of Koreans than other international students... their insecurity in front of other Koreans was attributed to a high possibility of getting to know each other later and being ashamed of their non-fluent English speaking skills. (p.283)

Also, if the interlocutors seemed to already know each other well, or if their numbers increased, so would the participants' feelings of insecurity. Of speaking with native English speaking tutors alone, the participants' levels of security seemed determined by the number and frequency of positive active responses. Signs of boredom, or saying, "What?" could easily destroy a sense of security. Of non-native interlocutors, if they seemed to have higher levels of fluency, the participants tended to feel less secure.

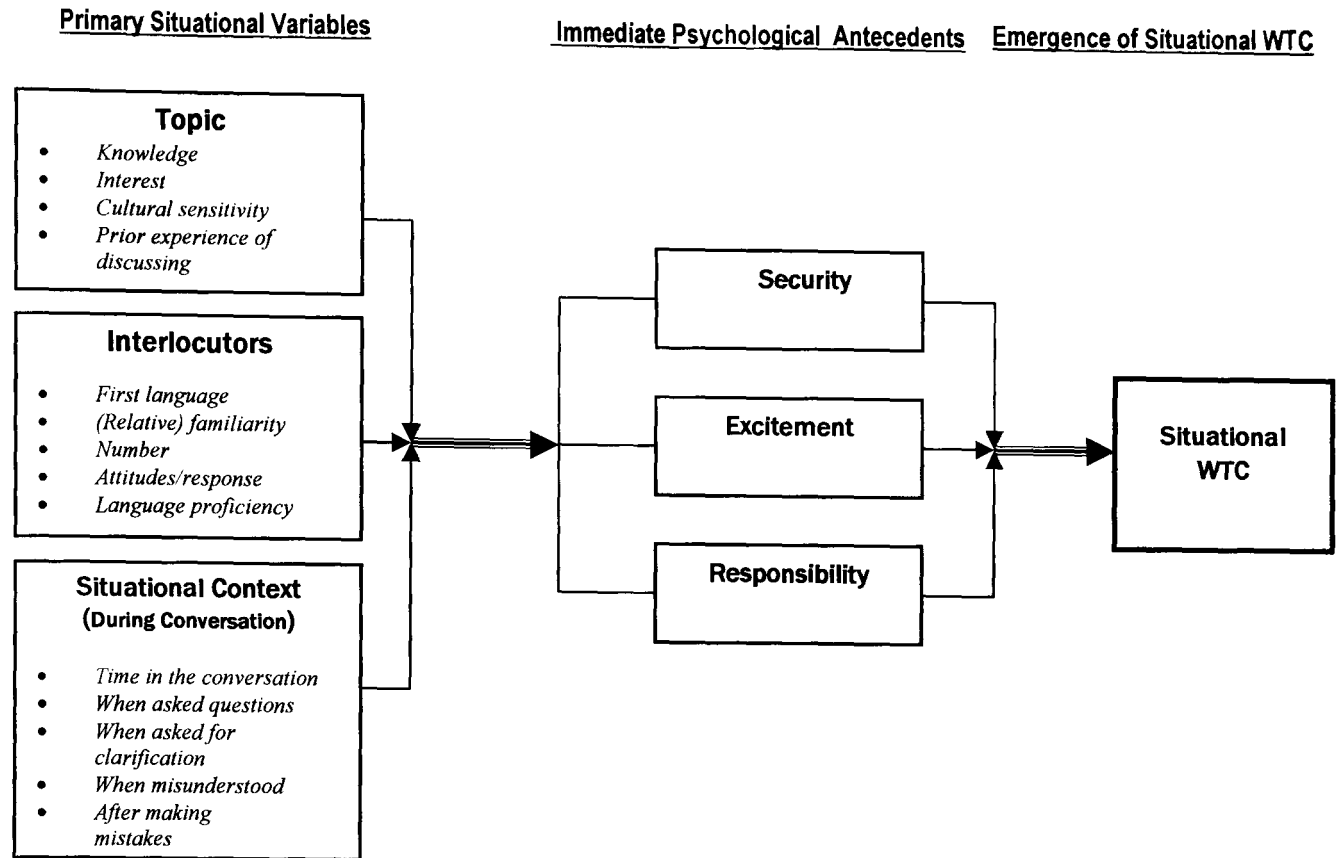
Unfamiliar topics also reduced participant security, and one told of avoiding eye contact when the unfamiliar topic of American football arose and he could only pretend to understand. In terms of conversational context, the participants mentioned remaining silent during the beginning of a conversation until a certain level of security with the topic was achieved. Also, if a mistake was ever made by a participant and he had to stop in mid sentence, he would then become more reluctant to speak again. Clearly WTC fluctuated over the course of conversations for these participants.

Excitement was defined by Kang as "elation about the act of talking," (p. 285). Familiar topics and skill-improving or otherwise attractive conversation partners boosted excitement for the participants. Again, Korean (L1) conversation partners were the least preferable: "I feel weird and not excited when I speak English to Koreans. I feel like I am wearing a mask."

By "responsibility" Kang refers to a sense of obligation to communicate in order to get or preserve something valuable, or to avoid some detriment. Also if the topic had been brought up by the participant, he was most knowledgeable about it, or the topic could potentially shed bad light on Korea, a strong sense of responsibility emerged among the participants. I strongly agree with this last point, knowing well that offerings to defend Koreans' eating of dog meat or controversial performances in the Olympics or the World Cup are sure-fire ways to perk up the WTC of a class.

Kang cautions that these variables interact and WTC predictions should not be made based on one variable. For example one participant felt very insecure about speaking in front of a Chinese student and his favorite tutor because despite his excitement to talk with the tutor, the higher fluency of the other student deflated his WTC. Kang feels that all three antecedents, security, excitement and responsibility must be considered in every situational context.





**Figure 3.5 Kang's (2005) Construct of Situational Willingness to Communicate (WTC)**

Figure 3.4 shows how any one of the three primary situational variables may influence any or all of the immediate psychological antecedents and thus on situational WTC. The key point here is to note that Kang proposes not only that WTC is more than a personal trait, and not only that it varies from situation to situation, but WTC may also fluctuate within one conversation with one set of interlocutors. To this point Kang suggests that situational WTC be discussed in terms of degree, for example, "His WTC dropped to a lower level when new interlocutors arrived and the topic changed."

Kang acknowledges that security, excitement and responsibility are terms new to the WTC field. She likens "security" to "state self-confidence" in the MacIntyre et al. (1998) pyramid model, but she feels "security" emerges more from situational variables. She differentiates "excitement" from just "interest" again because it emerges "dynamically from the immediate communication situation, while interest is already held and is brought to the communication situation" (p. 290). "Responsibility" has similarities with "motivational propensity" in MacIntyre et al. but for Kang responsibility still remains somewhat incomparable to any other term in the literature. About these three concepts, Kang also notes that security mitigates fear

while excitement and responsibility stimulate factors for WTC, so thus “both mitigating and stimulating factors are required in order for situational WTC in L2 to emerge” (p. 290). Kang also acknowledges limitations to this construct, noting specifically that many other variables, such as trait-like factors could influence situational WTC.

Kang offers a few suggestions for the classroom such as, making certain that learners have the chance to discuss topics they know about, creating a safe environment for making mistakes, where possible mix nationalities as much as can be done, and always endeavor to balance different facilitating factors as opposed to concentrating on just one.

From this one study based on limited empirical evidence, it is impossible to generalize to all language learners or even just all Korean learners of English. However, much of Kang’s study fits well with other WTC literature and certainly with my experience with Korean learners. I find Kang’s results to be very insightful into Korean WTC, and in light of many of the aspects of Korean society discussed here in chapter 2, I feel her conclusions are on target.

### *Summary*

As I hope the previous chapter made clear, the keeping of many social rules in Korean society can easily fall into jeopardy with the opportunity of L2 communication. Poor performance is feared to be ridiculed, high performance is feared to be labeled arrogant, and any L2 communication at all represents a step outside of usual practice and the comfort of the mainstream. Speaking in English is risky business for Korean learners, and the very real fear of being ostracized is the risk of being pushed out from the protection of the ingroup, which is vital for survival.

Several points in this chapter about the evolution of WTC and its specifics in the Asian context provide an outline for understanding the puzzle of Korean learners’ relationship with English:

- People have behavior patterns in their willingness to take opportunities to communicate.
- L2 WTC is both different and more complex than L1 WTC.
- Many trait and state variables are at work in L2 WTC.

- Perceived communicative competence and communication anxiety are major WTC indicators.
- Situational context, including cultural and geographic contexts, can influence WTC.
- The *other-directed self* and *submissive learning* are key elements in Confucian contexts.
- In Far East contexts desire to communicate is not necessarily equal to WTC.
- International posture influences Far East WTC.
- Far East education systems may be counterproductive to communicative learning.
- WTC can fluctuate from moment-to-moment

While all of these points may not pertain to every WTC encounter, together they shape a construct that allows the investigation of Korean learners' puzzling ambivalence toward speaking English.

Certainly elements of this situation must exist in cultures other than Korea, and obvious similarities have been found among Chinese and Japanese learners, but by observing the WTC of Korean learners of English we can peer into a moment of decision fraught with antecedents and consequences linked to the ancient history of a people and their particular rules for social engagement.

## CHAPTER 4 CONTACT HYPOTHESIS

My reasons for including this chapter on a social psychology theory that does not directly relate to language learning are based on the path I followed in my background reading and an initial hunch I had that Korean people's relationship with English was somehow similar to the prejudice which can exist between groups of people. Familiar to most everyone are the difficulties of intergroup relations that are all too often characterized by stereotypes, ignorance and discrimination that can sometimes tragically escalate as far as genocide. Attempts at quelling such problems through tolerance, education and diplomacy, fill newscasts and history books around the world. Still the language of prejudice remains familiar to all of us.

Observing my Korean students' relationship with English repeatedly reminded me of prejudice; perhaps not the overt "hate crime" type of prejudice, but subtler, even unconscious, "Some of my best friends are Black" type of prejudice. Unable to put my finger on why I felt this similarity, I delved into the literature of intergroup contact to search for answers:

- What is the nature of prejudice?
- What are its antecedents and consequences?
- Under what circumstances can it be modified?
- Does prejudice have any similarities with second language learning?

These and other questions led me to intergroup contact theory in hopes of better understanding Koreans' relationship with English.

### *The Metaphor of Language Learning and Prejudice*

For any person living in Korea in the last half century, contact with English has become increasingly inevitable. The quantity of English in Korea has steadily increased and the quality of the contact with English takes several forms:

- Contact with English-speaking culture (e.g. international goods or media)
- Contact specifically with the English language (e.g. road signs, advertisements, loanwords)

- Contact with English speakers in Korea (tourists or business people)
- Contact with using English very specifically for communication (actual information exchange)

Of these, perhaps contact with English-speaking culture (e.g. American) is most prevalent as it comes at people from everywhere. But, as discussed in previous chapters, contact with the language as a school subject and an important element of standardized testing is also inevitable. Contact with native and non-native, but non-Korean, English speakers is not quite common but is definitely on the increase. The last category, using English for communication, still lags far behind the other three but the awareness of its importance is growing significantly, and for many Koreans it is a personal hope to be able to converse with non-Koreans. Suffice to say, most Koreans have some sort of contact with English on a fairly regular basis.

I will approach Korean contact with English from the perspective of the social psychology construct known as the *Contact Hypothesis* [CH]. Although CH was first conceived as a way of observing contact solely between humans, I feel the other three types of contact mentioned above are closely tied to human contact and I suggest CH can be used as a tool to examine the relationship between Korean people and the English language. CH was developed to help reduce prejudice in relationships between groups of people, and I see this as a metaphor for the complex relationship between Koreans and English. I approach this investigation wondering if the insights from intergroup contact theory may be of benefit to understanding Koreans and English.

This chapter has the dual task of proceeding through a review of the relevant CH literature while at the same time referring back to the Korean context. The early writings of Gordon W. Allport and the recent work of Thomas Pettigrew act as bookends for the half-century history of CH, and their perspectives will dominate this discussion. Not a comprehensive review of all the material that could fall under the blanket of contact theory, this chapter highlights the major points in the evolution of CH in a way that hopefully shows its applicability to second language acquisition and specifically the Korean context.

Perhaps the most salient CH issues for this discussion of Korean learners of English are those of progression and process. Allport (1954) wrote of a "peaceful progression" that was ideal when two groups fall into contact, and Pettigrew (1998)

addressed the need to focus on the processes necessary to reduce the prejudice that arises when that progression is less than peaceful. In the relationship between Koreans and English, I equate peace with successful language learning.

#### **4.1 The Evolution of the Contact Hypothesis**

A commonplace but true fact of human life is that, in order to survive and thrive, people tend to form groups based on common factors such as geography, ethnicity, nationality, religion and social status. Group solidarity and a positive group-image help the survival and prosperity of the group, but problems often arise however when two or more groups come in contact with each other and due to ignorance, stereotypes, and imbalances in power, positive intergroup relations do not always occur. Research shows that contact definitely changes the attitudes and behavior of groups and individuals toward each other (Allport, 1954). That change, however, along with personal and societal variables, depends on the conditions under which the contact takes place, and in turn, those changes will influence further contact (Amir, 1969).

While strictly speaking not a hypothesis but rather an evolving theory and method of evaluating contact situations, CH seeks to answer the problems of intergroup conflict that hinder people from living and working together more harmoniously. The theory assumes that despite the myriad causes and effects of bad contact, all “good”, prejudice-reducing, contact has in it the same few conditions, which can be studied and then produced to improve group relations. Below is a summary of the development of this theory, organized around several key concepts:

- The overall transition from Allport to Pettigrew
- Outgroup image construction
- Attitudes and beliefs—the baggage carried into contact situations
- The process of lowering prejudice
- The influence of anxiety and hostility
- Recategorizing ingroups and outgroups
- The vital importance of friendship
- Getting beyond “He’s different from the others”: the elusiveness of generalization

After covering these points an outline of where CH research stands now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will explain what current research sees as the past problems of CH and the efforts made for reformulation.

### *Original Conceptualization of the Contact Hypothesis*

CH emerged from the field of social psychology in the aftermath of World War II. The America of the 1940s tried to solve its problems of prejudice between Blacks and Whites simply by putting the groups into contact with one another through integrating schools, businesses and neighborhoods. Ever since 1896, when U.S. Supreme Court case *Plessey vs. Ferguson* had upheld segregation as constitutional, “separate but unequal” conditions had caused much social strife. For half a century the American government supported limiting contact between groups, but this led to horrible problems of inequality. Many people assumed that desegregation was an obvious solution. Gordon W. Allport, in his *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954<sup>14</sup>) suggested an ideal, 4-stage, “peaceful progression” when two groups have contact. These four stages are not the conditions of the contact but rather the best four steps that need to be taken along the path of peaceful progression:

- **Sheer contact**, in its various possible forms
- **Competition**, as the inevitable, quick reaction to initial contact
- **Accommodation**, which finally leads to...
- **Assimilation**

It is important to remember that Allport was talking about two groups of people in contact with each other and not one group of humans in contact with a language, as with Koreans and the English language. Additionally, Allport was specifically referring to a socially powerful majority group [White Americans] and a relatively disempowered minority group [Black Americans]. Thus, the competition would be unequal and the accommodation and the assimilation would be largely one-sided.

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<sup>14</sup> 1954 was also the year of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown vs the Board of Education*, through which segregation of schools was deemed unconstitutional, and contact among Blacks and Whites would begin to increase greatly.

Indeed, in post-World War II America, simply putting Blacks and Whites in contact failed to reduce prejudice between the groups at least as often as it succeeded, creating yet a second problem or question: Why doesn't contact always solve the initial prejudice problem?

CH posits that the *conditions* of the contact, not the contact alone, determine the success of the contact. Allport (1954) outlined four essential conditions that a contact situation must have in order to achieve a peaceful, optimal effect:

- *Equal status* between the groups, within the contact situation
- The shared pursuit of *common goals*
- *Institutional support* for the contact
- Perception of *common interests and humanity* between the members

This basic concept of the critical importance of the situational conditions of contact, as opposed to just contact itself, became known as CH. It is on this basic principle that I investigate Korean contact with English: Under which conditions do Koreans contact English?

- What do they bring with them to English contact situations in terms of images, attitudes, and intentions?
- How is the Korean social world linked to the outcomes of this contact between Korean and English?

Over the ensuing decades CH spread around the world, was subjected to varied forms of research (some examples: Amir, 1969; Cook, 1985; Desforges et al., 1997; Gaertner et al., 1994), evolved along with trends in social psychology, gained and lost popularity, but in essence remained true to the simplicity of Allport's original conception. The articles cited in the following sections often represent the first articles to highlight key CH concepts pertinent to this study. Although many are now outdated, they offer a chronology of the development of CH. A final section in this chapter brings CH up to date in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



### *50 Years from Allport to Pettigrew*

Pettigrew (1998) outlines the history of CH from Allport (1954) almost up to the turn of the century, and reformulates contact theory by offering solutions to existing problems, advocating longitudinal research, and suggesting an additional condition for improving on Allport's original idea.

Pettigrew agrees with Allport's (1954) four necessary conditions for people of different groups, (be that ethnic, national, lifestyle, or other) to get along well with each other with reduced prejudice. These conditions are: equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support. However, Pettigrew finds four problems with Allport's hypothesis, which he terms: causal sequence bias, independent variable specification, unspecified process of change, and the lack of generalization of effects. These terms will become clearer as this summary of the evolution of CH progresses. Pettigrew offers solutions to these problems and offers a new model with which to understand contact theory. Perhaps most importantly Pettigrew points to a fifth situational condition, stating that in order to achieve optimal intergroup contact the different group members must have the opportunity and encouragement to become friends.

### *Allport, the Effect of Contact, 1954*

Allport defines several different types of contact situations including casual, acquaintance, residential, and occupational. He then lists four prejudice-reducing conditions, which will remain, with minor mutations, the foundation of CH up to the present time. The first condition, equal status, states that members of the minority and majority groups need to share social positions of relative equality. Allport notes that Whites more often tended to have close relationships with Blacks who were of equal or even higher social status. For the second condition, having common goals, Allport uses the extreme example of combat, noting that White soldiers felt reduced prejudice toward Blacks with whom they had served in life and death situations. The common goal of survival seemed to have been quite an effective motivator for reducing prejudicial attitudes. The third condition, having the contact between groups being sanctioned by some law or the general community at large, pervades all the examples Allport gives. Whether it's the hiring policy of a particular company or

the laws of the local school board, authoritative support increases the chance of good contact. Finally, the perception of common interests and common humanity, also aids in reducing negative attitudes towards others.

Allport notes that people who enter intergroup contact already with anxiety and aggressiveness often don't have positive contact even when the four conditions exist. In fact, Allport and many of the other authors of these articles take great care in acknowledging that CH is by no means an exact science, and that at best, certain tendencies can be detected, but by no means has a panacea for prejudice been found.

### *Group Image Construction*

From its beginnings in 1954, CH developed over successive decades and spread across the world. Pool (1966) concerns himself with the different types of travel people embark on; for example, for work, study, military reasons, leisure, etc. The results chapters of this dissertation highlight the effects of travel on Korean learners of English. Besides the purposes for travel, Pool lists several other factors that may affect the travel experience, including how far and how long the travel is, the relations with the people who are met, the culture gap with the home country, and the ease or hardship of the trip. A final factor turns out to be the most significant: who was this person before he or she started the trip? Pool goes in to great detail about the images that travelers and hosts have of each other and themselves before, during, and after contact. National images are a primary source for evaluating foreign people precisely because of the ignorance so many of us have about other nations and other groups of people in general.

Perhaps most significant, Pool points out that distant images formed from hearsay, stereotypes, ignorance, or only spotty information may be false, but, they have logical origins, and they also serve a purpose. These initial images tend to be very simple: all good or all bad instead of complex and subtle. While this simplicity may be quite inaccurate, it is easy to remember and to rally around, and so simple images can be quite effective for group solidarity, which is of course essential for group survival.

Simple national images are quite unstable and may quickly change (with brief contact) from favorable to unfavorable. However with contact and time, these images both stabilize and become more complex. Also interestingly, contact often slides travelers closer to the moderate norms of their home nation. With contact, people

notice that other groups of people are not perfect, and neither is their own. This *reappraisal* of social norms will play a significant role in Korean WTC.

Scott's (1966) article continues on the subject of international images and the historical development of CH. He, too, finds that images often have more to do with the person who has the mental image than with the person of whom the image supposedly is. Also the type of image that one individual holds for one group of foreign people is likely to be similar to the images held of other foreign groups. An image is everything that a person recognizes when he or she thinks about an object, in this case a foreign person. Scott finds that an image has three components. The *cognitive* component of an image is the "cold" intellectual understanding of that foreign person. The *affective* component is the "warmer" like/dislike, approval/disapproval, of that person.

Finally, the *action* or *behavioral* component is the set of appropriate responses to that foreign person. These three components work together. For example, the head may say, "this person is weak," and the heart adds, "he is bad," and so the consequent behavior is to *fight* him. If the head had said, "he's strong," *flight* may have been the chosen behavior.

#### *Attitudes and Beliefs—The Baggage Carried into Contact Situations*

Amir's (1969) article acts as a good summary of the research taking place in the late 1960s. He cites three variables in contact that should be considered when studying ethnic relations. The *type* of contact is the first variable and he lists seven components of that variable, including the social attitude toward the contact, the level of interdependence of the ethnic groups, and the potential for close acquaintance. The second variable is that individuals in such studies can be seen as either a subject or an object. This marks a step in the evolution of CH, which had before this time focused on minority groups as objects and the majority groups as subjects.

Amir's last variable centers on changes in attitude and behavior. He states that attitudes often don't change as much as the *intensity* of the attitude grows or weakens due to contact. And it is this level of intensity that affects the outcome of the contact. Amir stresses that the results of contact, whether favorable or unfavorable, are greatly related to the emotional, psychological, and social baggage an individual brings to the contact situation.

### *The Process of Lowering Prejudice*

Cook (1985) looked at the social influences that affect contact, specifically school desegregation in the United States. CH for Cook now consists of five conditions: 1) equal status, 2) disconfirmation of stereotypes, 3) interdependent cooperation, 4) acquaintance potential, and 5) supportive social norms. He predicted, "A favorable change in attitude and interpersonal attraction will result when there is personal contact with members of a disliked group (under these conditions)." (p.453)

Stephan's (1987) article summarizes the earlier decades of CH. He traces the history from the late 1940s and 50s. He notes how it was originally thought of as a "dragon slayer" for prejudice. CH in the 60s and 70s was revised and it matured. Following the psychological trends of that time it began focusing more and more on behavior over attitude. However, researchers added more and more variable conditions that they felt were necessary for CH. They overburdened it, proposing a nearly impossible contact situation.

The 1970s and 80s brought a focus on the intellectual processes that a person goes through during contact that change his or her attitudes and behavior. Stephan outlines previous conceptual models of process and puts forward one of his own. He notes three cognitive biases (attention, encoding, and retrieval) that get in the way of information processing by influencing what information is noticed, how it is organized in a person's mind, and how it is consequently remembered.

Stephan posits a new conceptual model for information processing in contact situations and ultimately suggests that instead of focusing on changes in stereotypes and prejudice, social science should perhaps look more closely at long-term changes in behavior and social norms.

### *The Influence of Anxiety and Hostility*

Islam and Hewstone (1993) looked at how Muslim and Hindu university students in Bangladesh feel about each other, and Tzeng and Jackson (1994) studied the affect, cognition, and behavior of Blacks, Whites, and Asians, working, studying, and living around a Midwestern US university. Islam and Hewstone looked not only at the qualitative and quantitative aspects of a contact situation; they also isolate a factor they call "intergroup." This concerns whether the contact is perceived as

between two individuals or two group members. They then define three variable individual factors: 1) *intergroup anxiety*, 2) *perceived outgroup variability*, and 3) *attitude toward outgroup*.

The second of these three, *outgroup variability*, was a somewhat new factor in contact theory and refers to how much a person in one group imagines members of another group can be different from each other, or are they really "all the same"? Yet it is the first factor, *intergroup anxiety*, which plays the central role for this study. Various conditions may cause this anxiety (e.g. little previous contact, status differences, etc.) and the results (e.g. reliance on stereotypes, narrowed attention to detail, and other information processing biases) have a major effect on the outcome of contact. These three aspects of contact and three individual variables all interact with each other to raise or lower the quality and consequences of the contact, but anxiety clearly holds the most sway.

Tzeng and Jackson (1994) studied the effects of three intergroup hostility theories: *conflict*, *contact*, and *social identity*; on three hostility components: *behavioral intentions*, *affective reactions*, and *cognitive evaluations*; between three ethnicities: *Whites*, *Blacks*, and *Asians*. Very generally, they found that all three theories affect all three hostility components, but they do so differently for each ethnicity. That is to say that good contact lowers hostility, ethnocentrism (high ingroup bias in social identity) raises hostility, and a high perception of possible conflict also raises hostility. Significantly these theories hold true for White subjects far better than for Blacks, or Asians. For example, unlike Whites, Blacks with lower levels of ethnocentricity were more hostile than those with higher ethnocentricity. This suggests that to lower hostility, which in turn lowers prejudice and improves relations, a society needs to appreciate ethnicities differently. This also suggests that research that focuses on only one group as a subject will not necessarily find results that are so applicable to all groups.

### *Recategorizing Groups*

Gaertner et al. (1994), noticed that in the past the contact conditions (equal status, cooperative interaction, personal acquaintance, and support of social authority/norms) never seemed to have a close relationship with each other, and *how* they lowered prejudice was not so clearly explained. The conceptual model

proposed here, however, generally states that the CH conditions work together to influence information processing and thereby transform how people see group membership. Very basically the conditions change people from thinking exclusively about *us* and *them*, to thinking inclusively about *we*. People naturally tend to want to feel good about their own group because that is where they find their own identity, and high self-assessment. Feeling worthy of a life, and a good life, is a necessary survival skill. The conditions support "inclusivity" by accentuating aspects of similarity between groups, and de-emphasizing differences. This boosting of similarities is done with sharing; sharing goals, status, interests, etc.

The conditions influence people to see groups in three or four different ways: *no group*--seeing people only as separate individuals; *one group*--sharing a common identity; or *two groups*--separate group identities. These group perceptions can be manipulated with such simple devices as team names and seating arrangements in a classroom. There is also a *dual identity* perspective in which *one group* and *two groups* can be perceived simultaneously. The article offers American football as an analogy. One can perceive a team as a group of talented individual athletes, as completely different offensive and defensive squads, or as one united team. The more things people share, the more they feel on the same team.

Two important terms from Gaertner that will reappear later are *decategorization* and *recategorization*. Decategorization was linked to perceived outgroup variability by Islam and Hewstone (1993), in that it is a process in which outgroup homogeneity is challenged and a person realizes that members of another group are not "all the same," and so interaction becomes *interpersonal* instead of *intergroup*. *Decategorization* usually works best during peaceful contact. *Recategorization*, e.g. seeing one group instead of two, however, can work when there is a greater perception of conflict, as in Tzeng & Jackson (1994), when stereotypes are not being disconfirmed, or when equal status does not exist. This is precisely the value Gaertner et al. (1994) see in their ingroup identity model: when the pathways between the different CH conditions are better understood, we can see how they interact with each other.

The findings of Stangor et al. (1996) in their study of U.S. student exchange support the theory that contact does indeed change group perceptions (i.e. stereotypes, attitudes, and *perceived variability*). Student exchange programs are often studied in reference to CH because many of the CH conditions often appear in such programs.

In this study, Stangor et al. focus on group perceptions, which they see as having three distinct parts: attitudes (group evaluations such as *like/dislike* or *favorable/unfavorable*), stereotypes (beliefs about the characteristics of a particular group), and perceived variability (the perception of how similar or different a particular group's individual members are from each other). Although most previous studies have either lumped all three together or focused just on attitudes and stereotypes, Stangor et al. find that the three work separately and that perceived variability stands out from the other two, in that it is concerned more with individuals than groups. The study found that not only did *perceived variability* rise and lower directly with the amount of contact, but high *perceived variability* predicted a desire to return to a country much more than attitude or stereotype did. Stangor et al. interpreted these findings as highlighting the importance of contact (perhaps more so than other factors such as psychological and social baggage). They do also admit that *perceived variability* often quickly diminishes without direct contact, so its effects may be short lived.

### *The Vital Importance of Friendship*

Pettigrew (1996) focuses on two major interrelated points that he felt had been neglected in previous CH studies: the prejudice-reducing role of *intergroup friendship*, and how it sparks both affective and cognitive processes, and *generalization* of effects to other, uninvolved, outgroups, and how that generalization can be limited by stereotypes and other cognitive factors, but those factors themselves can be overridden by affect. Very basically, *friendship* can help pave the very rocky road toward *generalization*.

Pettigrew (1996) finds three mechanisms that stem from friendship and that can override the cognitive barriers to generalization. The first two, *cross-group empathy* and *cross-group identification*, rather clearly refer to the shared feeling and understanding that occurs between friends. The third mechanism, reappraisal of one's own ingroup, involves a process called *deprovincialization*, through which a person may spend less time with his or her own group members, and may also realize that his/her group's way of living is not "the only way." Other groups thereby gain a more individualized and more human feel. Pettigrew believes this process broadens people's minds enough that their new feelings toward one group may generalize to other groups.

Hamberger and Hewstone (1997) looked at the same European survey as Pettigrew, and also concluded that in terms of contact, only friendship (not occupational or residential contact, for example) significantly reduces prejudice. However, their study also looked at other, background variables that also affect prejudice. As Pettigrew also did, Hamberger and Hewstone differentiated between *subtle* and *blatant* prejudice. The former is recognized by, for example, an exaggeration of cultural differences or a denial of positive feelings for the outgroup. Blatant prejudice is characterized by perceptions of threat from the other group and direct opposition to intimate contact. Friendship reduces both prejudices but more so the blatant type.

Background variables, such as education, values, national pride, and economics, also play a key role in lowering prejudice and also interact with each other. For example, education lowers prejudice, makes friendship between groups easier, and it also lowers feelings of nationalism. Lower nationalism in turn also raises the potential for friendship. Hamberger and Hewstone (1997) feel these background variables fall under the scope of sociology and political science, and so they feel experts in these fields need to work alongside social psychologists in order to defeat prejudice.

### *Getting beyond, "He's different from the rest of them": The Elusiveness of Generalization*

Desforges et al. (1997) deals specifically with the problem of *generalization* in the CH context. They cite Allport (1954) and state that his Contact Hypothesis must be seen as having two distinct parts. The first part deals with *specific attitude change* under certain conditions, and the second part concerns *generalization* under other certain conditions. Desforges et al. point out that the original CH conditions' failure to provoke generalization is a major flaw in contact theory. They do admit that generalization does sometimes occur, but there seems to be an inherent Catch-22; a riddle that plays on similarity and difference, which makes generalization elusive.

Research seems to have discovered that *stereotype disconfirmation* works to bring people together. That is to say that if someone perceives another group's member to be different, an exception to others in his or her group, attitude change



toward that person is easier than if he or she fits many stereotypes. Research, however, also finds that *subtyping* that person, saying, "Oh, he's different", easily dismisses such exceptions. Then the stereotype remains solidly intact. In order for generalization to take place, a person must be seen as "representative" of his or her own group. In essence, in order to first change attitude and then generalize that effect, a person must be seen as both similar to and different from his or her group at the same time.

Studying this riddle also proved to be a challenge that Desforges et al. met with the idea of *dual category membership*. They set up an experiment in which participants took part in a cooperative training program with a "confederate" named Daniel, whom they saw only on videotape. They learned from a fake description that Daniel was a member of two groups, which they had shown strong prejudice against in a previous survey. The usual CH conditions were present and the expected attitude change occurred. In keeping with the trends of the late 1990s, ethnicity was downplayed and group membership included such categories as homosexuals, neo-nazis, the mentally ill, and Hell's Angels.

The key to the research was *how* the participants were told about Daniel's dual membership. To highlight his representativeness, some were told only about one group, and others about both groups but at different times. With some participants one of Daniel's groups was said to be the very reason he was participating, or that one of his groups had helped fund this program. After attitude change was noticed, generalization was tested in another questionnaire and indeed the participants' feelings about Daniel's groups as a whole improved the more closely he was associated with those groups. This strongly supports *representativeness*, after *initial attitude change*, as a key to *generalization*.

