This study reports the findings of an investigation into the comprehension abilities of Korean EFL university students in American English and British English. Witnessing the dominance of American English in Korean English classrooms and its society and assuming that the linguistically biased English education phenomena has negative impacts on Korean EFL learners' listening comprehension in British English, still less other varieties of English, the researcher examined the issue of how different they would be in aurally comprehending two major English varieties. Data were collected from three rounds of experiments during which three groups consisting of 116 Korean university students listened to American English and British English and then they were given listening comprehension tests. The result of the comprehension tests revealed that all of the three groups, irrespective of English language proficiency levels, performed better in American English than in British English. This implies that Korean EFL learners are more accustomed to and more familiar with American English rather than British English and other varieties of English. The paper concludes with several suggestions to improve the linguistically biased English education phenomenon. (182 words)

I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing use of English as a lingua franca (ELF), it is important for learners of English to possess the ability to communicate with other English language users with a wide range of both native and non-native English accents. People listen much more than speak in daily encounters with others, which is applied to foreign language usage as well as one's mother tongue usage. Listening is regarded as a vital part of learning a foreign language although more priority seems to be given to its sister-speaking mainly owing to
an excessive emphasis on communicative-oriented English education.

As English is now considered a lingua franca around the world, Korean learners of English need to understand different varieties of English to communicate with not only native speakers of English but also non-native speakers of English. Given the fact that Korean learners of English are situated in English as a foreign language (EFL) environments, they, however, often have to rely on both authentic and non-authentic audio and video materials to practice and improve their listening proficiency. It is no exaggeration to say that Korean learners of English are quite used to a North American English, which served as a major reason why the researcher examined the Korean university students' listening comprehension abilities of the two major different Englishes in the world: American English (AmE) and British English (BrE). Due to the limited exposure to a wide variety of English, Korean EFL learners may have to confront a communication breakdown with people with different English accents not accustomed to Korean EFL learners. Unfamiliarity with different varieties of English can lead to listening anxiety and then have an adverse effect on their overall communication abilities.

In an ever-globalizing world, EFL learners need to develop their international communication skills in English and should be able to listen fluently and comprehend different varieties of English. In reality, however, there seems to exist linguistic prejudice or personal preference in some way. For an instance, previous studies on their attitude to different varieties of English revealed that many of the Korean EFL learners still favor AmE rather than other varieties of English (Choi, 2007; Gibb, 1999; Jung, 2005; Shim, 2002). Confining the scope of the study to two major Englishes of AmE and BrE, the researcher wondered if there exists any difference in comprehending the two major English varieties. How are Korean EFL learners' listening abilities to comprehend BrE? Or Are there any differences of their listening comprehension in AmE and BrE? With a view to investigating this phenomenon among the Korean university EFL learners, the present study examined their comprehension abilities of both AmE and BrE.

II. BACKGROUNDS OF THE RESEARCH

1. English as the Language of the Superpowers

   English is the most widely spoken and the most often studied language in the world. Thanks to the Internet and other technological advancement, the world witnesses the massive growth of English. Brought to Britain by Germanic settlers, mixed with other languages because of two invasions into Britain, and spreading beyond the bounds of the British isles owing to the rise of the British Empire, it is the official language of the Great
Britain, the native language of most of the British, and the dominant language of the United States of America. The emergence of the U.S. as a world superpower contributed to spreading the English language around the globe. It is no exaggeration to say that English is everywhere and its “worldwide presence of English as a lingua Americana” (Phillipson, 2008, p. 250) comes from the U.S. dominance and impact in a broad spectrum of areas including academy, economy, culture, military, etc. In particular, as the impact of the English language is also strongly felt in the movie and music industries, it naturally motivates many young people to study English (McKay, 2002), which further contributes to the spread of English worldwide. The global diffusion of English has resulted in varieties of English in different sociocultural contexts. With the emerging reality of world Englishes in different non-native contexts, English has already started losing its grip as a Superpower's language.

2. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

No would doubt the status of English as an international language (EIL) in a global sense. Graddol (1997), however, contended that the status of English is shifting, citing a case of some countries belonging to the so-called Expanding Circle\(^1\) where more and more people started using English for international communication, not as a school subject. It is a case in point that clearly shows a worldwide trend of accepting English as a practical tool of communication, not as a world superpower’s language. Based upon a demographic projection, Graddol (1999) even predicted that “the balance between L1 and L2 speakers will critically change, with L2 speakers eventually overtaking L1 speakers” (Graddol, 1999, p.62). With its global spread, English now witnesses the number of non-native speakers exceeding that of native speakers.

