

Promoting Expanding Circle Englishes: Student Perceptions of the Korean Variety of English and an English as an Intercultural Language Classroom Strategy*

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The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of 30 Korean university students majoring in English on the use of the Korean Variety of English (KVE) as well as on a class activity that promotes its use. Designed within the framework of the English as an Intercultural Language (EiCL) paradigm (Green & Lee, 2018), which is supportive of the use of localized versions of English, the activity involved having participants re-write a story that uses *inner circle* English to a story that uses KVE. This activity was aimed at increasing students' awareness of KVE and raising issues related to its use in the context of World Englishes. The findings revealed that the participants demonstrated a substantial awareness of many lexical forms of KVE but had less awareness of grammatical features of KVE. Regarding the legitimacy and use of KVE, a variety of opinions were expressed by the participants but the majority had negative perceptions overall; however, most participants felt the use of KVE was appropriate in certain circumstances. The majority of participants had positive perceptions of the activity used for this study. The implications of the study for both EFL learners and educators are discussed.

Keywords: English as an Intercultural Language, sociocultural linguistics, World Englishes, critical pedagogy, Korean Variety of English

1 Introduction

When Kahru's (1992) *Concentric Circle of Englishes* was first introduced over three decades ago, many English language educators and learners believed that the goal of English education in the *outer* and *expanding circles* was to adhere to and strive for competence as depicted in the native English speaker (NES) standards of the *inner circle*. In this manner, the *inner circle* sphere at the center of the model was viewed as the *bullseye* on an archery or darts board; the closer

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one came to “hitting that bullseye” the more proficient one was considered in the language. With this in mind, English education outside the *inner circle* has been greatly influenced by NES countries such as the U.S., the U.K., Australia, etc. For example, in the Republic of Korea, a so-called *expanding circle* country, there has been a long-standing focus on teaching and learning U.S. versions of English (Green, 2015; Jung, 2010; Kim Y. S., 2007).

Today, however, perceptions about the goal of English education in the *outer* and *expanding circles* have greatly evolved, in part because of the fact that, as Sharifian (2017) reports, “More than 80% of communicative events in English that are currently taking place around the world are between so-called ‘non-native’ speakers of the language” (p. 102). According to Ethnologue (2019), there are now almost twice as many non-native speakers of English (NNES) (743 million) worldwide than NESs (378 million). This unprecedented phenomenon calls for new and innovative paradigms and approaches to the way the language is conceptualized, taught, learned, and used. In light of the fact that the majority of English speakers are using the language as a foreign or second language, very often with other members of the *outer* and *expanding circles*, is it truly necessary or relevant to insist that these individuals focus on strictly adhering to *inner circle* standards or attempt to imitate NESs? Shouldn’t the ability to communicate between the two parties take precedent?

One recent paradigm that attempts to answer these questions is *English as an Intercultural Language* (EiCL) (Green & Lee, 2018, 2015; Lee K. Y., 2013; Sifakis, 2003). Based on the sociocultural linguistic premise that culture and language are inherently intertwined and that language education should promote empathy for other cultures as well as the development of *intercultural competence skills* (Byram, 1988), one of the main tenets of EiCL is that English is *universal*. That is, it belongs to all who use it, not just to members of the *inner circle*. In the words of Lee K.Y. (2013), the language is “universal in that it has become a heterogeneous language with multiple norms and grammars” (p. 292). From this point of view, Barratta (2019) maintains, “We should recognize all varieties of the English language as legitimate, with a time and a place appropriate for their usage” (p. 2). In addition, English should be seen as user-dependent and focused on comprehensibility; in other words, the primary objective or concern of language should be communicative, and use of the language should be dependent on the needs and purposes of those who are communicating with it.

