Exploring the Possibilities of Nonnative English Teacher in EIL Perspective

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This study was an attempt to find a way to raise awareness of teaching and learning English as a global language rather than as the mother tongue of a few English speaking countries. In particular, the study explored the possibilities of how nonnative English teachers contribute to promoting English as an international language (EIL) perspective and assist English language learners to attain desirable level of English proficiency with which they are able to fulfill themselves in international communication. Based on the analysis of a questionnaire to see what kinds of attitude EFL learners had on a course in which a nonnative-speaker (NNS) instructor used English as the medium of the class, and how the students evaluated the course, the study suggested that a NNS instructor can provide not only primary linguistic data, but also modeling effects by which the students are encouraged to practice their English acknowledging that a main purpose of learning English is to express themselves without having to necessarily conform to native speakers’ way of using English.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at promoting EIL perspective among the EFL students and teaching professionals as well. As English has emerged as “the first truly global language in the history of the world” (Hung, 2003, p. 33), and established itself “as a contact language or vehicular language – in a broad sense, a new variety that emerges in situations where interlocutors do not share an L1” (Mauranen, 2003, p. 514), the objectives of English as a foreign language (EFL) education should reflect new goals of learning English since it has been emphasized as a tool for communicating with people coming from different cultures. That is, the English language

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learners are learning English not only to communicate with the native speakers (NS) of English, but also for the purposes of communicating with the people coming from all the different language backgrounds.

However, it is not easy for the students learning English to be free from the obsession that they have to make their English as nativelike as possible, rather than refining their English language skills as intelligible and comprehensible as possible to whichever they would encounter, possibly to other NNSs of English rather than native speakers. According to Kachru and Nelson (2001), "in its narrow sense, intelligibility consists of word-level recognition. If you recognize that you are hearing (or reading) English, the language is intelligible to you" (p. 21).

Concerning how comprehensible a certain text is, they defined that "to the degree that a recipient finds a text meaningful, it has comprehensibility" (Kachru & Nelson, 2001, p. 21). As the statistics of English speaking population has suggested, the number of English as a second language speakers with 'reasonable competence' has been estimated to be 1,350 million while there are about 337 million English as first language speakers (Crystal, 1997, pp. 60-61). The students who are learning English as a foreign language should be prepared for the international situations in which they are to communicate with other NNSs. McDonough (2002) also pointed out that "L2/L2 communication is the majority use of English for learners (that is, more communication takes places between L2 speakers worldwide, especially with increasing use of the Internet and e-mail, than between L2 and L1 speakers)" (p. 35). Then, the teaching of EFL must be guided by "a new set of assumptions and goals because of its international status" (Christie, 2003, p. 363) in order to serve the needs of increasingly diverse and expanding population of English speakers.

Therefore, an urgent objective of EFL education is to help the learners acquire "intercultural communicative competence" (Cook, 2001) and performance skills. However, as Jenkins (2000) lamented, English language teaching (ELT) pedagogy has paid relatively less attention to this trend, with the exception of the teaching of Business English (Alexander, 1996), it has been criticized that ELT pedagogy could not adjust its methodologies to reflect this changing demographic patterns. While exploring appropriate methodology which can serve this newly emerging goal of learning English, it is also essential for the people doing research and practice in ELT to be aware of how the learners have perceived this trend and what kind of attitude they have in terms of preparing themselves to be competent speakers of English as "cross-national and cross-cultural language" (Honma & Takeshita, 2003, p. 207).

One of the ways to look into the learners' perception and attitude on how they accept this new goal of learning English as a means of intercultural communication, and deal with it in order to make themselves more competent communicators in international settings can be found in how they perceive and evaluate other NNS's way of using English. That is, it would provide
understanding of how the learners figure out their role as EIL users by examining the English language learners' appreciation of other NNS's English. In this vein, a scientific discussion on the roles of NNS instructors should be worthwhile since they can be said to suggest "a better model of a person who commands two languages and is able to communicate through both" (Cook, 2001, p. 176), and thus perform more suitable role in international settings. For the current study, a group of EFL students was asked about how they have thought of and evaluated the college course, *Advanced EFL Reading*, focusing on the way the instructor used English language as the medium of her lecture and all the other communication with the students, who was also NNS of English sharing her first language with the students. Having analyzed the students' answers to a questionnaire and their feedback, the study attempted to suggest the ways of how to promote EIL perspective, and prepare the learners for taking active roles in the era of international communication.

The present study attempted to examine the EFL college students' EIL perspectives by looking into their attitude toward and evaluation of NNS instructor's way of using English while teaching an academic course. The study was guided by following questions:

1. What kinds of attitude do the EFL college students have toward NNS's use of English?
2. What kinds of role can the NNS instructor play in bringing about the EIL perspectives to the EFL college learners?

II. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1. Pronunciation of EIL

Two issues, among others, should be raised in learning and teaching EIL: First, how speakers of EIL should behave phonologically in lingua franca contexts; Second, how they can secure mutual phonological intelligibility and acceptability with the aim of facilitating the use of EIL (Jenkins, 2000, p. 2). Rather than letting the students be obsessed with so-called standard pronunciation such as Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA), they should be assisted to refine their pronunciation skills as intelligible and comprehensible as possible. Also it has been reported that only less than three per cent of the British population now speaks RP while 33 per cent of the combined population of the USA and Canada speaks with a GA accent.

Hung (2003) suggested a pragmatic approach to the teaching pronunciation that "if intelligibility rather than conformity is the goal, then it is apparent that not all features of standard international accents of English (whether RP or GA or whatever else) are important for
intelligibility, and that some can only be acquired at great cost in terms of time and effort" (p. 36). Hung (2003) pointed out that "mutual intelligibility is just as much a lexical, grammatical, discoursal and cultural matter. But even with respect to pronunciation alone, it is often forgotten that good articulation, clarity, voice projection, etc. - matters just as much as the accent itself" (p. 34).