Although the concept of native speaker may sound inappropriate and even obsolete, the EIL status should allow for many different varieties of English as EIL, by definition, means a language that belongs to those who speak it and not to the few who acquire and use it since they were born. As Paikeday (1985) aptly entitled his book as “The Native Speaker is Dead,” the ownership of English now lies with anyone who uses the language for a wide variety of purposes. Claiming that L2 users should be considered as speakers in their own right, not as approximations to monolingual speakers (Cook, 1999, p. 185), Cook asserted that going beyond the native speaker is indispensable in English language teaching. Smith (1983) even went so far as to say that native English speakers should study

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\(^1\) It is one of the famous Kachruvian three circle model. Kachru (1985, 1992) presented the sociolinguistic profile of English around the world in terms of three concentric circles—inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle.
English as an international language if they want to interact in English with non-native speakers with a different national variety. If that granted, native speakers will no longer be able to exercise their exclusive privilege over L2 users in EIL. Reflecting this phenomenon, some scholars coined terms as shown in Table 1 with some delicate distinction each other.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholars</th>
<th>Terms Denoting the Global Nature of English</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strevens (1992)</td>
<td>English as an International Language</td>
<td>EIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal (1997)</td>
<td>World Standard Spoken English</td>
<td>WSSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal (2003)</td>
<td>English as a Global Language</td>
<td>EGL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>World English(s)</td>
<td>We(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a similar vein, Jenkins (2007) lately claimed to use English as a lingua franca, indicating that none of its speakers can be native speakers of the language (p. 2). She, however, underscored a number of advantages of EFL:

ELF emphasizes the role of English in communication between speakers from different L1s…. that there is nothing inherently wrong in retaining certain characteristics of the L1 such as accent…

(Jenkins, 2000, p.11 cited in Jenkins, 2007).

The status of EIL can be also felt in the electronically connected media as English is used as if it were “an official language of the Internet.” The English language is used not because of its linguistic beauty or superiority but because of its practicality by which many people can function in the world (Svartvik & Leech, 2006).

3. EFL Learners’ Attitude to Different Varieties of English

This area is believed to be relatively under-researched and may well deserve further in-depth research. Friedrich (2000) examined 190 adult Brazilian EFL learners’ attitude to English. Her participants revealed their rather strong preference for either AmE or BrE, ignoring other varieties of English.

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2 The terms are based upon articles and books authored by the scholars mentioned who are believed to coin a term. Other terms commonly used to mean the same thing with some minor different nuance include Global English, World English, Common English, International English, or General English.
Matsuda (2003) explored 33 Japanese high school students’ attitude to differing English accents. She found that while they perceived English as an international language, they still considered it owned by native English speakers such as Americans and British.

A small number of studies have examined the Korean EFL learners' attitude to different varieties of English. Commonly found is that Korean learners preferred American English to other English varieties (Choi, 2007; Gibb, 1999; Jung, 2005; Shim, 2002). Gibb (1999) looked into Korean university students and adults. Reporting that his participants strongly preferred American English to British and Australian Englishes, he claimed that the strong preference for AmE stems from political and/or historical familiarity with the United States. Shim (2002) also found Korean university students’ strong preference for American English to other varieties of English by an American, an Australian, a Pakistani, and a Korean. Jung (2005) compared pre-university and university students as to their preference and familiarity with AmE and BrE. He claimed that the hegemony of American English was found in the Korean EFL classroom, indicating that both pre-university and university groups preferred American English predominantly over British English as their target language. More recently, Choe (2007), in his qualitative study with four university students, found that three of them preferred AmE as an educational target while one accepted AmE and BrE as an appropriate standard variety.

With regard to a changing attitude of Korean EFL learners to varieties of English, the following studies can be cited. First of all, Shim’s study (2002) traced the development of Korean EFL learners’ attitude towards non-native Englishes. In her survey and interview study with her TESOL M.A. students, she reported that all of the students agreed to the need to understand non-native varieties of English. She ascribed the change in their attitude to the exposure to the concept of World Englishes. In the same vein, Choi (2007) conducted a survey study with two groups of Korean EFL college learners. Unlike those above-mentioned studies, her survey combined AmE and BrE as a Standard English. She also reported the positive effects of a World Englishes course on Korean EFL learners’ attitude to different varieties of English. Those who have taken a World Englishes course showed less preference for AmE or BrE while those who have never taken the course were found to favor AmE or BrE.