The EiCL approach calls for an enhanced study of World Englishes and the empowerment of localized versions of English. In Korea, much research has already been done on the Korean Variety of English (often called “Konglish”) (Blanco, 2018; Chang, 2010; Charles, 2015; Fayzrakhmanova, 2016; Hadikin, 2005; Hagens, 2004; Kent, 1999; Lee K. Y., 2010; Park, 2009; Seong & Lee, 2008; Thorkelson, 2005). While some educators view the use of KVE by Korean speakers of English as inappropriate, others encourage its use in certain circumstances. In favor of this later stance, Barratta (2019) writes, “Konglish

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reflects cultural identity, connects with linguistic diversity and above all, is already used to communicate in Korea, which is the ultimate purpose of language” (p. 2). Only a handful of studies have examined the perceptions of Korean English teachers and students about the use of KVE or employed classroom strategies to promote awareness of its use (Hadikin, 2005; Hagens, 2004; Kent, 2001; Thorkelson, 2005).

The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of 30 Korean university students majoring in English at a public university in Korea regarding 1) the use of KVE, and 2) an EICL classroom activity that promotes its use. In this activity, the participants were asked to re-write a short paragraph that had been written in a form of native-speaker English into a paragraph that used KVE. Following the completion of the activity, the participants took part in focus group discussions in which they were asked to discuss their opinions about KVE as well as the classroom activity.

The findings of this study are intended to not only provide insight into the participants’ awareness of and beliefs about the use of KVE but also elicit feedback on and encourage the development of pedagogical strategies that facilitate meaningful learning experiences within the EICL paradigm.

2 Literature Review

2.1 English as an Intercultural Language (EICL)

In response to the increasingly rapid proliferation and study of World Englishes, a number of pedagogical approaches and paradigms that attempt to clarify and provide guidance have been introduced. Some of the most well-known of these approaches are English as a Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer, 2011), English as an International Language (McKay, 2003), English as a Global Language (Crystal, 2012) and English as a Family of Languages (Crystal, 1998). Each of these models has a variety of interpretations and approaches. One more recent approach that has particular applications for sociocultural linguists and the promotion of local varieties of English has been labeled English as an Intercultural Language (ELcL) (Green & Lee, 2018, 2015; Lee K. Y., 2013; Sifakis, 2003).

According to Green and Lee (2018), EICL begins with the premise that language is a social practice in which “communication is not simply a transmission of information, it is a creative, cultural act in its own right through which social groups constitute themselves” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 13). It also recognizes the belief that language and culture, which is seen as dynamic, multidimensional, and contextual, are inseparable (Leveridge, 2008; Sharifian, 2017). In fact, as sociocultural linguists such as Janda (2016) point out, culture is deeply embedded in language through lexical and grammatical characteristics. This means that when learning languages, individuals are clearly internalizing

the culture embedded in those languages. This internalization is not necessarily one-sided, however. Sharifian (2017) writes, “Many communities of speakers, all around the world, have adopted English and adapted it for their own use, to encode and express their own cultural conceptualisations and worldviews” (p. 85). Malcolm (2017) suggests that this process of adoption of a second or foreign language involves four stages: retention (“the maintenance of features characteristic to the input variety”), elimination (“non-occurrence of features that could have been inherited from input variety but were not”), modification (“where features are modified”), and extension (“where features are transferred from local languages”) (p. 86). Through this process, individuals incorporate aspects of their own culture into the language that they are learning. In the case of KVE, Blanco (2018) states, “It has evolved into a variation of language which suits Koreans’ linguistic, cultural, and social needs” (p. 12).

If the above is true, then having the ability or opportunity to express oneself in the localized version of that language, rather than merely “mimicking” a native-speaker version of the language, empowers individuals to relate certain aspects of their culture to others in a way that they would not otherwise be able to. As Park (2009) reiterates, “The purpose of learning English as an international language is not to blindly imitate native speakers of English (NSE) but to understand and to be understood clearly” (p. 94). This is one reason that the EICL model promotes the belief that English education should not focus solely on NES benchmarks, an approach that Sikafis (2003) labels the *N-bound* perspective, which is concerned with “regularity, codification, and standardness” as defined by members of the *inner circle* (p. 239). Instead, maintains Sifakis (2003), a *C-bound* approach, which “prioritizes the process of cross-cultural comprehensibility between learners as a communicative goal in itself rather than on notions of accuracy and standards” (p. 239), should be taken. Not only does this approach enable individuals to more clearly relate certain aspects of their own cultures while focusing on the communicative process, it also discourages those interested in gate-keeping the language learning process and serves as a deterrent to *linguistic imperialism* (Canagarajah, 2003; Phillipson, 1992) and hegemonic socio-political and economic pressures..