## 4.2 Past Problems, Reformulation, and Expansion of the Contact Hypothesis

Recent research, spearheaded by Thomas Pettigrew (1998), notes that while the basics of Allport's theory hold true today, some major problems with CH remain, including:

- Writers overburdening CH with *facilitating*, but not *essential* conditions—much of the literature includes contact conditions such as individual background factors and/or the characteristics of a particular society that may raise or lower prejudice but are not vital to every situation.
- CH failing to address *process*—the affective and cognitive processes are not discussed; ie. the specific “how and why” prejudice is reduced
- CH not specifying how the effects of contact *generalize* to other contact situations, the entire outgroup, or uninvolved outgroups

Pettigrew addresses these and other problems, resulting in a "reformulated contact hypothesis." He proposes a *longitudinal intergroup contact theory* which takes into account that contact will have different outcomes depending on its different stages over time. With some rewording of Allport and one major addition, Pettigrew (1998) outlines five conditions for optimal contact:

- **Equal group status** within the situation—different groups’ members share similar knowledge resources, responsibilities, privileges, etc.
- **Common goals**—members all strive to achieve some similar aim within the contact situation.
- **Intergroup cooperation**—members are somehow compelled to work together as a team to reach their “common goals,” instead of competing against each other.
- **Authority support**—The laws or customs of a government, school, religion, business, sports team, military, or other organizing body encourage different groups’ members to live and/or work together in order to achieve common goals and some level of harmony.
- **Friendship potential**—members can easily find opportunities to share of themselves and empathize with others, thereby increasing the possibility for more intimate contact than is found in casual relationships.

Of the first four conditions *equal status* and *authority support* have more foundational roles as fixed elements of the contact situation, while *cooperatively* striving for *common goals* is obviously the more active component of the contact.

With an emphasis on friendship the five CH conditions working together, as reformulated from Allport by Pettigrew, have guided my research presented here.

At this point it may be helpful to point out three potential misunderstandings of CH that have occurred in the past (Pettigrew (1998) highlights several examples). First, CH does not state that simply putting groups into contact with each other will necessarily yield positive results. In fact Allport's original theory emerged from this unsuccessful assumption. Second, CH's small number of conditions does not deny that other factors may facilitate positive contact. Instead the CH conditions are meant to represent the "bare bones," essential conditions which must always be present for a contact situation to have the best effect. Third, Pettigrew stresses that the conditions are not just a list of static elements but rather parts of a process that takes place over time. The following sections will look more closely at the CH conditions and their link to language learning, by briefly highlighting some of the literature pertaining to CH.

### *Friendship Revisited*

As we will see in my findings with Korean learners of English, *friendship potential* plays a defining role in contact. Hamberger and Hewstone (1997) focused primarily on contact between friends as the prototype for intimate contact, stating that other types of contact, such as work or residential contact, are often so casual, superficial and involuntary, that they are better seen as *opportunities* for meaningful contact that may be taken advantage of or not. If two people are able to become friends they have found a way to put aside differences, prejudices, and stereotypes long enough to look at each other as individuals and not just representatives of an outgroup. As imposition of anything often results in opposition to it, the *voluntary* nature of friendship also has a profound effect because no outside forces impose friendships and so the involved people can feel a sense of control over their lives.

Intergroup friendship not only lowers prejudice, it also has a snowball effect in that it increases the likelihood of more friendship (Hamberger & Hewstone, 1997; Pettigrew, 1996) and more contact in general. Pettigrew also notes how the first four CH conditions create an environment conducive to friendship, and established friendships seem to incorporate those first four conditions. Thus friendship is both an effect and a cause of the other conditions. The positive effects of friendship may also *generalize* beyond just the individuals involved in the immediate contact when a

friendship between two people changes attitudes among many. (Pettigrew, 1996) *Generalization* is a key part of the CH which is incomplete if its positive effects stay at an individual, interpersonal level (Desforges *et al.*, 1997; Islam and Hewstone, 1993; Pettigrew, 1998). Pettigrew (1996) shows how friendship leads to generalization in three steps by promoting *cross-group empathy*, then *cross-group identification*, and finally *ingroup reappraisal*. However, these steps are not automatic and are often confounded when a friend is not seen as representative of his or her group, but instead as an exception: "He's not like the rest of them." This results in no significant change in attitude toward the group at large. The research suggests then that the outgroup friends should be seen as at least somewhat typical of that group to help spark generalization; a difficulty because "exceptional" qualities, those that make people different from others in their group, often spark friendship.

Pettigrew (1998) stresses how Allport (1954) spells out "when" contact makes positive changes in intergroup relations, but neglects to explain "how" and "why"; i.e. he neglects *process*. As mentioned above, Pettigrew (1996) found that interpersonal contact involving the processes of learning, empathizing, identifying and reappraising, mediates the role of contact, and he mentions that only longitudinal studies adequately examine this phenomenon. Many studies of intergroup contact effects have focused on *cognitive mediation* (see Stephan, 1987), but Pettigrew suggests that the CH conditions not only influence *affective* reactions, but also reactions such as *empathy*, which stem from friendship and can become, over time, more powerful than changes in mental information processes. Clearly, contact changes intergroup relations by processes involving both the head and the heart. While making this case for the power of the friendship process, Pettigrew makes two other points that will reemerge in our later discussion: (a) even though friendship encompasses the other four CH conditions, those conditions alone do not always lead to friendship, and (b) even without the other conditions, repeated contact can lead to friendship because repetition itself promotes liking. Still the power of friendship remains undisputed.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation addressed friendship in the Korean context. However it is worth mentioning here that friendship in Korea is defined quite differently than in the contexts from which the CH literature emerged, and is different even from friendship in neighboring China and Japan. The key difference is that friendships in Korea are traditionally formed only between people of the same

age, status, and background. Acquaintances of different statuses or ages are referred to and treated quite differently. While outsiders may see this as extremely limiting, most Koreans view it as a natural order.

It is perhaps also worth mentioning here that Chapter 4 will also discuss elements of Asian identity formulation that also differs from the original contexts of CH and most SLA literature. That is, generally in collective societies intimately related people have a stronger impact on individual identity than in non-collective societies (Gudykunst, 1998; Hsu, 1983). I will discuss later the relevant and unique role friendship plays in the Korean context.

### *Status and Images*

The CH condition of *equal status* stems from the image members of a group hold of themselves in comparison with their image of another group. Any community having more than one group of people carries with it the issue of the *relative status* of these groups to each other (Clement, Noels and Deneault 2001). If friendship is the panacea of CH, achieving *equal status* can be the major hurdle, and members' perceived group image rests at the center of this obstacle. The desire of one group to have a positive image of itself often results in discrimination toward another group, in the form of ethnocentrism or "ingroup bias," even with the mere awareness of an outgroup (Tzeng and Jackson 1994). While much research (notably Gaertner *et al.* (1994)) finds support for CH reducing intergroup bias for both majority and minority groups, Clement, Noels and Deneault (2001) highlight the key function of language in their study of minority and majority Anglophone and francophone groups in Canada. They found that confidence in an outgroup language both mediates and moderates identification and adaptation, perhaps due in part to a sense of internal control in contact situations. Here we see the CH and L2 learning overlap in terms of group images and status.

Sandwiched as it is between two historically powerful nations, Korea has long had issues of *relative status*. More recently, Russia, America, and North Korea have forced comparison on the South Korean people. Indeed, even though members of these nations may not be members of a particular Korean community, the presence of these nations is felt in every Korean community. Because all of these nations are generally considered to be more powerful [economically and/or militarily], and Korea's culture is often marginalized not only by other nations viewing Korea from

outside but also by Koreans viewing themselves. Thus, a special *ingroup bias* must exist in order for the people to promote a positive group image.

The constructed image of an outgroup is simply the thoughts and accompanying feelings that come to mind when an individual person meets, or even just thinks about, members of that group. Yet research shows that such projections say much more about the person who holds that image than the observed group (Pool, 1966). Similarly, an individual's contact with another group has consequences not only for the image of the outgroup, but also for his or her self-image (Scott, 1966). Ethnocentrism, competitiveness, xenophobia, and also xenophilia, all contribute to one group or nation's image of another, even before any direct contact takes place. Scott (1966) noted that images are necessarily oversimplified, as is the repertoire of responses to those images. He points out that outgroups are basically imagined in combinations of *good* and *bad*, and *weak* and *strong*. The corresponding responses are equally simple: good/strong evokes the response "follow"; good/weak evokes "help"; bad/strong evokes "run away"; and bad/weak evokes "fight," (especially if the group has the potential to be *bad/strong* in the future!) The oversimplified nature of such images serves a purpose as well, in that they are easy for masses of people to understand and rally around, and thus promote group solidarity by offering a clear and common goal.

In Korea, where several nations are considered *strong*, but a mixture of both *good* and *bad*, there exist the conflicting desires to both "follow" and "run away." This gets at the heart of the ambivalence that many Koreans feel toward several nations and at the particular feelings toward English. Again, as we saw in Chapter 2, these nations sometimes protect and provide role models for Korea, and at other times they threaten its identity and existence.

More recent research on national images has found that stereotypes, the beliefs about characteristics of other groups, hinge on the *variability of the image*--i.e. the degree to which members of the outgroup are perceived to vary from one another (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stangor *et al.*, 1996). Stereotypes not only assume inclusiveness and adequacy but also filter other perceptions--we tend to notice that which confirms our stereotypes and ignore that which disconfirms our previously held beliefs (Scott, 1966). Contact, however, especially over time and under the CH conditions, changes these images and promotes more positive intergroup perceptions (Stangor *et al.*, 1996). The limited contact most Koreans have with native English

speakers only serves to complicate perceptions of the people, the language, and thus Koreans' perceptions of themselves.

*"Language Status" and "Language Prejudice"*

One additional theoretical concept that needs to be introduced to better understand the data presented in later chapters is that of *language status and prejudice* (i.e. the status different languages hold and the prejudices people hold against different languages). When discussing non-native learners of English (for ESL/EFL term definitions see Nunan, 1999,. 2000) we cannot ignore English's growing status as a global language and the relative status between two languages within one setting (for a discussion of *diglossia* see Holmes, 2001). The Clement, Noels and Deneault (2001) Canadian study mentioned above showed that even English learners from French dominated provinces exhibited tendencies similar to other minority participants, suggesting that within the English dominated context of North America, even francophone in Quebec may sometimes feel relegated to minority status. Differences in status often lead to prejudices among people and it stands to reason that language could be involved.

The term *language prejudice* has been used occasionally in literature concerning attitudes towards African American English, language shifts among immigrants, and even sign language (O'Neil, 1997; Evans, 1996), but not in an EFL context as presented here. *Second Language (L2) prejudice*, as used in this discussion, mirrors what social scientists dealing with CH refer to as *intergroup prejudice*; *L2 prejudice* results in some degree of rejecting the second language. It is helpful here to note the distinction Hamberger and Hewstone (1997) make between *blatant* and *subtle* prejudice. *Blatant prejudice* involves a "perceived threat from the rejection of the out-group," and "opposition to intimate contact with out-group members," while *subtle prejudice* consists of "defense of traditional values, exaggeration of cultural differences, and denial of positive emotional responses to the out-group"(p.174). Thus, blatant prejudice is more extreme both in terms of the intensity of the contact and the emotions connected with that contact. As we will see below, prejudicial feelings can result in the specific rejection of a second language, and perhaps CH can assist in this conflict. Although this study does not focus on the relative status of English and Korean, or on the L2 prejudices of Koreans, it is useful

to outline the context from which this study emerged, especially because CH itself grew out of the search for a cure for prejudice.

### *Recent CH studies*

Although most of the literature discussed in this chapter follows the development of CH through to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some recent studies (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006; Brown, 2000; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2004) are bringing CH into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Brown (2000) described CH as being one of the most successful ideas in all of social psychology. However many researchers continue to find problems with it. In their meta-analysis of contact studies, Pettigrew and Tropp (2004) state that Allport's original conditions are not required in order to reduce prejudice but if one or more are present the possibility of lowering prejudice increases.

On of the most recent CH studies by Amichai-Hamburger and McKenna (2006) finds the CH conditions quite difficult to produce in typical contact situations due to potential high levels of anxiety and potential difficulty in bringing groups together due to geographic and other obstacles. They also note the problem of generalizing lower prejudice to others not present in the contact situation. The researchers propose the internet as a context for intergroup contact. They contend that several of the CH conditions can be achieved more readily in cyberspace. Equal status, for example, is often destroyed by appearances in face to face encounters because of the symbols of status people always wear with them. The CH condition of friendship potential, which will also be highlighted in the research of this dissertation, was also seen to have advantages via the internet. Anonymity, the absence of stigmatic features of appearance and mannerism, and ease of finding shared interests have convinced some researchers that internet communication can often lead to intimate relationships more quickly than meetings in person.

Certainly, advances in technology are changing how people interact, and future CH research must follow these trends. In terms of Korea, perhaps the most internet-based nation on earth, this recent link between CH and the internet offers fresh ground for research. CH seems poised to continue its development far into the future.



### *CH, WTC, and this Study*

At the end of this chapter on the *Contact Hypothesis* I would like to clarify what I see as the relation between the fields of CH and WTC and how they together relate to the findings of this study. In a very broad sense, after exploring both the CH and WTC literatures, I wondered whether the CH situational conditions found to lower prejudice between groups, might also raise WTC among Korean learners of English. In particular I became interested in the conditions of *equal status* and *friendship potential*. In terms of my quantitative data collection and analysis, I sought to measure the significance of status and friendship both among Koreans and cross-culturally. In my qualitative data I sought to understand how status and friendship affected the process of WTC rising and lowering in my interviewees' experiences.

As the results chapters will detail, I did find that having international friendships seemed to aid in raising WTC among many participants. Also the equality or inequality of the status of other people present at a communication event affected WTC. Additionally, many interviewees reported similar processes of gaining WTC over time, which could be described in CH terms. For example, *ingroup reassessment* of certain Korean norms through *deprovincialization* often seemed to stem from non-Korean contact experiences. In these ways, the CH literature lent me a vocabulary through which to both investigate and discuss Korean learners' WTC.

### *Summary*

This chapter has tried to show CH as a well-known theory which has both transformed and ended up relatively the same over the past fifty years. Pertinent to Korean WTC, several key concepts emerge from this literature which focuses on how groups interact. The results chapters of this dissertation, in ways similar to much of recent CH literature, focus on the process of perspective change. Steps along this process include viewing both outgroups and ingroups differently, which corresponds to the two main factors identified in this study: *Intercultural Complex* and *L1 Audience Sensitivity*. The process for outgroup reappraisal includes accepting the exaggeration, denial, an anxiety associated with prejudice, and then *stereotype*

*disconfirmation*. *Ingroup reappraisal* the often begins with *deprovincialization*, or seeing that “our way is not the only way.” In both cases *outgroup friendship* does lead to *reappraisal* by means of *cross-group empathy and identification*, and may actually sometimes be bolstered by certain levels of *ingroup bias*, which allows comfortable *relative status*.

The similarities between *intergroup prejudice* and low L2 WTC begin with the same anxiety over difference and inequality. The process-oriented approach of CH helps illuminate how a few Korean learners beat the odds and gain higher levels of WTC, but still experience fluctuations due to persistent in achieving generalizable results.

The role of CH in this study has been to provide a framework from which to look at how Koreans come into contact with English. WTC was not my first approach to this study but rather emerged as an important aspect of this contact situation. I feel that the factors that seem to reduce prejudice may also have a positive effect on raising WTC. Chapter 8 will revisit CH and show this study’s findings from that perspective.

## **Part II: Methodology**

### **CHAPTER 5 THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.1 Research Design**

##### **5.1.1 Justification for Combined Research Methodology**

Although this dissertation relies on both qualitative and quantitative methods, I originally conceived it as a primarily qualitative endeavor and so it remains. The questionnaire given to 4000 students taking a compulsory English course at two Korean universities acts as a backdrop against which to view the interviews at the core of this research. This backdrop may help the qualitative data obtain a certain level of generalizability. The two methods of data collection used here can hopefully inform and compliment each other.

The advantages of quantitative approaches to studying social phenomena are well known and popular. Generalizations can be made, causality established, and analyses easily replicated. Also researchers can remain distant from and impartial toward the people being studied. However this distance from the subjects of a study can also weaken the research because individual beliefs and perspectives about the social context are often not well represented by numbers. Perhaps quantitative methods can measure certain outcomes but may fail to explain the series of behaviors and attitudes which led up to those outcomes. Understanding process issues can be critical to understanding the outcomes. Qualitative methods can go a long way in uncovering process issues but if used alone also have many weaknesses, which are almost the mirror image of quantitative strengths. Small numbers of participants, selected through the bias of the researcher, and analyses that are very difficult to replicate often make findings less compelling. For these reasons I chose a mixture of methods in hopes of the strengths of one compensating for the weaknesses of the other. Especially while dealing with the Korean context, which may be unfamiliar to

much of my audience, I felt a mixed approach would offer more understanding of specific outcomes and the processes behind them.

In order to begin an empirical exploration of this issue of Koreans' relationship with English, I decided to take a qualitative approach to data collection. I feel this approach to be well suited because I feel the answers to this puzzle lie in the stories Korean learners of English have to tell and many key elements of these stories need to emerge from the interview process because they may be less than conscious. Much recent literature supports the use of qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fine et al, 2000; Fortana & Frey 2000; Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Silverman, 2000). Golden-Biddle and Lock (1997) especially focus on the idea that writing up qualitative research can be likened to telling a story and that extracts from interviews come together to present a story that is comparable to a quilt or a montage. The excerpts in the results section will present such a montage of the lives of Korean learners of English.

As mentioned in the literature review, there are some studies that deal with WTC in the Far East context (Hashimoto, 2004; Wen & Clément, 2003; Yashima, 2004). However they have not used qualitative methods. Their data collection and analysis is strictly quantitative, which has the advantage of generalizing results to a broader context. The majority of WTC studies have been quantitative, as most motivation studies have been. However I feel that to better understand how language learners feel about choosing to use their second language, also hearing and analyzing their own words may be very helpful. Considering the subjectivity issues about qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln 2000), I try to distinguish between what is primary data and what are my interpretations and thus allow the reader judge how I present my arguments.

From the qualitative/quantitative mixed method approach, a three-phase study emerged. I began with eight long interviews with people I found to have "beaten the odds" and become exceptional English speakers, and explored their understandings of the Korean world and their relationships with English. Those interviews are hereafter referred to as the *Exploratory 8*. The *World Cup 9* were a later group of longitudinal interviews with nine participants who had varying degrees of involvement with the 2002 World Cup soccer games. The first round of these interviews took place immediately before the sporting event, round two was soon after the games, and a third round was one year later. While collecting and analyzing

the interview data it became apparent that some quantitative data would make the findings from the qualitative data more compelling. Many insights and questions which emerged from the interview data informed the construction of a survey, the *WTC in Korea Questionnaire*. Findings from the survey data later informed the remaining data collection and analysis. Thus the mixed-method approach not only produced a variety of findings, but also helped shape the overall research design.

### 5.1.2 Research Questions

My initial question about why Koreans seem ambivalent toward English was broken down into several other questions. These research questions then led to the three parts of this study.

#### *The Exploratory 8*

I began the interviews with eight people to explore initial research question and I call those interviewees the *Exploratory 8*. The research questions that guided the first 8 exploratory interviews were rather broad:

- What is the nature of Korean learners' relationship with English?
- Do Korean learners feel something akin to prejudice toward English?
- What patterns might be found among Korean learners who have the competence and willingness to conduct a long interview in English?
- What elements from the Korean context emerge as factors that influence the learning and use of English?

The semi-structured interviews then followed these questions, generally tracing the history each interviewee had with English.

#### *The World Cup 9*

The *World Cup* interviews were somewhat different in nature from the *Exploratory 8*. They emerged from those first interviews, they were a longitudinal series spanning almost two years, and centered on one major event, the 2002 World Cup. The World Cup games hosted by Korea and Japan offered an international contact experience on such a grand scale that I felt it could greatly benefit this study

which centers on the Korean world coming into contact with the non-Korean world. I designed these interviews to investigate the effects of such an event on a group of nine Korean learners who like the initial eight interviewees, possess high enough language skills to take part in such in-depth interviews.

As this second series of interviews emerged from the exploratory 8, some of the research questions were similar. As the above questions show, these interviews also sought patterns which would arise from the stories of the interviewees relationships with English. In addition to these research questions, the World Cup interviews were led by the following:

#### First round (April through June, 2002)

- Do the interviewees feel Korea has prepared well for the games in terms of hosting so many international guests?
- Do they feel that hosting the games will have a significant and lasting effect similar to the 1988 Olympics?
- How do Korean learners with high English skills feel about such international contact?

#### Second round (July through September 2002)

- Due to Korea's success in the games, do the interviewees feel Korea's image has changed? Among Koreans? In the non-Korean world?
- Did they make and take opportunities to use English?
- Have their attitudes changed toward English?
- [If applicable] Why has this second interview been so difficult to set up?

#### Third round (July through November 2003)

- What lasting effects have you seen from the World Cup?

#### *WTC in Korea Questionnaire*

In addition to the exploratory and longitudinal interviews, I also designed a questionnaire about Korean learners' WTC. From the questionnaire I wanted to learn many things about the average Korean learner of English and what factors influenced their WTC. How much general anxiety did they feel toward communicating in

English? How much of that anxiety stemmed from the fear of making mistakes and how much from fears related to their national identity? Also how much do the contact conditions of any communication situation influence their WTC?

The construction of the questionnaire sequentially took place between the second and the third and final World Cup interviews. The addition of quantitative research came from my feeling that background data was necessary to make the interview data more complete and compelling. That is, I wanted to understand where the odds-beaters come from and what makes them different. The series of interviews had not only confirmed the recurrence of CH conditions among the odds-beaters' contact with English, but also I began to notice patterns in their WTC. I hoped to confirm these patterns among a large number of people.

## 5.2 Participants

### *The Exploratory 8*

The first eight interviews with Korean learners of English who had beaten the odds and become exceptional speakers, was the first phase of data collection. The following list, with pseudonyms, shows the order in which the participants were chosen and interviewed and the reasons for their inclusion:

- *Sally*, a 35-year-old pharmacist and former student of mine -- chosen because of her uncommon qualities of learning to speak English well as an adult, and being a divorced Korean woman.
- *Dan*, a 24-year-old English major at my university -- chosen because of his extended contact with the U.S. army.
- *Prof. Chul*, a 45-year-old English professor at my university -- chosen because of high level of English ability and yet a seeming dislike for the language.
- *Prof. Yun*, a 65-year-old German professor at my university -- chosen because of his experience dating back to the Japanese colonization of Korea, and more than 25 years living in the United states.

- *Barbara*, a 23-year-old Chinese transfer student at my university -- chosen because of her perspective on Korea as a Chinese national, and a talented English and Korean speaker.
- *Jung-min* and *Sun-jung*, both 14-year-old middle school students attending the same private English institute -- chosen because of their above average ability and youthful perspectives on Korea.
- *Aika*, a 27-year-old Japanese visiting instructor -- chosen for her English ability and her perspective on Korea as a Japanese national.

This initial round of interviews was meant to explore the relationship Korean people had with the English language. At this early stage of data collection this research project had yet to focus on WTC per se, however in choosing the eight participants I of course chose people willing and able to conduct a long interview in English. This in of itself qualified them as English learners who had beaten the odds that are against most Korean people.

Choosing both male and female participants from a wide spectrum of ages exposed me to a wide range of perspectives to explore, which gave me a number of potential focal points to select from as my research progressed; most notably the effect of contact with the non-Korean world and the seeds of *willingness* to use English. Also the next round of interviews became more focused in part due to practical considerations that arose in this first round. For example, in the first round I found it easier to find female participants with both the language ability and the daily schedules to meet with me. However the very young participants were quite shy about talking with a male non-Korean, so in the next round all interviewees were older than teenage. All in all, the selection of the *Exploratory 8* interviewees was very helpful in narrowing the focus of this research design on both theoretical and practical levels.

### *The World Cup 9*

The second phase of data collection, a three-part, longitudinal series of interviews, focused on the FIFA 2002 World Cup, co-hosted by Korea and Japan. I spoke with nine Korean women of varying ages and varying involvement in the World Cup games, immediately before the World Cup, again several weeks later, and



finally more than one year after the games. I spent four months searching for interviewees that fit the gender, age and World Cup involvement requirements I had in mind.

The choice of only women for these interviews was to limit variance among the participants. Choosing all men would have accomplished the same goal but it was easier to find female participants who had the proficiency to participate in English interviews. The nine women were also selected to fit into three age categories (twenties, thirties, and over forty) and three levels of contact with the World Cup games (official volunteers, indirectly involved, no connection). The goal was to have a group of Korean women who all had high English ability but who would also necessarily have various perspectives on the games and on Korea in general.

Finding participants proved to be quite difficult. I posted a request on a website for World Cup volunteers that was visited by over 10,000 people but fewer than five people responded and none ended up taking part. Through personal contacts I was finally able to select the following nine participants:

- Ms.Ang—a 60-year-old English teacher who has never left Korea. She had no direct contact with the World Cup games. She took part in all three interviews.
- Ms.Song—a 53-year-old English teacher who began traveling in recent years. She had no direct contact with the World Cup Games. She took part in all three interviews.
- Gyun-eun—a 40-year-old English teacher who started her own school and travels abroad often. She volunteered to work in the VIP section of a stadium where several World Cup games took place. She took part in all three interviews.
- Kyoung-tae—a 35-year-old church worker who has traveled extensively but had little interest in the World Cup games. She took part in all three interviews
- Sun-hye—a 32-year-old government worker who has left Korea twice for short travel. She took part in two interviews hesitantly and then broke contact.
- Ms. Ko—a 30-year-old homemaker, who planned to volunteer for the World Cup games but ultimately did not. She took part in only one interview through the internet and then broke contact.
- Jin-eun—a 29-year-old government worker who lived in Canada for two and a half years. She planned to work as an interpreter for the World Cup but dropped out before the games began. She took part in all three interviews

- Sook-ae—a 20-year-old university student who traveled abroad for the first time immediately after the World Cup. She volunteered as a translator and guide for visitors during the games. She took part in all three interviews.
- Sara—a 23-year-old university student who spent eight months studying English in Australia. She volunteered at a tourist information desk in a hotel during the World Cup. She took part in the first two interviews and then broke contact permanently.

In total, from both the *Exploratory 8* and the *World Cup 9*, the 17 interviewees represent both genders, three Asian nations, English abilities from low-intermediate to advanced, and a wide variety of contact with the non-Korean world. Table 5.1 summarizes how the interviewees fit into the different categories:

**Table 5.1 Interviewee Profiles**

|               | Interviewee Pseudonym | Sex | Age at first round | Experience Abroad <sup>15</sup> | World Cup participation <sup>16</sup> | Interview participation | Language proficiency <sup>17</sup> |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Exploratory 8 | Prof. Yun             | M   | 63                 | 25 years                        | N/A                                   | N/A                     | Advanced                           |
|               | Prof. Chul            | F   | 45                 | 10 years                        | N/A                                   | N/A                     | Advanced                           |
|               | Sally                 | F   | 35                 | 1 year                          | N/A                                   | N/A                     | High inter                         |
|               | Dan                   | M   | 24                 | +10 weeks                       | N/A                                   | N/A                     | High inter                         |
|               | Barbara (China)       | F   | 23                 | N/A                             | N/A                                   | N/A                     | High inter                         |
|               | Aika (Japan)          | F   | 27                 | N/A                             | N/A                                   | N/A                     | Inter                              |
|               | Jung-min              | F   | 14                 | None                            |                                       |                         | Low inter                          |
|               | Sun-jung              | F   | 14                 | None                            |                                       |                         | Low inter                          |
| World Cup 9   | Ms. Ang               | F   | 60                 | +10 weeks                       | Low                                   | Rounds 1,2,3            | High inter                         |
|               | Ms. Song              | F   | 53                 | None                            | Low                                   | Rounds 1,2,3            | High inter                         |
|               | Gyun-eun              | F   | 40                 | +10 weeks                       | High                                  | Rounds 1,2,3            | High inter                         |
|               | Kyoung-tae            | F   | 35                 | +10 weeks                       | Mid                                   | Rounds 1,2,3            | High inter                         |
|               | Sun-hye               | F   | 32                 | -10 weeks                       | Mid                                   | Rounds 1,2              | Low inter                          |
|               | Ms. Ko                | F   | 30                 | +10 weeks                       | Low                                   | Round 1                 | N/A                                |
|               | Jin-eun               | F   | 29                 | +10 weeks                       | Mid                                   | Rounds 1,2,3            | Inter                              |
|               | Sara                  | F   | 23                 | +10 weeks                       | High                                  | Rounds 1,2              | Inter                              |
|               | Sook-ae               | F   | 20                 | None                            | High                                  | Rounds 1,2,3            | High inter                         |

### *Survey Participants*

A large-scale questionnaire survey was carried out to provide general information about Korean learners and their attitudes and behaviors concerning English. The demographic information of the participants in two universities is summarized in Table 5.2:

<sup>15</sup> Although there was a wide range of travel experience among the interviewees, the 10 week mark is used to correspond with the survey data.

<sup>16</sup> *High* connotes working in a capacity directly involved with the FIFA 2002 World Cup. *Mid* connotes working in a capacity that changed somewhat due to the World Cup. *Low* connotes no work that was affected by the World Cup.

<sup>17</sup> All the participants spoke well enough to conduct long interviews in English and so they were all grouped as intermediate. The subjective *high*, *middle*, *low* refer to my perceptions of their spoken clarity in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, and their fluency in terms of smoothness and pauses in speaking.

**Table 5.2**  
**Frequency by Universities**

|       | Males | Females | Year in university |                 |                 |                 | Total |
|-------|-------|---------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
|       |       |         | 1 <sup>st</sup>    | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 4 <sup>th</sup> |       |
| Uni 1 | 1288  | 1497    | 1444               | 1206            | 62              | 59              | 2771  |
|       | 46.2% | 53.8%   | 52.1%              | 43.5%           | 2.2%            | 2.1%            | 100%  |
| Uni 2 | 715   | 462     | 1056               | 48              | 42              | 16              | 1162  |
|       | 60.7% | 39.3%   | 90.9%              | 4.1%            | 3.6%            | 1.4%            | 100%  |
| Total | 2003  | 1959    | 2500               | 1254            | 104             | 75              | 3933  |
|       | 50.6% | 49.4%   | 63.3%              | 31.9%           | 2.6%            | 1.9%            | 100%  |

I chose university aged learners because they had completed all of their primary and secondary school English education and had taken the extremely important college entrance exam. Korean universities carry with them reputations that are widely known and that both reflect the scholastic aptitude of the students that are admitted, and often determine the career prospects of those students. For this reason I chose one university that is known as a “local” university, meaning that it is located outside of the prestigious capital city of Seoul, and another “Seoul school” commonly considered among the top three in the country (hereafter these will be referred to as University 1 (local) and University 2 (Seoul) respectively).

Local universities tend to be more representative of the majority of students in Korea and so [see Table 5.2] 70% of those I surveyed came from University 1, with the remaining 30% coming from the more prestigious Seoul university. I felt this leant itself to a fair representation of the generation as a whole. An attempt was also made to balance the genders of the participants, and although 60% of the University 2 participants were male, overall from both universities combined, male and female participants were split at 50%.

Table 5.2 shows a cross-tabulation of the two universities and the participants’ year in school. Both universities are four-year schools which require their first-year students to enroll in an English conversation course with a native speaker. I selected students from this pool in hopes that there would be some uniformity among them in terms of formal English education. Although some upperclassmen were enrolled in these courses and took part in the survey, roughly two-thirds were indeed freshman students and approximately 95% were within their first two years of university.

Having almost all of the students in their first two years of university adds a great deal of uniformity to the pool of participants in light of several aspects of the

Korean education system. As discussed in Chapter 2, Korean English education underwent a major transformation with the implementation of the “seventh curriculum” at the beginning of 1998. Therefore all underclass students would have gone through a similar education experience. Had the pool of those surveyed been more mixed with upperclassmen this uniformity would not exist for several reasons. Male university students almost always enter their mandatory military service during their sophomore year, and so by the time they are juniors or seniors they may be much older than their female classmates. Transfer and returning students also usually enter a university as juniors and often at advanced ages. These age differences could mean that their primary and secondary education may have been under different curricula than freshman and sophomore students, detracting from the uniformity of the pool and perhaps skewing some of the results.

Table 5.3 shows a crosstabulation of the two universities and the participants’ majors. University students in Korea are placed into different colleges upon their enrollment but do not declare a specific major until their sophomore year. For example students who will eventually graduate as English majors will be enrolled as freshman into the college of humanities.

**Table 5.3**  
**Crosstabulation of University and Majors**

|       | Major |       |      |       |       |      |      |      |       |
|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-------|
|       | 1     | 2     | 3    | 4     | 5     | 6    | 7    | 8    | Total |
| Uni 1 | 796   | 921   | 27   | 396   | 420   | 82   | 3    | 149  | 2799  |
|       | 28.4% | 32.9% | 1.0% | 14.1% | 15.0% | 2.9% | 0.1% | 5.3% | 100%  |
| Uni 2 | 252   | 287   | 87   | 86    | 407   | 51   |      |      | 1172  |
|       | 21.5% | 24.5% | 7.4% | 7.3%  | 34.7% | 4.4% |      |      | 100%  |
| Total | 1048  | 1208  | 114  | 482   | 827   | 133  | 3    | 149  | 3971  |
|       | 26.4% | 30.4% | 2.9% | 12.1% | 20.8% | 3.3% | 0.1% | 3.8% | 100%  |

\*\*a small number [under 10] of participants with undeclared majors are not represented in this table

1: humanities; 2: business, social science; 3: law, 4: natural science; 5: engineering; 6: pre-med, nursing; 7: music, art, fashion; 8: physical education.