Having focused on the relative importance of segmental and suprasegmental features, Jenkins (2000) expressed the view that while the most serious errors are those involving both levels, "many segmentals are vital for the preservation of phonological intelligibility" (p. 135). Van Els and De Bot (1987), and Brazil (1994) also indicated that it is hard to suggest that suprasegmental errors be more seriously affecting the phonological intelligibility. Such research findings seem to suggest that as far as the NNS instructor's spoken English is supported by correct articulation at segmental level and thereby would successfully achieve the communication goals, her way of speaking out can be taken as a model showing the students "the richness of multilingual use" (Cook, 2001), for whom it might be easily frustrating to base their goal on the NS model.

2. Language Teacher as a Cultural Informant

One of the functions that a language teacher is expected to perform is that of cultural informant. Currently it has been actively discussed whose culture should be introduced into English language classroom since it is not the mother tongue of a few English speaking countries any more in EIL contexts (Kam & Wong, 2003; Kramsch, 1993; McKay, 2000; Widdowson, 1994). Early in 1976, Smith made several assertions regarding the relationships between an international language and culture: Learners of an international language do not need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of that language; The educational goal of learning an international language is to enable learners to communicate their ideas and culture to others (cited in McKay, 2000, p. 7).

Byram (1998) distinguished biculturalism and interculturalism. For Byram, biculturalism assumes that an individual identifies with and accepts the beliefs, values, and practices of a particular culture while interculturalism assumes a knowledge of, rather than acceptance of, another culture. Clearly in the EIL classroom, interculturalism should be the goal (cited in McKay, 2000, p. 8). For the EIL learners who are asked "to reflect on their own culture in relation to other cultures" (McKay, 2000, p. 8), or establish what Kramsch (1993) described as a sphere of interculturality, the NNS instructor who shares the native language and culture with the students can be said to be in a better position to play the role of facilitator assisting the students to foster intercultural perspectives positively and actively than the monolingual NS instructor.
3. Content-Based Instruction (CBI)

The current study followed principled assumptions provided by the CBI approach which aims at helping English language learners to "be both functionally and academically literate" (Kasper, 2000, p. 3). Within this approach, a more effective language learning can take place when "language becomes the medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learner, then learners are pointed toward matters of intrinsic concern" (Brown, 2001, p. 49). Research on the CBI approach has suggested that "content-based classroom may yield an increase in intrinsic motivation and empowerment, since students are focused on subject matter that is important to their lives" (Brinton & Master, 1997; Snow & Brinton, 1997; Snow, 1998, cited in Brown, 2001, pp. 49-50). With the NNS instructor who is teaching content course, the students will have an idea of how they can effectively use English for the presentation and discussion of academic and professional knowledge. A goal of college-level EFL education should aim at assisting the students to attain what Cummins (1981) has described Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) rather than let them be satisfied with the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS). Modeling the NNS instructor who successfully delivers academic contents, the students will find that it is plausible and realistic to become an efficient bilingual.

The course, Advanced EFL Reading, on which the study was based was offered to promote a literacy skill, reading, in English. From the beginning, the students were urged to understand reading as a crucial part of literacy skills. In particular, reading in L2 should not be considered as translation, but direct interaction with the L2 texts. What was meant by translation in the current study referred to the traditional way of giving out the interpretation of the texts from L2 to L1. It did not mean that L2 learners should not use translation strategies at all when they read in L2 regardless of their reading proficiency. As the semester began, some of the students expressed their concern about the instructor's language policy like that "I, at first, was wondering how reading class can be conducted in English. But it was good since the instructor helped us check our understanding through questions and made summary with us together - translation" (6), it was a routine in the traditional EFL class where the instructor sharing his L1 with that of the students would provide translation with a form of summary or paraphrase unless they faithfully supplied interpretation for one sentence after another.

In terms of understanding the relationship between L1 and L2 reading, there have been empirical studies supporting the universal stance arguing that "the basic process of reading is universal, involving the formation, modification, and confirmation of hypothesis based on features of the text itself as well as the reader's prior knowledge" (Goodman, 1970, 1981, 1985,
cited in Kern, 2000, p. 118). Threshold level of language proficiency (Cummins, 1979) or linguistic ceiling (Clark, 1978, 1980) are two of the hypotheses reflecting such a universal stance in that “after reaching a certain level of L2 proficiency, the relationship between L1 and L2 reading increases as L2 proficiency improves” (Lee & Schullert, 1997, p. 715).

On the other hand, “the picture will be more complex when one considers certain other findings in second language reading research suggesting that reading in different languages can involve qualitatively different perceptual and processing strategies” (Kern, 2000, p. 119). Especially, having focused on the multidimensional role of mental translation, L2 reading researchers argued that “mental translation has been found to facilitate readers’ semantic processing; to be used in response to specific obstacles to comprehension; and to allow readers to consolidate meaning, retain information, clarify syntactic difficulties, verify information, and check comprehension” (Kern, 1994, cited in Crabbe, 2003, p. 37). In order for a reading course to effectively assist the students to become critical as well as independent readers in the L2, the reading instructor needs to be aware of the two approaches to understanding L2 reading and apply the implications provided by each considering the students’ level of English proficiency and educational background both in L1 and L2.