With this in mind, the EICL approach accepts the belief that English is a global language; that is, it “belongs” to all who use it, not just to those residing in the *inner circle*, and strives for the promotion of intercultural awareness, competence (Byram, 1988), and empathy. In short, EICL refutes the notion of the “us versus them” mentality and constitutes the space for individuals to “glocalize” the intercultural communicative process while interacting in an environment of mutual respect. In the words of Lee K. Y. (2013), the EICL paradigm “helps individuals explore how to construct a sense of cultural identity as well as develop the skills needed to prepare them for intercultural interaction on the global stage” (p. 297).

2.2 The Korean Variety of English (KVE)

A number of studies have examined both the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the localized variety of English in the Republic of Korea, which is commonly referred to as Konglish. As Hadikin (2005) reports, “Korean English doesn’t have institutionalized backing in the same way as Singapore Englishes or Indian Englishes but various scholars have discussed a substantial number of English loanwords and phrases” (p. 3).

Konglish doesn’t merely consist of English loanwords and phrases, however. As Blanco (2018) states, “Konglish has reached the category of a variety or sub-language since it also functions as a potential vernacular, which displays linguistic consideration for morphology, semantics, syntax, pronunciation, pragmatics, and discourse” (p. 12). Studies that have identified and defined several aspects of KVE include Seong and Lee’s (2008), which discusses specific distinctions between NES English and KVE in word order, ellipsis, articles, prepositions, and the use of passive. Examples of differences in word order included differences related to adjectival order (e.g., “every my mistake” versus “my every mistake”) and titles (“Washington president” versus “President Washington”) (p. 87). According to the authors, differences in the use of ellipsis (e.g., “Today hot” versus “It was hot today;” “Know how to go” versus “I know how to go”) were due to the fact that “situationally or contextually predictable words can be deleted from a sentence (in Korean)” (p. 87).

In another study by Baek (1994), nine morphosyntactic features were identified, including the use of plural morphemes, tense markings, pronouns and possessive determiners, passive and causative constructions, and multiple modifying clauses (p. 155). Additionally, Kachru and Nelson (2006) report on lexico-semantic, morpho-semantic, and pragmatic differences between *inner circle* English and KVE that were originally singled out by Shim (1999).

Related to lexicon, Fayzrakhmanova (2016) writes, “Koreanized English words are naturally incorporated in all lects...and contribute to the formation of Korean English as a new English variety in Korea” (p. 216). According to Kent (1999), KVE has incorporated vocabulary from native speaker English in five ways: direct loanwords, hybrid terms, truncated terminology, through substitution, and by the creation of pseudo words (p. 201). Both Kim S. B. (2013) and Hadikin (2005) divide KVE into the following four categories:

1. Direct loanwords from English or Japanese with the same meaning but a simplified form (e.g., “self” meaning “self-service”)
2. Direct loanwords with broader or narrower meaning (e.g., “Burberry” meaning any long rain coat)
3. Shift extenders or loan words with altered meanings (“rinse” meaning “hair conditioner”)
4. Fabrications (“eye shopping” rather than “window shopping”) (Hadikin, 2005, p. 9)