Table 5.3 shows these colleges, however not all colleges in both universities are represented because the survey took place in the spring semester and certain colleges enroll students in English courses only in the fall. More than 50% of those surveyed were enrolled in humanities, business, and social sciences.

### 5.3 Instrument

#### *The Exploratory 8*

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments were used in the three phases of this study. The data collection instrument for this first phase of research consisted of talking face to face with Korean learners of English. The one-on-one, 90-120 minutes interviews were conducted in private offices of educational institutions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The interview questions guiding this investigation were broad at first, then leading to more specific ones. My goal was to uncover the following:

- Participants' histories of contact with English from a CH perspective
- Participants' changing attitudes and behaviors toward English
- Participants' contact experiences which had specific impact on their language learning

Although these were broad questions for which I sought answers, in the case of most of the interviews I asked several specific questions. The interviews were semi-structured so I did not ask the exact questions every time. However the following is a list of commonly asked questions:

- When did you first realize people from other countries existed?
- When did you first realize languages other than Korean existed?
- When did you first meet a non-Korean person?
- What are your early memories of English?
- When did you begin learning English?
- What attitude did your family/friends have toward English?
- What attitude did your family/friends have toward non-Korean people?
- What memories do you have of your early English teachers?
- At what period do you feel you made the most progress in English?

These questions were asked in order to establish the participants relationship with English. If the interviewee had traveled abroad, I asked questions such as:

- When did you first travel? For what purpose?
- What are your most profound memories?

This would invariably lead to stories both positive and negative which I would explore with follow-up questioning. Interspersed among these questions I would include some of the following:

- How did you feel when you used English?
- Did you make any friends through English with either Koreans or non-Koreans?
- How would you compare [a particular aspect of the Korean world] with the same thing in the non-Korean world?

Another line of questions focused more on just the Korean world, for example:

- How do Korean men and women differ?
- What is the impact of Confucianism on Korea?
- How would you define *chemyon* and *jung*?<sup>18</sup>

I always attempted to have my questions emerge from given answers and so I rarely had to bring up many of these topics unsolicited. For example, I would merely have to say, “Tell me more about that,” or “Could you define that word you just used?” thus their stories guided much of the course of the interviews.

### *The World Cup 9*

Having emerged from the exploratory interviews, the three rounds of World Cup interviews included many of the questions listed above. Still there were questions that dealt specifically with the World Cup.

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<sup>18</sup> These terms respectively refer to “face” and “filial piety.”

The first round of interviews centered on:

- Gaining background information about each of the participants
- Asking them about their relationship with English [in a similar way to how the exploratory interviews were conducted.
- Asking them about their memories and the effects of Korea hosting the 1988 Summer Olympics and any similarities they see with the World Cup games.
- Asking their plans for participation in the World Cup and their general expectations for the games.

Again, the interviews were semi-structured and the participants' answers often prompted unplanned questions. I asked very many of the same questions from the exploratory interviews except an additional few:

- What are your memories of the 1988 Olympics?
- How do you imagine the World Cup will compare with the Olympics in terms of impact on Korea?
- [For those directly involved with the games]: What inspired you to work for the games? What do you hope to gain?

After nine pleasant first interviews, more than half of my interviewees were very difficult to contact again, ultimately citing their “poor English” as the cause of their hesitation. This troublesome process speaks to the focus of this study: many Koreans have a strong ambivalence toward communication in English.

After a period of frustration, and in an attempt to understand why my interviewees were avoiding the second, I broadened my focus to include not only CH but also WTC. An informal interview with a university student shed light on this problem when he mentioned that “status” may play a role in WTC.

I eventually did conduct eight out of the planned nine second round interviews soon after the World Cup games. Before 2002, Korea had not won a single World Cup game in 20 years. In these games, however, the team advanced to the bronze medal round by defeating several powerhouse nations. This was generally



considered to be one of the most momentous occasions in Korea's recent history. I wanted to investigate the impact of this event on my interviewees.

The second round of interview questions focused on:

- What attitude did your family/friends have toward non-Korean people attending the games?
- What did you do during the games?
- How did the games affect your perception of being Korean?
- How will the success affect Korea's international image?
- Did you meet people from various countries? If so, how did you compare yourself and other Koreans to them?
- [For those who traveled after the games]: How did you feel traveling after Korea's success in the games?
- Did your relationship with English change after Korea's success in the games?

The third round of World Cup interviews came more than a year after the games were done. Again I had difficulty meeting with my interviewees. They dodged my calls and some disappeared entirely. However more than half of them spoke with me and I had them fill out the questionnaire that had been given to the 4000 university students [see below]. I wanted to see how their answers fit within that larger group. This will be discussed further in later chapters but they not surprisingly scored high-level WTC.

### *WTC in Korea Questionnaire*

The questionnaire was constructed to measure Korean learners WTC and its relationship with other variables in the language learning situation. Based on relevant studies (Dörnyei, 2001; Yashima, 2002), the questionnaire was constructed to include items in five different areas: WTC (9 items), communication apprehension (5 items), anxiety, fear of mistakes (7 items), loss or identity and betrayal (6 items), and contact conditions (12 items). The first nine WTC items were on a 5-point Likert scale and the following 30 items concerning other factors were on a 6-point Likert scale. The two

different scales were used to reflect the different nature of the survey items. Because a 5-point scale allows for neutrality, it was used for the items dealing with *willingness to behave* in a certain way, thus allowing the respondents to express their neutrality or uncertainty about hypothetical behavior. The 6-point is given for items concerning *attitudes* the respondents have at the present moment, and forces them to at least mildly agree or disagree with a statement. In retrospect, perhaps consistency in the point scale could have been equally or more valid an option.

The next 11 items concerned demographic and experiential information. Including eleven external information questions, there was a total of fifty questions in the questionnaire. In order to avoid unnecessary confusion due to L2 language ability, the items were written in Korean (see Appendix X for both Korean and English version of the questionnaire). Although some items were adapted from previous studies, many were original and needed to be tested by means of a pilot questionnaire. The pilot was given to 100 students at one of the two universities that took part in the full study. The reliability of the final questionnaire was as follows: 9 items on *WTC*:  $\alpha = .887$ ; 5 items on *communication anxiety and apprehension*:  $\alpha = .735$ ; 7 items on *fear of mistakes*:  $\alpha = .763$ ; 6 items on loss of identity/betrayal:  $\alpha = .685$ ; 12 items on *contact conditions*:  $\alpha = .608$ .

## 5.4 Procedures

### *The Exploratory 8*

After my research design for these first interviews was clear to me I set about finding participants who I felt were atypical in their English ability. That is to say I looked for Korean learners who I knew to speak English with such fluency and comfort that they would not shy away from a two-hour interview in English with a native speaker. Several people came to my mind that included friends, students, and colleagues. On two occasions I needed to ask other colleagues who they felt might be suitable.

I conducted almost all of the interviews on the campus of my university, usually in my personal office or in the office of a colleague. This was most convenient for both me and for my interviewees because it involved very little travel

time. On two occasions, with the two schoolgirls, I traveled to their private English academy, about one hour from my university.

In all cases I was alone in a room with the interviewee. I would clearly tell them when the tape recorder was either on or off and let them know I would turn it off at any time if so desired. In the case of the two young girls I had their Korean English teacher inform their parents and get consent. Also, during the interview the teacher was always in the next room to help the girls feel comfortable.

All the interviews took place during the Spring 2001 semester within about ten weeks. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes, for a total of 12 hours. Over the next several months the interviews were transcribed by me, sometimes with the help of an assistant for controlling the recorder. An attempt at verbatim transcription was made. This often included typing word for word grammar mistakes. However when I felt a grammar mistake would impair the meaning for the reader, I would make small corrections.

### *The World Cup 9*

In terms of recording and transcribing this series of interviews, I followed the same procedure detailed above. However, these interviews took place at a greater variety of places, but still within the city where I live. As stated above, finding and meeting this group of interviewees often proved to be rather difficult so I tried to be as accommodating as possible by offering to meet them at places of their convenience. Still, contact through email and telephone proved to be difficult, and in three instances I had to meet in restaurants which proved problematic for recording. The total recording time for all three rounds of World Cup interviews was approximately 35 hours.

Because one interviewee lived outside of my city and at the last minute before the start of the World Cup games was unable to keep her promise of visiting my city, I conducted the interview via internet live messaging. For several reasons this proved to be less than ideal. I was unable to keep her attention on the topics and she seemed to give the shortest answers as possible. I would not use this method again.

### *Survey Questionnaire*

After constructing the pilot questionnaire, I told the participating classes that this was not mandatory but it would be a great help to me and hopefully to many people in the future. The questionnaire was written in Korean to make it as easy as possible for the students. Also I made certain that the entire questionnaire fit on to two sides of one paper to make it seem not too extensive for the students and to ease data entry. I administered the questionnaire at the beginning of class when the students' energy was at its peak. As a final touch I used a variety of colored paper, which seemed to please the students. The students were instructed not to put their name or any other identifying information on the questionnaire to insure confidentiality and anonymity. They were also told that their participation would have no bearing on their academics.

I did not set a time limit but everyone finished in less than 10 minutes. Then I collected the papers and returned them to an envelope which was labeled with the name of the class, and the date. Later, before entering the data, I brought together all the envelopes and numbered each questionnaire in the upper right corner. In each class there were a few papers that were not filled out correctly or it seemed obvious that the student did not take it seriously and just filled in numbers in a straight line. These questionnaires were discarded and not assigned a number. Data entry was done with the help of an assistant. One person would read out numbers, usually in groups of three, and the other would repeat these numbers while typing them into the SPSS program. I feel this cut down on entry errors.

After analysis of the pilot data, I began planning the full study, which would include 4000 students, in more than 100 different English conversation classes, taught by more than two dozen native instructors at two universities in different cities. To bring this all this data from so many people into one SPSS file, I focused on clear organization.

I first wrote a letter to the instructors of these classes, asking for their help and explaining my purpose. Then with the help of one colleague at each school who knew all the instructors, I was able to get enough cooperation to move forward. I then wrote a list of very clear instructions and a script for the instructors to read to their classes. These were a version of what I had said and done with the pilot questionnaire, explained above.

I prepared labeled envelopes with enough questionnaires and all instructions inside. For the university in another city, I sent the envelopes by registered mail and arranged for them to be sent back to me in the same way. It was vital for me to stay well informed of the progress along the way.

I also felt it was vital to limit the amount of time all of this would take in order to control as much of the process as possible. About 4500 questionnaires were administered and collected on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of one week in April 2003. The instructors would pick up and drop off their envelopes at their shared office immediately before and after their classes, sealing and signing each envelope. Impressively, the level of cooperation was very high. Few if any students refused to answer the questionnaire and all of the instructors followed the directions well. When all the envelopes were again in my possession, I began the numbering and data entry process as described above.

Data entry was labor intensive but was completed before June 2003. When solicited people to help, I would offer a free lunch in the form of a slice or two of pizza. This seemed to work quite well.

## **5.5 Data Analysis**

### **5.5.1 Interview Data**

All interviews were recorded onto cassette tapes. Transcription was done through MS Word and starting and stopping a cassette player. I worked both alone and with an assistant. An attempt was made to keep the transcripts as true to the recordings as possible. Garbled statements were labeled as such. Grammatical errors were often left alone unless I felt the meaning would be left unclear. Pauses, laughter, etc. were only identified if they seemed meaningful to the discourse.

Data analysis of the qualitative data followed the general principles of qualitative content analysis. First I assigned codes to the interview transcripts and from these codes a number of themes were developed, for example, the theme of which period in a participant's life seemed to have the most positive impact on their achievement. After a theme was identified, comparisons among participants' responses were further analyzed. Reasoned judgments were subsequently made as a result of an iterative process of repeatedly moving between the data and the emergent findings and

comparing the participants' interpretations of their own actions and the actions of others.

### *Quality Criteria During Analysis*

For practical reasons and in an effort to raise the reliability and validity of the qualitative data, I continuously discussed and asked for assistance with every phase of the project. That is to say, I needed help in finding participants, arranging and conducting interviews, transcription, coding, counting, and generally thinking about the research project. An advantage of living and working in Korea throughout the entire process is that I always had easy access to many Korean and non-Korean friends, university colleagues, research assistants, and students. All of these people were involved and very experienced in the endeavor of English language learning in Korea, as learners and/or educators.

For the selection of the *Exploratory 8* interviewees I enlisted the help of four or five Korean colleagues from my university to help me find participants. For example, a former research assistant who became the manager of an English institute selected her two best middle school students to be interviewed. She later assisted in transcribing their interviews and translating the few Korean phrases that were spoken. Later, during coding and counting I was able to discuss my criteria for including certain statements in certain categories. This process took place with different people in all the interviews.

Overall, in the transcription phase of the analysis, two native English speakers and three native Korean speakers assisted me. I transcribed no interview alone. All the coding was done with the help of one Korean and one non-Korean, both of whom helped with the transcription. Word frequencies and counting were done with the help of three Koreans, two of whom helped with the two earlier phases. Written-up drafts of all analyses were read over and commented on by two Koreans and two non-Koreans, all of who had helped with earlier phases.

This consistent and invaluable help guided every phase of this project. They people mentioned above also helped with the quantitative phases of this project. These helpers also knew each other and many of the participants, and so ideas were easily and often exchanged. Without such exchange I would have been left in the unfortunate position of relying solely on my own interpretations.

### *Word Frequencies*

As an example of the analysis procedure I will explain several of the steps I would follow to try to ensure that my conclusions emerged from the text and not simply from my mind. Using Microsoft Word I would copy the entire transcribed text of one interview and paste it into one of the free word frequency programs available on the internet. Of the several I used the best was from [www.writewords.org.uk/word\\_count.asp](http://www.writewords.org.uk/word_count.asp).

Being able to see all the unique words used by a particular person gives quick insight into patterns of expression. For example one interviewee used the word *interesting* 18 times and the word *stupid* 17 times. Using MS Word's *find* function it is easy to quickly locate and highlight where in the interview these words were spoken. A list can then be made of what the interviewee refers to as stupid and/or interesting. I found this helpful because I would not rely on my memory or subjective intuition to start constructing patterns.

After creating frequency lists for all the interviewees, making comparisons became easy. For example while that first interviewee uses *stupid* 18 times, only four of those times is she referring to herself. Of the remaining 14 times, nine of them refer to the Korean world and the remainders refer to the non-Korean world. When she uses the word, it is often from an informed and empowered perspective. But a second interviewee does not use the word stupid at all but instead uses words such as *forced* and *unfair* more frequently and always in instances where she feels powerless.

### *Coding*

The “word frequency” approach allowed several keywords to emerge from the transcripts, which led me to create thematic categories initially based on words such as *stupid*, *forced* or *unfair*. Systematically going back and forth among the transcripts, word frequencies, and a growing list of thematic categories, I eventually identified a few dozen recurring themes. I could then go through individual transcripts and label statements according to these recurring themes.

## Counting

Toward the end of the data analysis process in hopes of summarizing the major findings of this study, I applied a somewhat quantitative approach to analyzing the interview transcripts. After word frequencies and coding repeating patterns within the texts, I counted instances of interviewees making statements which fell under particular categories. One level of categorization focused on the 40 most repeated themes that emerged from the transcripts. Then a meta level categorization identified those themes as attitudes and behaviors concerning either IC or L1AS. Differentiation was also made concerning whether the statement was linked to a facilitating or debilitating impact on WTC, labeled as IC +/- or L1AS +/- . For example, a statement such as, “I enjoyed speaking English in front of my family,” would be categorized as “L1AS +” because it shows willingness to communicate in English in the presence of a Korean audience.

Though not an attempt at formal statistical analysis, I took another step in quantifying the interview texts by calculating the number of different statements for all interviewees and the ratios among the different categories. Table 5.4 Is a partial replication of Table 8.5 from the concluding chapter, in which I bring together and summarize all of the findings of this study.

**Table 5.4 Partial Replication of Table 8.5 Case by Case Matrix**

| Interviewee | IC + | IC - | +/- ratio | L1AS + | L1AS - | +/- ratio |
|-------------|------|------|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Prof. Yun   | 4    | 3    | 1.3 : 1   | 4      | 0      | $\infty$  |
| Prof. Chul  | 7    | 5    | 1.4 : 1   | 4      | 2      | 2.0 : 1   |
| Sally       | 21   | 9    | 2.3 : 1   | 6      | 5      | 1.2 : 1   |
| Dan         | 9    | 5    | 1.8 : 1   | 5      | 3      | 1.7 : 1   |
| Jung-min    | 11   | 8    | 1.4 : 1   | 5      | 3      | 1.7 : 1   |
| Sun-jung    | 17   | 4    | 4.3 : 1   | 1      | 1      | 1         |
| Total       | 69   | 34   | 2.0 : 1   | 25     | 14     | 1.7 : 1   |

The case-by-case matrix allows numbers to emerge from text, giving a basis for comparison of thematic statements, different groups of interviews, and individual interviewees.



### 5.5.2. Questionnaire Data

This section on the quantitative is much shorter than the previous section on the qualitative data both because this study is primarily qualitative and the quantitative analysis is not unfamiliar or complex. Using SPSS (v. 12.0), I ran the standard descriptive analyses to find the mean scores for WTC, communication apprehension and anxiety, fear of mistakes, loss or betrayal of identity, and contact conditions. I also found frequencies for the demographic information and then ran correlative analysis to find which factors were most highly correlated to WTC.

## 5.6 Limitations of the Methods

Although I attempted to be both systematic and thorough, certainly there are issues of subjectivity and validity. Any interpretation of any data remains vulnerable to the perspectives of the researcher and my strong affection toward the Korean people may have certain influences. Also I did not use any standardized methods of assessing the proficiency of my participants.

Also, although I have a large quantity of interview transcriptions, perhaps a greater number of interviewees could have yielded a better dataset. Although I have been aware of these limitations and tried to overcome them, I don't expect my findings to be perfect. I hope that this study can contribute to the discussion of language learning in various contexts.

## Part III: Results and Discussion

### CHAPTER 6 INTERCULTURAL COMPLEX

#### 6.1 Opening Argument

Having introduced the premises, the theoretical background and the methodology of the study, the following two results chapters will address several aspects of what is a complex issue. Therefore it may be useful to start this part of the thesis by outlining my argument before getting into the details. The concluding chapter (Chapter 8) will revisit all these issues in a more elaborated manner.

The Korean context offers a truly unique case through which to study the complex issue of willingness to communicate [WTC]. I will argue for the existence of two major factors, *Intercultural Complex* and *L1 Audience Sensitivity*, which seem to exert the main influence on Korean learners' decisions to use English and thus profoundly affect WTC in the Korean context. They represent, I believe, keys to the puzzle of Korean learners' ambivalence toward English. These factors are socially based processes that fundamentally shape Korean communication intentions and practices. Thus, they produce a direct link between the social world and the linguistic reality within it, bringing the social world to the linguistic moment. While of course other factors are also at play, these two stand out so strongly and appear to be so unique to the Korean context that they deserve the focus of this study. Through my data I will show the existence of these two factors, define and distinguish between them, and show explicitly how they develop, how they are modified, and what are their consequences.

The first factor I term *Intercultural Complex* [IC], by which I mean a socially constructed mixture of beliefs, attitudes, and values Korean learners have concerning the non-Korean world. The point of focus here is the interface where the Korean world collides with and then coexists with the non-Korean world. *Intercultural Complex* refers then to the unique way that Koreans view the non-Korean world and how they compare themselves to that outside world. In essence, IC is about *inequalities* Koreans perceive between themselves and the non-Korean world. IC's

attitudes, beliefs, and values constitute the *generalized baggage* that Korean learners carry around with them and bring to any communication event. In fact, this baggage is pervasive, affecting a wide range of behaviors from buying foreign goods to watching foreign movies. Also, as Korea globalizes more and more and the collision of worlds becomes more inevitable, this issue gains greater importance. In terms of how IC develops, several unique aspects of Korean society shape learners' attitudes, beliefs, and values toward the non-Korean world.

It is imperative to understand that while this complex is similar to what Yashima (2003) termed *international posture within a Japanese context*, referring to a general notion of encompassing any nations' people's attitude toward other nations, IC in the Korean context is uniquely and significantly characterized by what is known as *han*, or "regret" over the Korean situation. In the national consciousness there is a pervading sadness and sometimes shame over many of the events of Korean history, as well as the present situation. These events vary from foreign invasion and occupation, to mismanagement at the hands of Korean leaders, to a nation divided and still at war. *Han*, I will argue, is a sense of insecurity or even inferiority that Koreans feel about their position in the world, especially relative to certain powerful countries. An interesting other side of *han* is that it can also become a driving force among Koreans to persevere, giving *han* a "never again" quality. These aspects of *han* are further mediated by individual learners' past experiences with the non-Korean world, in particular travel abroad and international friendship, to make a woven tapestry which is the *Intercultural Complex*. It stands to reason that IC can be modified according to a learner's past experiences. Those experiences in turn may modify learners' perspective on *han* and other aspects of their posture towards things non-Korean. The data will also show a variety of antecedents and consequences of IC.

Despite Korean IC being characterized by *han*, which seems to be a rather negative concept, it often manifests itself as a boost to WTC. Many of the extracts in this chapter show participants drawn to communicate with the non-Korean world, either to escape the Korean world or to reshape non-Korean perceptions of the Korean world. IC also may result in lower WTC when insecurities provoked by *han* cause hesitation to confront the non-Korean world. As Wen and Clement (2003) discuss in terms of Chinese WTC, a schism may appear between "desire" to communicate and "willingness" to communicate. Korean *han*, as it functions in IC,

rests at the point of this schism. Chapter 8 will explore both the “facilitating” and “debilitating” sides of IC.

The second factor, L1AS, refers to an intense awareness of the differences, or more specifically, the *inequalities* speakers perceive between themselves and the Korean audience present in the communication situation. Therefore, the focus here is only on situations in which a Korean person speaks with an interlocutor who may or may not be non-Korean<sup>19</sup> as well, but other Koreans are present.

The “inequalities” refer to differences in status and age among Koreans, which bear heavily on interpersonal relations. A key point here is that the audience may play a more significant role in the “to speak or not to speak” decision than the actual communication partner, when that interlocutor is non-Korean and the audience is Korean.

L1AS, then, is a *situational reaction* to the audience present at the communication event and how learners compare themselves with that audience. Thus L1AS is primarily communicative, dealing only with language practices, and is situation-specific. In terms of the development of L1AS, chapter 7 turns away from *han* to other well-known aspects of Korean identity and social interaction--*chemyon* (face), *jung* (affection among intimates), and *wangtta* (ostracizing). As with IC, L1AS has both “facilitating” and “debilitating” sides which will be explored in Chapter 8.

In these discussions of IC and L1AS, it hopefully remains clear that these two powerful forces from the social world are quite distinct from each other. The distinction arises from where these two determinants develop and at what level they operate. IC develops from Korean learners' perceived inequalities with the non-Korean world and operates on a wide variety of behaviors, which concern not only the Korean world. L1AS, on the other hand, develops from perceived inequalities among Koreans, and operates completely independent of the non-Korean world, and specifically on the level of language communication. Together these two factors point out a clear link between the social world and the precise linguistic moment when learners decide whether or not to use their second language.

While this study seeks to highlight these two important forces and their joint influence on a precise linguistic moment, it will not focus on the factors' interaction with each other. Also, the question of whether proficiency should be included in a

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<sup>19</sup> In L2 learning situations a group of Koreans only may gather to speak English among themselves.

discussion of WTC is a natural one. While there is no doubt that proficiency plays a role, it is not this study's focus because the significance of intrapersonal variation due to audience indicates that proficiency is not the only determining factor and therefore this study focuses on factors other than proficiency.

This dissertation presents *one* way of looking at WTC among Korean learners of English, bringing the social world to the linguistic moment in a context not often explored in SLA literature. Through this discussion it will be clear that the situation of the Korean learner is so unique that broader, non-Korean-specific studies, could never fully explain Korean WTC. Hopefully this discussion may also unearth some of the subtleties of WTC, which heretofore have been missed in the explorations of other contexts.

## 6.2 Intercultural Complex: Quantitative Results

Before presenting findings from the quantitative data, I should reiterate that this research project is primarily qualitative and the quantitative findings are meant to provide a backdrop for the more elaborate qualitative findings. The basic statistical analyses run on a large number of participants simply provide evidence of the context from which the interview participants come and some major patterns of attitude and behavior found there.

### *IC and ICC*

Before going further into this chapter on *Intercultural Complex*, I should distinguish this factor from Byram's (2001; 1998; 1997) well-known *Intercultural Communicative Competence* [ICC]. The obvious similarity is that both deal with intercultural issues; that is, how a language learner interacts with members of another culture. However, besides this similar foundation, IC and ICC differ significantly. First, IC does not center on *communicative competence*, which is relatively stable in individual learners, but instead focuses on the fluctuating attitudes and behaviors that situationally alter Korean individuals' perspectives on the non-Korean world.

*ICC* has made great strides in putting forward the importance of culture in language learning. Byram's "four saviors" delineate how a language learner must have knowledge of the other culture, interactive skills, tolerance, and the ability to

learn about that culture, in order to successfully interact with speakers of their L2. However, IC is more concerned with a learner's *willingness* to jump into a communication event, more so than how well that learner will swim.

Byram's ideas have informed my research and helped define it. Still this research project remains focused on the intrapersonal fluctuations that decide whether an L2 learner will volunteer to enter L2 use.

### 6.2.1 External Factors and WTC

The university students who participated in this questionnaire survey came from two differently ranked Korean universities. Much external variation existed among those university students, and by "external" I mean contact experiences with the outside, non-Korean world, as opposed to any inner attitudes or beliefs. Table 6.1 presents a variety of factors among those surveyed, which sketches a portrait of a typical Korean university classroom of undergraduates at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Approximately half of them have been to private English institutes or *hagwons*<sup>20</sup> at some point in their lives, and 80% have had the experience of speaking to a non-Korean person outside of school. So, at least some contact with non-Koreans is common showing that opportunities to exhibit WTC in English do exist within Korea and investigating how often Koreans take these opportunities is the focus of this study. Table 6.1 shows the variation among Korean university students in terms of external variables.

| <b>Table 6.1</b>   |       |              |              |
|--|-------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>External Variation among Korean University Students (%)</b> |       |              |              |
|  | Total | University 1 | University 2 |
| Native teachers  | 56.5  | 49.1         | 74.1         |
| <i>Hagwon</i>  | 46.1  | 42.7         | 54.1         |
| Lived abroad   | 2.9   | 1.1          | 6.9          |
| Traveled abroad  | 13.8  | 6.1          | 32.5         |
| Spoken to foreigners   | 80.6  | 76.0         | 91.4         |
| Foreign friends  | 11.5  | 8.5          | 19.0         |

<sup>20</sup> *Hagwons* are privately run academic institutes that supplement the education given in regular school. They are very popular because parents want to give their children as much advantage as possible. English *hagwons* often employ some native English speakers and are the students' first contact with non-Koreans.

Another key result from Table 6.1 is the experience abroad that is commonly found among Korean learners. First, the discrepancy between the two universities is perhaps most evident here as only roughly 1% of students from university 1 have ever lived abroad, while almost 7% of university 2 students have. Travel abroad shows similar results with almost a full third of university 2 students having traveled while only 6% of university 1 has ever left Korea. The results for university 1 are perhaps more representative of all Korean university students although perhaps much higher than for the general population. Only a small percentage of Koreans have travel abroad experience. The much higher percentages for university 2 may reflect significant economic differences between the student bodies.

At only 11.5%, friendship with non-Koreans is far from common among those surveyed, however, as with travel abroad, the possibility does exist. Interestingly, a higher percentage of university 1 students have foreign friends than have traveled abroad, but that is not the case for university 2 students even though their actual percentages are higher. This seems to suggest that although 32% of university 2 students have traveled, they did not always have deep contact with local people. Still it is a key result that university 2 students have twice the percentage of foreign friendships and three times the percentage of traveling abroad as university 1.

Table 6.2 shows the relationship between the years abroad and the number of foreign friends. Table 6.2 goes deeper into the issue of travel and foreign friends but without differentiating between the two universities because the numbers are rather low. Still some key results are present such as the fact that almost 10% of those surveyed have never lived abroad but still have between one and five foreign friends. Having more than five non-Korean friends is much more rare, even among those who have lived abroad. Ninety percent of all surveyed then have neither lived abroad nor have any non-Korean friends.

**Table 6.2**  
**Crosstabulation of Years Spent Abroad and Non-Korean Friends**

| Years<br>Abroad | Non-Korean Friends |       |       |       | Total |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                 | None               | 1-5   | 6-10  | 10+   |       |
| Never           | 3454               | 378   | 11    | 4     | 3847  |
|                 | 89.9%              | 9.8%  | 0.3%  | 0.1%  | 100%  |
| 1-2             | 38                 | 26    | 6     | 4     | 74    |
|                 | 51.4%              | 35.1% | 8.1%  | 5.4%  | 100%  |
| 3-10            | 10                 | 10    | 2     | 7     | 29    |
|                 | 34.5%              | 34.5% | 6.9%  | 24.1% | 100%  |
| 10+             | 1                  | 1     | 2     | 5     | 9     |
|                 | 11.1%              | 11.1% | 22.2% | 55.6% | 100%  |
| Total           | 3503               | 415   | 21    | 20    | 3959  |
|                 | 88.5%              | 10.5% | 0.5%  | 0.5%  | 100%  |

Much of this study's qualitative data centers on the contact experience of the 2002 World Cup games, when thousands of sports fans and the eyes of the world came to Korea. It seemed a golden opportunity for many Korean learners of English to speak to foreign visitors. Table 6.3 looks at the relationship between travel abroad and actually speaking to non-Koreans during the World Cup.

**Table 6.3**  
**Crosstabulation of Travel Time Abroad and WTC during the World Cup**

| Travel<br>Abroad | Foreigners spoken to during World Cup |       |      |       | Total |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|
|                  | None                                  | 1-5   | 6-10 | 10+   |       |
| Never            | 2700                                  | 614   | 44   | 48    | 3406  |
|                  | 79.3%                                 | 18.0% | 1.3% | 1.4%  | 100%  |
| 1-2 wks          | 190                                   | 65    | 4    | 8     | 267   |
|                  | 71.2%                                 | 24.3% | 1.5% | 3.0%  | 100%  |
| 3-10 wks         | 123                                   | 59    | 11   | 4     | 197   |
|                  | 62.4%                                 | 29.9% | 5.6% | 2.0%  | 100%  |
| 10+wks           | 44                                    | 24    | 7    | 10    | 85    |
|                  | 51.8%                                 | 28.2% | 8.2% | 11.8% | 100%  |
| Total            | 3057                                  | 762   | 66   | 70    | 3955  |
|                  | 77.3%                                 | 19.3% | 1.7% | 1.8%  | 100%  |



Almost 25% spoke to at least one non-Korean during the games, which seems to support the notion that there were indeed many opportunities for contact. Even around 20% of those who had never traveled abroad took some opportunities to speak with non-Koreans. Both universities are located in large cities which hosted several games over a four-week period. That one quarter of the participants found opportunities to speak with non-Koreans suggests that ample opportunities existed. However, that three quarters of the participants did not take the opportunities seems significant because findings that will be presented later show that on average the participants reported that they were more willing than not to speak with non-Koreans. What then stopped such a large percentage of participants from taking advantage of ample opportunity? These percentages alone do not uncover the processes that allowed these participants to make and take WTC opportunities, and it will not be until the interview data that we can better see the process.

#### 6.2.2 Internal Factors and WTC

Table 6.4 begins to go deeper into the minds of the participants by looking at several factors that were measured with the survey: communication anxiety and apprehension, fear of making mistakes, a sense of loss or betrayal of one's Korean identity, the conditions of the contact situation, and willingness to communicate. These are termed "internal" because they concern the inner feelings of the participants' minds.

The key result here has to do with the difference between the two universities. As we have seen from much of the data above, university 2, the Seoul university, has a rather different student body in regard not only to their entrance exam scores but also much higher percentages for time spent abroad (three times the percentage of university 1) and foreign friendship (twice the percentage of university 1).

**Table 6.4**  
**Internal Factors among Korean University Students**

|                    | 1: Uni 1 |      |      |    |
|--------------------|----------|------|------|----|
|                    | 2: Uni 2 | N    | Mean | SD |
| Anxiety            | 1        | 2820 | 4.1  | .8 |
|                    | 2        | 1179 | 3.6  | .8 |
| Fear of Mistakes   | 1        | 2820 | 3.7  | .8 |
|                    | 2        | 1179 | 3.6  | .8 |
| Loss of Identity   | 1        | 2818 | 2.7  | .7 |
|                    | 2        | 1179 | 2.6  | .7 |
| Contact Conditions | 1        | 2820 | 3.3  | .5 |
|                    | 2        | 1179 | 3.5  | .5 |
| WTC                | 1        | 2819 | 2.6  | .9 |
|                    | 2        | 1179 | 3.0  | .8 |

Table 6.5 shows the Pearson correlation among internal factors and negative correlations were observed between WTC and anxiety, fear of mistakes, and loss of identity and anxiety shows the strongest correlation with WTC ( $r = -.411$ ).