III. METHOD

The current study, qualitative in nature, also provided quantitative information based on the students’ answers to the questions presented with several options. That is, while the study attempted to gather information before forming categories from the students’ feedback, comments and suggestions, it supplied the statistic information based on the students’ answers for each question in the questionnaire. The two ways of interpreting data would contribute to better understanding of whole picture concerning how the students evaluated and accepted the other NNS’s way of using English for professional purposes. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) mentioned that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, to interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them” (cited in Lazaraton, 2003, p. 2), the study, especially for the qualitative interpretation of data, analyzed the contents of students’ feedback, comments and suggestions for themes and recurring patterns of meaning as a way to answer the above-mentioned research questions.

1. Participants

Twenty-six out of 27 students taking the course Advanced EFL Reading participated in the
study by answering a questionnaire as well as providing feedback, comments and suggestions on the course. The 27 students were all Korean college students ranging from sophomore (10) to junior (10) to senior (7), majoring in English Education (21), Education (3), Sociology (1), Korean Language Education (1), Home Management (1), respectively. Three were male students while twenty-four female. The instructor (the researcher) was a Korean speaker who earned her BA and MA in English from Korean universities before she went to the USA for her MA and Ph.D. in TESOL. During her stay in the USA, she had official and unofficial teaching experience as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) from 2000 to 2001, and graduate research assistant (GRA) between 1994 and 1998.

2. Context of the Study

The course, *Advanced EFL Reading*, was one of the required courses that English Education majors at the university had to take, in principle, when they were sophomores, but also open to other students housed in other departments. A main purpose of the course was to help the students improve English reading proficiency to a higher degree in a relatively short period of time, in this case, one semester.

1) Texts

The instructor was given the right to design the course including selecting texts and other reading materials. She made up the syllabus to provide as many extensive and intensive reading opportunities as possible. In his review on research in L2 reading, Brown (2001) gave attention to what Krashen (1993) and Day and Bamford (1998) have suggested: “extensive reading (free voluntary reading [FVR], as Krashen called it) is a key to student gains in reading ability, linguistic competence, vocabulary, spelling, and writing” (p. 301). Along with intensive reading practice which employed top-down, bottom-up and interactive processes during the session, the students were given assignments such as semantic map-drawing with a book, through which they could conduct extensive reading outside the classroom.

Having considered that majority of the students taking the course were from the English Education department, the instructor selected readings mainly from the second language acquisition (SLA) studies, English education-related papers and newspaper articles which were supposed to help understand how humans can acquire language(s), both first and second. These reading selections had twofold purposes: one was to give the students strong motivation to keep reading since they were eventually related to their major, English education; the other was to have coherence among the reading materials so that the students were supposed to have a
sense of accomplishment when the semester was over as well as build up background knowledge, schemata, across the selections.

2) Language Policy

The classes were held twice a week with each session lasting for 75 minutes. Each session was processed with classroom discussion, small-group and pair work, and question-answer format. The students were supposed to read texts before coming to the session and be ready for classroom discussion; they, on Mondays, also had to turn in 2-page long summary of reading for the week. The instructor used English all the time while the students were allowed to use both Korean, their L1, and English for discussion as well as making and answering questions. What the instructor attempted to provide through this language policy of the course was "authenticity of communication" (Kern, 2000, p. 15) as well as reduce the anxiety among the students whose spoken proficiency of English could not satisfy the level of cognitive demand that the discussion and questions would require. Since the readings dealt with the academic and professional information, the students might feel the gap between the cognitive demands of expressing their ideas and comprehension, and the linguistic skills of spoken English in particular. In principle, the course followed the main tenets of CBI. According to Pica (2002), "there is a good deal of evidence from assessment and evaluation studies that content-based approaches promote L2 proficiency and facilitate skill learning in ways that are relevant and important to the academic and professional goals of L2 learners" (p. 3). In this particular course, no specific attention was given to discrete language skills other than discussing some vocabulary items which were unfamiliar to most of the students when reading additional materials such as newspaper articles which were not listed on the syllabus, thus the students were asked to read without preparation.

3. Data

The data were collected with a questionnaire which was developed to investigate what kind of perception and attitude the EFL students had on a course in which a NNS instructor used English as the medium of the class, and how they would evaluate the course taught by the NNS instructor. The questions consisted of those asking personal information regarding the students' English proficiency level, learning experience with NS and NNS instructors, evaluation on the instructors' English language skills as well as teaching skills, and on the course in general. In particular, the students provided feedback, comments and suggestions for open-ended questions such as Q9, Q10, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, and Q18, which were used for qualitative interpretation in the study. See Appendix for the full version of the questionnaire.
4. Procedure

The participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire at the end of the semester, in the 14th and 15th week of Fall 2001. Originally the questionnaire was planned to be answered on Wednesday of the week 14, but some of the students who missed the class were invited to fill out the questionnaire during the final exam which was held in the 15th week of the semester. In order for the participants to feel more comfortable in responding to the questionnaire, they were encouraged to use both Korean and English, or either one in providing their answers to each question. The students remained anonymous without having to reveal anything concerning their identification such as name, student ID number, or gender. They were assured that their answers, feedback and suggestions would remain confidential and be used only for the research.

5. Method of Data Analysis

For the qualitative aspects of data analysis, the study mainly conducted content analysis of feedback, comments and suggestions provided by the participants. Above all, in many qualitative studies, “the real interest is in how participants make sense of what has happened, and how this perspective informs their actions, rather than determine precisely what they did” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 58).