Why Korean university students prefer American English can be found at, among others, their familiarity with American culture and perception of America as an economic power (Gibb, 1999). Since 1955 when the First Korean Republic published its First National Curriculum totally based upon American English as the standard (Choi, 2006), the strong presence of American English has been found almost everywhere in our society even though a slight change is being made to recognize the importance of ELF as there is an increasing need to communicate with other non-natives with different English accents.

The above-mentioned studies claimed to have found the strong preference for American
English among Korean university learners of English. They, however, fail to see if there exists any difference in their comprehension abilities of different varieties of English by their different levels of English. Narrowing down to two major varieties of English of AmE and BrE, the present study investigated any difference in comprehending AmE and BrE.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

The participants of the present study consisted of 116 students from two universities in Seoul. A majority of the participants were English majors (63%) and the rest consisted of business (7%), engineering (4%), sports education (26%) majors. The participants were divided into three groups (above-intermediate, intermediate, and below intermediate) based on the result of a pre-test. The test, similar to a TOEIC test, consisted of 50 questions.

2. Instruments and Procedures

The study used six audio recordings with three American English and British English, respectively. The recordings were done by an American born, brought up, and educated in Mid-western area of the United States and a British born, brought up, and educated in South-eastern area of England. Both of them have been in Korea for three and two years, respectively and currently work as an instructor at major language institutes, Seoul. Each of them was asked to read the three different texts at a normal speed\(^3\) in the researcher’s office which was not entirely sound treated but equipped with a recording device which can filter out noise. The recorded parts were sampled and tested with three EFL learners to check if the recording quality was appropriate for the present study experiments. Those double-checked recordings were stored into a computer in an MP-3 format. The MP-3 files were played for the experiments using audio systems equipped with an MP-3 compatible CD player.

The texts used for the recording were chosen from the major American and British broadcasting news Web sites. The average length of the recordings was 1.10 minutes. The participants of each group listened to six short stories in total with three AmE and BrE,

\(^3\) The reading speed per minute was measured at wpm, which ranged from 139 to 156. The average wpm was 148.
respectively during their class hours, followed by listening comprehension tests. The researcher was allowed to conduct the experiment every other week.

In addition, a questionnaire with five questions was administered prior to the experiment in order to find the participants’ preference to either AmE or BrE.

3. Data Analysis

The aim of the analysis was to identify how different the participants are in their comprehension of the two major standard Englishes of AmE and BrE and whether they show different preference for either AmE or BrE. For this purpose, the present study employed a repeated measure ANOVA using SPSS 11.5 with a significant level of 0.05 applied in all of the analysis in the following section.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Preference of English

To the question of which English do you prefer between AmE or BrE, around 76% (n=88) of the participants chose American English as their preferred type of English while 24% (n=28) preferred British English as their preferred target.

2. Comprehension Scores of AmE and BrE Tests

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the scores of the comprehension tests across the two different Englishes of AmE and BrE. It displays the mean score of AmE of each group is higher than that of BrE.
TABLE 2

Descriptive Statistics for Scores of the Comprehension Tests by Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Accents</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above-intermediate</td>
<td>BrE</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>BrE</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below-intermediate</td>
<td>BrE</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As displayed in Table 2, irrespective of their proficiency levels, all of the three groups comprehended AmE better than BrE.

Table 3 summarizes the results of repeated ANOVA for a within-subject factor (a caption variable).

TABLE 3

Results of Repeated Measures ANOVA for Within-Subjects Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCENT</td>
<td>1669.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1669.31</td>
<td>87.12</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCENT * LEVEL</td>
<td>558.54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>279.27</td>
<td>14.58</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2165.24</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>19.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geisser-Greenhouse corrected degrees of freedom are used.

As shown in Table 3, there is both a main and an interaction effects. Accent had a significant main effect ($F=87.11$, $df=1$, $p=.000$), which means that different varieties of English resulted in differences in the participants’ listening comprehension. For the A x B interaction (an accent x a level), there was also a significant interaction effect between accent and level ($F=87.12$, $df=2$, $p=.000$). As it produced the interaction effect, a follow-up post-hoc test was conducted to see what caused a difference.

TABLE 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>204152.82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>204152.82</td>
<td>7878.35</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUPS</td>
<td>9638.59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4819.29</td>
<td>185.98</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2928.18</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>25.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 shows, there was a significant main effect in groups, which indicates that three groups showed different results when they listened to AmE and BrE.