**Table 6.5**  
**Pearson Correlations among Internal Factors and WTC**

|         | Anxiety | Fear    | Loss   | Contact | WTC |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|-----|
| Anxiety | .       |         |        |         |     |
| Fear    | .529*   | .       |        |         |     |
| Loss    | .134*   | .112*   | .      |         |     |
| Contact | .109*   | .087**  | .140*  | .       |     |
| WTC     | -.411*  | -.246** | -.134* | -.025   | .   |

\*\* $p < 0.01$

The results indicate that WTC is closely related to internal factors that have positive or negative impact on L2 learning process. That is, the more anxiety and fear of mistakes the learners have, the less WTC they exhibit. The results are in line with

MacIntyre's (1994) WTC model in that communication anxiety has a direct effect on WTC.

It should also be noted that "a sense of loss or betrayal of one's Korean identity" was not strongly linked with a lessening of WTC. Before collecting this data I expected there to be a strong worry that speaking English could be viewed as detrimental to some Koreans' sense of national identity. Often I have heard Koreans speak of a fear that perhaps children who learn English too young will not become "true Koreans," or tales of how the Japanese used their language to force Korean-ness out their colony. This data however does not support such notions.

The Pearson correlations in Table 6.6 show that the number of foreigners spoken to and the number of foreign friends are mildly correlated with WTC.

**Table 6.6**  
**Correlations of External Factors and WTC**

|                        | WTC   | Native<br>Teacher | Hagwon | Lived<br>abroad | Travel<br>abroad | Foreigner<br>Spoken<br>to | Foreigner<br>Friend |
|------------------------|-------|-------------------|--------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| WTC                    | 1     |                   |        |                 |                  |                           |                     |
| Native<br>Teacher      | .144* | 1                 |        |                 |                  |                           |                     |
| Hagwon                 | .136* | .358*             | 1      |                 |                  |                           |                     |
| Lived<br>abroad        | .108* | .088*             | .026*  | 1               |                  |                           |                     |
| Travel<br>abroad       | .190* | .225*             | .148*  | .358*           | 1                |                           |                     |
| Foreigner<br>Spoken to | .248* | .269*             | .199*  | .157*           | .282*            | 1                         |                     |
| Foreign<br>Friends     | .221* | .143*             | .089*  | .392*           | .368*            | .327*                     | 1                   |

\*p < 0.05

Not surprisingly, the number of foreigners spoken to and the number of foreign friends shows a significant correlation with travel abroad, supporting the link between WTC and experience abroad. Due to the large sample size, significant results were found in many areas. However, some of the results, especially correlations below .20 may be too small to be meaningful. The correlations above .30 are more worthy of serious consideration.

### *Summary of Quantitative Data Results for Intercultural Complex*

The quantitative data presented in this chapter tells the first half of the story of this study. The over 4000 university students who participated in this questionnaire survey came from the same background in terms of the national conditions of English education. However the students from university 2 had to have achieved higher scores on the very important English sections of the entrance exam in order to enroll in the prestigious “Seoul school.” This data itself shows other very important differences between the two groups in terms of their contact with the non-Korean world, because university 2 students have much more foreign travel and friendship experience than university 1 students. However, despite this contact, something keeps the communication fear and anxiety levels of the university 2 students on par with the levels of university 1 students. Also, as mentioned above, the fear of loss of identity does not seem to be a major factor in lowering WTC. Thus it seems that students of varying proficiency have similar high levels of fear and anxiety but these do not stem from any fear of losing “Koreanness.”

The following sections of this chapter will use the qualitative data from this study to deeply explore the attitudes and beliefs associated with the collision between the Korean and non-Korean worlds through the words of my interviewees. This will hopefully present a fuller understanding of what the above numbers outline, and what lies at the center of *Intercultural Complex*. The following chapter will then finish the story of this study by offering a suggestion of what still causes such fear and anxiety in Koreans with high English proficiency and much intercultural contact. I posit that the root of much of this fear about lies deep within the Korean world.

### **6.3 Intercultural Complex: Interviewee Perceptions of Korea**

Intercultural Complex is a force that both attracts and repels Koreans from their WTC in English. The attitudes, values and beliefs involved when Koreans are faced with the collision of the Korean and the non-Korean worlds can be both motivating and de-motivating. The objects of these attitudes and beliefs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Koreans' own direct comparisons between the Korean and non-Korean worlds.
- Korea's world reputation
- The attractiveness of certain non-Korean things
- Direct contact with non-Koreans within Korea
- Travel outside of Korea
- Special events that stimulate reappraisal of the relationship between the Korean and non-Korean worlds

Through interview extracts, these categories will be investigated in this chapter showing that the crucial issue here is whether these attitudes and beliefs come together to tip the scales toward WTC. The complexities and inexactness of this "coming together" reflects the dynamic and fluctuating quality of WTC that has thus far not been sufficiently explored in the extant literature, and which helps explain the high level of intra-personal variation in WTC which takes place, even within a single conversation.

The value of IC, along with L1AS, in terms of this conceptualization is that they group together several complex factors into two clearly distinct forces. The interview data below does not show something simple but rather something very complex and often contradictory. Also, sometimes a single negative (or positive) attitude that one person holds toward the Korean world can quickly switch from being a de-motivating force to becoming a motivating force in terms of WTC, simply by virtue of how it functions in a conversation. As discussed earlier, *han*, Korean regret or shame, can be both a motivating and demotivating force, often hinging on as little as a turn in conversation.

The extracts below explore this and other processes in a way that empirical data from the unique Korean context has not done thus far by showing Koreans interacting with their own attitudes about Korea. The quotes support and enlighten this study's quantitative data and act as a text that may be analyzed and/or similarly replicated by future researchers by bringing up similar issues with different participants. I am confident, given the repeated patterns which emerged from my interviews and my years of informal observation, that future research would uncover similar patterns which could fit into the IC/L1AS conceptualization.

### 6.3.1 Common Themes

Understanding IC begins with understanding the common perceptions Koreans have of their country and themselves. Then it becomes easier to understand the process of development of IC and how it ultimately influences WTC. The excerpts in this section illustrate a variety of perceptions Koreans have of Korea, but there is also a great uniformity in these perceptions.

#### *Inferiority*

In the globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century comparisons among countries are inevitable. Either directly or indirectly all the interviewees measured Korea against certain other countries. Gyun-eun directly compared Korea with other countries while talking about how her co-workers think visitors will be impressed with certain Korean things, but she disagrees:

*We can't compete with westernized buildings, or houses, or [other] things. We can't compete with these things. My co-workers think that Woobang Towerland<sup>21</sup> or some buildings are better than Korean old traditional houses. But I don't think like that. So what I think [is that] we should change our mind.*

Several things are of interest in this extract. First, Gyun-eun feels that Korea “can’t compete” with things in the west. As we will see below this is a very common sentiment that Korea is somehow below the level of western countries. Second, she feels that it is a mistake for Korea to try to compete with western countries *with* western things such as skyscrapers and amusement parks. Instead Gyun-eun suggests that Koreans show off their traditional culture. This points to her opinion that there is value in Korea but Koreans themselves often don’t see it because they try so hard to aspire toward the west, leaving them at a distinct disadvantage and with feelings of inferiority. Finally, she states that Koreans should change their minds. This call for

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<sup>21</sup> A local amusement park on a much smaller scale than Disneyland.

change came up repeatedly among the interviewees, again reinforcing that it is the mindset of Koreans that is the problem and the solution lies in Koreans changing.

Something that Koreans are also very aware of is that Japan in particular is much better known around the world. Sook-ae tells her opinion about Koreans compared with the Japanese. She begins by saying that Korea measures well against many other Asian countries, especially those of Southeast Asia:

*[Korea] itself is very good compared to those other countries, but our people's characteristics, our personality can't hold a candle to Japanese because we are not that "keep in line" and we have a very... hot temper. When compared to whole Japanese people and whole Korean people, I think the Japanese are more polite and they really put high value on standing in lines, we are not...we cut in line and we are not that civilized.*

While it may seem striking that a major criterion for being considered a civilized country is its people's ability to wait for a bus in an orderly manner, but this came up many times among my interviewees. It is also significant that Sook-ae mentions "*hot temper*," because that characteristic also came up repeatedly. The sense of shame has moved on to a sense of inferiority especially concerning the more sophisticated Japanese.

It is important to note that the non-Korean world, for many of my respondents, is not a solid block. Some countries have quite different positions than others. Usually when discussing these matters, a distinct hierarchy emerged with regions or country names being mentioned. Kyoung-tae spoke straightforwardly about which countries had higher levels of thought:

*I think our people's thought is not the level of western people. It's not like German or English people...the level of our people... We are not so accustomed to being polite and to care about another person. That's the level of our people's thought.*

Again, less sophistication than specific other countries emerges as a common perception Koreans have of themselves. Kyoung-tae points out the Germans and the

English as examples of higher-level countries in the world hierarchy so deeply fixed in many respondents.

Mrs. Song echoed Kyoung-tae's remarks when discussing her observations from a recent trip, *"Italy is above us... because they have many art, many paintings, many buildings... in Europe most countries are above our country and when I traveled the Asian countries, I think they are below us."* Again what is very significant here is not only the general hierarchical opinions, but they were stated as such a matter of fact. This concept of fixed position seems very akin to the Confucian thought patterns. Again this reinforces the idea that unique context brings about unique behavior and these excerpts bring to life how Koreans view the world and how they act on their beliefs.

The interviewees did not just talk about their own views of Koreans and key comparisons, they spoke of contact situations where such things were discussed. Jin-eun traveled for some time with a group of Americans and she remained very aware of how they may be viewing her and her country:

*I don't think, they would say, 'Oh Korea, it's a good country,' something like that... but I traveled with them, those people from the states. They were talking about China in olden times and they were talking about the Chinese who came to the States to work labor. At that time I was thinking [how they considered me] And they would always remember the times that we were very poor like the 1960s, 1950s. They remember only those times.*

Jin-eun's final remark speaks to how their past haunts many Koreans when they enter a contact situation where people from other countries are present. If we look at her words while remembering how many interviewees spoke of how Korea of today was not well-known a deeper understanding emerges of how they may feel whenever the Korean world collides with the non-Korean world. That is to say that they may feel fear that because most of the world knows very little of present-day Korea, people may only recall the past poverty of Korea, never knowing the great economic progress that has been made. The unique history of Korea will follow every Korean to every non-Korean language communication event. Here the sense of inferiority to other countries stems from the stigma of past poverty. The above extract shows how Jin-eun compares Korea with China but in a manner that still



results in feelings of inferiority because the Americans she spoke with may associate Korea with past Asian poverty. The next section highlights more of the perceptions others may have of Korea, or more specifically, the lack of perceptions.

### *Pride and the Need to be Known*

Feelings of shame and inferiority are often coupled with frustrations over Korea not being very well-known in the world. Gyun-eun feels that there is great ignorance about Korea in the world. She stated very emphatically about her trip to Canada, that *"The people I met, in Montreal and Quebec, really had a little idea of Korea. They don't even distinguish South Korea and North Korea!"* Many Koreans who have traveled abroad tell this exact same story and because they know how radically different the two Koreas are, they take this as rather a large insult and they feel shame that the South has not made itself more widely known.

As fixed as some of these feelings of shame and inferiority seem to be, it is essential to understanding how IC works in the Korean context, to know that there seems to be a possibility of a type of upward mobility for Korea. Major events that bring Korea to the world stage seem to be seen as opportunities for Korea to improve its world image, and pride becomes an important factor in IC.

Sara credits the 1988 Seoul Olympics for much of Korea's world renown. The point to notice here is that Sara brought these feelings to the contact situations she had while traveling abroad and she links this to the possible effect of the (at the time of this interview) upcoming 2002 World Cup:

*[Due to] the Olympics... people said that Korea is known for foreigners... when I went to Australia, the people, they knew about the Olympics... [Still,] even now if you go abroad and we say, I'm from Korea, some people don't know where Korea is or what [is] Korea. So, they will know maybe.*

Important to note here that although Sara sees the Olympics as a factor that helped Korea gain some world recognition, she feels people around the world still do not know any specifics about the country. Her last statement, "they will know maybe" refers to her hope that after the World Cup more people will know more about Korea, but the "maybe," shows her uncertainty.

A fortuitous aspect of this qualitative study is that I was able to hold several interviews before the World Cup games and then several more afterward. Korea performed unexpectedly well and these interviews document some examples of both pride and reappraisal. We will return to this later in the chapter, however the remarks of Jin-eun below show her earlier negative feelings toward her own country in contrast to her feelings after the World Cup:

*[I am now] proud of being Korean [after WORLD CUP]... [However] I had some very bad experience when I was in Canada. I traveled in the east side of Canada. People asked me where are you from. I answered I was from the west side of Canada because I didn't say I'm from Korea.... At that time the people who I was traveling with are from the states and Norway, other different countries except Asia. I felt that they think Asian people are kind of lower... Inferior. I just felt like that, so I still feel shame about what I did.. After the World Cup... I think other people in the world they can recognize Korea better than before. Now I can say I'm from Korea if I travel again. ... It was a bad mistake because I denied my identity. I think Korean people must not do that such a foolish thing.*

This lengthy excerpt touches on many of the intricacies of IC because we can see how Jin-eun, while traveling in Canada with non-Asians, felt inferior to those westerners and did not want to be identified as Asian. When asked exactly how she thought she could fool people, she explained that in an attempt to distance herself as much as possible from being labeled Korean she told people that she had immigrated to Canada,. Jin-eun then credits the World Cup with making her realize that denying her identity was a foolish mistake. It is significant to note that she feels the World Cup brought Korea to the attention of the world, and by thus being better known, a new sense of pride and perhaps responsibility has emerged, marking a change from feeling compelled to deny her identity.

This marks a key switch in attitude Jin-eun had toward her country and herself, and that can be seen as a key switch in her IC, offering a clear example of how IC develops and can be modified. It is worth reiterating that what Jin-eun's story points out is not that the World Cup changed Korea per se, nor does she think the games actually changed non-Korean people's attitudes toward Korea. Instead Jin-eun

feels that the World Cup filled a void in the minds of the rest of the world, moving Korea from the unknown to the known. From this perspective it is quite possible that Korean individuals may have great pride in their country but still feel shame for being so little known in the world.

The interviewees did not have uniform reactions to the World Cup. Kyoung-tae, who has traveled to many countries and had a wide variety of international experiences was very disinterested in the World Cup and most other Korean things. While discussing the recent success of Korea during the games, she asked me a question: “*Have you ever worn the red shirt?*” Red is the signature color for Team Korea and most fans wear red shirts when showing their support for the national team. I told her I had worn the red shirts because I was proud of Korea’s performance. She laughed at my answer and said:

*Sorry. Proud. But I have never been proud of my people. Never. I asked her why not, We have had special people who have some talent. Like famous cellist or pianist. As anywhere, some famous people in Korea. They can play and they are proud. But I don’t think they are also proud of Korean people. ... I’m still looking for my identity. On that point I never thought I am a Korean. Just nationality is Korean, and I am also an Asian... but I never had an identity of myself that I am Korean.*

The key point here is that Kyoung-tae’s lack of pride in Korea has done things quite similar to what pride did for other interviewees. Kyoung-tae speaks English very well and seeks out opportunities to use her language talent. Her IC spurs her to use English despite her lack of Korean pride just as forcefully as pride spurs others to use their L2 skills. This can perhaps be better understood through the following exploration of the complex dimensions of the Korean concept of *han*.

### 6.3.2 Major Underlying Theme: *Han*

Intercultural Complex is a complex force in that so many factors, from so many angles, may go into its construction. Yet IC remains very distinct and useful for uncovering the uniqueness of groups of people and individuals. The excerpts above paint a rather negative picture Koreans have of themselves, whether due to

negative points they see in themselves or the fact that Korea's positive points remain unknown to the outside world. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the Korean term *han* refers to a key aspect of Korean national identity. In this section, in their own words, some interviewees express their views about *han*.

Mrs. Song is an English teacher in her fifties and she thinks that *han* is a thing of the past:

*Han was the remains of the past age. It was the remains of the Chosun dynasty<sup>22</sup>. But the people who are living nowadays, including me, don't have han, the sadness in my mind.*

Although Mrs. Song may feel that *han* is a relic of the past, clearly many Koreans still identify themselves and Korea with the words of sadness and regret. Mrs. Song herself situated Korea below most European countries, and also made statements of worry that people she met while traveling may hate her because she is Korean.

Prof Yun, who taught in the German department of his university, spent over twenty years in the United States. Earlier in this chapter I characterized IC as "baggage," and here Prof. Yun refers to *han* as something Koreans always "carry" with them:

*Koreans think we have our peculiar national sentiment which can be compressed into the so-called han as a kind of regret, a deep regret, a deep hurt feeling that we carry with us... the Korean nation has been subject to foreign invasion and interference many times... we are keenly aware of the presence of the Japanese as aggressors in the past and Korea is now divided into two countries and we ascribe this to the international intervention by foreign powers.*

Prof Yun's words are not at all uncommonly heard. Regret over their history and strong feelings against the Japanese are emotions that many Koreans speak of. It is important to understand that like Prof Yun, many Koreans speak of "regret" about

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<sup>22</sup> From 1392-1910, sometimes called Korea's golden age of Confucianism.

the past as an essential part of being Korean. It goes to follow that this will have some influence on Koreans' attitude toward other countries as well.

Prof Yun goes on to pinpoint the historical contributions of several countries to Koreans' feelings about the collision of the Korean and non-Korean worlds. The "grudge" he mentions Koreans often feel hits at the heart of *han* and IC; and their link with survival:

*Partly the Japanese are responsible for this division because it was under their control and when the vacuum was created it was a vacuum left behind by the Japanese... We had such a feelings if the Japanese had joy in seeing Korea being torn apart in ideology, in power struggles, even under dictatorship, like watching the house of a neighbor being burned and felling some kind of joy over it. We suspect Japanese... of harboring such kind of subtle hostility towards Koreans.*

For Prof Yun, the Japanese are not the only culprits for Korean people. Other countries have also collided with Korean to cause *han*:

*And we harbor this grudge against the Americans and Russians. So the Korean nation has been afflicted like the Jews. The Jews of the Orient. We were the people who didn't invade another country, and toward the Japanese, the Koreans were always benevolent... We carry a sense of persecution.*

This extract suggests that Koreans hold a "grudge" against the years of "persecution" and a distinct fear of being "torn apart" by more powerful nations. *Han* emerges not only as a result of these fears but because it is such a common feeling among Koreans, *han* acts as a glue that protects Koreans from being torn apart.

The extracts in this section are representative of what many respondents in this study have expressed and what, in my experience, many Koreans often express. The term *han* often comes up in Koreans' characterizations of the selves, particularly in relation to the collision of the Korean and non-Korean worlds. Words such as "regret," "grudge," and "persecution" all point to negative feelings toward collision. However those results can translate into either a strong willingness or a

strong hesitancy toward contacting the non-Korean world. In fact, I suggest that the power and ubiquity of *han* among Koreans serve to create a forceful ambivalence toward the non-Korean world through which individuals may feel both strong rejection and attraction. In this way, Korean IC can be seen as a powerful force, directed toward the collision of the Korean and non-Korean worlds, which is the antithesis of indifference.

The remainder of this chapter will look more closely at the role English plays in this ambivalence rooted in *han*. Given the unique and often strict social rules of Korean society, it will be interesting to investigate what Koreans are attracted to from the non-Korean world. The next section uses interview excerpts to illustrate some of the nature of that attraction.

## 6.4 The Lure of English and the Non-Korean World

The non-Korean world inundates the Korean world, with non-Korean ideas, systems and products. The respondents in this study expressed their opinions about what drew them toward what they themselves considered the non-Korean world. The following excerpts in this section do not paint a picture of consensus but rather continue in the vein of showing a complexity of perspectives that reflect the collision of worlds.

### 6.4.1 Different Desires

Often because of discontent that can be related to what was discussed in terms of *han*, many respondents expressed an attraction to the non-Korean world. Repeatedly they expressed desire for something “different,” that stemmed from varying degrees of contentment with the Korean world. Kyoung-tae, a woman in her thirties, represented the most extreme negative views of the Korean world. She felt she had failed to adapt to the Korean world:

*If I am a member of a society I have to be the member of the society... [and] have a good relationship with [other] members. But I don't have, and also I'm not so adjusted to the environment. ... That's why I'm always looking for new things, new environment, new people. That's why I'm just a failure. Just a fool.*

When asked who considers her a failure and a fool, she answered in a manner that speaks to the complexity of perspectives involved in IC and the collision of worlds:

*My family and friends. I'm a failure, absolutely. But, I myself, am satisfied about me. (Laughs) You know, for me, for myself, my opinion is quite good and important. But... you are another person, so I have to tell you the other person's thought and view... you have to see me in another person's view, right? ...in Korea, it's much more important to care about other people's view.*

In ways remindful of Wen and Clement's (2003) *other-directed self*, Kyoung-tae explains that she is a failure because that is what other people think because she does not accept the ways of Korean society. However, in an interesting twist she does play by the rules of Korean society when she calls herself a fool for failing to play by the rules of society.

Kyoung-tae states that the "Korean way" is not the only way or the best way, but it seems to her to be somewhat inevitable. She suggests that she is compelled to evaluate herself based on this way but she actually does not accept it in her heart. She states that she is "*satisfied about me*" even though others consider her a failure. Faced with other people, including a non-Korean interviewer, she will give the answers that other people would give.

Although Kyoung-tae was quite unique in her bluntness and willingness to denounce her Korean identity, she brings up an issue that is rather common and pertinent to this discussion: how can Korean learners of English balance both acceptance and rejection of their own society? Kyoung-tae seems unafraid to be considered a failure and she also consciously links this un-Koreanness with her desire for "new things." She also has much more travel experience, foreign friendship, and WTC than the average Korean learner. Interestingly, she seems to have had a unique assessment of Korea before she had most of these contact experiences. This suggests that while there maybe a close link between contact experience and ingroup reappraisal, there is not necessarily a causal, sequential link. The reappraisal may come first.

Despite the diversity of opinions, many respondents repeated ideas of being drawn toward things that would either raise Korea to a higher place in the world or raise themselves as individuals to a place that allowed for more freedom and diversity than they had previously known. Mrs. Ang commented on how the prospect of making English the second national language of Korea was not at all a bad idea:

*I think it is very reasonable because America is one of the strongest countries... one of the most advanced countries... so to catch up... it's quite natural for us to master the language.*

It is significant to note that she easily equates English with America and deduces that acquiring the language could help in gaining the power. This desire for difference is a desire for more power through the association with the non-Korean world on a national policy level.

However, most of the respondents first spoke of personal experiences when they spoke of what drew them to the non-Korean world. Whether it was a kind person, religious fervor, wanderlust, or defiance against the Korean world, all my respondents had stories of wanting to build a bridge between worlds, some bridges were meant for two-way traffic, others were meant to be burned immediately after crossing.

The key concept in this desire for difference is that even from an early age, Koreans become acutely and almost constantly aware of the Korean and non-Korean worlds. So the collision of these worlds will always leave an indelible and unique mark on every Korean which they will always carry with them and rests at the center of IC. Extracts concerning childhood show how their perspectives develop.

This next excerpt comes from Sally who remembered that when she was very young she thought there was only Korea. Slowly she learned that there were many places where people lived differently than everything she was used to. During the interview her eyes lit up like a child's:

*I always believed there only Korean [things] when I was a kid. But there is different country, different people who celebrate different holidays, eat different food. How can't it be interesting?*



To a child the prospect of more and different holidays and food was terribly exciting as Sally remembered.

Sally expressed a desire to see the world that began at a very early age and in a place that was very important in her life. Church was very important in Sally's family life and as a young girl she was regularly exposed to pictures of Jesus who, she was told, was of great importance but who had features unlike anybody she had contact with. She spoke of this being the beginning of her strong curiosity about contact with the non-Korean world. A later section will explore the role religion may play in IC.

In the excerpts above Sally repeats the word "*different*" again and again. In such a homogeneous society as Korea, it is not surprising that curiosity will develop over "different" things and Sally's repetition of the word signals how attractive difference was to her. As an adolescent looking at magazines, Sally's curiosity grew and she realized that English would be her necessary ticket outside of Korea, into the West, "to see it real."

### *Desire for Travel*

Throughout her interview Sally continued to speak of her desire to see more of the different world and how that desire became mingled with a desire to learn English. The following quote from her brings in yet another element in the travel issue for Koreans. As will be discussed in the next chapter the 1988 Seoul Olympics marked a turning point in Korea's recent history. Before that time the Korean government kept very strict rules about who was able to leave the country. Sally spoke of that time:

*I always wanted to go abroad, to travel, but I didn't have a chance. I was a [university] student, and until 1988 in Korea, only special people could travel, could go abroad. You need[ed] special reason to go abroad. And I graduated school in '89, so just one year after 88...we have different situation.*

She did go abroad, to Japan, but her dream was not everything that she had hoped for since childhood:

*It was not comfortable. I could not communicate with other people... I didn't speak English, so it was not fun. I think since then I decided I really wanted to learn speaking English.*

Sally had just graduated from university in pharmacy and she had spent years reading English textbooks and had done well on the entrance exams, which highlight English, to enter a competitive major. Still, her knowledge of English did not translate into her being able to communicate in the language. Her desire to step out of Korea was finally realized but her English ability failed her. This experience however marked the beginning of her efforts to learn how to communicate in English. Sally's stories are common among the other respondents in this study and the desire to travel is common among Koreans in general.

Kyoung-tae, like many of the other respondents, spoke of her desire to get out of Korea and see the world: *"I like travel... I want to go out and see something different... and different people... so I went to Israel as a kibbutz volunteer."* The use of the word *"different"* was very common among the respondents. They commonly expressed a desire to simply touch the non-Korean world.

When the topic of travel has ever come up in a class of mine, I cannot recall a student showing no interest in visiting the world outside Korea. Difference from the Korean world is often mentioned as a great source of curiosity. The next section explores another often heard subject and one with links to CH, the interest in meeting friends from the non-Korean world.

### *Desire for Friendship Potential*

As discussed in Chapter 4, the CH sees friendship potential as one of the most important conditions for lowering prejudice and the interview data in this study suggests that friendship may also encourage WTC.

Interest in contact with non-Koreans often began in interviewees' early years. Mrs. Ang, now in her sixties, spoke of childhood meetings that made a lasting impression on her:

*In our village, I saw some American soldiers, and they tried to give out some things to eat such as sugar, sometimes coffee, and chewing gum. So to my*

*eyes, they were good because they tried to give us something nice. They looked very different in appearance, so I was very curious. Most of them were handsome, so I felt something nice about them.*

For Mrs. Ang these memories stayed with her for decades and her use of the words “different/curious” follow what others have stated about the non-Korean world.

Dan, who chased foreigners around an international expo as a high school boy, explained that now he sees English a tool which is often hard to handle but when he was younger he saw it as new magic:

*I just only focused on the possibility of communicating, using my poor English with foreigners. I was amazed [by that] effect. English can make me enter into a new world and make me communicate with new foreign people.*

And in answer to the question why foreign people are so attractive to him, he replied:

*It's like I'm living in Korea... and I'm kind of a curious person as you might see. I want to go different. It can be bigger or smaller. I want to go out. I want to leave from society of Korea. It does not mean I do not like here. I want to, I love to challenge myself into new things.*

For Dan, communicating with foreign people was that challenge. Again, the words “new” and “different” filled his answers. He also mentions that despite his desire to leave Korean society, it does not mean that he rejects Korean society. This feeling is quite complex because the strong desire to leave things Korean is simply the desire to be rid of things Korean. Dan's response seems to hint that he wants new things *in addition to* Korean things, not *instead of* [italics mine] Korean things. In essence, he becomes the contact point between the two worlds and he feels very desirous of interacting with non-Koreans, not just passively observing the non-Korean world. The next section explores religion as a draw toward something new.

As a final statement about international *friendship potential*, Sally commented on what she had to do in order to make that potential a reality. She noted

that, “*Meeting Korean people, it’s so easy.*” She went on to explain that all she had to do was ask a few basic questions such as age and education and then she had a pretty good idea about the person. “*That tells everything. There are not many exceptions.*” But with foreigners she feels that she has to ask many, many questions on a great variety of topics:

*I have to ask all. And it takes longer time, but it is more interesting. And I have to think what I should ask and what I should not. So, it’s like participation in a class. I have to concentrate on what other people will do. Meeting Korean people is like a classroom in middle school or high school. I have to [just] sit down and listen to what they say. I don’t have to think.*

She adds, “*When I speak English, I feel more free. I think I have some different ideas from Koreans and I can talk about those things [with non-Koreans]. I feel more freedom to [speak], to tell my ideas.*” So, for Sally, making international friends is both more difficult and more interesting than making Korean friends because she has to take care to notice cultural differences and sensitivities. She also compared meeting Korean people to lecture style classes where no active thinking or lively interaction is required. Finally she states that she feels more freedom to speak her mind with international people. She feels that she has ideas that are different from what many Koreans think, and she feels some discomfort with the prospect of voicing her opinion around other Koreans. International friendship, therefore, seems to have yet another draw. It is not simply new and different, it is not just interesting, it also offers greater freedom of expression. Interestingly, a person’s second language, in this case, can allow them more opportunity to communicate their ideas than their first language.

### *Desire to Spread Religion*

Several of the interviewees in this study discussed religion as a very important part of their lives. Christianity is very popular in Korea but is not considered a “Korean religion” because its origins are from the non-Korean world. Korean Christian church can then be seen as contact points for these two worlds. Many churches hold English services and encourage their members to learn English

in order to do missionary work. Also many schools, including university 1 in this study were founded by non-Korean missionaries. The extracts in this section show how religion has affected some of the participants in their desire to touch the non-Korean world.

The interviewee, Sally, was quoted above as being drawn toward Jesus because he wasn't Korean. She went on to explain how her early church experiences heightened her excitement and drove her toward learning English:

*Jesus is different. He's not Korean. I wanted to see those people who look different and different culture, church, and you know... I got motivated about learning English, that affected me [as a child] and in high school I started to read foreign magazines and I could look at a lot of pictures all about western culture, I was interested to see it real.*

Mrs. Ang tells also of another memorable meeting from her youth, which was connected to religion:

*I started to talk in English because we have some missionaries [at my high school]. Christianity. We had some lady missionaries. We could have some opportunity to speak with them. I only remember one lady who was very old. In our eyes, she was a grandmother. Very much religious. And she had good belief, faith in God. And I respected her very much.*

Today Mrs. Ang is both an English teacher and a very active member of her church. She helps run an English service every Sunday where both Koreans and non-Koreans come together. This shows the contact of the two worlds resulting in WTC.

Mrs. Ang links English with other things she finds valuable in her life. This linking is done at some level by all the respondents but the key point to notice here is that they find high value in the non-Korean world. The next section will focus more on the role of English in these relationships with the non-Korean world.

*careers. So people were eager to learn English. During the outbreak of the Korean War, this interest became intensified.*

This comment expands the timeline on the importance of English. In fact, Prof. Yun also told stories of his mother learning English from missionaries in school during Japanese occupation in the 1920s. Clearly, the importance of English in Korea has a long history and it is deeply entrenched in the culture.

Present day Korea, of course, focuses great attention on English. Sally describes what she thinks is Koreans' general view toward learning English:

*Probably all Koreans want to learn English and also want to be expert to speak English well. It's very enthusiastic. People believe when you speak English you can get a good job. Nowadays the economy is really bad and [finding a job] is really bad, so people think you have to have some specialty to get a job. So English is the first thing to do.*

Sally's use of the words "Bad" and "Good," along with the primacy she ascribes to English is suggestive of an ambivalence many Koreans seem to have toward English. The "goodness" of English directly relates to the "badness" of the economy.

Korean learners of English often exhibit ambivalent attitudes toward both English and Korea. That is to say they often feel both positively and negatively toward their second language and their home country. These complex attitudes are also linked to each other in that a Korean learner's relationship with English will influence her relationship with Korea, and vice versa. English resides at the contact point of the Korean and non-Korean worlds and at the complex relationship Koreans have with both.

Sally states that everyone sees English as vital to getting a job but again it is not because of English per se. English becomes a way for employers to distinguish certain prospective employees from the rest. As if to emphasize this point, Sally also added, "My job has no relationship with English. I don't use English at work at all." Her statement, however, is not entirely true. Sally is a pharmacist and all the medicines where she works are labeled in English. What Sally seems to mean is that she does not speak English at work. She does not use it "at all" for communication. I take her statement as an indication of further ambivalence toward English. That is to

say, while it is used as an evaluative tool in employment, and it *is* actually used for part of her work, it is not important for communication. Sally also mentions that English is important “*nowadays*,” because in light of the recent Asian economic crisis, jobs are hard to find and English helps people to be special to employers.