However, in the present study, it can be said that major themes were set up as form of questions which would direct the participants’ attention to one aspect of the course, whether it was concerned with evaluation on the instructor’s language skills or with the reason for taking an English-medium course. The questions could be understood as guideboard by which the participants were able to provide more focused feedback and comments as Riggenbach (1999) mentioned that “although qualitative research advocates theory generation through discovery, it is naive to think that there are no preconceived guiding theories going into a project” (p. 39). Under each theme were several categories expected to emerge. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested that “through examining the information within each category, we come up with overall descriptions of the cultural arena or explanations of the topic we are studying” (p. 228). For the convenience of coding, each questionnaire was randomly numbered and the participants remained anonymous. The feedback, comments and suggestions provided in Korean were translated into English and indicated by ‘- translation’ right after the quotation while those provided in English were quoted as they were without any revision. Thus, some quotations from the students’ answers included grammatical errors. For the quantitative aspect of information, frequency for each option per question was counted and transfigured with percentage.
6. Validity and Reliability

To secure the validity of the research, I followed the definition of validity suggested by Maxwell (1996). He used “validity in a fairly straightforward, commonsense way to refer to the correctness or credibility of description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation” (p. 87). Thus, above all, I transcribed the students’ answers as accurate as possible because “the main threat to valid description, in the sense of describing what you saw and heard, is the inaccuracy or incompleteness of the data” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 89).

In the present study, the two types of information provided by the respective qualitative and quantitative data analysis were combined to provide better picture of the participants’ perception of and attitude toward the NNS instructor and the course taught by her. As contrasted with reliability in quantitative study, which refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated, “the term reliability in the traditional sense seems to be something of a misfit when applied to qualitative research” (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). However, in the current study, if there had been more viewers involved in the data analysis, it could have been supported by interrater reliability. Instead, the researcher tried to do best to explain how the study arrived at its research findings.

IV. RESULT

1. Self-Assessed English Proficiency Level

Concerning the students English proficiency level, it appeared that they rated general proficiency level higher than that of spoken proficiency as summarized in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>General English proficiency</th>
<th>Spoken English proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-intermediate</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-intermediate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25*</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One student marked two options (b) and (c) and corrected them, but neither one was clearly marked so that it was not counted.
2. Experience of Taking English-Medium Courses

All but one student answered that they had taken a course taught by NS instructors while 21 students took a course in which NNS instructor used English as the medium of the class. Depending on the individual students, the number of English-medium courses offered by NS instructors varied from one course to eight courses. A few students indicated that they took 6-8 courses or 5-10 courses. From the answers to Question 5, *Have you ever taken a course in which a nonnative-speaker of English instructor used English as the medium of the class?* the number of the English medium courses taught by the NNS instructors appeared relatively smaller than that of those by NS instructors. There was one student who did not have experience of taking English medium course taught by NS instructor while five students said that they had not taken English medium course with NNS instructor. Of the five students who had not taken English-medium course with NNS instructor, four students answered that they could not because there was no course offered by NNS instructor using English as the medium for the course while one chose option *b) Because I could not trust the NNS instructor's English especially for his or her pronunciation.* The student also answered that he would not take a course with NNS instructor with the reason: “I want to take the lesson happened in authentic situation” (5). See Appendix for how many students chose each option per question.

3. Intention to Take another Course with NNS Instructor

Twenty-three students of the total twenty-six provided reasons why they would take another English medium course with NNS instructors (Question 9). Twelve out of the twenty-three said that they did see no difference between NS and NNS instructor (10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25): “As far as they use English, it can definitely help me improve my English - Besides their English is great” (10); “I think the lecture using English as the medium of the course enhance the opportunities of students’ speaking English, too” (11); “I think there is no specific difference between nonnative instructor class and native instructor class. The most important thing is the passion and attitude the instructors have” (12).

In particular, two of the twelve pointed out that NNS instructor can provide “modeling effects” (21), and “some unique advantage” (22). Three students mentioned that it was less stressful (2) or more comfortable (8, 26) to take an English-medium class with NNS instructor. Especially one of the three students expressed expectation that “the lessons by NNS instructor can be more effective since they are able to understand the difficulties that we experience, which NSs cannot understand, and help us accordingly – translation” (2). Another two students said that they felt solidarity with NNS instructor (9), due to same L1 background (24). Some students
pointed out that NNS instructor's pronunciation is not good compared with that of NS instructor, but NNS instructor's "expressions are excellent" (6), "far better in class preparation" (9), or "easier to understand" (7). Thus, these eight students (2, 7, 8, 9, 21, 22, 24, 26) discussed the strengths that the NNS instructor would possibly display.

4. Evaluation on the Instructor's Teaching Skills

For Question 13, *How would you evaluate the instructor's way of teaching?* nineteen students out of the 26 students provided comments. Seven students (2, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15) of the 19 mentioned how the instructor took care of the students' affective aspects and tried to "help the students engaged in the class without having them feel much stress - translation" (2); "She complimented students every time they answered!! Encouragement!! Give confidence" (13). Three students (16, 18, 21) discussed how the instructor provided feedback for the weekly written assignments (16, 21) or the questions (18): "It was good that she checked every assignment and answer the questions - translation" (16); "What I like most is that you repeated all students' answers" (18).

Five students (10, 19, 23, 24, 26) made suggestions that the instructor use various types of reading texts (19), reduce the amount of reading as well as include various types of reading (10), consider the students' level of proficiency and slow down the speed (24), use the students' L1 for lecturing on the difficult parts (26), set up more group and pair works (23) while one student showed satisfaction with the texts saying that "I love her choice of reading materials because they are related to Ed. and expanded my knowledge" (13). One student said that he or she was "satisfied with both your class and your effort to prepare this class" (1) while another mentioned that it was interesting for the instructor to have the students make their own questions about the text (11).

5. Evaluation on the Instructor's Language Skills

Seventeen students of the 26 students supplied comments on the instructor's English language skills. Fifteen students of the 17 appeared to evaluate the instructor's language skills good enough to deliver lectures mentioning that the instructor spoke English fluently (2, 5, 6, 10, 12, 19), accurately (19), and beautifully (7) with good structures and expressions (5, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21), showing confidence (8) so that she did not seem to have difficulty making herself understood in English (1, 12, 20).