The following Table 5 summarizes the post-hoc tests for a between-group variable by accents of AmE and BrE.
2. Analysis of Pairwise Comparisons of a Between-Group Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accent</th>
<th>(I) Groups</th>
<th>(J) Groups</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>group1</td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>14.232(*)</td>
<td>1.203</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>21.864(*)</td>
<td>1.346</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>-14.232(*)</td>
<td>1.203</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group1</td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>7.632(*)</td>
<td>1.107</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>group1</td>
<td>-21.864(*)</td>
<td>1.346</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>-7.632(*)</td>
<td>1.107</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrE</td>
<td>group1</td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>12.583(*)</td>
<td>1.058</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>13.913(*)</td>
<td>1.184</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>group1</td>
<td>-12.583(*)</td>
<td>1.058</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>group1</td>
<td>1.329</td>
<td>.974</td>
<td>.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>-13.913(*)</td>
<td>1.184</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>group2</td>
<td>group3</td>
<td>-1.329</td>
<td>.974</td>
<td>.175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the above Table 5, multiple comparisons clearly indicated statistical significance between every pairwise comparison under the AmE condition. Under the BrE condition, the pairwise comparisons revealed a statistical significance between Group 1 and Group 2 and Group 1 and Group 3, but no significance was detected in the pairwise comparison between Group 2 and Group 3.

FIGURE 1
Mean Differences between AmE and BrE
Figure 1 shows mean differences of three groups when they listened to AmE and BrE. The mean differences in both Group 1 and 2 are easily detected while it is hardly found in Group 3.

As all of the above-mentioned data demonstrated, the group differences at the initial stage remained in both comprehension tests of AmE and BrE. Noteworthy is the overall decrease in their comprehension scores when they listened to BrE (see FIGURE 1). It can be interpreted to show that the participants are not accustomed to listening to and comprehending BrE, resulting in lower comprehension test scores. In case of Group 3, the difference of test scores between AmE and BrE showed a slight difference (24.7 in AmE and 23.8 in BrE), which means that their overall aural proficiency is low and thus not influenced much by either AmE or BrE.

The multiple comparisons under the AmE condition also found a significant difference between all of the three pairwise comparisons. When having listened to BrE, the groups showed somewhat different results. Group 1 and Group 3, however, showed no statistical difference in their pairwise comparisons while Group 1 and Group 2, and Group 1 and Group 3 revealed statistical differences. It indicates group differences remained under the AmE mode while those changed under the BrE mainly due to a decrease of Group 2’s score in BrE comprehension. It revealed the intermediate learners’ linguistic bias and unbalanced aural comprehension skill.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined how different Korean university students are in their comprehension of the two major English varieties of AmE and BrE. Irrespective of English language proficiency levels, all of the groups performed better in AmE than in BrE. The whys and wherefores of the finding can be ascribed to Korean EFL learners’ familiarity with and preference for AmE rather than other varieties of English. Several previous studies (Gibb, 1999, 2001; Jung, 2005; Shim, 2002) produced virtually same result from their surveys that Korean learners of English were found to have preference for and more familiarity with AmE than BrE. Their findings, however, were based on their participants' responses to questions of questionnaires and interviews, not based on actual comprehension differences in understanding these two varieties. The findings of the current study can be summarized as the following.
Korean University Students’ Listening Comprehension in American and British Englishes

1. AmE is more familiar.

The participants were found to be accustomed to AmE, which was confirmed by the comprehension scores of the AmE and BrE tests. All of the three groups (above-intermediate, intermediate, and below-intermediate) showed better comprehension results when they listened to AmE than when they listened to BrE (see Table 2 and Figure 1). The test scores can be safely interpreted as indicating that the participants have been exposed more to AmE and thus more familiar with AmE. In an EFL situation like Korea, EFL learners tend to have more opportunities of studying English through materials such as textbooks, course books, etc. than of engaging in face-to-face conversations with natives speakers of English.

North American instructors are overwhelming the Korean ELT market, which has naturally led to AmE dominating books and other materials with audio recordings. It is no exaggeration to say that major bookstores and professional agencies handling ELT books and materials prefer them in AmE as quite a few learners and customers want to purchase books and materials recorded in BrE. This phenomena triggers or even accelerates the dominance of AmE in the Korean ELT field. As exposure would likely increase familiarity and hence comprehension (Gass & Varonis, 1984 cited in Munro, 1998), it is no wonder to see that a majority of learners prefer a language variety that they are more familiar with (Jung, 2002).