Returning to Sally’s childhood relationship with English, it becomes evident that the language has played a long and influential role in her life. She tells of learning that another girl in her church could speak another language. This experience with English caused Sally to feel jealous and isolated in the world. The comment attests to how a relationship with a second language is very much intertwined with the relationship with one’s own community:

*I heard a girl in church and she was older than me... and we were doing some Christmas things. We were just practicing and she sang Jingle Bells in English... But it was a big shock, big memory. I think at that moment I realized somebody could speak English among Koreans and actually around my age...I was very jealous... I knew this was a very popular carol and except me all people in the world know this song.*

Sally’s story is of a young girl’s desire to learn something new, but more than English being central to her story, it is her revelation about other Koreans. The shock comes from the fact that some Koreans who are like her, can do something that she cannot. The fact that the girl in church is close to her age emphasizes their similarity but Sally herself remains different. Compounding this isolation, Sally as a young girl realizes that this carol is popular around the world and because she does not know English, she is left out of this common knowledge.

Sally goes on to tell of her efforts to be included in this group of people who know Jingle Bells. She says:

*I tried to remember this song and I tried to figure out what this song is... but you know, those days I could not get the tape, I could not get the lyrics. So for a long time it was a question in my mind.*

Sally told this story with the passion of a little girl who wanted to have what the others had. This story is an example of how although English may be an object of

desire for Korean learners, there is always the deeper issue of the relationship the learner has with their own community. In fact, even though Sally speaks of the popularity of the carol around the world, this little girl is more concerned with how she compares with another little girl who is a part of her immediate experience.

Sally desired English so she would not be left behind other children. Such childhood experiences with English are tied to the learners' relationship with other Koreans, as well as the non-Korean world. The previous stories show how the respondents have found a variety of benefits in learning English. The following section highlights how the relationship with English, as the contact point between two worlds, also hold a variety of conflicts.

### *Conflicts with English*

Despite the benefits that English may bring to Korean people, conflict certainly arises in the relationship, and the extracts below show some of the conflicted feelings of the interviewees in this study. Dan once described English as a “*magic*” that allowed him to enter another world, but his attitude toward the language fluctuated. As he continued to study English and have attraction toward the non-Korean world, he also had worries over the influence of the language:

*Using English, I think it's okay, but what I am seriously worrying about is, I'm afraid people might forget what we have... or the pride as a Korean...I'm afraid the coexistence of two things can make a lot of conflict, a lot of stress... as time goes by I'm afraid the Korean language could be like the American Indians' [languages]. Just some tribes use Korean language... [Today] if you buy a Korean car [in Korea] everything on the car is written in English. You don't see Hangul. Where it says “Hyundai” it's not written in Hangul.*

This excerpt highlights Dan's worries about the use of English in Korea. He feels that the use of English can reach a point where it threatens Korean identity and pride. He speaks directly to the issue of ambivalence when he explains that “*coexistence*” can lead to “*conflict*.” He likens Korea's situation to that of the Native American Indians' disenfranchisement. Dan uses the words “*just some*



*tribes*” which emphasizes his deep fear for his own country’s fate due to its collision with the outside world.

His next example from Hyundai is equally sharp because the automotive industry and the steel industry that supports it are pillars of the Korean economy and national identity. Dan points out that he is not speaking of cars that are exported to countries that could not read the Korean language. Instead he is talking about Korean made cars that are bought in Korea, by Koreans, but the Korean car owners can read only English on their car. As mentioned in chapter 2 on Korea, the country’s economic growth over the past fifty years is a great source of pride, but Dan notes how one of its most powerful companies writes its name only in English.

Dan’s comments show how his attitudes toward English are profoundly mixed. On the one hand English is a magic bridge that can allow his country to prosper, but on the other hand English threatens to reduce Korea to weakness. The juxtaposition of his examples of *“tribes”* and a conglomerate company like Hyundai accentuates his ambivalence. English, at the center of Korean IC causes conflict for many.

Several other interviewees described how English often caused conflict in their lives. Jung-min is a 15-year-old high school student who studies English in school and in two private academies after school hours. She was very hesitant to have her interview but she finally agreed at the request of a teacher. As she continued to talk her tone became more and more nationalistic. *“I don’t like [the] Japanese,”* she stated while talking about pop music. *“Because I am a good Korean.”* Jung-min was echoing sentiments very often heard from Koreans of various ages. She linked being *“a good Korean”* with dislike of another nation’s people as she discussed the influx of popular culture from other countries into Korea. at the interview she wore a t-shirt with English words on it and commented:

*That’s not good situation. Korean is breaking now... that’s a big problem. I am Korean and I think Korean is the best language. But everywhere there are English or French, and not Korean. There is no Korean. There are no Korean t-shirts.*

In many of Jung-min’s other comments she showed no hostility toward other countries and she often seemed to have a warm interest in other cultures. The above

comments suggest an attitude that English has eclipsed Korean within Korea and this creates some conflict for her. Her comments show a fear or at least wariness toward some “Korean-ness” being lost due to Korea’s collision with English.

The stories in this section show how many of the respondents have some conflicts associated with English. Some interviewees state that English itself is problematic for them while others feel English plays a role in a situation of major conflict. This section, then, shows how the respondents’ relationship with English is more complex than just one of desire. Chapter 8 will explore the idea that these mixed feelings may in fact help maintain an interest in the language.

### *English and School*

Chapter 2 detailed the mania associated with the university entrance exam in Korea and how English is an important part of that exam. This section presents interview extracts that show important school in general and studying English in particular was important to the respondents while growing up. The first quote in this section comes from the answer to the question, “*When did you first decide that you wanted to speak English well?*” The answers all bring up issues that concern English and school. Dan spoke of how his father spoke several languages and performing well in school was very important in his family. English speech contests were common during Dan’s school years and they were an excellent way for him to exhibit his talent. This excerpt highlights the important role English plays in Korean school life:

*I saw many good English speakers who were [my] age and I knew some of them [had] lived in the States or other foreign countries. [This] made me feel there were many students who can speak English very well... but I got number one [in the speech contest] including all my middle school.*

Dan was proud to outrank his classmates in the English contest, especially the ones who had spent time abroad. He also added that his nickname in high school was “*Study Machine*,” and his ability in English set him apart from others. Also, his mentioning of how others learned their English abroad but he had not added more to his victory. It was as if he was beating his rival classmates and the other countries.

School became an arena and English was Dan's weapon to battle both other Koreans and foreign countries. As mentioned above the relationship with English often relates to the relationship with Korea. Similar stories were repeated often by other respondents, all emphasizing pressure to do well in English but rarely with any focus on communication. The next section will focus on meeting non-Koreans and communicating with them.

#### 6.4.3 Meeting Non-Koreans in Korea

There is not a large population of non-Koreans that live or even visit Korea and many Korean learners of English lament the very few chances they have to speak with native speakers. Still, between the American military presence and a steadily growing population of native English teachers and business travelers, many Koreans, especially those who often exhibit high WTC, have had opportunities to meet non-Koreans within Korea. These contact experiences are often very profound in shaping opinions of both the Korean and the non-Korean worlds. The extracts in this section are stories of fear, attraction, rejection, and success when the respondents came into contact with non-Koreans in the Korean world.

Sara sums up the very commonly stated belief that most Koreans have about Koreans meeting non-Koreans, *"Korean people are afraid of foreigners because they don't speak English. Only for that reason they are avoiding if they see foreigners."* While this dissertation argues that the issue is more complex than that, I do feel that many if not most Koreans hold a belief similar to Sara's and perhaps for that reason they do not explore Korean-world factors as major influences on their WTC.

Sook-ae tells of her volunteer work during the 2002 World Cup games and her reluctance to approach groups of non-Koreans despite her desire to and her confidence in her language ability:

*I just couldn't because they were in groups with each other from the same country. And I'm only one volunteer. Just approaching them as an individual. It is very difficult for me to start a conversation. They were in groups they were having really fun with each other.*

For Sook-ae, her reluctance stemmed from the fact that she did not want to interrupt the *"fun with each other"* the group was having. The point to notice is that

language was not mentioned as an issue in this situation. Instead, Sook-ae feared that she would be an intrusion.

For many respondents English is often considered the bridge that is necessary in order to make contact with people from the non-Korean world. Sook-ae brings up an issue that is very important for many people her age, attraction to the opposite sex:

*I don't like Korean guys that much either. I'm attracted to the foreign guys... I generally, I don't feel anything toward Korean guys. They just look like people that lives around me, that's all. I can't feel anything toward them. But I like my foreign friend who is Canadian and actually he was the only one that I liked. So I don't know the reason why. Maybe somebody should cure me.*

Sook-ae says several things of interest here because she not only voices her attraction to non-Korean guys, but despite saying that she does not know the reason why, she sheds some light onto the issue when she states, *"they just look like people who live around me."* To Sook-ae, the people she encounters every day do not provide the attraction that foreigners do for her. Still, it is also telling that she suggests that she needs somebody to *"cure"* her, implying that she feels her lack of emotion toward Korean men is somehow wrong. Her desire to meet non-Koreans is not just focused on language but also attraction and this attraction to non-Korean men seems closely linked to a rejection of Korean men.

However this is not to say that language is not an issue at all in attraction to non-Koreans. Gyun-eun said that the VIPs she worked with during the World Cup often commented on her English. *"They said my English is good, but I [wasn't] satisfied."* Perhaps this is also an issue of the value of humility in Korean society, but it was rare for any of the respondents to comment positively on their English ability. Most repeated comments similar to Gyun-eun's above.

The respondents in this study, *odds-beaters*, exhibited a greater willingness to approach non-Koreans than is usually seen. Several of them offer explanations of how they did this. Sook-ae, just before she volunteered for the World Cup, gave herself advice that she felt was necessary for her to communicate well with non-Korean visitors:

*I will smile a lot... and I have to talk to them first, you know. I have to approach them and I have to talk to them first... So, at the most important thing that I have to have is an active attitude. I don't have to be shy or I don't have to be feel hesitant. I just have to go active.*

Sook-ae repetition of the words “*first*” and “*active*” stress the importance she feels this kind proactive behavior has in order to achieve high WTC with these visitors. She also repeats “have to” several times and she said these words with great emphasis, often pointing out that passivity is the huge hurdle that Koreans in general must work very hard to overcome.

Gyun-eun adds to this by explaining how she has been able to make friends with non-Koreans. It is significant to notice that she implies through her words that many Koreans tend to think of non-Koreans as so different that they act differently around them:

*Even if he is different, a foreigner. It is same I think. We are same and have [similar] emotions, but different culture. I talk very naturally to him or her. Like with my mother or with my friends. It is the same. So they feel very comfortable with me, like a friend.*

Even with her limited English, Gyun-eun does a rather eloquent job of summing up much of the CH and the changes that Koreans must go through in their mindset in order to improve *friendship potential* and increase WTC. Her repeated use of the words “different” and “same” she makes a claim for what needs to be done. Despite differences Koreans need to uncover the sameness among people and cultures. Gyun-eun’s words touch an important issue that the above quotes have outlined. Koreans see non-Koreans as different and although this may be seen as positive, in that contact with different people may allow them to make some desired changes in their lives, those differences may also cause some fear and hesitation. In order to overcome this, a certain sameness needs to be uncovered within the difference. Through experience Gyun-eun learned that she must approach and speak with non-Koreans as she would her Korean family and friends.

Dan, as a high school boy at the culture expo was actually not interested in *communication* per se because he did not understand what was being spoken back to

him after he asked his questions. He used memorized expressions that he knew would get some response, and he was not concerned that he did not understand that response. He was motivated toward simply interacting with the foreigners. He recalled that he enjoyed that simple interaction so much that he likened it to magic. Important here is the unusual lack of fear Dan had about being different from his friends.

However, Dan sometimes exhibited a negative attitude toward both English and non-Koreans. As stated above, Dan spent his military service time working with the US Air Force in Korea. He spent his days working side by side with American service men and women. Although he was chosen for this duty because of his English ability, he often felt inadequate in terms of English. The story he recounts below is from a time that he went to eat pizza with some Americans while off-duty. He spoke with bitterness over this event for a variety of reasons:

*They were talking about sex with Korean girls and [how] many Korean girls are so crazy for learning English that even most of them even try to have sex with American soldiers to learn English, to improve their English skill... and I couldn't eat, the pizza was choked in my throat. I was so ashamed...how could women do that just to learn English?*

Dan quickly added that maybe the men were just saying that to show off in front of a Korean man. He also said that he had heard of Korean women doing this. Dan's story exemplifies the complexity of the complex and often conflict filled collision of the Korean and non-Korean worlds. English often plays a central role when Koreans and non-Koreans meet in Korea, but not just as a tool for communication. Dan's story shows how English can also be viewed as a symbol of the inequalities between worlds. Dan's shame centered around English and the interaction among non-Koreans and Koreans within Korea. This is the heart of IC. The next section will explore stories of the collision of worlds outside of Korea.

#### 6.4.4 Travel Abroad

As is evident from the descriptive statistics from the quantitative data, the majority of Koreans have never traveled abroad. However, it is not surprising that most of this study's interviewees, who were chosen based in part on their unique

communication practices, have traveled outside of Korea. In fact all but two of the *World Cup 9*, coincidentally the youngest and the oldest from the World Cup interviews, had been abroad when they were selected. Soon after her first interview Sook-ae took her first trip outside of Korea. Only Mrs. Ang remains as never having left the country.

The impressions that the interviewees brought home with them shaped many of the attitudes they have toward the Korean and non-Korean worlds. Gyun-eun actually had her first “abroad” experience while still in Korea. The American military bases in Korea are really transplanted pieces of America, complete with American-style houses, shops, government offices, etc. In recent years, tightened security has made it more difficult for non-military personnel to get on base, and very few Koreans have had that chance. Still, some do and Gyun-eun went to one while in college to take an English class:

*I was a freshman. I went to go study English [on base]... I thought it's like [being] abroad. I was abroad in America or somewhere outside Korea. In the camp area [people] were wearing uniforms. Compared with our army they were very free, looked free. And so many foreigners. Anyway, the atmosphere was different.*

Although unable to articulate it further, Gyun-eun repeatedly remarked that the U.S. soldiers acted “*very free*” in comparison to Koreans in the military. She noted that the American military is all-volunteer, while Korean men have mandatory service, but she felt that the entire “*atmosphere*” on base seemed freer. There was a sadness in her voice when she talked about this. Sook-ae had a similar sad tone when she spoke of her first impression of another country after her trip to America. “*Comfortable, no traffic, clean, quiet.*” In addition to that sad tone, Sook-ae also expressed exuberance over being able to speak English, and she was very proud for not having fallen into the common habit Koreans have of spending most of their time abroad among other Koreans, speaking Korean:

*[I was] confident even when my English is not excellent and perfect. I tried to do everything by myself. I tried not to stay in a Korean group because I would lose many chances to speak in English. I met people in the library, supermarket and*

*clothes shop etc. I didn't have any problem in communicating with Americans there.*

However many respondents mentioned that they had some negative feeling about how they would be perceived by the people from different nations. Soon after the 2002 World Cup, Mrs. Song visited Europe and she expressed some of her worries. “[Maybe] *they think us a very small country in the Far East, and we are not civilized people. They seem to think our nation, our people, very primitive.*”

Mrs. Song did not go into greater detail concerning why other countries may have such perceptions but about Italy she was more specific because of the recent history between the two nations.

Korea and Italy played each other in an important game during the World Cup. Italy lost and many Italian fans were furious, blaming poor officiating, more than the Korean people themselves. Still, Mrs. Song, although not a big soccer fan, had very distressed feelings while in Italy just a few weeks after the infamous game:

*In Italy I felt a little differently [than in other countries] because they dislike us... I myself didn't want to say, I am Korean...Maybe, they'd hate me. In other countries... I am Korean, I am from Korea.*

The important point to notice here is the very clear example of how an event can so directly affect the Intercultural Complex of an individual. Mrs. Song was brought to the point of not wanting to speak or even admit her nationality because of a soccer game.

Sally had similar experiences while living in America for more than one year soon before her interview. It was a dream she had had for many years of her life but she told of many experiences that made her think of returning to Korea and even giving up her pursuit of English.

*I believed I would settle down there. I had no fear to do that. I will make friends...but now I know that some parts is just a dream. I cannot make friends that easily as expected.*



Here the issue of friendship potential emerges as Sally tells of the major event that defeated her hope to make friends easily in America. This lengthy extract shows what Sally felt was the turning point in her time living abroad:

*I was waiting for the bus long. More than 20 minutes. Then it came and I got on...in the States when you transfer the bus you have to get a small piece of paper. You ask to the driver and the driver will give it to you. So I did the same thing that I usually did and just a few moments later the bus driver stopped and the bus driver came to me and started to yell at me. I didn't know what was going on. I was surprised and because it's not my mother language...she explained very slowly... she told me I took the ticket from her hand very rude and my action was too rude... but I do that every morning every evening... if I were a native speaker she would not do that. She cannot stop the bus and she cannot yell at customer in front of 20 people.*

She went on about more details of the story. She said that was the time that she felt she needed a break from America and from English. She also repeated that she felt her non-native speaker status was at the heart of this problem, that if she were a native speaker this would not have happened. She felt singled out because of her weaker English. For Sally, English betrayed her into an isolation in which she could not have the quality of relationships she had hoped for. This example of the collision of worlds resulted in Sally deciding to take a break from both America and English. She has since returned to both.

As a final travel story, Mrs. Song tells of an experience she thought of as heartwarming while traveling in France, again immediately after the 2002 World Cup. “When we went into a restaurant, the workers in the restaurant they welcomed us, they said together “Daehan Minguk!” [This is the formal name of Korea, and is chanted by fans at sports events.] During the World Cup, Korea became quite famous for this cheer. For Mrs. Song, who had considered her country to be below European countries, this moment was one very great pride. It is also an example of how IC can be altered in just a moment.

Through the excerpts above, we can see that the Korean learners of English in this study have a variety of reasons to feel both drawn to and away from English. Also, in every case, English is not the only relationship that is of issue. Always the

relationship with Korea and/or their Korean identity comes into play. The next section will step back from English per se and focus on this relationship the respondents have with Korea. As will be discussed in later chapters, it is precisely the appraisal and reappraisal of this relationship that has direct bearing on Korean learners WTC in English.

## 6.5 Reappraising Korea

The contact hypothesis highlights the importance of *ingroup reappraisal* in the process of reducing prejudice among groups. The interviewees in this study often told of the processes they went through which resulted in a different view of Korea. This final section in this chapter on IC explores this process of reappraisal in terms of acceptance, detachment, pride and the courage to be different.

### 6.5.1 Acceptance and Detachment

Prof Chul explains the pride she feels rather succinctly and in a way similar to the “that’s the way it is” approach to negatives as well:

*I could not choose my birthplace and then I think we have to adapt ourselves to our environment. At the same time we have to promote our environment, but first we have to accept our conditions in order to change our condition or to develop it.*

Perhaps these words could be interpreted as pessimistically determinist or rather hopeful. I see them as indicative of the ambivalence Koreans feel toward their position in life in general. Poignantly Prof Chul says, “*first we have to accept our conditions.*” This statement points directly to some core beliefs in Korea. Things must first be accepted, but Prof Chul sees this as a step toward change. She sees acceptance as something freeing, and the next extracts explore the idea of detachment as a next stage of reappraisal.

Gyun-eun worked in the VIP room at the World Cup and met with more foreigners during that time than all the other respondents combined. When asked what makes her so different from most Korean learners, she replied:

*My character is very outgoing. I want to be very enjoyable and happy. It doesn't [come from] somebody else, [it comes from] myself, so I try try. I changed my mind. They don't change their mind, they don't do that.*

To explain her process of change, Gyun-eun focused on her strong will to be free, even to be the point of going against Korean tradition. She told a story of how her father had restricted her for many years and how her husband had tried:

*After marriage I broke [with my father]. I didn't speak with him... I'm sorry to him. I [should] say yes. It felt not good...that's our society. We're trained to obey our parents, so that's all... After marriage I tried to do something. But my husband doesn't want sometimes. But I [talk with him] very kindly. But even if he doesn't like that, sometimes I do. But he complains to me. But I want to. That is my life... so change your mind. It's very difficult to him... he complains. I [listen] then I forget.*

Gyun-eun's story is one of delicate balance. She understands the rules of her society, and that her father and husband would not like her acting against their wishes. Her final statement, "*I listen, then I forget*" speaks precisely to the process of reappraisal. Gyun-eun first listens, showing respect for the Korean ways, but then, in her desire for freedom, she forgets those ways and changes her mind. Gyun-eun feels sorry to her father, and does her best to appease her husband. Still, she changed her mind at one point in her life, and she remains determined to stay in control of her life. She repeated the idea of changing one's mind several times indicating reappraisal. She no longer looks at the Korean way of doing things as the only or inevitable way. She sees alternative paths to being able act more freely.

#### 6.5.2 Pride and the Courage to be Different

While talking about the successes of Team Korea in the 2002 World Cup, Sook-ae remarked that she had found new pride in her country. The importance of this excerpt is the active nature of Sook-ae's change. It is not something that happened to her as much as it is something that she made happen:

*Sure. I'm proud of being Korean...Actually I really longed for America, the dream country. And I've always thought, when will I go to America? I've always thought that, but now I think that's useless. I was born being Korean and I've grown being Korean, so what's the use of my old complaints [about Korea]? ...I'm Korean and I have to love myself being Korean. So I've changed my attitude and I think I'm proud of being Korean and I will decide my mind to love this country.*

Sook-ae uses “*have to*,” “*I've changed*,” and her final decision to love to express how active this change is for her. Clearly she makes sense of the situation in that she must make pride and love grow inside her. She goes on and creates another poignant phrase: “*Well, the feeling that I feel inside about Korea is kind of mandatory, kind of patriotism.*” Her phrase puts together the elements of being proactive and feeling responsibility in a way that shows her reappraisal of Korea and a new perspective on how the Korean and non-Korean worlds collide. Perhaps the World Cup success was a catalyst, but according to Sook-ae, the real change came from within herself.

Stories of burgeoning pride were repeated by all of the interviewees to varying degrees. Hae-sun spoke of how Korea used to be “*very ashamed and very afraid*” of the power of European countries, “*But now we have pride and have courage... we cannot recoil.*” Japan and colonization also appeared often in the opinions about Korea’s newfound pride, for example, Gyun-eun talked about how Korea used to be too passive:

*We just blamed that kind of thing and we didn't do anything, just blamed. We are their colony 36 years. Only we just blamed... But after this World Cup we know...[the] intentional power we have. So we can do lots of things better than Japan. Better than the other countries. I'm so proud of [the team].*

The significance placed on sports games may seem overblown, especially when juxtaposed with decades of colonization. However, the comments of the respondents may be digging into the heart of Korean Intercultural Complex. As previous quotes in this chapter attest to, Koreans often comment on how their country measures up to

its two Far East neighbors, European nations, and the United States. The major issue is often that Korea is simply not well-known.

What the World Cup did for Korea was to put it on the world's stage with the most popular sport on earth. The result was that Korea defeated the European powers of Poland, Portugal, Italy and Spain. Although tying against America, Korea advanced further in the tournament. Although never matched against Japan, Korea also advanced further. At the end of the competition Korea was chosen "*Most Entertaining Team*" with over a quarter of a million votes from fans worldwide, which was more than three times the votes of the next runner up. Korea achieved the recognition it had so sorely wanted.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the World Cup offered a rare chance to observe the psyche of an entire nation go through a major transformation while under observation. The value of this is the chance to see respondents express their feelings about such a unique and yet salient experience of worlds colliding and major reappraisal.

There were of course differing opinions on the long-term effects of the World Cup on Korea, although they were generally hopeful. Mrs. Song commented, "*Our economy will prosper and many people will be interested in our culture... when we face difficult problems we will cooperate [with other nations] and we will solve the problem, so our country will advance.*" Many of the other interviewees hoped for the same outcome, but skepticism remained with some. In her first interview, Sara had not expected much from the Korean team:

*Before the World Cup, I told you that [it] will not change Korea to other countries. But the crazy cheering of Korea, [did have an effect]. But it's September<sup>23</sup> now, maybe as more time passes, people who are in other countries they [will begin to] forget.*

Sara followed this with another interesting comment about how when she has a child she will tell the child that the World Cup definitely changed Korea. "*Many people think that the World Cup changed Korea much, so I'll lie to my child.*" This comment not only points again to the idea of "mandatory patriotism," of which Sook-ae spoke, but also the "other-directed self," because Sara feels compelled to

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<sup>23</sup> 10 weeks after the end of the 2002 World Cup games

follow the opinion of others, even to the point of lying to her child. Even with the powerful effects of the World Cup, much of the effects of Korean society remain.

One other aspect of the World Cup games also shows the collision of worlds. The Coach for Team Korea was not Korean but a Dutch man named Guus Hiddink, who is now very much a Korean national hero. His months in Korea are an IC microcosm giving many examples of what happens when worlds collide. The Confucian-based codes of hierarchy usually reached to the soccer field in Korea, and playing time was often based on seniority rather than performance. Coach Hiddink changed all that bringing outrage from players and fans until he started winning games. How long lasting these effects will be is uncertain, but Gyun-eun, mentioned it in her second interview immediately after the games:

*We didn't believe in Hiddink or his words, but he did what he wanted... he didn't care, only did his job so finally Korea's team did very well. Nowadays we know, someone who wants to do something, he or she [should just] do his or her best... I always tell my children [this].*

Gyun-eun's words "*he didn't care*" about Hiddink are similar to what she said earlier about herself, "*I listen, then I forget.*" She reiterates that a key to reappraisal of the Korean world is to forget or not care too much about it.

Koreans all know that Hiddink did many things in the non-Korean way. Whether that manifests itself in Korean society in the near future remains to be seen. However another respondent, Jin-eun, also uses Hiddink as an example for her students about English:

*I just emphasized the importance of English. And I gave them as an example Guus Hiddink. Even though he's not from an English speaking country. He can speak English very well. He can teach Korean players in English, he can communicate with lots reporters in English.*

Jin-eun found in this Dutch coach, a Korean national hero, the example for the value of a second language. Hiddink also shows the potential value of the collision of worlds, in these instances because he caused many Koreans to rethink how they have viewed their world.

Reappraisal of one's ingroup may be sparked by a variety of factors and among these interviewees acceptance, detachment, pride and the courage to be different appeared often in their stories. Reappraisal transforms IC and allows Korean learners to view differently the collision of worlds, and the role of English in that collision.

### *Summary*

This chapter has outlined *Intercultural Complex* as one of two factors in this study which greatly influences the WTC of Korean learners of English. Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data outline a picture of how Koreans may view the inevitable collision between the Korean and non-Korean worlds. The quantitative data finds that only between 10 and 15% of the 4000 survey participants have ever traveled abroad or made non-Korean friends. At the same time it was found that travel and international friendship have a powerful and positive effect on L2 WTC. On the negative side, different forms of communication anxiety were found to significantly lower WTC. The portrait that emerges from the quantitative data is one of learners who have an interest in English but often feel anxious about speaking. That anxiety is generally lower for those with direct contact experience with the non-Korean world.

The qualitative data comes from the Korean *odds-beaters* who have somehow gained more WTC than most. Not surprisingly, most of them have considerable non-Korean contact experience, but their stories show that becoming an *odds-beater* is a complex process. A strong lure from the non-Korean world pulls at many Koreans. Yet feelings of inferiority and regret over Korea's history are deeply rooted in the social fabric, and referred to as *han*, among Koreans. This *han* seems to be at the root of why Koreans often feel their nation does not measure up to the well-known and powerful countries of the world. Thus, the lure is tainted with anxiety.

Even the *odds-beaters* often have mixed feelings about their country but they have come to terms with *han* enough to accept and sometimes reappraise their Korean identity, and make continued contact with the non-Korean world. Their personal histories show that there is not just one way to overcome *han*, and in fact it seems to be an ongoing challenge to hold onto a sense of pride. Travel, friendship, and sometimes desires to spread religion or succeed in school or business all helped the *odds-beaters* cope with the communication anxiety that seems to be so common.

The role of IC in this study has been to gather together the all the attitudes and behaviors Korean people may exhibit concerning the collision of their Korean world and the non-Korean world that surrounds it. Simultaneously the outside world is a source of attraction and anxiety. Together with L1 Audience Sensitivity, which will be discussed in the next chapter, Intercultural Complex is one of the forces that strongly affects the WTC of Korean learners of English. Chapter 8 will then bring together the findings for both IC and L1AS.



## CHAPTER 7 L1 AUDIENCE SENSITIVITY

### 7.1 WTC and L1AS: Quantitative Results

The quantitative data that pertains to *L1 Audience Sensitivity* is presented below, preceding the qualitative interview data for similar reasons as in the previous chapter. The quantitative data is meant to provide a backdrop for the interview data by sketching a picture of the general Korean population, as represented by the 4000 university students who participated in the study.

The results presented here focus specifically on how the *relative status* of other Koreans present at the communication event affect WTC. The questionnaire offered different situations to the participants in order to explore their possible reactions to different audiences. As explained in Chapter 5 (Table 5.3) the contextual situations were divided based on the *relative status* and *relative English proficiency* of the audience members that would be present at the communication event. Those audience members would need not be participants in the communication, but rather their simple presence is the key factor.

Although mentioned in Chapter 2 on Korea, it bears repeating here that an important aspect of Korean society is that for most Koreans a “friend” is someone of the same age and usually similar social status. Older and younger acquaintances, no matter how close, are thought of as “seniors” and “juniors,” and are treated rather differently than same-aged “friends.”

Tables 7.1 through 7.4 present cross-tabulations for the mean scores of WTC in various contexts and the number of foreign friends and travel time abroad. It must be noted here that in all four tables mean scores are given for the combined number of students from both universities, not distinguishing between universities 1 and 2. The reason for this is to focus on how the L1 audience affects all the participants regardless of the differences between the universities. The differences highlighted in the tables below are the characteristics of the audience, and whether the participants had zero foreign friendship and travel experience or a considerable amount. The four tables are divided based on L1 status and proficiency as perceived by the participant as speaker. The mean scores are based on a five-point Likert scale with 1 being very unwilling to communicate in that situation, 5 being very willing, and thus 3 being exactly in the middle.

### 7.1.1 WTC with No L1 Audience

The focus of the following findings is to establish under what circumstances the participants reported being willing to communicate in English. The key results in these tables can be found by observing when the mean scores reach above 3 on the five-point Likert scale, indicating that participants are more willing than not to communicate in that situation. Also important to observe is the uniformity with which the mean scores drop depending on the audience, almost regardless of the contact experience with non-Korean friendship and travel. That is to say, that even though friendship and travel uniformly raise WTC (reading table rows from left to right), certain changes in the audience uniformly drops WTC (reading table columns from top to bottom).

Table 7.1 proposes two communication situations; one with no Korean audience present and the other in a public place and in front of a friend of equal English proficiency. The questionnaire offered several other situations but these two make the point of the powerful effect of the L1 audience.

**Table 7.1**  
**Crosstabulation of Situational WTC and Previous non-Korean Contact<sup>24</sup>**

| Communication<br>Opportunity:<br>Speaking with...   | L1<br>Status/<br>Proficiency | All  | Foreign<br>Friends |      | Travel<br>Abroad |            |
|---|------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|------------------|------------|
|   |                              |      | 0                  | 1~5  | 0                | 10+<br>wks |
| An English speaker on campus with<br>nobody else around.  | N/A                          | 3.45 | 3.38               | 3.98 | 3.37             | 4.28       |
| An English speaker while on the train<br>in front of a <b>Korean friend</b> with the<br><b>same English ability</b> . | =/=                          | 2.77 | 2.67               | 3.41 | 2.68             | 3.85       |

The following tables will build on the findings here in Table 7.1, which presents the crux of L1AS and a cornerstone of this entire dissertation. Regardless of non-Korean friendships or travel abroad, the participants in this study, on average, were more likely than not to communicate with an English speaker, if no Korean audience were present. Imagine a Korean university student, walking across her

<sup>24</sup> T-test results for differences among groups are provided in Table 7.?

campus alone and seeing a native English speaker. She will be more willing than not to approach this person and strike up a conversation. However if that same student meets that same native speaker on a train while traveling with her Korean friend, she will be much less likely start an English conversation. The language and the interlocutor remain identical; the drop in WTC results from introducing the L1 audience. Furthermore, a relatively similar WTC drop will occur whether this student has had significant previous non-Korean contact or not. Certainly the mean scores for those participants with high non-Korean contact remain higher than those with low contact, but the contact experience does not make them immune to L1AS. Three key points must be observed here: (1) Koreans seem, on average, to be willing to communicate in English, but (2) the presence of other Koreans hinders that willingness, (3) even with “WTC-boosting” non-Korean contact experience.

The motivation for this study came from my lack of understanding of why Koreans so often talk of wanting to speak with foreigners, but also often avoid such opportunities. The results shown in Table 7.1 support this phenomenon by showing that eagerness does exist, but WTC behavior is more likely in the absence of a Korean audience. The following tables will show how subtle changes in the status and relative English proficiency affect WTC.

### 7.1.2 WTC with L1 Audience

Table 7.2 shows two communication situations in which the audience member has lower English proficiency relative to and as perceived by the speaker. The difference between the two situations is in the status of that audience member and in the fact that in every case raising the status of the audience lowers WTC.