However, eight students pointed out that the instructor's accent (5, 6, 19) or pronunciation (8, 9, 13, 14, 20) did not sound native like since "there is few intonation in her speaking" (5). But,
among the eight students, none said that they still had much problem understanding her lecture due to her accent or pronunciation: “Pronunciation was not as natural as a native “American”. But that doesn’t matter. It didn’t interfere the learning” (13). The evaluation done by the twenty-six students on the instructor’s teaching and language skills was presented in Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation on the instructor’s English language skills</th>
<th>Evaluation on the instructor’s teaching skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrible</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>4 14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>16 59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>7 29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One student marked two options (b) and (c) so that the total number made 27.

6. Enhancement of the Content Knowledge

Concerning Question 15, Do you think the content this course dealt with is helpful for you to understand second language learning/acquisition? sixteen students provided their comments. Eight students mentioned that it was (very) useful (6) and helpful (11, 14, 15, 17), to understand learning English as a foreign language (6), or an excellent course for English education major (24) since it provided professional readings (2) with helpful theories (20). Some students said that the course content helped correct his or her “wrong thought: I cannot make it because I am not a native speaker – translation” (12), or “improved both reading comprehension skills and knowledge in ESL and acquisition” (13); “I broaden my schema related with my major” (17).

However, two students complained that “I felt bored with a lot of difficult theories that made me complicated” (8); “It seems that there were too many professional texts. One or so should be enough” (25) while two students showed satisfaction saying that “I am very satisfied with the course, mostly” (5); “Since I was interested in this area, I took the course with interest without being bored. Moreover, this course is related to the others that I took so that I could understand it without difficulty – translation” (21).

7. Improvement of English Language Skills

Fifteen students out of the twenty-six provided comments for Question 16, Do you think this course helped you improve your English language skills? The students’ comments were induced
as answers to the open option, *Could you please state in what way the course helped or didn't help you to improve your English language skills?* Eight students of the fifteen mentioned that their reading skills were improved (2, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21): "As reading a lot of difficult text, I have become able to read other general texts without difficulties – translation" (2); "Reading speed is much better than before" (12).

On the other hand, seven of them said that the course helped improve other skills such as writing (11, 17, 21), speaking (10, 11), organization (15), vocabulary (7, 21), grammar (7) or English proficiency in general (6): "While reading a lot of texts, I became used to various useful expressions which helped improve my English proficiency to some degree – translation" (6); "This course helped me to speak and write my opinion in English" (11). One student made comments that "I had my fear of grammar and vocabulary (also listening) disappear. However, since it was a reading course, knowledge concerning speaking skills was little provided – translation" (24). Another student also mentioned that he or she had to employ four language skills for the course: "I was able to get information about the foreign language learning as well as make efforts for listening/reading, and writing/speaking to some degree – translation" (9).

8. Suggestions to Improve the Course

Of the twenty-six students, sixteen provided suggestions when they were asked with Question 18, *Could you please give some suggestions to improve these types of courses?* Seven students suggested that the course include more various types of reading such as newspapers, short stories, or just general reading (3, 10, 14, 16, 17, 21, 25): "I suggest that it could be good to use general texts rather than related to English education. Just reading text was no difficult but understanding text is difficult" (3); "I think that it was good to read professional articles. But I wish that we had had more reading in other genres" (10).

Five students suggested that there be more participation (6, 11, 20) through more discussion (24), with small group talk (8). In particular, two students of the five wished that the instructor had made more efforts to induce the students' participation (6, 20): "Only a few students present their opinions while many number of shy students cannot. I think that it will be a good class if the instructor can consider giving more chances to such students too – translation" (6); "For the free discussion, first of all, (the instructor) should try to make the students not shy. Therefore, (the instructor) could begin the semester by having the students introduce themselves, then the students could get less shy – translation" (20).

Some student made a suggestion to have 'class reading' once in a while to learn scanning and skimming (13), a short presentation (15), and L1 use by the instructor for some parts (26) while one student said that "It was good enough – translation" (12). The twenty-six students' responses
for Q15, Q16 and Q18 were presented in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation on the Course</th>
<th>The course helped improve English language skills</th>
<th>The course helped understand L2 learning</th>
<th>Satisfied with the course in general</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a certain extent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25*</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One student marked between (b) and (c) so that his or her answer was not counted.

V. DISCUSSION

1. Evaluation of and Attitude toward the NNS Instructor

It has appeared that the students did not make serious distinction between NS instructor and NNS instructor in terms of who should be in charge of an English-medium course and who can make better instructor. That is, the students’ feedback showed that the students did not seem to have much reservation to accept NNS instructor’s way of using English and teaching an academic course. Rather than drawing the line between native and nonnative, most of the students seemed to be concerned with the contents or message the instructor would deliver. Also, they wanted more English input as some of the students’ comments indicated: “Whether they are native or nonnative speaker instructors, I like those who use English as the medium of the course” (15). Whether with NS or NNS instructor, the students seemed to appreciate the opportunities to use English. For most of the students, taking a course taught by a NNS instructor was thought to be another way to receive and use English in real contexts. That is, the students seemed to be aware that it does not have to be native speakers all the time who are supposed to use the target language in front of the students. The English language input provided by the NNS instructor seemed to be accepted as a form of various types of language input in authentic situations.

The students were likely to be more interested in how much the instructor would prepare for each lesson and take care of the affective aspects of the learners as well as give out timely and appropriate feedback. According to the relationship between factors presented as Pearson correlation, it was between \( Y = \text{How helpful the content of the course was in understanding L2 learning and evaluation on the course in general} \) that showed relatively higher correlation.
(r=0.685, p=0.01 (2-tailed)). This relatively strong relationship between the two factors seemed to imply that the information dealt with the course could be more relevantly appreciated and led to overall evaluation on the course.