In addition to syntactic and lexical differences existent in KVE, a number of sociocultural linguistic aspects are also apparent. In a study by Green and Lee (2020), a group of Korean university students identified ten lexical or grammatical differences between Korean and English that they believed were embedded in the two languages. These differences, which included: possessive pronouns (the use of “our” versus “my”), honorifics, family-related vocabulary, gender-specific vocabulary, word order, and the use of personal subjects, verb tenses, prepositions, articles, and singular/plural nouns, affected the use of KVE, reported the authors. Jendraschek (2009), Lee D. Y. (1996), and Suh (1978) have written extensively about how honorification in the Korean language has influenced Koreans’ use of English, and in a study by Chang (2010), the use of honorification, “our” versus “my,” responses to yes/no questions, and the omission of personal nouns and pronouns were mentioned as aspects of Korean culture that are present in KVE.

When reviewing the results of any study on language use, including those related to Korean English speakers use of KVE, it is important to consider the fact that not all individuals use language in the same manner.

2.3 Perceptions of KVE

Understanding the nature of KVE is one thing, but how do English educators and learners in Korea feel about its use, especially in light of the overwhelming influence and focus that *inner circle* English has had on English education in the country? A small number of studies have attempted to answer this question, and others have developed classroom activities that pose this question to students.

In a study by Charles (2015), 20 native Korean speakers living either in Korea or abroad were asked if they believed KVE should be accepted as a standardized variety of English at the international level. To this question, 9 of the participants answered “no,” that “Konglish is something they own and would like to keep within their own culture” (p. 140); 7 said “yes,” that “all English varieties should be accepted as tools of communication” (p. 139); and 4 stated “maybe.” The author concluded that, while most were not supportive of KVE being standardized internationally, many were “in favor of Konglish being used within an international setting to communicate with non-Koreans” (p. 141).

Hadikin (2005) conducted an informal survey of 20 Korean students and staff at an English language center in order to elicit their opinions of KVE and its use. Perceptions about KVE were mixed. Approximately half of the respondents had a negative impression; the rest were either positive or neutral. However, 50% of the participants commented that “Konglish was useful for intercultural communication and could be a useful bridge between Korean and standard varieties of English” (p. 15). The author concluded the study by stating that only a minority viewed Konglish as “an important part of Korean culture” and that many students “had never considered English as a changing language” (p. 16).

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In 2004, Hagens surveyed 9 Korean English teachers in South Jeolla Province to assess their thoughts about KVE and also found that the participants had mixed feelings about its use. Although some participants stated they “valued it as something uniquely theirs” (p. 55) and felt it was sometimes appropriate to use Konglish in the classroom with other Koreans, most of the respondents identified feelings of embarrassment, shyness, guilt and anger associated with KVE, preferred that their students not use it, and felt that students should be taught that it is poor and incorrect. The majority believed, however, that students should learn to distinguish between Konglish and “standard English” and learn about the contexts in which each is appropriate.

Two studies described classroom activities aimed at raising students’ awareness of KVE. Kent (2001) discussed techniques and resources that made use of students’ knowledge of KVE to “assist them with the language learning process” (p. 89). These strategies included Konglish word lists, picture word lists, and vocabulary list expansion. The goal of these activities was aimed at raising awareness of students’ use of KVE so they could eventually be trained to use more “native standard forms” of the language. Thorkelson (2005) also developed and conducted a classroom strategy whose objective was to enhance university students’ awareness of KVE by having them re-write text that had forms of KVE in it. The goal of this activity was to “inform students of their incorrect Korean-English usage,” (p. 1). In other words, the participants were taught that Konglish was inappropriate and that to improve their English skills, they needed to use as little of it as possible. The study was conducted with 220 students and concluded that, for the most part, the participants became “more aware of and sensitive to how Konglish would influence their anticipated audience” (p. 5).

Of note is the fact that most of the studies about perceptions of KVE were small in scale and conducted 5 to 20 years ago, making the need for a more recent study of this subject more apparent. In addition, the studies that involved the use of a classroom activity focused on increasing the participants’ awareness of KVE as a means of discouraging, as opposed to promoting, its use.