**Table 7.2**  
**Crosstabulation of WTC and Friends & Travel**  
**L1 Audience Perceived Proficiency being Lower while Status Rises**

| Communication<br>Opportunity:<br>Speaking with...   | L1<br>Status/<br>Profi-<br>ciency | All  | Foreign<br>Friends |      | Travel<br>Abroad |            |
|---|-----------------------------------|------|--------------------|------|------------------|------------|
|   |                                   |      | 0                  | 1~5  | 0                | 10+<br>wks |
| An English speaker on the street in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>lower</b> English <b>ability</b> .          | -/-                               | 2.54 | 2.47               | 3.04 | 2.48             | 3.15       |
| An English speaker at a coffee shop in front of a Korean <b>superior</b> with <b>lower</b> English <b>ability</b> . | +/-                               | 2.36 | 2.39               | 2.78 | 2.31             | 2.82       |

Table 7.3 shows two situations in which the audience member has higher perceived proficiency, and overall, the participants lose WTC when the audience gains status. However this is not the case for participants with foreign friends and/or travel, and in fact “travelers” gain WTC. While any reasons offered for this break in uniformity are purely speculative, it seems that those participants with significant travel have gained some experiences that push them to communicate more as the status of the audience rises.

**Table 7.3**  
**Crosstabulation of WTC and Friends & Travel**  
**L1 Audience Perceived Proficiency Being Higher while Status Rises**

| Communication<br>Opportunity:<br>Speaking with...   | L1<br>Status/<br>Proficiency | All         | Foreign<br>Friends |             | Travel<br>Abroad |             |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
|   |                              |             | 0                  | 1~5         | 0                | 10+<br>wks  |
| An English speaker while waiting in line in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>higher</b> English <b>ability</b> . | -/+                          | 2.22        | 2.15               | 2.65        | 2.16             | 2.86        |
| An English speaker at a restaurant in front of Korean <b>superiors</b> with <b>higher</b> English <b>ability</b> .  | +/+                          | 2.15        | 2.07               | 2.65        | 2.08             | 3.14        |
| <b>Total average</b>  |                              | <b>2.69</b> | <b>2.63</b>        | <b>3.22</b> | <b>2.63</b>      | <b>3.44</b> |

Two more tables may help to show more of the intricacies of L1 Audience Sensitivity, especially as it relates to travel experience. Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 showed what happened to WTC mean scores when audience proficiency remained constant (Table 7.2: lower proficiency; Table 7.3: higher proficiency) but status moved from lower to higher. The next two tables, although containing all the same

data, show what happens when audience status remained constant (Table 7.4: lower status; Table 7.5: higher status) but proficiency moved from lower to higher.

Table 7.4 shows that in all categories of participants, including travelers, WTC drops when the audience status remains lower but their proficiency rises.

**Table 7.4**  
**Crosstabulations for WTC and Friends & Travel**  
**L1 Audience Status being Lower while Perceived Proficiency Rises**

| <b>Communication Opportunity:</b>   | <b>L1 Status / Proficiency</b> | <b>All</b> | <b>Foreign Friends</b> |      | <b>Travel Abroad</b> |          |
|---|--------------------------------|------------|------------------------|------|----------------------|----------|
| Speaking with...  |                                |            | 0                      | 1~5  | 0                    | 10+ wks  |
| An English speaker on the street in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>lower</b> English <b>ability</b> .          | -/-                            | 2.54       | 2.47                   | 3.04 | 2.48                 | 3.15 (6) |
| An English speaker while waiting in line in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>higher</b> English <b>ability</b> . | -/+                            | 2.22       | 2.15                   | 2.65 | 2.16                 | 2.86     |

However, Table 7.5 shows that in all categories, except travelers, WTC drops when the audience status remains higher but the proficiency rises.

**Table 7.5**  
**Crosstabulation for WTC and Friends & Travel**  
**L1 Audience Status being Higher while Perceived Proficiency Rises**

| <b>Communication Opportunity:</b>   | <b>L1 Status/ Proficiency</b> | <b>All</b> | <b>Foreign Friends</b> |      | <b>Travel Abroad</b> |         |
|---|-------------------------------|------------|------------------------|------|----------------------|---------|
| Speaking with...  |                               |            | 0                      | 1~5  | 0                    | 10+ wks |
| An English speaker at a coffee shop in front of a Korean <b>superior</b> with <b>lower</b> English <b>ability</b> . | +/-                           | 2.36       | 2.39                   | 2.78 | 2.3                  | 2.82    |
| An English speaker at a restaurant in front of Korean <b>superiors</b> with <b>higher</b> English <b>ability</b> .  | +/+                           | 2.15       | 2.07                   | 2.65 | 2.0                  | 3.14    |

Once again the travelers show a different pattern from all others in that they prefer to speak in front of an audience that they consider being superior in both status and proficiency to themselves, while all other groups prefer such a group the least.

Much further research would be needed to understand this phenomenon clearly, however the qualitative data in the following sections of this chapter will help to show more of the processes involved here. Clearly, however, something happens to Korean learners when they gain more than ten weeks of travel experience. Indeed travel raises WTC levels in general, but it also seems to change the pattern in which the Korean learners view their Korean audiences and their relative status and proficiency.

Table 7.6 combines all the data from Tables 7.1 through 7.5 and shows both the uniform patterns in WTC and the breaks from those patterns. All the situations are again described along with their audience status/proficiency code, and one column is added to how those situations uniformly “rank.” That is to say the first ranked situation is the one in which the overall WTC mean scores are the highest. Moving down the table each successive situation is shown by rank. For those groups with zero foreign friends and zero travel experience, the ranking exactly matches the ranking for all participants.

Looking at the status/proficiency code, it is clear that WTC is uniformly higher when L1 audience is not a factor. Then, if an L1 audience is present, equal status and proficiency brings about the highest WTC. If however relative status and proficiency are unequal, it seems that it is better for WTC if the L1 audience is first of lower proficiency, regardless of their status. So L1 audience proficiency seems to detract from WTC more than L1 audience status.

**Table 7.6**  
**Crosstabulation for WTC and Friends & Travel**  
**While L1 Audience Status and Perceived Proficiency Vary**

| Communication<br>Opportunity:<br>Speaking with...   | L1<br>Status/<br>Proficiency | Rank            | All         | Foreign<br>Friends |             | Travel<br>Abroad |             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
|   |                              |                 |             | 0                  | 1~5         | 0                | 10+<br>wks  |
| An English speaker on campus with nobody else around.   | N/A                          | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 3.45        | 3.38               | 3.98        | 3.37             | 4.28<br>(1) |
| An English teacher about your homework assignment.  | N/A                          | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3.10        | 3.03               | 3.64        | 3.04             | 3.76<br>(3) |
| Korean-speaking and English-speaking friends at a coffee shop.  | N/A                          | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 2.85        | 2.78               | 3.45        | 2.78             | 3.65<br>(4) |
| An English teacher out of class on campus.  | N/A                          | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 2.81        | 2.74               | 3.38        | 2.74             | 3.47<br>(5) |
| An English speaker while on the train in front of a <b>Korean friend</b> with the <b>same English ability</b> . | =/=                          | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 2.77        | 2.67               | 3.41<br>(4) | 2.68             | 3.85<br>(2) |
| An English speaker on the street in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>lower English ability</b> .             | -/-                          | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 2.54        | 2.47               | 3.04        | 2.48             | 3.15<br>(6) |
| An English speaker at a coffee shop in front of a Korean <b>superior</b> with <b>lower English ability</b> .    | +/-                          | 7 <sup>th</sup> | 2.36        | 2.39               | 2.78        | 2.31             | 2.82<br>(9) |
| An English speaker while waiting in line in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>higher English ability</b> .    | -/+                          | 8 <sup>th</sup> | 2.22        | 2.15               | 2.65        | 2.16             | 2.86<br>(8) |
| An English speaker at a restaurant in front of Korean <b>superiors</b> with <b>higher English ability</b> .     | +/+                          | 9 <sup>th</sup> | 2.15        | 2.07               | 2.65        | 2.08             | 3.14<br>(7) |
| <b>Total average</b>  |                              |                 | <b>2.69</b> | <b>2.63</b>        | <b>3.22</b> | <b>2.63</b>      | <b>3.44</b> |

The grey cells in Table 7.6 indicate scores which do not follow the descending order shown in the 'Rank' column. The numbers in parentheses indicate the rank.

#### *T-test Results for L1AS*

Table 7.7 presents again the communication situations from the questionnaire and used in Tables 7.1~6. Simply numbers in Tables 7.8 and 7.9 will refer to these situations.

**Table 7.7 Descriptions of the WTC Situations Referred to in Tables 7.8 And 7.9**

| Situation | Description   |
|-----------|---|
| 1         | An English speaker on campus with nobody else around.   |
| 2         | An English teacher about your homework assignment.  |
| 3         | Korean-speaking and English-speaking friends at a coffee shop.  |
| 4         | An English teacher out of class on campus.  |
| 5         | An English speaker while on the train in front of a <b>Korean friend</b> with the <b>same English ability</b> . |
| 6         | An English speaker on the street in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>lower English ability</b> .             |
| 7         | An English speaker at a coffee shop in front of a Korean <b>superior</b> with <b>lower English ability</b> .    |
| 8         | An English speaker while waiting in line in front of your <b>junior</b> with <b>higher English ability</b> .    |
| 9         | An English speaker at a restaurant in front of Korean <b>superiors</b> with <b>higher English ability</b> .     |

Tables 7.8 and 7.9 provide the t-test results for the different groups in the above tables. All differences were found to be significant.

**Table 7.8**  
**T-test Results of the Difference between the Effect of Having Zero and 1-5 Non-Korean Friends on WTC**

| Situation | Friends | N    | Mean | SD   | t      | df   | Sig. |
|-----------|---------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|
| 1         | 0       | 3506 | 3.38 | 1.18 | -9.37  | 3921 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 417  | 3.95 | 1.07 |        |      |      |
| 2         | 0       | 3500 | 3.03 | 1.14 | -10.40 | 3916 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 418  | 3.64 | 1.06 |        |      |      |
| 3         | 0       | 3505 | 2.77 | 1.22 | -10.87 | 3922 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 419  | 3.45 | 1.19 |        |      |      |
| 4         | 0       | 3505 | 2.74 | 1.55 | -8.19  | 3922 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 419  | 3.38 | 1.28 |        |      |      |
| 5         | 0       | 3502 | 2.67 | 1.18 | -11.35 | 3918 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 418  | 3.41 | 1.81 |        |      |      |
| 6         | 0       | 3507 | 2.47 | 1.21 | -9.02  | 3924 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 419  | 3.04 | 1.23 |        |      |      |
| 7         | 0       | 3497 | 2.30 | 1.16 | -7.88  | 3913 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 418  | 2.78 | 1.26 |        |      |      |
| 8         | 0       | 3502 | 2.15 | 1.15 | -8.41  | 3919 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 419  | 2.65 | 1.23 |        |      |      |
| 9         | 0       | 3506 | 2.07 | 1.12 | -9.94  | 3923 | .000 |
|           | 1-5     | 419  | 2.65 | 1.20 |        |      |      |



**Table 7.9**  
**T-test Results of the Difference between the Effect of Having Zero and More than 10 Weeks Travel Time Abroad on WTC**

| Situation | Travel   | N    | Mean | SD   | t     | df    | Sig. |
|-----------|----------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|
| 1         | 0        | 3398 | 3.37 | 1.18 | -7.01 | 3481  | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 4.28 | 0.98 |       |       |      |
| 2         | 0        | 3393 | 3.04 | 1.14 | -5.78 | 3476  | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 3.76 | 1.21 |       |       |      |
| 3         | 0        | 3399 | 2.78 | 1.23 | -6.46 | 3482  | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 3.65 | 1.08 |       |       |      |
| 4         | 0        | 3398 | 2.74 | 1.57 | -4.24 | 3481  | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 3.47 | 1.23 |       |       |      |
| 5         | 0        | 3394 | 2.68 | 1.18 | -9.04 | 34.77 | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 3.85 | 1.06 |       |       |      |
| 6         | 0        | 3400 | 2.48 | 1.22 | -5.06 | 3483  | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 3.15 | 1.35 |       |       |      |
| 7         | 0        | 3389 | 2.31 | 1.16 | -4.00 | 34.72 | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 2.82 | 1.29 |       |       |      |
| 8         | 0        | 3396 | 2.16 | 1.16 | -5.50 | 3479  | .000 |
|           | 10+weeks | 85   | 2.86 | 1.34 |       |       |      |
| 9         | 0        | 3399 | 2.08 | 1.13 | -8.48 | 3482  | .000 |

### 7.1.3 WTC and Audience Proficiency and Status

Table 7.6 also shows that while both foreign friendship and travel abroad experience improve WTC, the addition of an L1 audience significantly lowers these groups' WTC. In fact a case could be imagined in which a non-traveler with no L1 audience present would be much more willing to communicate in English than an experienced traveler in the presence of an L1 audience. Thus it seems the power of travel to raise WTC is weaker than the power of the L1 audience to lower WTC.

However, the situation becomes more subtle and complex when observing how travel changes the pattern of uniformity presented in Table 7.6. The shaded areas represent breaks in the uniformity that exists in the overall ranking, and the numbers in parentheses represent the rank order within that group. While the group with one to five foreign friends show slight breaks from the uniform (1,2,3,5,4,6,7,9,9), the travelers group exhibits much more radical breaks (1,3,4,5,2,6,9,8,7). Clearly travel has significant, complex, and subtle effects on WTC.

I speculate that the reason for the radical breaks in uniformity for the travelers stems from the fact that they have had the opportunity to exit the Korean world which chapter 2 of this thesis has shown to be so powerfully influential over individuals in this *other-driven* society. All of the strict social rules of Korean society did not exist for the travelers for at least ten weeks, and so they were afforded the opportunity to see that the way of the Korean world was not the only way. Perhaps they learned how people can successfully interact differently than in Korea. Experiencing this for a period of time may then be enough to cause these breaks in uniformity. Of course travel seems not enough to *erase* the power of the L1 audience, the effects of which remain clear. However travel does seem enough to *alter* the effects of the L1 audience on Korean learners' WTC. Certainly many factors are at play and deeper statistical analysis would be necessary to confirm these speculations. The following sections of this chapter, however, will allow the voices of my interviewees to tell their stories of the power of the L1 audience.

#### *Summary of Quantitative results for L1AS*

The key results reflected in the above quantitative data show that among the 4000 university students surveyed, WTC mean scores on average indicate that the participants are more willing than not to converse in English with a native speaker, however, only under the condition that no other Koreans are present. With L1 audience members, WTC drops significantly.

Non-Korean contact experience, in the form of travel abroad and international friendship, boosted WTC. However the presence of L1 audience members still reduced WTC for all groups, especially when differences in status and proficiency were salient. The uniformity among participants strongly suggests the importance of L1AS across levels of proficiency and experience.

Pieces of the original puzzle, which this dissertation centers on, are beginning to fit together. I had observed Koreans' strong attraction toward English and wondered why they also avoided speaking it. Their sensitivity toward other Koreans seems to play a major role. The following qualitative data will explore some of the underlying causes and processes of this phenomenon.

## 7.2 L1 Interaction

The quantitative data presented in section 7.1 provides backdrop for the following sections of qualitative results in which interview extracts will show the process through which Korean learners become so sensitive to Korean audiences and how they deal with the consequences of that sensitivity. As stated previously, *L1 Audience Sensitivity* refers to the acute awareness Korean learners of English have toward the relative status and L2 proficiency of other Koreans around them in an English conversation situation. This awareness stems from a variety of factors revolving around status differences, the expected behavior that social codes require, and fear of making L2 mistakes. There is a general fear that improper behavior, for example not showing due respect, may result in loss of face for those involved. One consequence of this fear is a hesitation to use English if the speaker or one or more present audience members might feel uncomfortable with the second language being brought into the situation.

L1AS is quite complex and the interview extracts in this chapter will attempt to show how it functions in Korean society and how it develops and changes in individuals. Unlike *Intercultural Complex* [IC], which was discussed in chapter 6, L1AS functions independently of the non-Korean world. That is to say that this heightened awareness of audience occurs among Koreans even when no non-Koreans are present, and even no second language is being spoken. Some of the extracts do not specifically refer to English use but bear on this discussion in that they shed light on what generally occurs when Koreans interact with each other. Although many of the factors that affect IC may also have an impact on L1AS, this chapter will focus on what happens within the Korean world more so than what happens when the Korean world collides with the non-Korean world. Because many important points that also concern L1AS were covered in the previous chapter, this chapter is more concise.

Although the interaction of IC and L1AS is not the focus of this study because they function independently, it is worth mentioning that Korean *han*, regret and shame, which is at the root of IC, probably also rests at the core of L1AS. As a feeling of persecution from the outside world, *han* binds Korean people tightly together. It seems that the desire to preserve that bond often takes the form of heightened awareness of others, and abiding by the social rules that strengthen such bonds.

Three main points give structure to this section of this chapter as it explores the development of L1AS:

- Koreans' unique and influential manner during interaction
- Koreans' perceived competence in English
- Koreans' attitudes toward speaking English in front of each other

By examining these points through the words of this study's interviewees, a picture emerges of how the process many Koreans go through when presented with a situation in which they must decide whether to speak English while other Koreans are present.

The first excerpt in this chapter comes from one of the World Cup interviewees that typifies responses often heard from Koreans when they are asked, "Why don't you practice English among yourselves?" Living and teaching in a country with several million people clamoring for someone with whom to speak English, I long thought this was an obvious question but the reactions I often got suggested that the question was preposterous. This chapter attempts to untangle the reluctance so many Koreans seem to have over speaking English around each other unless it is absolutely necessary.

Jin-eun, went to an English institute to study conversation, and she made close friends there but they never spoke English together outside of class. Her reason was simply, "*We didn't have to speak English.*" That perhaps seems a very understandable reason, but I feel that the matter of fact answer covers some deeper reasons that will become more apparent in the section below about speaking English around non-Koreans.

### 7.2.1 *Chemyon* and *Jung*

Before specifically focusing on speaking English, it is important to have the respondents discuss their views on how Koreans generally interact with each other. As was discussed in chapter 2, many of the social rules in Korea dictate a wide range of behaviors and many people are less than willing to break such rules.

As mentioned above, *jung* and *chemyon* are two powerful forces in Korean society. Mrs. Ang, the oldest of the World Cup interviewees, spoke of their

importance in terms of resolving conflicts and providing peace among the people of a community. She explained why it was important to keep *jung* and *chemyon*:

*When people keep Korean traditional etiquette, it helps make better society... Younger people should follow the oldest person. That'll make the older person happy. When my mother was alive, even when her opinion and mine were different, I followed her.*

Mrs. Ang stated that following the Korean rules is what “*should*” be done to make things “*better*.” It is also interesting that she points out that the reason it is best to follow the words of elders is not because their ideas may hold more merit, but simply because it will make them “*happy*.” Her statement points to a very key issue in Korean society: pleasing others is often the goal of action rather than the successful completion of a task. This once again points to the often-mentioned “other-directed self.” According to Mrs. Ang, younger people have a duty to please the oldest person in the situation and if this is not done that will be to the detriment of society.

Mrs. Ang also responded about whether non-Koreans should also follow Korean etiquette in order to help make a better society and to please the oldest person present. She simply replied, “*No. Cultural difference.*” This response by Mrs. Ang provides insight vital to understanding L1AS in that she draws a line between the Korean and non-Korean worlds and applies strict rules only to the Korean world. Other respondents also spoke about the strict rules of the Korean world and two terms, *chemyon* and *jung*, repeatedly came up. These terms were discussed in earlier chapters and Prof Chul gives her opinion:

*Because Korean people are really conscious of appearances or showing themselves to other people, so they really highly consider... chemyon and jung. I think that they are positive [to know the world] because they have some positive effects, but they have more negative effects.*

Prof Chul associates both *chemyon* and *jung* with the importance Koreans place on appearances. Also although she feels Koreans consider these highly, she feels they are more negative than positive. Prof Chul goes on to give examples of

both *chemyon* and *jung*, and it becomes more evident that she, like many Koreans have very mixed feelings about the duties they feel compelled to fulfill. *Chemyon*, which is sometimes called “face” in English, has to do with acting properly according to your position in society. Prof Chul says, “*Lots of Korean men, even though they lose their job, they cannot make any income, they have to treat their friends and they have to show some kind of magnanimous toward other people.*” Her point here is that treating friends to a free meal is something that is supposed to be done in certain situations and having no money to do so is not a valid excuse.

She then gives an example of *jung* from her own life. *Jung*, as stated above, is how people must relate to their intimate friends. She comments briefly on her feelings about her own career choices:

*If I get a good job offer from [another] university in Seoul, even though I have more good chance for my academic career and for my family relationship and friends, I think because of jung it's really difficult for me to decide to leave [my current job]. Because I feel a lot of jung or responsibility toward my students and I really highly consider that.*

Interestingly, Prof. Chul shows what seems to be a contradiction. She will put the feelings of her students above that of her family even though her family is obviously closer to her. On top of that, she has also said that she sees many negative aspects to *jung* and *chemyon*. Yet, still she admits to following their rules, albeit unhappily.

Although the rules of Korean society can be viewed negatively, they are often still followed, sometimes to personal detriment. The *other-drivenness* of the Korean world has great power. The next section looks at the powerful influence of gender roles in the Korean world.

### 7.2.2 Gender

When Koreans interact, gender is rarely ignored. This section highlights a few perspectives on gender in the Korean world. Sixty-five year old Prof. Yun had many strong opinions that are often voiced by other Korean men, especially of his

generation. The following quote shows how he feels Korean people have many strict roles they feel they should stay in:

*The Korean man faced with the difficulty of asserting [himself] is a side phenomenon of the fast developing capitalist market where full-time jobs are of vital importance. And many Korean men do not have this job opportunity and they are sort of deprived of the opportunity to develop into full masculinity. They feel inferior to women. I think it's comparable to the situation in which American Blacks find themselves in America. When they are not awarded the job opportunity, they feel less secure of themselves. That's why there are so many family problems with Blacks in America. A similar situation also develops in Korea. If you are a Korean man of age 30, you are really in trouble. You should have a good job to get married.*

Prof Yun also mentioned that Korea has evolved with the growing freedom of women, but his words here were focused on the pressures he feels men are under. Prof Yun also makes a comparison with a segment of the American population that he feels is disenfranchised. He paints a picture for Korean men in which they are disempowered and even emasculated and less than women.

He says that certain Korean men are “*really in trouble*,” followed by, “*You should have a good job to get married*.” This not only implies that a good job is a necessary condition for marriage, but also that marriage is simply necessary condition. This necessity of marriage is a forgone conclusion for most Koreans. Marriage is the cornerstone of the support system and source of identity for most Koreans.

Another interviewee, Prof Chul, is two decades younger than Prof Yun, and female. She understandably has some different opinions about men and women in Korea. However, her answers reinforce some of the points also brought up by Prof Yom. In answer to the question what are the differences between Korean men and women she became quite emphatic. Yet, although her answers seem to be opposed to Prof. Yun's on the surface, there are some deep similarities in terms of how both men and women feel restricted in the Korean world:

*Oh, there's tremendous differences...Actually if Korean woman wanted to get a career here, we have to deal with a lot of blocks, obstacles in front of us. It's really difficult for us to get support; even from family members...our situation is totally different from Korean men's situation. They get strong and total support from their family and society is really in a sense, is really nice to them.*

The sharp contrast of opinions between the two professors also has aspects of similarity. Both feel their gender suffers under the rules of the Korean world. The two professors feel that Korean society restricts their gender and the important point how gender, like *chemyon* and *jung*, dictates interaction among Koreans. Why are the rules of Korean society obeyed if they seem to cause such unhappiness? The next section explores the penalty for breaking the rules of the Korean world.

### 7.2.3 *Wangtta*

As mentioned in the chapter on Korea, *wangtta* refers to a person who is ostracized from their own ingroup for any of a variety of reasons. From a very young age, Korean children are punished in a way opposite from many western children. Instead of being placed in their room and not allowed outside to play, Korean children are placed outside the front door of the house and not allowed back in. Many adult Koreans perhaps continue to feel a similar dread toward being ousted from an ingroup. The threat of this *wangtta* punishment seems to keep Koreans following the rules.

While conducting research that compliments this study (Edwards and Kim, 2005) I asked a number of high school and university students to comment on what might constitute pushing another student from their group and labeling them “*wangtta*.” The themes of extremeness, difference, and arrogance run through the phrases listed below. These represent just a sample of the many responses I received, but most of them followed this same vein:

- So selfish that [nobody likes] him
- Someone who is so shy or [has an] ugly face



- One student is too different from other students.
- *Wangtta* has handicap, usually we don't play with them.
- He is different from normal people.
- Not honest
- So much honest
- Too genius
- Behavior like richer
- When someone plays alone
- He is dirty or believe that they are princess or prince
- Act alone, too arrogant, too quiet

It is significant to note how often words such as “so” and “too” appear, calling to mind “extremeness” but also suggesting that every one should know that there are certain, and commonly known limits to individuals’ behavior. Punishment is then meted out to those who break that barrier.

Perhaps the most pointed phrase from the above list is “too different,” which summarizes the essence of *wangtta*, by at once acknowledging difference among people and pointing out that varying greatly from others is negative. Other facets of *wangtta* emerge from this list which illuminate some of the specific types of difference and extremeness that warrant punishment. The phrases “not honest” and “so much honest” clearly point out the importance of knowing exactly how honest to be, but that is not the only tightrope to walk. Being “dirty” or having an “ugly face” seems just as bad as acting like a clean and beautiful prince or princess. One should neither be “too arrogant” by showing wealth or “genius,” nor should one be “too quiet,” or “act alone.”

The idea of a tightrope suits this situation in which Koreans find themselves whenever they interact with other Koreans. Earlier in this chapter Mrs. Ang spoke of the release of non-Koreans from the rules of Korean society, we may also presume that within the Korean world, non-Koreans do not punish with *wangtta*. That being so, it would only be a Korean audience which brings in the possibility of *wangtta*.

This section on L1 interaction has explored how Koreans interact with each other in Korean because this is the foundation of L1AS. Korean “potential speakers” of English realize that the presence of other Koreans, who may cast *wangtta* punishment on them, makes being willing to communicate a very threatening affair. Either being seen as “too different” or “arrogant” for flaunting their English ability, or being noticed for making “dirty, ugly” mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation, or for just being “too different” by not speaking Korean, potential speakers may not feel motivated to risk taking the opportunity to speak. Korean world rules based on *chemyon*, *jung*, and gender, and punished by *wangtta* if broken, are the basis of L1 interaction and thus L1AS. The next section will explore L2 interaction in the Korean world, that is, when English is involved among Koreans.

### 7.3 L2 Interaction

The previous section described the threatening situation of being willing to communicate in English while in the presence of other Koreans. One element of this threat are the worries individuals have over their English ability. While this dissertation does not focus on proficiency, *perceived competence* has been shown in the literature to be very influential in WTC. Emerging from the interviews in this study were many comments, often negative, the respondents had about their L2 ability. Such perceptions pertain to L1AS because it seems that many Koreans worry deeply about how other Koreans might assess their English ability.

#### 7.3.1 Perceptions of L2 Competence

The excerpts below uncover many of the thoughts that may go through a Korean person’s mind as they think about how their English is being perceived by other Koreans. Some of the quotes are not specifically about situations when other Koreans are present but are included to help give an overall picture of perceived competence.

Sook-ae commented at the end of her first interview with me that, “*I don’t think I did a good job speaking English.*” Such sentiments were very often repeated by the interviewees. Humility, which is so valued in Korea, may play some role here, but certainly insecurity is also often present.

Hae-sun, more specifically details how she sometimes feels when speaking English: *"My English was very poor and I cannot explain my emotion and feeling when I want to talk. I can't explain in English well so that is why I feel very stressed."* This frustration of not being able to communicate feelings that are inside and important and communicable in Korean, was very often mentioned by the respondents. Hae-sun goes on to tell how the experience of speaking English is often one of judgment for her: *"[It's like] maybe some kind of test of my ability. An exam, like I am a student. It makes me feel stress."* As mentioned in Kang (2005), the idea that every English speaking opportunity is an "evaluation event" is very common and quite distasteful for many Koreans.

Hae-sun's use of the word "*stress*" highlights the feeling that so many Koreans mention when talking about speaking English. It is significant that she mentions feeling like a student because that brings in the very important element of status. Inequalities in status, in this dissertation, have come up again and again as major factors in many interactions for Korean individuals. If while speaking people feel they are like students, then that implies the present audience is somehow seen in the role of a teacher. As we have learned, being a Korean student is often to be disempowered and under very strict authority.

Another example of speaking English being perceived as an event of unequal status comes from Jin-eun. Similar to feeling like a student, she often feels like a child:

*There is something I really want to talk about... but it is too hard to give you what I am thinking exactly because a lack of words... I feel myself foolish... It's like a child that doesn't speak words properly. I feel like I am a child.*

Speaking English, from Jin-eun's perspective, becomes a form of infantilization, rendering her much less than the adult she is usually. However, in the case of Jin-eun and all the other interviewees, it is crucial to recall that they all have the ability to speak and listen to English well enough to conduct hours of interviews in that second language. This makes them both unique and esteemed by both Koreans and non-Koreans in the country. Yet the insecurity persists, suggesting that other factors are also at work.

Mrs. Song, who speaks English fluently and has traveled abroad extensively, explains her insecurity over English:

*In my case, I have no self-confidence because I have no experience to speak in English in America for a long period. If I lived in England or the US for a long time, I'll have self-confidence in speaking English.*

Mrs. Song makes immigration a prerequisite before allowing herself to feel secure about her ability. The particular point to notice here is that many of the respondents feel very insecure about their English when they walk into a communication situation. As the quantitative data in this study points out, the addition of a Korean audience drastically affects WTC, and the quotes in this section examine how these respondents often feel childish or foolish while being publicly evaluated.

However, an inconsistency also emerges from the texts of the interviews, that highlights intra-personal variation in WTC that also emerged from the quantitative data. For example, Eun-jin, who stated above that she often feels like a fool and a child when she spoke English, also stated:

*I used to feel uncomfortable. But I tried not to be shy and afraid in front of people who have better ability. I trained myself and my English is quite good now. I know I don't have to be perfect. I have no problem in communicating in English.*

Jin-eun's change in personal assessment, although the excerpts were taken from different interviews<sup>25</sup>, signals a strong fluctuation that a single individual may have when perceiving their own communicative competence. Sometimes Jin-eun describes herself as a confident communicator and sometimes as a foolish child, suggesting that WTC in general and perhaps also L1AS are powerful but not always stable forces.

Also interesting in Jin-eun's quote above is her explanation of how she feels she transformed herself into a confident communicator. Highlighting L1AS, she talks of being "*in front of*" others, meaning Koreans with "better ability." She talks of

suppressing her own fear and shyness through her own effort, and the realization that she does not “have to be perfect.” As previous chapters have discussed in detail, Koreans often feel great pressure to be perfect, whether that is self-imposed or not. For Jin-eun, releasing herself from that pressure is what allowed her to gain more confidence to speak English in front of Koreans. The next section will explore this situation further.

### 7.3.2 Using L2 among Other Koreans

Several aspects of Koreans using an L2, specifically English, among other Koreans influence events of this nature. The excerpts in this section describe how the interviewees feel when they must face other Koreans while using English.

#### *English and Korean Relationships*

The complexities involved when Koreans speak English in front of other Koreans is a major focus of this dissertation, and I feel understanding this will help unlock some of the mysteries of Koreans’ ambivalence toward English and perhaps allow them to learn the language with greater ease. The importance of close relationships and the power of *jung* and *wangtta* among Koreans has been discussed in this and other chapters. The short list of phases below from data in Edwards and Kim, (2005) pinpoint many of the general attitudes Koreans hold toward speaking English with other Koreans they feel close to. I asked these participants to comment on what, if any, effects English has ever had on their Korean relationships. Here are some sample responses:

- Sometimes it made me a fool in friendship
- It doesn’t affect the friendship that much. I feel accomplished when my friends look up to me.
- It’s not good for classmates but in the internet, it’s very nice to make friends.

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<sup>25</sup> The first excerpt is from Jin-eun’s second interview, soon after the World Cup, and the second excerpt is from her third interview, one year later.

- It's very helpful. If I have high-level English, my friends invite me [to get together and discuss learning English] and then I answer them, so friendship is growing.
- Sometimes it's very good at friendship but if I speak too much English, they will hate me.

Clearly not all of the attitudes were negative and some respondents saw English as making themselves more attractive. Still, it is important to note that possessing English skill is usually seen as attractive, while speaking "too much" can result in hate. Another particular point to notice in the above list is what one respondent said about the internet in comparison with classmates. This opinion suggests that speaking English in front of other classmates who are physically present differs from chatting in English on the internet. This person seems to believe that the anonymity of the internet lessens the effects of L1AS, and allows communicating in English to not be labeled as bad. Of course internet communication is a very different form of communication than has been discussed thus far in this dissertation, but we can take this statement as a signal that a key factor in L1AS may perhaps be that the speaker be clearly identified. The list of quotes above shows some of the attitudes Koreans have about English in their close relationships. The next two sections examine when speakers feel their English ability is different from the other Koreans present.