Meanwhile, a lower correlation was found between How helpful the course was in improving English language skills and evaluation on the course in general (r=0.395, p=0.01 (2-tailed)). This could be interpreted in two ways: First, information could be more importantly related with the course evaluation; Second, it would be hard for students to feel or achieve linguistic improvement within a semester-long period. While there were seventeen out of the twenty-six who chose option (c) I was satisfied with the course to a greater extent for Question 17, only 10 marked option (c) A lot for Question 16. To be able to assist the students to improve linguistic skills too, the classroom activities should be more balanced between content-delivery and language enhancement tasks.

However, overall, the students showed more interest in the types and contents of texts rather than in the instructor’s linguistic abilities. As seven students mentioned when providing suggestions for Question 18, they wanted more various genres and types of texts including the ones for pleasure: “Since this course is not for “education”, but for reading in English, it would also be good to read newspapers and magazine, and discuss them – translation” (25). The students’ suggestions revealed that the instructor could not figure out what kind of expectation the students would have when taking a reading course. In order to reflect the students’ needs and expectation for the course, it would be better if the instructor, at the beginning of the semester, were able to discuss them with the students and accommodate the students’ suggestions in the syllabus.

Even though the students did not complain about the instructor’s linguistic abilities to a degree to which their comprehension or communication would be interfered, a consideration should be given to the view on pronunciation and accent in particular. In a sense, it is reasonable for the students to be concerned with the accent of the NNS instructor since it could affect the way the students would form their own English accent to a certain degree even though they would have other sources of spoken English input. How much native-language accent can be allowed in carrying out speaking performance in L2 should be an issue which needs rigorous discussion within the ELT profession.

Traditionally, “those who write pronunciation materials for the EFL market have a vested interest in preserving the phonological status quo, with its emphasis on the need for learners to acquire all the features of ‘native speaker’ (RP or GA) pronunciation, including connected speech, rhythm, and intonation patterns, regardless of their (ir)relevance to EIL intelligibility” (Jenkins, 2000, p. 14). Within the EIL context, what has been assumed to be standard English can be reduced to a social dialect (Trudgill, 1999, cited in Jenkins, 2000, p. 204) and “minority
variety” (Crystal, 1995, p. 110). A desirable goal that ELT profession should be able to suggest can be found in promoting the awareness on the mutual intelligibility and acceptance in international contexts rather than imposing a NS’s model of pronunciation and accent on the L2 learners.

That is, the issue of how to secure phonological intelligibility and comprehensibility needs to be put forward in preparing the L2 learners for international communication. A shift in viewing the relative contribution between segmental and suprasegmental levels in achieving intelligibility would suggest that as far as the NNS instructor articulates with each phoneme being correctly pronounced, she is able to communicate with her NNS students without any difficulty and thereby present a model of how to effectively use spoken English without having to imitate the way native speakers would. Jenkins (2000) even further asserted that she believes that “the optimum pronunciation models for EIL are those of (NNS) fluent bilingual speakers of English. These are both more realistic and more appropriate than L1 models and yet sacrifice nothing in intelligibility” (p. 226). As one student mentioned that the instructor’s “pronunciation was not native like. But she explained the difficult text in easy ways with precise expressions – translation” (9), NNS’s pronunciation can be compensated with good use of structure and expression supported by articulation.

2. Authenticity of L2 Use

Since one of the students gave a reason why he or she would not take a course with a NNS instructor such as “I want to take the lesson in authentic situation” (5), it seems to deserve a discussion of what constitutes an authentic situation in L2 use. In a simplest sense, authenticity in terms of L2 use can be defined as the L2 used for the real communication with genuine purpose, not for the sake of practicing the language. Little, Devitt and Singleton (1988) described authentic language as “created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced” (cited in Cook, 2001, p. 146). Concerning the authenticity of texts, Izumi and Bigelow (2001) stated that “authenticity, broadly defined, deals with not only the source and quality of the text but also the way users learn and perceive the text and the way it is related to other language learning activity” (p. 182) even though a certain text or task can be differently interpreted depending on “how one defines authenticity” (Izumi & Bigelow, 2001, p. 183).

Whether the language is used by its native speakers or nonnative, it can be said that it is used authentically as far as the contexts are real situation be it classroom or outside classroom. Especially in EIL contexts, the English language learners can have more chances to be involved in communicating with other nonnative speakers. Then, the English language they would use for
genuine information will be more than authentic even though there is no single native speaker around. During the course, most students appeared to take classes as real ones dealing with genuine information delivered in English: "Whenever I look at my books or issues, the content I studied help me to understand some difficult major issues" (17); "It was good since the contents were those that the English Education department have dealt with... It was true that it was hard (to understand) for a time being, it seems a great help – translation" (14). Thus, the course may be an example of authentic situations in which there was no native speaker, but everyone knew that they were using English not for the sake of practice, but for the real purposes of communication.

If the aim of ELT is to produce L2 users, ELT profession should be able to show that “successful L2 users exist in their own right and are not just pale shadows of native speakers” (Cook, 1999, p. 200). A typical instructional situation in which “learners of English were drilled in expected conversation routines with native speakers of English rather than with non-native speakers” (Wong & Kam, 2003, p. 472) still seems so strong an image among some of the EFL learners who might feel uncomfortable to accept NNS instructors’ use of English as authentic.

However, at least with the participants of the current study, the view and attitude toward the NNS instructor appeared more favorable up to the degree in which ELT profession would not have to worry about preaching EIL perspective among the L2 learners. That is, among the students who provided reasons why they would or would not take a course with NNS instructor, twelve students said that they would take a course with NNS instructor because they basically did not see the difference between NS and NNS instructors. Seven of the 12 even indicated strengths of NNS instructors such as “I think that the instructor can understand the students’ problems due to the similar cognitive paradigm shared by same Koreans, and solve those problems – translation” (24).