3 Methods

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the perceptions of Korean university students majoring in English about 1) the use of KVE, and 2) a class activity related to the use of KVE. To this end, the study had two research questions:

- 1) What perceptions do the participants have regarding the use of KVE?
- 2) What perceptions do the participants have of the class activity designed for this study?

The objective of the educational activity used for this study was to

increase students' awareness of differences between U.S. English and KVE and to encourage them to use KVE. The participants were asked to re-write a short story that had been written in U.S. English into a short story using KVE. Although not one of the main objectives of the study, the researcher also examined what forms of KVE were used by the participants to change this story.

3.1 Participants

Thirty undergraduate Korean university students took part in the study. All participants were majoring in English at a public university located in a southern province of the Republic of Korea. Eight of the participants were seniors, 12 were juniors, and 10 were sophomores. There were 19 female participants and 11 male students; their ages ranged from 20 to 25 years of age. The participants were all enrolled in one of three online courses offered by the English Department of the university and taught by the researcher, a native speaker of English, during the Fall 2020 semester. The courses in which the participants were enrolled all focused on the development of the students' oral proficiency in English as well as other language-related skills; the sophomore participants were enrolled in English Presentation I, the juniors in English Presentation II, and the seniors in Intercultural Communication. These participants were chosen due to their availability; in other words, a non-probability sampling strategy was adopted. Prior to the beginning of the study, the researcher had not discussed any of the issues specifically related to the focus of the study to any of the participants.

One limitation of the study was the fact that the English proficiency of each participant was not assessed; having this information would have made the investigation of possible correlations between English proficiency and the results of the study possible.

Prior to the beginning of the study, the participants were told their participation was voluntary and would have no effect on their course grades. They were also informed that even though their responses in the focus group discussions would be recorded for the purpose of data analysis, their involvement in the study would be strictly confidential.

3.2 Research design and procedures

The courses in which the participants were enrolled were all offered online through the university's Learning Management System (LMS) and used a combination of educational videos that had been recorded by the researcher and interactive video conferencing sessions. The activity for the study was introduced in one of the videos. In the instructions, all participants were asked to re-write a short paragraph that had been written in U.S. English (Appendix) into a short paragraph that used KVE. The students were instructed to use "as much Korean English (Konglish) as possible" when re-writing the story. Instructions were not given on how to incorporate KVE into their re-writes. The participants

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were given two weeks to submit this assignment to the researcher by email.

As opposed to asking the participants to translate this paragraph from KVE into a form of NSE, similar to Thorkelson's (2005) approach, it was believed that having them convert from NSE to KVE would provide the participants a unique perspective in the examination of differences between the two as related to EicL. Kachru and Nelson (2006) have reported that this strategy is one that has been used to incorporate the concept of World Englishes into the EFL classroom.

After the participants' versions of the paragraph had been received, the researcher divided the students into groups of four or five and led each group in 40-45 minute focus group discussions using a synchronous video conferencing program. There were a total of 7 focus group discussions (2 for the seniors, 3 for the juniors, and 2 for the sophomores). The purpose of these discussions was to elicit the opinions and perceptions of the participants related to the two research questions for this study. Since one of the objectives of the courses in which they were enrolled was to improve students' English oral proficiency, the participants were encouraged to use English in the discussions but were informed that they could also speak in Korean if they preferred.

The questions asked during the focus group discussions were open-ended to allow participants to more fully describe their perceptions and to avoid the possibility of closed-ended questions steering or influencing their responses. In several cases, follow-up questions were asked by the researcher to encourage participants to expand on their answers. Related to their perceptions of the activity, the participants were asked: "What do you think the purpose of this activity was? What is your opinion of the activity? Would you recommend this activity for other students? Why or why not?" Regarding the participants' perceptions of KVE, they were asked: "How do you feel about using Konglish when you speak English? Is it always better to avoid using Konglish? Please explain. Are there any advantages to using Konglish? If so, what? Are there any disadvantages? If so, what?" Each focus group discussion was recorded and later reviewed by the researcher as part of the process of data analysis.