#### *Audience with Perceived Higher Competence*

Living in California with a Korean family, Sally noticed that the parents of the family had been there for a long time but rarely spoke English. Sally knew that they understood English rather well but she rarely heard them use it. She spoke of how these parents were similar to other Koreans she knew in Los Angeles.

*I have seen a lot of people who don't speak English, who don't try to speak English there, because they are so afraid of making a mistake. And they have lived there for long and their children speaking is very well and whenever they go to restaurants or any public place, with their kids, they always*

*wanted their kids speak English. Not them. But they understand everything. They are just afraid of making a mistake.*

Sally mentions how these parents don't want to speak English even though they seem to have good ability. Perhaps the fear of mistakes the parents felt came not only from the prospect of speaking in front of the local native speakers but also from speaking in front of their own children who have higher language ability. The next section will explore another side of L1AS, when the L1 audience has lower language ability. Perhaps because the parents perceive their children to have higher language competence, they become less willing to use English. According to this study's quantitative data, the fact that their children are also of lower status would lower the parents' WTC even further.

#### *Audience with Perceived Lower Competence*

As the quantitative data shows, an audience with lower competence than the speakers also lowers WTC and many of the interviewees told stories that reflect this. During the World Cup games the respondent, Sara, saw her Canadian English teacher at the stadium,

*I was with my boyfriend. If I were alone I [would have said] hello to her. [But] he didn't want me to go to her...Because [as with] many people who don't speak English, because he doesn't speak English he's afraid of foreigners.*

The boyfriend's fear, causing her low WTC, did not explain the situation fully, but Sara continued with another encounter that involved her boyfriend.

*I saw a lot of foreigners downtown in department stores. And it's a little bit different culture [here in Korea]. If people [bump into each other] they don't say sorry or excuse me. And when I hit a foreigner, I said, "sorry." And she smiled at me...and I was with my boyfriend and he asked me, "Why did you say sorry?" But I really didn't mean to say, "sorry," but I hit her. My mouth just said, "sorry." ...I think he thought that we were [among] a lot of people*

*and when I said sorry many people would hear me. [He was] a little bit shy. Not shy, I mean ashamed.*

Sara explained that her boyfriend was ashamed of the fact that his girlfriend said, "Sorry" when other Koreans were able to hear. This is different from what she had said a few minutes earlier about his being afraid of foreigners. Her new comment suggested that he had been somehow afraid of what other Koreans would think. I asked Sara exactly what he felt was shameful, speaking English or simply apologizing. She answered immediately and emphatically, "*Speaking English!*" I asked her why and she replied, "*Being different [is shameful].*" I asked her if she felt the same way. "*No. Because I have experience in a different country<sup>26</sup>, but has never, so he has a narrow mind. He doesn't want to change... I don't care if I'm not with him.*" She soon added, "*I want to change him. But if he doesn't learn how to speak English he'll not change.*"

Sara's words explained her view of her boyfriend's attitudes toward being different and at the same time she explained herself. She does not feel shame because she has been abroad. Somehow that allows her to accept difference much more easily. However, her boyfriend would need to learn English in order to broaden his mind. She also explains that her own feelings are very much connected to her boyfriend in that if she were alone she would not care about such things. Despite their differences of opinion on the topic of being different, both Sara and her boyfriend care very much about what others think. He cares about the opinions of the other Koreans and she cares about his opinion. Both of them are more focused on the audience watching and listening to the scene, than on the non-korean woman taking part in the interaction.

Sara's story exemplifies the feelings that many Korean learners have about the opinions of other Koreans observing their intergroup contact. This story also points directly to the issue of intrapersonal variation in WTC. Sara states that she would not care about any of this if her boyfriend were not around but because he was, she feels apologetic to him for her WTC.

This section showed an example of WTC lowering due to an audience member with low proficiency. Gender status may also have played a role in this

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<sup>26</sup> She had traveled and studied in Australia for ten months.



situation. The next section explores some attempts the respondents have made at speaking English with other Koreans.

### *Attempts at Speaking English among Koreans*

Often interviewees explained that speaking English among Koreans was something that they had tried and failed to do. The reasons for failure varied, but a common answer was, *"Because we are Korean."* Sook-ae, as quoted in above sections, stated that she pushed herself to be confident enough to speak English with non-Koreans but she told another story about speaking with Koreans. The following excerpt shows her feelings about this and also a seeming contradiction:

*I don't like speaking English with Koreans. We're Koreans and it's awkward to speak in English... [But] I don't care what other people think. I was in an English study group...Speaking in English didn't work very well... If I speak English to Koreans, they will think of me arrogant. And people will judge my English skill. I'll be angry and annoyed. I wouldn't want to hear those things. I don't want to be bothered by people who say that. But people are just like that.*

Sook-ae stated earlier that she had confidence but here she says she does not like and feels awkward about speaking English. She then states that she does not care what other people think, but then shows that she does care about what other people think. She says that Koreans' thinking her arrogant and judging her skill will directly result in her feeling angry and annoyed. She also then makes a distinction saying that she does not care what other people *think* but she does not want to be bothered by what they may *say*. Clearly, she finds speaking English around Koreans to be bothersome and not valuable for practicing her English, because it simply *"didn't work very well."* Several other respondents told stories of attempting to form English speaking groups, but in similar ways they usually fell apart

The next excerpt gives the example of an attempt at speaking English among family members that failed. Mrs. Song tried to start practicing English with her daughter on a regular basis:

*My daughter had been to England for 1 year and when she returned home I proposed to her to discuss things in English just for 30 minutes a day. For several days we continued to do that but after that we didn't. Other family members didn't feel comfortable about it... They said "Say things in Korean." Because they couldn't understand. So our promise was broken... In my side, I felt it was very good and useful. And my daughter felt so, too. Anyway we can't do that any longer.*

A mother and daughter decided to speak in English together and felt it "very good and useful." The other family members did not participate, but they stopped the two from their practice. Significant here is not only that the other family members objected to something that did not directly involve them, but also how readily the mother and daughter gave up their pursuit because of this. Mrs. Song stated, "We can't do that any longer," because it was disallowed by family members. In order to keep family peace, English had to stop their 30 minutes of English practice.

Both Mrs. Song and Sook-ae use the word "comfortable" when they discuss the problem with English among Koreans. English causes the discomfort among other people, which seems to be a problem serious enough to cause mothers and daughters to break promises with each other. And with Sook-ae, personal discomfort and annoyance stopped her English practice with other Koreans. L1AS in these situations is so acute that these highly motivated learners of English give up certain practices quite quickly. The next section explores the debilitation attached to L1AS as well as some success stories of modifying this powerful force.

## **7.4 From 'Communication Paralysis' to L1AS Modification**

Chapter 4 on the *Contact Hypothesis* pointed out how the *process* of lowering prejudice involves many stages, which may include changes in *empathy*, *identification*, and *ingroup appraisal*, among others. Many variables are necessarily at play both in the case of prejudice and of WTC. In this section liken lowering prejudice to raising WTC by focusing on a few cases in which subjects speak directly about how they overcame their L1AS problems.

The extracts<sup>27</sup> in this section come from Edwards and Kim (2005) and are included here because several statements pinpoint certain aspects of L1AS that occur when Koreans travel abroad specifically for English study. There is a great popularity and thriving economy based on Koreans traveling abroad in order to improve their English skills, especially in the area of speaking. The irony is that the Koreans often either travel abroad in groups, or meet other Koreans at schools in other countries that have become popular among the Korean community. The newness of the foreign surroundings and the ease and familiarity of the other Koreans who have traveled, may cause the Koreans abroad to spend much of their time among themselves, resulting in many of the same L1AS problems that existed in Korea.

The term *communication paralysis* in this section refers to this phenomenon in which a Korean is so motivated to speak English that they go to such lengths but then continue to be unable to move toward their goal. This most negative result of L1AS remains common among students abroad. Still, some successes can also be found, how L1AS *may* be modified.

#### 7.4.1 Speaker Recognition of L1AS

The following quotes come from university students who had recently returned from studying in the United States with a group of other Korean students. This first student fits the profile shaped by this chapter's quantitative data on L1AS by commenting on speaking in front of different types of people:

*I should speak more freely but it seems more difficult to speak English in front of Korean people. I can talk better in front of [native] teachers but I feel more afraid of speaking in front of my friends...I cannot speak if there's someone who speaks very well.*

This student expresses many key elements of L1AS communication paralysis, beginning with a sense of guilt, and perhaps even shame, shown through the word “*should*.” The student felt that speaking is the better thing to do but that is “*more difficult*” due to a present Korean audience. The student states that speaking in front

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<sup>27</sup> These interviews were conducted in Korean, transcribed and then translated into English.

of friends and especially people with better ability is extremely difficult. Another point to notice here is the recognition that this student has in knowing the cause of the reluctance to speak. Further extracts will support the value of this recognition as a step towards gaining more confidence and lessen the negative effects of L1AS. However this recognition is not uncommon and needs more in order to change WTC.

#### 7.4.2 Comparisons with Other Korean Learners

The success stories that will follow represent a progression from recognition to confidence and then some alleviation of communication paralysis. The following student extract also shows high L1AS but focuses more on one student comparing themselves with other students:

*I compare myself with others a lot, thinking how that person can speak that well, what I should do to be like her. I think at least half of my classmates are better than me... I think I know very little about English. That's why I have little confidence.*

Confidence erodes when this student does not measure well against the others around her. Her focus is not on her own ability or progress except in comparison with others. This reflects what was discussed in chapter 2 about the Korean education system strongly emphasizing relative comparisons with classmates. This student wants to be more like those better speakers but this causes her to speak less.

The next student brings up another point that often appears: the fear of making mistakes in front of the L1 audience. As stated above, striving for perfection is common and the quote below highlights how the fear of being less than perfect can become a major detriment to WTC:

*I have fear. I am in darkness. I pay a lot of attention to other people. I'm afraid of making mistakes. People might talk about my grammar and pronunciation mistakes. I feel that I'm the worst in class.*

The fear of this student is so great as to have him describe it as “*darkness*,” imagining that other people are discussing his grammar and pronunciation mistakes. The last statement, of feeling like “*the worst in the class*,” indicates a sense of shame resulting from negative comparisons. Communication paralysis occurs, leaving students unable to do what they traveled around the world to do.

However, study abroad is also the place where many students not only recognize their paralysis and its causes, but also begin steps to cure it. Interestingly, feeling pity for other paralyzed Korean students came up several times as a signal of progress. The switch in perspective is explored in the next section.

### 7.4.3 New Perspectives

In the above quote the word “*should*” seemed to signal a sense of guilt and shame about students not doing what they traveled so far to do, and below we see sympathy for others not achieving their goals. Possibly they see their own communication paralysis reflected in other students and then become sparked to change themselves:

*I feel sorry for those people who crossed the Pacific Ocean to study English but the only thing that they do is to study in the library. Also I feel sorry for those who are ashamed of their English.*

This student recognizes in others the communication paralysis that will be counterproductive to their goals, and is struck by the irony of going so far to sit in a library. For some, it seems the pity they feel for others helps them to change their perspective on L1AS.

This next and final quote from the study abroad students shows another student who has successfully escaped communication paralysis, recognizes the debilitating shame in others, and also explains more of the internal process behind modifying L1AS:

*I don't want to bet everything on English. I don't follow English, I let English follow me. My life goal is not to speak English well. I want to have a happy and enjoyable life. English is a tool and a medium for that kind of life. Since*

*I'm not a native speaker, I cannot speak perfectly. I'm not ashamed of it. I feel really sorry for those people who are ashamed of their English... If they feel ashamed of their mistakes, I feel sorry for them.*

This student explains several characteristics of having overcome the negative effects of L1AS. The demotion of English as “*my life goal*,” allows the student to reposition English as a *means* or “*tool*” for a happy life as opposed to an ultimate *end*. Next, native speaker proficiency is replaced as a goal and imperfection is accepted without shame, which reduces the fear of mistakes. Finally, the feeling of pity for those still trapped by fear and shame, especially in L1AS situations, distances and perhaps protects the student from those debilitating emotions.

Much of the data in this dissertation suggests that WTC within one individual may fluctuate greatly from situation to situation. Thus, the above is only one student's account of the process through which a different perspective on communicating in English can be gained. This perspective differs from the paralyzing fears of mistakes and judgments, and also the shame felt in front of those from one's own country.

#### 7.4.4 L1 Audience/Authority Support

The force of L1AS in the *other-driven* Korean world makes it unsurprising that if a situation exists in which the L1 audience is supportive of the speaker using English, communication paralysis may be broken more easily. This “authority” support recalls the conditions of CH.

Several respondents also told stories of friends and family being supportive of their English use. Gyun-eun, a wife and mother of two children did not leave Korea until several years after her marriage. She went to Bali on a family vacation and they had a Korean tour guide. She said that often she was able to understand the English being spoken in Bali better than the guide:

*I heard many things and told my tour guide. He didn't catch but I caught and told him and taught him. [other Korean tourists] were surprised... My husband was very proud of me. My children too.*

Gyun-eun's family, along with the other Korean tourists, act as an authority for her in that they are very influential in her life. When they are the audience for her speaking English, their support boosts her WTC significantly. Just as negative judgment, and the fear of negative judgment, from the L1 audience lowers WTC, positive support, and the hope for positive support from the L1 audience raises WTC.

## 7.5 Summary

This chapter on L1AS has presented the quantitative and qualitative findings from my data collection and analysis. The survey data confirmed that on average the participants were more willing than not to communicate in English, however this was only true if no Korean audience was present at the communication event. WTC dropped significantly with the addition of a Korean audience and inequalities in status and English proficiency lowered WTC even more. Even *odds-beaters* with significant previous contact with the non-Korean world reported similar L1AS effects.

The qualitative data delved into the possible reasons for the powerful impact of L1AS and uncovered several aspects of Korean society which seem to play a role in this very common occurrence. Social interaction among Koreans has many traditional rules of conduct that the interviewees reported have a great effect on them. *Chemyon* and *jung*, “face” and “filial piety” are at the core of the *other-driven* character of Korean society, dictating much of social behavior. People are expected to act in certain ways with certain people and according to their relative status. *Wangtta*, “ostracizing,” is the severe consequence for breaking the rules, often just by being different. Speaking English can present a no-win situation in that making mistakes is considered shameful, speaking well is considered arrogant and just speaking at all is considered standing out as different. Out of fear of *wangtta*, many Koreans seem to feel it is safer not to speak English at all, if Koreans are around, despite the social mania to learn the language.

Some interviewees reported occasions in which they overcame L1AS and spoke in front of other Koreans. The process leading up to that seems to involve reappraising Korea's social rules, giving up on becoming a perfect native speaker, and fewer comparisons with other Koreans' abilities. Even so, L1AS seems to keep a stranglehold on most Korean learners of English.

The role given to L1AS in this study has been to group together all the feelings that Koreans have about interacting with each other that may ultimately affect their WTC in English. In the *other-driven* Korean world, sensitivity to other Koreans will often be very high. When the opportunity arises to speak in front of other Koreans, the speakers may be greatly affected by what they expect the audience reaction to be.

Chapter 8 will conclude this dissertation by reviewing the key results for IC and L1AS together. A somewhat quantitative look at the qualitative data will highlight some patterns in the facilitating/debilitating natures of IC and L1AS. Limitations and implications of this research, along with proposals for future study will be explored.



## CHAPTER 8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Summary of the Main Findings

The initial motivation behind this study was to better understand why I often heard Koreans lament that they wanted to speak English better, but in my classrooms I had to battle to keep my students speaking English. “Because we are Korean,” was the common explanation that always perplexed me. For several years before embarking on this research I wondered whether the stated desires for better English were true, or if perhaps some prejudice against English existed deep in the hearts of Korean society. I never, however questioned the intelligence of Korean learners, so I was not surprised to find that this puzzle proved to be very complex.

Looking back on my early puzzlement about students being unwilling to use English, potential prejudices, and Korean society in general, it is also not surprising that I began this study by looking into literature concerning Korea, WTC, and CH. While reviewing this literature it seemed to me that although great strides had been made by many researchers about WTC in L2 learners, very little had been done in the Asian, and specifically Korean, context. Living and teaching in Korea had taught me that Korea was unique in a variety of ways and I often felt that because of the homogeneity of the culture, its historical reputation as the *Hermit Kingdom*, and its many strict social rules, Koreans are perhaps more “intensely Korean” than other groups of people are intensely themselves. Therefore I suspected that Korean WTC should have its own special investigation.

After the completion of my data collection and analysis, I feel I have gained many insights into the puzzle that first intrigued me. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research allowed me to look into both the general patterns that exist across the whole of Korea, and the specific processes that make up such patterns. In regards to the puzzle of why Korean learners seem simultaneously eager and reticent to speak English, two major factors emerged, which I labeled *intercultural complex* and *L1 audience sensitivity*.

Upon further analysis I discovered that each of these factors had two distinct sides; one that had a facilitating effect on WTC and another that was debilitating to WTC. In this concluding chapter I would like to bring together the findings from the

qualitative and quantitative data for both IC and L1AS into a coherent statement about the WTC of Korean learners' of English.

### *The Metaphor of Food*

Toward the end of my analysis of the data, I realized that many things had changed from my original perspectives on this study. As a way to help myself understand this project and its findings as a whole, I looked for a metaphor that could bring these ideas together. The idea of food came to mind. A metaphor highlights the similarities between two things, while ignoring the differences, in an attempt to clarify unfamiliar concepts with a subject familiar to everyone. Below are some of the similarities I found between the subject of this study and food.

**Table 8.1 Metaphorical Similarities between This Study and Food**

| <b>Food</b>  | <b>This Study</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Nutritional Health</b><br>In order to live as healthy a life as possible a person's nutritional health plays a vital role. Different people put differing amounts of importance on the influence of nutrition on quality of life.                 | <b>Willingness to Communicate</b><br>In order to learn a second language as well as possible, a learner's WTC plays a vital role. Different people put differing amounts of importance on the influence of WTC on second language acquisition. |
| <b>Food from Plants and Animals</b><br>One way of observing factors that influence nutritional health is to look at the effects caused by food from plants and the effects caused by food from animals.  | <b>Intercultural Complex and L1 Audience Sensitivity</b><br>One way of observing factors that influence WTC is to look at the effects caused by IC and the effects caused by L1AS.   |
| <b>Alternative perspectives</b><br>There are other ways to observe nutritional health, for example by the division of the five food groups or by vitamins and minerals.  | <b>Alternative perspectives</b><br>There are other ways to observe WTC, for example with the pyramid from MacIntyre et al. (1998), or Yashima's (2002) L2 Communication Model.   |
| <b>Facilitation and Debilitation</b><br>Foods from both plants and animals can either enhance or detract from nutritional health.  | <b>Facilitation and Debilitation</b><br>Both IC and L1AS can either enhance or detract from WTC.   |
| <b>Nutritional Health fluctuations</b><br>While an individual can be said to generally have good nutritional health, the quality of that health can fluctuate fairly rapidly, to the point of a single bad meal potentially causing serious illness. | <b>WTC fluctuations</b><br>While an individual L2 learner can be said to have high WTC, the level of that WTC can fluctuate, to the point of a certain contact situation causing temporary or lasting effects.                                 |

The key points from Table 8.1 are that IC and L1AS can have both facilitating and debilitating effects on WTC, and that WTC fluctuates intrapersonally. As I continue to summarize the findings of this study I will make the case that the dual nature of these factors may help to explain the fluctuating nature of WTC. Everyone understands how a person's intake of food affects them on a meal-to-meal

basis, and the findings of this study illustrate how the attitudes and behaviors of language learners have similar effects on their WTC.

### *Quantitative Findings*

While secondary to the qualitative portion of this study, the findings from the quantitative data analysis outline patterns in Korean WTC, and the qualitative analysis later details the underlying processes which seem to produce these patterns. Table 8.2 displays a summary of findings for both IC and L1AS which appeared in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively. They are brought together here to show the coherence within the WTC phenomenon. Table 8.2 is divided into columns explaining what was discovered about the 4200+ participants in the survey, about WTC in general, and specifically how the participants responded about WTC situations.

**Table 8.2 Summary of Quantitative Findings Concerning both IC and L1AS**

| About Participants  | About WTC  | About Participants' WTC  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer than 10% of those surveyed have five or more non-Korean friends</li> <li>• Fewer than 10% of those surveyed have more than 10 weeks experience traveling abroad</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positively linked to international friendship</li> <li>• Positively linked to international travel</li> <li>• Negatively linked to fear of making L2 mistakes</li> <li>• Negatively linked to L2 communication anxiety</li> <li>• Not linked to fear of national identity loss</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On average, participants were more likely than not to speak in English with no Korean audience present</li> <li>• Those surveyed with higher non-Korean contact* exhibit higher WTC</li> <li>• Introducing a Korean audience to communication events lowers WTC, even for those with higher non-Korean contact</li> <li>• The social status and perceived L2 ability of the audience further affects WTC</li> </ul> |

\*Higher non-Korean contact is represented by five or more non-Korean friends and/or more than 10 weeks travel abroad

The summary of findings presented in Table 8.2 shows how the quantitative data analysis determined that only a small percentage (approximately 10%) of the participants had any significant contact with the non-Korean world. While this is not surprising, it offers a picture of one segment of the Korean population. This finding fits with why English for communicative purposes is often not stressed in the school system despite the nation's efforts at reform. While the youth of the participants

limits the time they had to gain contact experiences, this data shows the characteristics of the young Korean population, and what the first 20 or so years of life in the Korean world produces in terms of WTC.

Table 8.2 also presents findings specific to WTC in terms of how it is related to non-Korean contact. The data strongly supported the idea that higher levels of contact with the non-Korean world raise WTC. Also, fear of making L2 mistakes, along with feelings of anxiety and apprehension towards communicating in English, are linked with lower WTC. While these findings are not surprising, they highlight different factors that raise and lower WTC.

For years I often heard Koreans speak about how English could squash the Korean language and hurt Korean people's sense of being Korean. These results, however, did not show as strong a link between loss of national identity and low WTC as I would have expected. This finding heightened my attention toward the other factors and led me to think that the collision between the Korean and the non-Korean worlds must be a very complex issue, which led me to investigate what I termed Intercultural Complex.

The final column in Table 8.2 focuses on how having a Korean audience present affects Koreans speaking English. The first point, however, is that the participants responded that they would be somewhat more likely than not to speak with a non-Korean, as long as no other Koreans were present. Although upon reflection this fits with my experiences, I was surprised because I so often met with reticence toward speaking English. I agreed with what Koreans often say about fear of foreigners and or the English language. Only after embarking on this research did I notice the importance of the L1 audience. This first point also makes sense of all the interest in English and the non-Korean world that puzzled me for years. Many Koreans have desire and even willingness to speak English, if they can be away from other Koreans.

Of course there were differences in WTC even with no L1 audience. Approximately 10% of those surveyed had high non-Korean contact experiences. They were compared with the remainder of the participants, and were found to have significantly higher WTC. However, the addition of the L1 audience lowered WTC in a uniform manner across all the participants. So, WTC did not remain constant, based on contact experiences, it fluctuated based on who the speaker was speaking in front of. Differences in the audience's social status and L2 ability continued to lower

WTC, and in the same manner for the different groups. Although the high-travel group deviated slightly from this, a uniform, descending pattern emerged.

The pattern showed that WTC was highest with no L1 audience present, and then lowered with an audience of equal status and equal L2 ability. Interestingly it dropped again when the audience's status and ability dropped. That is to say, the participants were less willing to talk in front of their "subordinates" than their "equals." WTC then hit its lowest level with an audience of "superior" status and ability. The data in Chapter 7 goes into the details of mixing, for example, higher status with lower ability, but the patterns remain uniform throughout. Together, the findings in Table 8.2 show that the participants, on average, are willing to speak English. Also, while contact with the non-Korean world, the core of IC, seems to raise WTC significantly, it still does not make potential speakers immune to the power of L1AS, which continues to work in relatively the same way, on all speakers.

The qualitative findings of this study take on the investigation of what processes might be at play behind the phenomenon found in the quantitative data. The pool of interviewees seemed to have "beaten the odds" and gained a rare level of WTC, enough to volunteer for a long interview in English. Many of them also speak English regularly among other Koreans. Their stories lend insight into how that occurred in their lives, and the specific attitudes and behaviors at work. The analysis shows how this qualitative data can also fit under the categories of IC and L1AS, and within other research on Willingness to Communicate and the Contact Hypothesis.

### *Qualitative Findings*

The qualitative, and primary, portion of this study investigated the relationships with English that certain Koreans had. The interviewees were selected because they had somehow been able to beat the odds and become proficient and willing enough to use English often and in many situations. My hope was to discover patterns in the processes through which they gained their WTC.

Chapters 6 and 7 presented extracts from the interviewees' stories, organized thematically under the factors IC and L1AS, and also under categories such as *han* and *wangtta*, which related the extracts to important aspects of Korean society. The analysis of these extracts, then, helped to show the link between the norms of an

entire society and the linguistic moment when an L2 learner decides whether or not to speak.

In order to introduce this summary of the qualitative findings of this study, I will make use of a display which I used in the analysis of interview transcripts. Because Chapter 6 and 7 discussed IC and L1AS separately, I will also use other displays to help summarize the qualitative findings for both factors together.

Table 8.3 shows the format through which I collected recurring themes from the interviews, categorized them into a matrix, and noted specific common aspects about each. Explaining Table 8.3 highlights several key findings.

**Table 8.3 Overview Matrix: Format for The Organization of Recurring Themes**

|                         |                  |               |   | Focus        |                  |      |       |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|---|--------------|------------------|------|-------|
| Factors influencing WTC | Major Components | Effect on WTC |   | Korean World | Non-Korean World | Self | Other |
| IC                      | Attitudes        | Facilitating  | R<br>E<br>C<br>U<br>R<br>R<br>I<br>N<br>G<br><br>T<br>H<br>E<br>M<br>E<br>S |              |                  |      |       |
|                         |                  | Debilitating  |   |              |                  |      |       |
|                         | Behaviors        | Facilitating  |   |              |                  |      |       |
|                         |                  | Debilitating  |   |              |                  |      |       |
| L1AS                    | Attitudes        | Facilitating  |   |              |                  |      |       |
|                         |                  | Debilitating  |   |              |                  |      |       |
|                         | Behaviors        | Facilitating  |   |              |                  |      |       |
|                         |                  | Debilitating  |   |              |                  |      |       |

Reading the matrix from the far left, two major factors were found to have a profound effect on WTC, which I termed Intercultural Complex and L1 Audience Sensitivity. The double line between them represents how they are distinct from each other. IC concerns the collision between the Korean and the non-Korean worlds, while L1AS concerns interaction only within the Korean world. The next column, however, shows that both factors share the same major components of attitudes and behaviors. These components were then found to have dual effects on WTC. Some attitudes and/or behaviors seemed to facilitate WTC, while others debilitated it. The next column lists the many recurring themes that emerged from the transcripts. In terms of analysis chronology, it was usually easiest to code extracts as attitudes or behaviors first, then see if they seemed to facilitate or debilitate WTC. Only later

could they be placed under certain theme categories and finally under IC or L1AS. Certainly an amount of overlap was often found (see Table 8.4).

The question of what differentiates facilitation from debilitation became quite complex when, for example, the attraction toward being like a native English speaker lowered WTC, or rejection of Korean society raised it. Although further research will of course be necessary, the remainder of Table 8.3 shows some results from this study.

For IC, some of the recurring themes focused on the Korean world, some on the non-Korean world, and some on both. Interestingly, the attitudes that focused on both, that is a direct comparison between the two worlds, were found to be most debilitating. The more facilitating attitudes and behaviors focused more on one world or the other.

For L1AS, I looked at whether the attitudes and behaviors focused more on the self, or on others. Again a pattern emerged in that far more of the facilitating attitudes and behaviors focused on the self, while focus on others tended to be more debilitating. Together with the IC findings, it seems that there is a pattern wherein focusing on one's country or self, as opposed to other countries or other people, has greater benefit to WTC. However the issue is not simple. A closer look at the specific attitudes and behaviors which recurred shows a great complexity.

Table 8.4 lists the 40 most recurring attitudes and behaviors found in all interview transcripts, placed into the categories discussed above. Obvious overlap occurs in some places, but care was taken to keep the distinctions as clear as possible. A key point to notice, as mentioned above, is the seeming contradictions. For example, "strong nationalism" and "lack of patriotism," both appear under "Debilitating Attitudes" of IC. The reason is that some interviewees reported that they felt less compelled to speak English when they felt Korea was or should be superior to other countries. Other respondents did not want to use English because they felt no reason to talk with others as a representative of a weak nation.

**Table 8.4 Clustering of Recurring Facilitating and Debilitating Attitudes and Behaviors in IC and L1AS**

|             | Facilitating  |   | Debilitating  |  |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|
|             | Attitudes   | Behaviors   | Attitudes   | Behaviors  |
| <b>IC</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attraction to non-Korean world</li> <li>• Attraction to L2s, especially English</li> <li>• Pride in Korea</li> <li>• Desire for Korea to be better known</li> <li>• Positive view of Korea's world reputation</li> <li>• Negativity towards Korea</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traveling abroad</li> <li>• Seeking non-Korean relationships</li> <li>• Studying English voluntarily</li> <li>• Joining international activities</li> <li>• Reappraising Korea's world status</li> <li>• Spreading religion</li> <li>• Promoting Korea</li> <li>• Rejecting Korea</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inferiority to other countries [Japan/the West]</li> <li>• Feeling geographically/economically/militarily "small"</li> <li>• Xenophobia/Prejudice</li> <li>• Feelings of persecution</li> <li>• Anger towards English</li> <li>• Strong nationalism</li> <li>• Lack of patriotism</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejection of Korean identity</li> <li>• Rejection of non-Korean norms</li> <li>• Discriminating against or Avoiding non-Koreans</li> <li>• Stopping English study</li> </ul>                                  |
| <b>L1AS</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of Koreans' WTC problems</li> <li>• Acceptance of personal language limitations</li> <li>• Knowledge &amp; tolerance of non-Korean social interaction</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact with mixed Korean/non-Korean groups</li> <li>• Reappraisal of Korean social interaction norms</li> <li>• Evaluating L2 progress primarily on personal achievement</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for Native-level English</li> <li>• Fear of L2 mistakes</li> <li>• Fear of being seen as arrogant</li> <li>• Fear of breaking social rules</li> <li>• Fear of being seen as different</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low self-evaluation of English ability</li> <li>• Frequent negative comparison with others' English</li> <li>• Avoiding/limiting English among Koreans</li> <li>• Strict adherence to social norms</li> </ul> |

The contradictions in Table 8.4 can be further understood through a case-by-case analysis of the interviewees' responses.



**Table 8.5 Case-by-Case Matrix: Selected Statements Made in First Interviews**

| Selected Common Statements                  | Interviewee Code |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | Totals Out of 15 |
|---|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|
|   | A                | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O |                  |
| Feeling national inferiority or persecution | •                | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 15               |
| Awareness of Korean's WTC problems          | •                | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |   | • | • | • | 14               |
| Desire for Korea to be better known         | •                | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |   | • | • | • | • | • | 14               |
| Low self-evaluation of English ability      |                  | • | • | • | • | • |   | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 13               |
| Acceptance of personal language limitations | •                | • | • | • |   |   | • | • | • | • | • |   | • | • | • | 12               |
| Avoiding English among other Koreans        |                  |   | • |   | • | • |   | • |   |   | • |   | • | • | • | 8                |
| Anger toward English                        |                  | • | • | • | • | • |   |   |   |   | • |   | • | • |   | 8                |
| Stopping studying English                   |                  | • | • | • |   |   |   |   |   |   | • | • | • | • |   | 7                |
| Fear of being seen as different             |                  |   |   |   | • | • |   |   |   |   | • |   | • | • |   | 5                |
| Positive view of Korea's world reputation   | •                |   |   |   |   | • | • |   | • |   |   |   |   |   |   | 4                |
| Rejection of Korean identity                |                  |   | • |   |   |   |   |   |   | • |   |   | • |   | • | 4                |
| Desire to spread religion                   |                  |   |   |   |   |   | • | • |   | • |   |   |   |   |   | 3                |

|             | Interviewee | Code |           | Interviewee | Code |
|-------------|-------------|------|-----------|-------------|------|
| Exploratory | Prof. Yun   | A    | World Cup | Mrs. Song   | H    |
|             | Prof. Chul  | B    |           | Gyun-eun    | I    |
|             | Sally       | C    |           | Kyoung-tae  | J    |
|             | Dan         | D    |           | Sun-Hye     | K    |
|             | Jung-min    | E    |           | Ms. Ko      | L    |
|             | Sun-jung    | F    |           | Jin-eun     | M    |
|             |             |      |           | Sara        | N    |
|             |             |      |           | Sook-Ae     | O    |

Table 8.5 shows how many and which interviewees made statements on particular points. The points were selected not simply because of their high frequency, and in fact some very frequently mentioned comments do not appear in this table. Instead, comments significant to this project are shown in this table, in hopes of displaying patterns that emerged from the data. The table shows the most frequently expressed points at the top of the table. The table also reveals certain characteristics of individual interviewees, however the table's main purpose here is to quantify some of the qualitative data and thus display some emergent patterns.