In this particular context of the current study, the fact that the NNS instructor shared same L1 and culture with the students seemed to play as an element to reduce the level of anxiety in the classroom and promote solidarity between the students and the instructor. Having focused on the multi-competence L2 user model, Cook (2001) elaborated the goal of second language acquisition (SLA) as follows: “what we need is a model that recognizes the distinctive nature of knowing two or more languages and does not measure L2 knowledge by a monolingual standard” (p. 194). That is, L2 learners are learning the L2 to add one more language to their linguistics repertoire, not replacing their L1 with L2. Thus, when the students are aware that their instructor retains her L1 as well as keep her identity as a speaker of her L1, they would consider the goal of being competent bilingual more realistic without having to force themselves to pass as native speakers of the L2 as one student’s comment suggested: “I don’t think that the course taught by a native speaker should be standard. I think that we can learn many things even
in the course taught by a NNS instructor. At least, it has modeling effects. – translation” (21).

VI. CONCLUSION

The students’ comments appeared to be consistent with the arguments presented by ELT researchers: While the native speaker provides a standard of how to use English, it is also true that “many of the native speakers in a corpus will be less proficient than many nonnative speakers known to us. The automatic claim of the native speaker to be the target user is therefore questionable.” (McCarthy, 2001, p. 140). Within a specific context of language use, there will be “expert and inexpert native speakers, and expert and inexpert non-native speakers” (ibid.). Kramsch (2003) also argued that “native speakers do not always speak according to the rules of their standard national languages; they display regional, occupational, generational, class-related ways of talking that render the notion of a unitary native speaker artificial” (p. 251).

In foreign language instruction, it has been controversial over what should be taught when considering “the interplay between the linguistic ideology and the sociocultural reality of pedagogical practice” (Train, 2003, p. 6). Train (2003) showed concern that “the culture of standardization surrounding the native standard language enters into conflict with learner-centered pedagogies” (p. 10). As Romaine (1994) suggested, “standardization is not an inherent, but rather an acquired or deliberately and artificially imposed characteristic. Standard languages do not arise via a “natural” course of linguistic evolution or suddenly spring into existence. They are created by conscious and deliberate planning” (p. 84). Valdman (2003) talked about two problems if the foreign language teachers strictly adhere to standard norm: “First, that norm will seldom be evident in the samples of authentic oral texts to which learners will be exposed. Second, to expose them only to highly contrived materials that adhere to the standard norm will make it difficult for them to understand authentic texts” (p. 58).

Especially when considering the notion of native standard language is “the locus of monolingual identity, both collectively and individually” (Train, 2003, p. 8), ELT profession fostering the bilingual and multilingual identity which ought to be positively promoted within the EIL perspective cannot but attempt to call for “greater inclusion of sociolinguistic variation and cultural diversity” (Train, 2003, p. 9). Having paid attention to the varieties of English in teaching context, O’Keefe and Farr (2003) also emphasized “the profiling of ELF as a robust variety that is independent of English as a native language”(p. 410).1

Another point that the students mentioned was modeling effects that NNS instructor can

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1 ELF stands for English as a lingua franca.
provide: "I like your ways of speaking English. When I wasn't accustomed to it, I thought your pronunciation is a rather brave. But now I really like it. You're very confident and show us how to speak out our own English confidently" (8); "You seem to express your opinion very efficiently in English in spite your poor pronunciation but it doesn't matter" (20). From the way the NNS instructor delivered her lecture and communicated with the class, the students might find an English speaker model with whom they would identify more easily than with native speakers.

Traditionally in language pedagogy, "the linguistic authority of the native speaker, derived from that of Chomsky's 'ideal speaker' had been extended beyond grammar to include social behavior and cultural knowledge as well" (Kramsch, 2003, p. 254). However, "since 1985 and following the "socio-cultural turn" in second language acquisition have the "growing number of multilingual speakers around the world ... continued to raise doubts about the validity of the native speaker model for foreign language study" (Finger, 2003, p. 46). Especially, in terms of preparations of being a language user, and even language teacher, NNSs are not always in disadvantage. They may be qualified with insight as well as experience of acquiring another language and contacting its culture that NSs may lack. Mauranen (2003) also argued that "voices in the English teaching profession and among scholars in the field have questioned the NS's status as the most relevant model for teaching English and have called for the development of models for international speakers that are more appropriate to the changed role of English" (p. 513).

While not against the reason for preferring NS instructor since "the native speaker can model the language the students are aiming at and can provide an instant authoritative answer to any language question" (Cook, 2001, p. 176), Kramsch (1998) also called our attention to the argument that "non-native teachers and students alike are intimidated by the native-speaker norm" (p. 9). Thus, it has suggested that "students may prefer the more achievable model of the fallible non-native speaker teacher" (Cook, 2001, p. 176). This point of view sounds echoed with a critical sociocultural perspective that will "promote a vision of language learning and teaching as a process of nurturing multilingual (Blyth, 1995) and intercultural speakers (Byram & Zarate, 1997, cited in Train, 2003, p. 4) rather than the arguably unattainable goal of producing ‘native-like’ speakers" (Train, 2003, p. 4). Then, "if the students are to be persuaded to become L2 users, they need to be presented with proper role model of L2 users to emulate" (Cook, 2002, p. 336). In this vein, modeling effects that NNS instructors can provide may be a message for successful L2 users reminding that "the ownership of two languages has increasingly become seen as an asset as the ‘communication world’ gets smaller" (Baker, 2001, p. 417). Such multi-competence perspective in which "L2 users are portrayed as investing in bi- or multilingualism, rather than in ubiquitous TL development" (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 299) may be more effectively practiced by NNS instructors rather than by NS instructors.
The current study was based on only one case of English-medium course with relatively small number of subjects. Thus, it would be hard to make any generalization out of the research findings concerning the EFL learners’ attitude toward NNS instructor as a source of language input and a model of L2 user. Further research should be able to observe not only larger number of NNS instructors but also extensive range of NNS speakers working in various situations. In particular, for the instructional contexts, the effects that NNS instructor might bring can be different depending on school levels. For instance, the pronunciation factor that college students seemed to be able to accommodate can turn out to be a bigger problem for younger students. Even though it was suggested that it is necessary to show a successful L2 user through NNS instructor, there should be careful consideration as to which linguistic parts a particular NNS instructor should be more proficient in when teaching different group of learners by their age and education level.