3.3 Data analysis

In analyzing the responses of the participants on the re-write of the paragraph, the researcher merely documented which lexical or grammatical changes the participants made and the number of times those changes were made. Since a detailed examination of this data was not the focus of this study, a statistical analysis of the responses was not conducted. The data collected does provide some understanding of the linguistic changes made by the participants, but a more detailed quantitative study of this data in the future would provide more insight in terms of specific lexical and syntax changes that were made.

The recordings of each focus group discussion were reviewed by the researcher and transcripts of each were made. Of note is the fact that, although

the participants were informed that they could speak in Korean during the discussions, none of them chose to do so; therefore, translation from Korean to English on the transcripts was not necessary. In coding the responses of the participants, the researcher followed Glesne’s (2006) steps of description, analysis, and interpretation to identify which themes emerged. A pre-assigned coding system was not used to avoid a pre-determination or prejudice stemming from the researcher’s interpretations or expectations.

4. Findings

4.1 Participants’ responses in activity

Although not specifically related to the research questions for this study, an analysis of the changes the participants made in the writing activity showed a total of 26 different changes in vocabulary (Table One). The words most commonly changed were “window shopping” to “eye shopping,” “Internet café” to “PC room/bang,” “comedian” to “gagman/woman,” and “part-time job” to “arbeit.”

Table 1. Changes Made by Participants in Activity

Original	Changed to	# of times
window shopping	eye shopping	25
Internet café	PC room/bang	23
comedian	gagman/gagwoman	21
part-time job	arbeit	19
coffee shop	café	17
studio apartment	one room	17
dress shirt	y-shirt	17
school retreat	MT	16
pork cutlet	tonkatsu	15
underwear	panties	15
cram school	academy/hagwon	13
public bathhouse	sauna/bathroom/spa	13
flash drive	USB/hard drive	12
pool	pocket ball	10
dress	one piece	9
health club	health/fitness	9
night club	club/night	9
stapler	hotchkiss	7
scarf	muffler	7
trench coat	burberry	7
celebrity	talent	6

Others: owner of small business – CEO, hang out with – play with, cold noodles-nangmyeon, my department – my team, older and younger classmates – my seniors and juniors

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The participants only made three grammatical changes. Two participants changed: “Let me tell you a little about myself” to “Let me introduce myself.” Another two changed: “I’m majoring in English” to “My major is English,” and one changed: “a couple of weeks ago” to “two weeks before.”

Of interest was that fact that, although not instructed to do so, four participants took the initiative to write another paragraph, in addition to the one they were asked to translate, that used KVE. Curious as to why they had done this, the researcher contacted these students to ascertain their rationale for doing this. All four participants claimed they had written this extra paragraph because they had wanted to. In the words of one participant, “I did it because it was fun writing in Konglish.”

In these four paragraphs, the following KVE vocabulary or phrases was used: “handphone” for “cellphone” (3), “notebook” for “laptop” (2), “remocon” for “remote control” (2), “man to man” for “face to face,” “hood-t” for “hoodie,” “play with my boyfriend” for “spend time with my boyfriend,” “take a lecture” for “take a class,” “non face-to-face” for “online,” “cunning” for “cheating,” “woke myself up” for “woke up,” “morning call” for “alarm,” “running machine” for “treadmill,” “apart” for “apartment,” “fighting!” for “cheer up!”, and “navi” for “GPS.”