The most frequently mentioned topics are at the top of the table, showing that these odds-beaters most often commented on feelings of Korean weakness, desire for more renown, and an awareness of WTC problems. Much more research is necessary to investigate the patterns suggested here.

Table 8.6 displays a content analysis of the 15 first interviews<sup>28</sup>. Only the first round of World Cup interviews were used because that allows for approximately equal time in all interviews. Also the first interview questions were similar for both groups, unlike the following World Cup rounds of interviews. Table 8.6 lists the number of facilitating and debilitating comments, and the ratio between them, for both IC and L1AS, for all interviews. No differentiation between attitudes and behaviors was made because the focus here is facilitation and debilitation.

<sup>28</sup> The two non-Korean interviewees were excluded

**Table 8.6 Case-by-Case Matrix: Content Analysis of Facilitating and Debilitating Comments from all First Interviews\***

| Exploratory | Interviewee | IC + | IC - | +/- ratio | L1AS + | L1AS - | +/- ratio |
|-------------|-------------|------|------|-----------|--------|--------|-----------|
|             | Prof. Yun   | 4    | 3    | 1.3 : 1   | 4      | 0      | $\infty$  |
|             | Prof. Chul  | 7    | 5    | 1.4 : 1   | 4      | 2      | 2.0 : 1   |
|             | Sally       | 21   | 9    | 2.3 : 1   | 6      | 5      | 1.2 : 1   |
|             | Dan         | 9    | 5    | 1.8 : 1   | 5      | 3      | 1.7 : 1   |
|             | Jung-min    | 11   | 8    | 1.4 : 1   | 5      | 3      | 1.7 : 1   |
|             | Sun-jung    | 17   | 4    | 4.3 : 1   | 1      | 1      | 1         |
|             | Subtotal    | 69   | 34   | 2.0 : 1   | 25     | 14     | 1.7 : 1   |
| World Cup   | Mrs. Ang    | 13   | 2    | 6.5 : 1   | 6      | 1      | 6.0 : 1   |
|             | Mrs. Song   | 12   | 3    | 4.0 : 1   | 0      | 4      | 0         |
|             | Gyun-eun    | 17   | 2    | 8.5 : 1   | 3      | 0      | $\infty$  |
|             | Kyoung-tae  | 12   | 6    | 2.0 : 1   | 3      | 0      | $\infty$  |
|             | Sun-Hye     | 8    | 5    | 1.6 : 1   | 0      | 1      | 0         |
|             | Ms. Ko      | 2    | 3    | 0.7 : 1   | 0      | 1      | 0         |
|             | Jin-eun     | 14   | 6    | 2.3 : 1   | 0      | 4      | 0         |
|             | Sara        | 13   | 8    | 1.6 : 1   | 0      | 2      | 0         |
|             | Sook-Ae     | 13   | 2    | 6.5 : 1   | 5      | 0      | $\infty$  |
|             | Subtotal    | 104  | 37   | 2.8 : 1   | 17     | 13     | 1.3 : 1   |
| Total       |             | 173  | 71   | 2.4 : 1   | 42     | 27     | 1.6 : 1   |

\* +/- refer to facilitating/debilitating effects on WTC

The criteria for selecting an excerpt to be counted in one of the categories were based on questions concerning comments in the interview transcripts:

- Does the excerpt clearly reflect attitudes and/or behaviors of the interviewee?
- Does the excerpt clearly reflect the characteristics of either IC or L1AS?
- Does the excerpt clearly relate to facilitation or debilitation of WTC in terms of either IC or L1AS?

The quantification of this qualitative data is not meant to achieve true statistical results, however it helps to uncover patterns in the data, many of which were unexpected. Table 8.6 also offers an overview of the 15 interviewees whose stories are the heart of this study. Counting lent me a certain objectivity and I was often surprised to see the results for particular people that I had incorrectly remembered as making more facilitating or debilitating statements than they actually did.

First glance at Table 8.6 shows there were far more comments made about IC than L1AS, which was not at all unexpected in light of the rarity that most Koreans opt to speak English in each other's presence. It was also not surprising that on average there were more facilitating than debilitating comments. Overall, in terms of

IC, for every 1 debilitating statement that was made, 2.4 facilitating statements were made. The interviewees then, were approximately two and a half times more likely to say something positive than negative about the collision of the Korean and non-Korean worlds. In terms of L1AS they were 1.6 times more likely to make a positive statement.

Table 8.6 is not an attempt to compare the Exploratory interviewees with those of the World Cup, but subtotals for each group do show a difference in the IC+/- ratios. The Exploratory group has a 2:1 ratio while the World Cup group is 2.8 to 1. This is perhaps due to a variety of reasons including the fact that the World Cup interviews took place during the excitement just prior to the opening of the event.

More interesting, however, is looking at individual cases, and how all of them have a mixture of positive and negative things to say concerning IC and L1AS. Chapters 6 and 7 present extracts from all these interviews to explore certain themes connected to Korean society and its relation to WTC, but Table 8.6 offers insights into the individuals, which are also telling. For example, the far right column shows the L1AS +/- ratio and four cases are listed as infinity. These four interviewees indeed seemed the most relaxed and enthusiastic about speaking English in any situation. Similarly, those with the highest IC ratios tended to be the most gregarious.

Of all the ratios presented only one, Ms. Ko, is under 1 to 1, and she was reluctant from the start and could not be reached for her second and third interviews. Another interesting case is Kyoung-tae who has a below average ratio in IC but infinity in L1AS. As her extracts attest, she spoke English quite fluently and took every opportunity to use it. Her low IC ratio stems from the negative things she had to say about the Korean world. This however spurred her further in her pursuit of speaking more English.

Table 8.6 suggests that a process is at work beneath these “odds-beaters,” in which facilitating and debilitating attitudes and behaviors work in concert with each other at an approximate 2 to 1 ratio. While some cases, Gyun-eun for example, go as high as 8.5 to 1, almost none dip below an even 1 to 1. The odds-beaters have a mix of positive and negative statements to make about IC and L1AS, but they tip the scales toward the positive side.

### *World Cup Findings*

Much of the findings from the World Cup interviews have already been reported. That longitudinal series of interviews was initially designed to track the effects of this large-scale event on a group of odds-beaters. Although this did not end up being the center of this study, some interesting findings did emerge. Table 8.7 displays the quantification of facilitating and debilitating comments for selected World Cup interviewees. For comparison's sake the data from the first interviews, conducted immediately before the 2002 World Cup and presented in Table 8.6, is presented again along with data from the second interviews which took place after the games. Ratios of facilitating to debilitating comments can then be compared.

**Table 8.7 Comparison of Comments from First and Second World Cup Interviews**

|              | <b>First Interviews</b> |             |                  |               |               |                  |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
|              | <b>IC +</b>             | <b>IC -</b> | <b>+/- Ratio</b> | <b>L1AS +</b> | <b>L1AS -</b> | <b>+/- Ratio</b> |
| Mrs. Song    | 12                      | 3           | 4.0 : 1          | 0             | 4             | 0                |
| Gyun-eun     | 17                      | 2           | 8.5 : 1          | 3             | 0             | $\infty$         |
| Kyoung-tae   | 12                      | 6           | 2.0 : 1          | 3             | 0             | $\infty$         |
| Jin-eun      | 14                      | 6           | 2.3 : 1          | 0             | 4             | 0                |
| Sara         | 13                      | 8           | 1.6 : 1          | 0             | 2             | 0                |
| Sook-Ae      | 13                      | 2           | 6.5 : 1          | 5             | 0             | $\infty$         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>81</b>               | <b>29</b>   | <b>2.8:1</b>     | <b>11</b>     | <b>10</b>     | <b>1.1:1</b>     |

|              | <b>Second Interviews</b> |             |                  |               |               |                  |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
|              | <b>IC +</b>              | <b>IC -</b> | <b>+/- Ratio</b> | <b>L1AS +</b> | <b>L1AS -</b> | <b>+/- Ratio</b> |
| Mrs. Song    | 11                       | 4           | 2.8:1            | 3             | 0             | $\infty$         |
| Gyun-eun     | 22                       | 2           | 11:1             | 0             | 0             | 0                |
| Kyoung-tae   | 2                        | 4           | 0.5:1            | 0             | 0             | 0                |
| Jin-eun      | 5                        | 13          | 0.4:1            | 0             | 0             | 0                |
| Sara         | 4                        | 3           | 1.3:1            | 0             | 3             | 0                |
| Sook-Ae      | 18                       | 4           | 4.5:1            | 0             | 1             | 0                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>62</b>                | <b>30</b>   | <b>2.1 : 1</b>   | <b>3</b>      | <b>4</b>      | <b>0.75 : 1</b>  |

Perhaps the most startling comparison comes from L1AS, in that despite the World Cup being a unique and grand collision of the Korean and non-Korean worlds, and despite Korea's great success in the games and as co-host, both L1AS facilitating and debilitating comments dropped in number by more than half and to zero for most

interviewees. Only Mrs. Song made any positive L1AS comments, all concerning the trip to Europe she took right after the games with a group of Korean travelers.

Not too much should be made of the low number count because the second interviews focused on the time between the two interviews whereas the first interview covered the participants entire lives. Still it is noteworthy that no great jump in L1AS comments occurred in these participants after the World Cup games. In terms of IC comments the overall numbers also dropped and that may also not be of great significance, however the individual cases do show some interesting results.

Mrs. Song, Gyun-eun, and Sook-ae, all continued to lean heavily toward making more positive comments. Gyun-eun and Sook-ae both had very positive volunteering experiences, which surpassed their already positive expectations, and the numbers in Table 8.7 reflect that. Sara had high hopes for her volunteering experience but they fell short and she spoke with very few non-Koreans during the games. Her disappointment shows in her IC+, and IC-, numbers dropping sharply. Jin-eun had planned to volunteer in the games but then decided to quit. Her disappointment in herself, which she stated, also shows in her sharp rise in IC- comments. Kyoung-tae, who stated her very low interest in the World Cup had fewer IC comments in general and they leaned more toward IC-.

I take the data in Table 8.7 to show the power of expectation. Positive expectations, which were met, are reflected in stable positive numbers. Exceeded expectations cause a strong jump and unmet expectations cause a significant decline. This method of analysis, again, is not statistically based but does show some trends in these participants. Also it reflects on the effects of the World Cup. While such an event may affect different people in different ways, much of it is based on the individuals' expectations. Still however, L1AS seems immune to even a very positive, nationwide contact experience.

### *Overview of findings*

Many of the 40 common themes listed in Table 8.4 could be grouped under some of the aspects of Korean society that were discussed in earlier chapters. Table 8.8 lists five of those aspects and relates them to findings related to IC and L1AS.

**Table 8.8 Summary in Terms of Key Aspects of Korean Society**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <i>Han</i>     | “Regret” over Korea’s past and even present situation; a sense of inferiority and sometimes shame. This is at the heart of IC in that <i>han</i> can be seen as a direct result of the collision of the Korean and non-Korean worlds.  |
| <i>Jung</i>    | “Filial piety” that exists among those in close relationships including family, friendships, work, school, and region. <i>Jung</i> is characterized by the duty one feels towards one’s intimates. Because of its effect on social interaction it is one of the roots of L1AS.   |
| <i>Chemyon</i> | “Social face” that must be maintained by acting in ways appropriate to one’s social position. While similar to <i>jung</i> in terms of duty, <i>chemyon</i> concerns social position beyond intimate relationships. Keeping <i>chemyon</i> is another root of L1AS.  |
| <i>Wangtta</i> | “Ostracizing” which occurs when someone breaks social norms such as <i>jung</i> and <i>chemyon</i> and becomes an outcast from a particular group. While often linked with interaction in school, the threat of <i>wangtta</i> seems to hover over Koreans of all ages. This threat seems to heighten the sensitivity in L1AS. |
| Ambivalence    | Whether in the dichotomy between desire and willingness to communicate, or in the facilitating/debilitating nature of both IC and L1AS, “opposite forces” often seem to pull at Korean learners of English.  |

Together, the different aspects of Korean society listed in Table 8.8 explain some of the processes underlying IC and L1AS by outlining attitudes and behaviors that are typical of Korea and the consequences of being seen as atypical. In short, a Korean person may often feel the threat of being cast out of a group for acting differently. Because deciding to speak English is seen as atypical behavior, it can be easily seen as risky behavior. Table 8.8 then highlights how the social norms of a particular group can be directly linked to a particular L2 linguistic moment.

Table 8.9 summarizes the findings of this study differently than Table 8.8 by focusing not on aspects of Korean society but instead directly on the two factors which emerged from and were labeled in this research.

**Table 8.9 Summary in Terms of IC and L1AS**

|      |  |
|------|--|
| IC   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ IC fluctuates intrapersonally</li> <li>▪ Overall, a high level of contact with the non-Korean world in terms of travel and friendship seems to heighten WTC.</li> <li>▪ Negative IC effects seem to stem from the subject comparing Korea poorly with other nations</li> <li>▪ Positive IC effects seem to stem from positive reappraisal of Korea's world status</li> </ul>  |
| L1AS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ L1AS fluctuates intrapersonally</li> <li>▪ Overall, the presence of other Koreans during an English communication event significantly lowers WTC, even among those with high levels of non-Korean contact.</li> <li>▪ Negative L1AS effects seem to stem from the subject comparing themselves poorly with other Koreans.</li> <li>▪ Positive L1AS effects seem to stem from subjects reappraising Korean social norms and/or not comparing themselves with others</li> </ul> |

Comparison between Korea and other nations is at the root of IC, and how Korea fares in that comparison determines the positive/negative fluctuations. High contact with the non-Korean world helps IC to lean toward the positive, promoting WTC. Comparison between an individual Korean speaker of English and other Korean people present is at the root of L1AS. Even though any audience lowers WTC, inequalities in status and perceived English competence drop it even more. Reappraisal of Korean social norms and refraining from comparisons may lessen the harmful effects of L1AS but it seems few speakers may be completely immune.

The factors IC and L1AS highlight how comparisons of one's nation and oneself may result in lowering the willingness to risk L2 communication, and reappraisal of one's society and oneself, often as a consequence of outgroup contact, may raise WTC. The complexities of this phenomenon are deep but most certainly the findings of this study strongly tie Korean society to Korean WTC in English.

### *The Threat from Within: Findings from a CH Perspective*

This research project began with many of the ideas that came from the *Contact Hypothesis* literature. Here at the end of the findings I would like to come full circle and look at those findings from a CH perspective. Several key terms mentioned in Chapter 4 can be used in reference to the findings of this study, however, now at the end of this project I find I have not arrived where I expected.



When I approached this project I suspected that Koreans harbored something similar to prejudice against English, perhaps because it threatened their identity, and this was the cause of their low WTC. Hamburger and Hewstone (1997) made the distinction between *subtle* and *blatant prejudice*, and one characteristic of *blatant prejudice* was a “perceived threat from the rejection of the outgroup” (p.174).

As I began my data collection, I heard many stories from my *odds-beater* interviewees that reminded me of other CH terms, and during data analysis, I found the emergent patterns also reflected a CH perspective. For example, the *reappraisal* the *odds-beaters* went through over time often involved *deprovincialization*, seeing that the “Korean way” was not the “only way.” Travel experiences often fostered *perceived variability* among outgroup members, meaning the *odds-beaters* began to see non-Koreans as multifarious and not just as a lump of foreigners. Friendships often helped *cross-group empathy* and *identification*. *Anxiety* seemed to hinder WTC as much as it was found in the CH literature to keep *prejudice* alive.

The major difference from what I had expected is that I find now that in terms of Korean WTC, the “perceived threat from rejection” does not come from the *outgroup* but from the *ingroup*. The treatment is the same, but the ailment is opposite; it comes from within and not from without. Interestingly, this seems to also be a key to becoming an *odds-beater*; realizing that the threat to WTC does not come as much from the English language or the outside world, but instead it comes from the “threat of rejection” from the Korean world. Those that realize this and somehow strive to manage this threat, end up on the “treatment path,” even if not the “cure path.”

## 8.1 Implications of the study

Looking at the overall results of this study, it is my hope that it can contribute to the ongoing research in the area of L2 WTC and specifically to raising awareness toward the great importance of understanding how every unique society may bring very unique conditions to L2 communication situations.

Also, the use of the insights from CH leads me to a hope that this study may encourage bringing in research from social psychology and perhaps other fields to better understand WTC in second language acquisition in different contexts

In terms of English language learning in Korea, I hope this study can raise awareness for both students and educators about WTC. It is my feeling that Koreans interested in language learning focus so heavily on proficiency levels and fear of foreigners that they do not look carefully at the anxiety the non-Korean world causes for learners. This oversight may allow fear-filled environments to continue in classrooms and among any group of Koreans when the opportunity to communicate in English arises.

### *Practical Strategies to Increase WTC*

Perhaps this study can encourage English teachers to take serious measures to modify classroom environments, for example by disallowing peer laughter and ridicule toward those brave enough to speak. Teachers punishing students for their mistakes should also be curbed. Emphasizing that it is okay to make mistakes in English and that it is also okay to show good ability would make for very different classrooms. However this would need to be done on a policy level, making certain behavior against the rules, because centuries of social influence will not disappear with mere suggestions or encouragement.

Travel is of course cost-prohibitive in many situations, but this study's highlighting of non-Korean travel and friendship could encourage more use of means such as the internet, as suggested in the CH literature, to allow Korean learners of English contact with people from the non-Korean world. Again, such contact should include Korean audience members of varied status and proficiency instead of just lone, anonymous individuals staring at a computer screen. I have implemented such ideas at my university in the form of cyber discussions with video links projected on large screen TVs with mixed audiences at different venues. They have proven to be quite successful in encouraging WTC.

English language classrooms in Korea would perhaps also do well to teach English in ways which also celebrate Korea as having a valued place in the global

community and encouraging learners to create a vivid global identity and not only a Korean one. Reappraisal of the Korean world could also be taught with approaches that focus on *different* ways of doing things, not *better* or *worse* ways of doing things.

The reality of the university entrance exam in Korea is one that is not apt to radically change in the near future. The mania surrounding the exam needs to be managed in ways that do not foster the levels of fear that now exist. With the help of technologies such as voice analysis software and again video conferencing, more communicative aspects of English could be made part of the exam encouraging teachers and students to put more focus skills that help WTC.

The *odds-beaters* in this study offer some practical strategies that could be helpful to other language learners. As mentioned previously many of the interviewees in this study told how *reappraisal* of both Korea and themselves as individuals helped them feel more comfortable and willing to use English. “*I’m not a native speaker. I cannot speak perfectly [and] I’m not ashamed of it,*” are words that could be an effective mantra for other learners and teachers of English in Korea. Frequent repetition of such ideas could help change the way so many learners feel about English.

A related strategy that could be implemented on both a small and a large scale could be the use of *role models*. Many of the *odds-beaters* in this study told stories of key figures in their past which greatly influenced them. For example, Sally told of a girl in her elementary school who had been abroad and spoke English well. This girl had a lasting impact on her language learning. Starting with parents and teachers, role models with high WTC could help others by not accentuating the fear which is often associated with English. Celebrities who have learned English could also be used to reach great numbers of people through the media. A key element with role models could be incorporating the above idea of *no shame over imperfection*, instead of holding up highly proficient role models that have reached the rarely attainable.

These things, along with solid teaching of other basic language skills can hopefully produce a next generation of Korean learners of English with less fear and more agility in the lingua franca. The contribution of this study will hopefully raise awareness of the complexities and importance of WTC, as well as catalyze further research in this area.

### *The Uniqueness of Korea Revisited*

Chapter 1 of this dissertation included a section outlining what I have found to be the major differences between Korea and other countries, most specifically China and Japan, in terms of the social forces at work on learners' WTC. The introduction mentioned that the differences may be mainly of degree but this section will sketch some more specifics in order to clarify how this research found Korea to be.

First, to reiterate, English learners from China and Japan have been found to have comparatively low WTC relative to the focus on learning the language (Wen and Clement, 2003, Yashima, 2002, 2004). Similar to in Korea, much of English education is based on rote memorization with little focus on communication. Both Yashima and Wen and Clement discuss how students are often found to be reluctant to speak both in class and in public. Both also mention how these Far Eastern societies are very *other-directed* in that it is common for people to regulate their behavior significantly based on what they imagine other nationals might think of them. Fear of making mistakes stands out as a great hindrance to communication in all three societies. Although comparison of these three cultures is not the focus of this study, I would state that Korea, China, and Japan could be seen as more similar than different in these regards, especially from a non-East Asian perspective.

Still, I strongly feel that Korea does have its own uniqueness, and that much of it comes in the form of intensity of degree of some of the elements mentioned above. The findings of this research show that *fear of mistakes* and *communication anxiety* significantly lower Korean learners' WTC. Also key social elements highlighted in this study, especially *chemyon*, *jung*, and *wangtta*, could be grouped under *other-directedness* because they concern rules of social behavior and the consequences for breaking those rules. I posit that these elements may be somewhat more intense in Korea than in either China or Japan.

Certainly, much more hard research would be needed before any hard claims could be made but I base this assertion on what I have observed and heard over many years from Koreans, Chinese, Japanese, and non-Koreans. The common perception is that Korea has many social behavior rules which are more strict than elsewhere. My qualitative data collection for this research project included interviews with two

women from China and Japan, both of whom support this claim. They spoke of how bizarre they found many Korean social practices. In particular they noted that gender roles in Korea are far less liberal than in their countries, and they found it distasteful how women were often treated unequally. Korean friendship practices were also noted by both to be quite strange to them because Koreans generally do not consider people of different ages to be potential friends but that is different from what they were used to at home.

Another key difference I have observed and found in my data is related to *han*, the sense of shame and regret Koreans often carry with them. Neither my Japanese and Chinese interviewees nor any others I have met refer to their countries as weak, small, or victimized, however, as my data points out, Korean people often have such opinions of Korea. And Koreans often point to China and particularly Japan as their victimizers. While I feel these elements do not make Korea wholly unlike China or Japan, I think they lend Korea a certain level of uniqueness that warrants further investigation into how every group of people may have at least some distinct WTC characteristics.

## 8.2 Directions for Further Research

If this research project can spark future research, then it has been a success. In terms of the non-Korean world, I hope that other studies focusing on how the L1 audience affects WTC can be carried out in other countries in order to observe how similar the results may be. I would be first interested in Japan and China, expanding then to other Asian countries. I would also be curious to see findings in less developed countries in the southern hemisphere, as well as European countries such as the Netherlands where WTC seems to be so high. I would suspect that the results would be quite different from those in Korea if the social rules of interaction are also quite different.

Within Korea, I would like to see this research expanded to include measures for language proficiency in order to see more exactly what influences it has. Also conducting quantitative data collection on a wider variety of ages could uncover more insights considering the rapidity with which certain aspects of Korean society have been changing. Finally, I would very much like to see experimental research

done which investigates WTC in action. For example, I envision an experiment where groups of individuals are asked to walk from one location to another either alone or with other Koreans. Along the way a non-Korean confederate would be waiting, perhaps looking distressfully at a map. Under which conditions might the Korean subject stop and offer help? From my own experience in similar situations in Korea, almost always the people who stop for me are alone and there is not much of a crowd around.

It is my desire to continue research in the area of WTC of qualitative, quantitative, and experimental natures. I am fascinated by Korean society in general and Koreans' often puzzling relationship with my mother tongue. I hope my work can bring greater freedom and less fear to the people of my adoptive home.

### *Final Words*

I began Chapter 1 of this study with the quote, "Because we are Korean," which was the answer I so often heard when I asked my students why they were not speaking English in English class. I thought their reply was both puzzling and a little foolish and so I embarked on this research project in the hope of understanding why my students said those words. After exhausting investigating, over several years, I have come to believe, rather sheepishly, that my students are precisely and insightfully correct. My students behave in a manner that reflects all the social and historical influences that indeed make them Korean.

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# Appendix A

## WTC Questionnaire

### English in Your Life

Keimyung Spring 2003

Hello Everybody,

Thank you for taking these few minutes to tell us about English in your life. This survey is being conducted by Keimyung to better understand how students really feel about speaking English. This is **not** a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, and you don’t even have to write your name on it. We are only interested in your sincere personal opinions. Thanks again for your help.

**The following section is composed of statements concerning your feelings about communication with other people in English. Please indicate in the space provided how willing you would be to speak English in each situation. If you would be almost never willing to speak English, write 1. If you are willing sometimes, write 2 or 3. If you are willing most of the time, write 4 or 5.**

| 1                    | 2                 | 3                     | 4               | 5                     |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Almost never willing | Sometimes willing | Willing half the time | Usually willing | Almost always willing |

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Speaking to your English teacher about your homework assignment.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Speaking with an English speaker on campus with nobody else around.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Speaking with an English speaker while on the train in front of a Korean friend with the same English ability. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Speaking with an English speaker at a restaurant in front of Korean superiors with higher English ability.     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Speaking with an English speaker on the street in front of your junior with lower English ability.             | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Speaking to your English teacher out of class on campus.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Speaking with an English speaker at a coffee shop in front of a Korean superior  
with lower English ability.

1 2 3 4 5

Speaking with an English speaker while waiting in line in front of your junior  
with higher English ability.

1 2 3 4 5

Speaking English among Korean-speaking and English-speaking friends  
at a coffee shop.

1 2 3 4 5

are a number of statements with which some Keimyung students agree and others disagree. Please  
how much you agree with each statement by writing the appropriate number in the space provide

|                | 2                | 3            | 4               | 5                   | 6                 |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Mildly agree | Mildly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| I Feel that after the World Cup, Korea's international status greatly improved.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel confident when I speak in English class.                                  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel foreigners in Korea really want to make friends with Korean people.       | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I would feel comfortable speaking English with native speakers.                  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel Korean society encourages me to make contact with foreigners.             | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I worry about making mistakes in front of native speakers.                       | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel the Korean language has a much lower status than Chinese and Japanese     | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I don't worry about making mistakes in English in front of a Korean superior     | whose       |
| English is lower than mine.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I don't worry about making mistakes in English in front of my Korean friends     |             |
| with equal ability as me.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| Learning English has the effect of making me feel culturally estranged.          | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel western countries have national goals similar to Korea's goals.           | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| It would embarrass me if I had to give directions in English to tourists.        | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel native English speakers have life goals similar to Korean people's goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English class.                     | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I always think that Koreans are at risk of becoming Americanized.                | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| When I speak English I have the feeling that I am losing my cultural identity.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel Korea is one of the more developed countries in the world.                | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.            | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I don't worry about making mistakes in English in front of a junior              | whose       |
| English is lower than mine.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I feel the Korean language has a much lower status than English in the world.    | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
| I am afraid that in twenty years if nothing changes Korean will no longer be     |             |
| spoken in Korea.   | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |

- I worry about making mistakes in English in front of a Korean superior whose English is better than mine. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I don't worry about making mistakes in English class. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I feel Korea's status in the world is low. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I feel living in Korea offers very few opportunities to make foreign friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I am afraid that Koreans will lose their language and culture. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I feel Korea and America cooperate well together 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I believe the fact that English being the global language threatens Korean language and culture. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I worry about making mistakes in English in front of a junior whose English is better than mine. 1 2 3 4 5 6
- I feel my education in English has helped prepare me to make contact with foreigners. 1 2 3 4 5 6

stated above, your identity is completely confidential. We don't want your name or specific information, but it will be helpful if you can give us some general information. or circle what is appropriate.

- 40 Age \_\_\_\_
- 41 Gender: [1] Male [2] Female
- 42 Year: [1] Freshmen [2] Sophomore [3] Junior [4] Senior
- 43 Major: [1] Humanities, Foreign languages, Education [2] Int'l Studies, Business, Social Science [3] Law [4] Natural Science [5] Engineering [6] Pre-med Nursing [7] Arts, Music [8] Physical Ed
- 44 I have had **native-speaking English teachers**. [1] Yes [2] No.
- 45 I have attended a **hagwan** for English conversation. [1] Yes [2] No
- 46 Total time **residing abroad** (approx)  
[1] 0 yrs [2] 1-2 yrs [3] 3-10 yrs [4] more than 10 yrs
- 47 Total time **traveling abroad** (approx)  
[1] 0 wks [2] 1-2 wks [3] 3-10 wks [4] more than 10 wks
- 48 Approximate number of **foreign strangers** you have spoken to in Korea  
[1] 0 [2] 1-5 [3] 6-10 [4] more than 10
- 49 Approximate number of **foreigners** you spoke with due to **World Cup** events [1] 0 [2] 1-5 [3] 6-10 [4] more than 10
- 50 Approximate number of **close relationships with foreigners** you have had [1] 0 [2] 1-5 [3] 5-10 [4] more than 10

## Appendix B

### Simple English questions from the College Entrance Exam

1. 다음 글의 제목으로 가장 적절한 것은? What is the best title for this passage?

Few people are aware that 1883 is an important year in the history of the Korean press. In that year the newspaper was first published in Korea in an effort to educate the people and bring necessary changes to the country. Three times a month it brought the readers news about the country and the rest of the world. A year later the newspaper was discontinued for a while due to a fire. It had to close in 1888 because of money. In spite of its short life, it changed forever how people got their news in Korea.

- 1) How to Read Korean Newspaper
- 2) The Beginning of Newspapers in Korea
- 3) A Big Fire in the Newspaper Printing House
- 4) International News in Korean Newspapers
- 5) How Newspapers Change Korean History

2. 다음 글의 빈칸에 가장 적절한 것은? What is the best word to fill in the blank?

Historians and sociologists have concluded that \_\_\_\_\_ satisfies a basic human desire. People have a basic need – an instinct – to know what is occurring beyond their direct experience. Being aware of events we cannot see for ourselves gives a sense of security, control, and confidence. When the report of recent events is blocked, “a darkness falls,” and anxiety grows. The world, in effect, becomes too quiet. We feel alone. John McCain, a U.S. senator, writes he missed most was not comfort, food, freedom, or even his family and friends. “The thing I missed most was information – free, undistorted, abundant information.”

- 1) news    2) food    3) honor    4) freedom    5) friendship

3. 다음 글에서 전체 흐름과 관계 없는 문장은? Which sentence does not fit well

in the paragraph?

The first privately published, modern newspaper to appear in Korea was *the Dongnip Shinmun (The Independent)*. 1) It was established in 1896 by Dr. Seo Jaepil, a medical doctor and independence leader. 2) The newspaper is the most effective medium of communication in the modern world today. 3) As its name implies, the daily was aimed at educating the public and maintaining independence from colonial powers. 4) The Dongnip Shinmun printed three hundred copies of four tabloid pages three times a week. 5) The first three pages were printed entirely in Han-geul, the Korean alphabet, and the last page in English.

4. 다음 글의 내용을 바탕으로 주어진 문장을 완성할 때, 빈칸 (A)와 빈칸 (B)에 가장 적절한 것끼리 짝지은 것은? Based on the passage, which pair of words best completes the sentence below?

Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman was a famous American journalist at the turn of the century who wrote for the newspaper *New York World* under the pen name Nellie Bly. She felt that the best way to get the real story was from the inside rather than as an outsider. On one occasion she pretended to be a thief so that she would get arrested and see for herself how female prisoners were really treated. On another occasion she faked mental illness in order to be admitted to a mental hospital to get the real picture on the treatment of mental patients.

→ Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman achieved fame for the (A) and (B) way that she obtained her stories.

- |                |             |              |         |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------|
| (A)            | (B)         | (A)          | (B)     |
| 1) bold        | adventurous | 2) realistic | timid   |
| 3) dangerous   | humorous    | 4) imaginary | careful |
| 5) indifferent | bold        |              |         |

5. 다음 주어진 문장에 이어질 글의 순서로 가장 적절한 것은? In which order should sentences A, B, and C follow the sentence below?

During the 1960s, the Beatles were always in the news headlines: films, world tours, and sometimes scandal.

(A) Although there was little reaction to his statement in England, Christians elsewhere started a massive campaign to destroy Beatles albums and their pictures.

(B) Lennon apologized for the remark later, and the Archbishop of Boston admitted that he was probably right, but many still refused to forgive him.

(C) In 1996, *the Evening Standard* published a long, rambling interview with John Lennon in which he proclaimed that the Beatles were “more popular than Jesus.”

- |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1) (A) – (C) – (B) | 2) (B) – (A) – (C) | 3) (B) – (C) – (A) |
| 4) (C) – (A) – (B) | 5) (C) – (B) – (A) |                    |

6. (A), (B), (C)의 각 네모 안에서 어법에 맞는 것끼리 골라 짝지은 것은?  
Which combination of A,B,C, is grammatically correct?

Charles Cunningham Boycott was an English land agent. He was sent to manage an estate in Ireland. The crops were bad and the people were incredibly poor. Yet, Boycott took all he could from them and penalized them (A) for not producing / not to produce more. His servants left him and the people despised him. The Irish Land League, (B) made / making up of tenant farmers, cut off his food supply. Finally, Boycott returned to England. Since then, the word “boycott” has meant (C) organizing / organization to force a person or group to change their ways.

- | (A)                  | (B)    | (C)          |
|----------------------|--------|--------------|
| 1) for not producing | made   | organizing   |
| 2) for not producing | making | organization |
| 3) for not producing | made   | organization |
| 4) not to produce    | making | organizing   |
| 5) not to produce    | made   | organizing   |