It was once again confirmed that American English is overwhelming British English. Korean EFL learners, however, are expected to and should understand these two major varieties in order to work as an active member of an ever-globalizing world. It is deplorable to notice that they have been exposed mostly and quite accustomed to American English. It is more than important to develop the Korean learners' ability to more easily comprehend various English accents. Given possibilities that Korean EFL learners would use English with both native speakers and non-native speakers of English, it is definitely more than necessary to expose them to not merely two major Englishes-AmE and BrE but also other accented Englishes.

In this regard, English education professionals including private and public school teachers, ELT materials planners, and professors are strongly urged to ensure that Korean EFL learners are exposed to varieties of English including AmE and BrE by presenting different varieties of ELF models.

2. Meta-sociolinguistic instruction is in order.

Approximately 76% (n=88) of the participants favored American English as their preferred type of English while 24.1% (n=28) preferred British English as their preferred
target. The finding confirms once again the strong preference for American English among Korean university learners and supports the findings from Gibb (1999), Shim (2002), and Jung (2005). Given the limited exposure to BrE, it is a matter of course to see more preference for AmE among the Korean EFL learners.

As English is the most commonly used language around the globe, many different varieties of English have developed and are developing all over the world. In addition, the focus of learning English is shifting from native-like competence to international intelligibility (Jenkins, 2007). Such being the case, Korean EFL learners absolutely need to develop and improve their comprehension ability to communicate with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds with a variety of English accents. Modiano (2004) aptly stated that Anglo-Americanization is alleged to do harm to the social and cultural integrity of non-native speakers of English, even adding that ELT fields need a theoretically neutral platform for the teaching and learning of English based on the Euro-English and English as an international language paradigms.

Taking into consideration the fact that an increasing number of non-native speakers of English are interacting with each other using English as a lingua franca, English teachers and learners need much meta-sociolinguistic instruction in order to prepare learners of English adequately for the future uses of English as a communication tool (Matsuda, 2003), not as English as a native language of the United States or the United Kingdom.

3. Which English should be taught in Korean EFL classrooms?

Taking into consideration the fact that more and more people around the world are communicating each other in English and thus mutual intelligibility among them is ever more emphasized, the linguistically biased English education phenomenon should be corrected. Korean English classrooms, English textbooks, and other supplementary materials are dominated by American English. Korean national curriculum has hardly designated American English as a Standard English for a learning target. As English is shifting from a property of the United States and the Great Britain to that of the world, Korean EFL professionals and practitioners should pay more attention to the trend.

First of all, more varieties of English or at least BrE should be granted in Korean ELT fields. As the world now witnesses more and more non-native speakers of English communicating in a variety of English and it is believed that Korean EFL learners would have more opportunities to talk to other non-native speaks than to native speakers, they should be able to understand not only the so-called prestigious and most popular variety but also international or regional varieties of English. Strevens (1992) argued that an American or a British variety is recommended to be adopted as long as it will be most useful. His argument, however, leaves much room for further discussion as the world has
already seen other varieties spoken and written since then.

In order to allow for different varieties of English, it is recommended to record the elementary and secondary school English textbooks in different varieties of English or at least AmE and BrE. In addition, listening comprehension tests administered nationwide to secondary school students should include other varieties of English. What happens in practice: Korean EFL learners are provided with recordings of nothing but North American English, which is mainly because of the so-called gate-keeping carried out by ELT publishers and the marginalization of ELT speakers in their ELT materials (Jenkins, 2004). In addition, all of the tests have been recorded in North American English. Why are Korean EFL learners exposed to and forced to be accustomed to AmE alone?

Secondly, Korean ELT professionals and in particular practitioners should prepare their learners to be global English speakers. Toward this end, it is essential to provide them with different varieties of English whenever possible in classrooms as English belongs to the world, not to the United States alone.

And thirdly, Korean teachers of English should be trained enough to recognize the necessity and importance of learning different varieties of English. With a view to exposing our EFL learners to varieties of English, it is prerequisite that EFL teachers should be made familiar and comfortable with different varieties of English to provide variety exposure. Fortunately, some of the in-service teacher training programs have lately started offer World Englishes for EFL teachers, EIL for EFL classrooms, etc., which should spread to pre/ in-service programs as the demand for learning and teaching Englishes has never been greater.

The present study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the study and its contributions. The first limitation has to do with the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the participants. The second limitation concerns the method of confirming the degree of difficulty of the listening materials as the researcher and two native speakers simply checked the texts with the number, length, and degree of difficulty without resorting to systematic criteria.

And finally further research is needed to investigate a longitudinal effect of exposure to different varieties of English on EFL learners’ listening comprehension.

References


Applicable levels: tertiary
Key words: American English, British English, World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International English (EIL), listening comprehension

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