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APPENDIX
Students' Evaluation

This questionnaire is to see what kinds of attitude EFL students have on the course in which a nonnative-speaker instructor uses English as the medium of the class, and how the students evaluate the
course taught by a nonnative-speaker instructor. Your help is highly appreciated.

1. Self-assessed General English proficiency level
   a) Advanced (14%)  
   b) High-intermediate (18.72%)  
   c) Low-intermediate (6.24%)  
   d) Beginning-level (0.06%)

2. Self-assessed spoken-English proficiency level
   a) Advanced (0.06%)  
   b) High-intermediate (16.35%)  
   c) Low-intermediate (16.51%)  
   d) Beginning-level (0.09%)

3. Have you ever taken a course for which a native-speaker of English is the instructor at school?  
   a) Yes (25.96.2%)  
   b) No (7.34%)

4. If your answer is Yes to the question 3, how many courses have you taken with native-speaker instructors?  
   1 course: 1 (4%)  
   2 courses: 7 (28%)  
   3 courses: 2 (8%)  
   4 courses: 5 (20%)  
   4-5 courses: 1 (4%)  
   5 courses: 4 (16%)  
   6 courses: 1 (4%)  
   7 courses: 1 (4%)  
   8 courses: 1 (4%)  
   6-8 courses: 1 (4%)  
   5-10 courses: 1 (4%)  

5. Have you ever taken a course in which a nonnative-speaker of English instructor uses English as the medium of the class?  
   a) Yes (21.80.8%)  
   b) No (7.19.2%)

6. If your answer is Yes to the question 5, how many courses have you taken with nonnative-speaker instructors?  
   1 course: 8 (38.1%)  
   2 courses: 7 (33.3%)  
   3 courses: 4 (19%)  
   4 courses: 1 (4.8%)  
   5 courses: 1 (4.8%)  

7. If your answer is No to the question 5, why didn't you take a course with a nonnative-speaker so far?  
   a) Because I didn't want to take a course offered by a nonnative-speaker instructor since I couldn't trust his or her English in general.  
   b) Because I didn't want to take a course offered by a nonnative-speaker instructor since I couldn't trust his or her English especially for his or her pronunciation. (1.20%)  
   c) Because there was no courses offered by nonnative-speaker instructor using English as the medium for the course. (4.80%)  
   d) Other reasons (Could you please specify the reasons: _________________________________)

8. Do you want to take another courses for the next or future semester offered by nonnative speaker
instructors using English as the medium of the course?
   a) Yes (4.80%)  b) No (1.20%)

9. If your answer is Yes to the question 8, could you please specify the reasons?

10. If your answer is No to the question 8, could you please specify the reasons?

11. How demanding is this course, ELE 224?
   a) Easy to take with little reading and homework (1: 3.4%).
   b) Challenging but manageable to take (20: 69%).
   c) Too much reading (4: 13.8%)
   d) Too much homework (4: 13.8%)
   *Some students marked more than one option so that the total number became 29.
   *A comment: "I am proud of myself for my effort to accomplish this course as it was quite difficult to submit every homework" (1).

12. How would you evaluate your preparation for this course?
   a) I prepared each class with full preparation (3: 11.5%)
   b) I prepared for most classes with sincere preparation (16: 61.5%)
   c) I prepared for some classes with full/sincere preparation, but couldn’t for others (6: 23.1%)
   d) I couldn’t prepare for most classes (1: 3.8%)

13. How would you evaluate the instructor’s way of teaching?
   a) Terrible
   b) Good (5: 19.2%)
   c) Very good (13: 50%)
   d) Excellent (8: 30.8%)
   Could you please make comments on the instructors teaching skills?

14. How would you evaluate the instructor’s English language skills?
   a) Terrible
   b) Good (4: 14.8%)
   c) Very good (16: 59.3%)
   d) Excellent (7: 25.9%)
   *One student marked (c) and (d) so that the total number made 27.
   Could you please make comments on the instructors language skills?

15. Do you think the content this course dealt with is helpful for you to understand second language learning/acquisition?
   a) It didn’t help at all.
   b) It helped to some degree (11: 42.3%)
   c) It helped me a lot (15: 57.7%).
   Could you please state your own opinions about the course?

16. Do you think this course helped you improve your English language skills?
   a) Not at all.
   b) To a certain extent (15: 60%).
c) A lot (10: 40%).
* One student marked between (b) and (c) that his or her answer was not counted.

Could you please state in what way the course helped or didn’t help you to improve your English language skills?

17. How would you evaluate the course in general?
   a) I could not be satisfied with the course at all.
   b) I was satisfied with the course to some degree (9: 34.6%).
   c) I was satisfied with the course to a greater extent (17: 65.4%).

18. Could you please give some suggestions to improve these types of courses?

   Thank you very much for your help!

   Applicable levels: college / higher
   Key words: NNS instructor, English as an international language (EIL)

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