4.2 Participants’ perceptions of KVE

Four main themes emerged from the analysis of the participants’ responses to questions about KVE; these themes were related to 1) general opinions about KVE, 2) the appropriateness of its use, 3) the advantages of using KVE, and 4) the disadvantages of using KVE. Regarding the participants’ general opinions of KVE, the majority of responses (19) were negative; that is, most of the participants stated they had a negative opinion of KVE. Five of the participants said they had a positive opinion, and 6 said they had a neutral opinion. When asked to explain the reasons for these perceptions, the major reasons for those with negative opinions was the perception that Konglish was an “inaccurate” or “incorrect” form of English, “foreigners” would not be able to understand them if they used it, and standardized tests of English such as TOIEC required an understanding and use of “native English.” In the words of one participant, “Konglish is the English we learn in Korea, but it is not the English we should know when we communicate with people from other countries or take English exams.” Another stated, “My English teachers always taught me that Konglish is a mistake. It’s kind of funny for us Koreans to use but it is not real English.” Those with positive opinions of KVE offered the following reasons: it is something unique to Koreans that represents aspects of their culture and it is still possible to communicate with non-Koreans using KVE. One student in this camp said, “Every country speaks their own kind of different English. Even native speakers like Americans don’t speak the same. But we can still communicate with each other.” Another gave the example of the Konglish that is used in K-

pop (Korean popular music). “K-pop songs use lots of Konglish,” he said. “But they are still popular in the world.”

As to the appropriateness of KVE’s use, the participants’ perceptions seemed to correspond to their general opinions of KVE. None of the students expressed the opinion that KVE should never be used, but those with negative general opinions stated that it was only appropriate for Koreans to use KVE with each other. “If we meet foreigners,” said one sophomore, “we should not speak Konglish.” When asked about the appropriateness of using KVE in the Korean EFL classroom, two students stated the opinion that Konglish should never be used in the classroom because it was important to learn native English for tests or “travel to native speaking countries.” Those with positive or neutral general opinions of KVE reiterated their perception that it was possible to communicate with non-Koreans using KVE. “I lived in the Philippines six months,” said one senior. “And I know I spoke Konglish a lot. And they spoke Philippine English. And we could communicate. Also,” he continued, “there is a lot of Konglish words that are easy for foreigners to understand, like ‘one room’ and ‘handphone’ [sic].” Another student gave the example of telling a Canadian visitor to Korea that a good place to stay when traveling around the country was a “pension.” “But he didn’t understand ‘pension,’ so I just explained. And he understood. It wasn’t hard. I taught him some Konglish!” the student laughed. Finally, two participants expressed the opinion that using Konglish with other Koreans was fine. “Even some foreigners who live in Korea, like our professor, know Konglish, so it’s okay,” said one.

When asked about the advantages of KVE, the most common advantage given was the perception that it is representative of Korean culture and circumstances. “It shows something about Korea,” a junior said. One student gave the example of a “PC bang,” which she claimed has a unique meaning here in Korea. “If I use another English word like ‘computer room,’ it is not the same,” she said. Two students also mentioned that some Korean words have become Konglish. According to one participant, “hagwon” is one example given of a Korean word that is known by some non-Koreans. The names for food were also mentioned as Korean words that are used even when speaking English. “Yeah,” said one participant, “Kimchi is kimchi!” There also seemed to be some pride in the fact that Konglish is something shared by Koreans. “It’s like slang,” a senior stated. “We understand its meaning. It’s okay if other people don’t understand.”

The most commonly mentioned disadvantage to using KVE was the fact that English speakers from other countries might have difficulty understanding it. “If I use Konglish in another country they may not understand me,” summed up one sophomore. Another student expressed the opinion that it could be a problem if Koreans don’t realize they are learning or using Konglish. “We think we are learning native English, but if it is really Konglish we might make mistakes on English tests.” Finally, two participants who had a negative opinion of KVE said that using Konglish made them feel “ashamed” or “stupid.” When asked to elaborate, one replied, “Because it is wrong. It shows our mistakes.”

4.3 Participants' perceptions of activity

Related to the second research question, three main themes emerged from the participants' responses. To begin with, the majority (21) stated that the activity had been "fun" or "interesting." Ten students said they had "enjoyed" re-writing the paragraph from NSE to KVE. "I don't know why, but using Konglish is funny[sic]. Maybe because we think we should not use it." Another stated, "I enjoyed this assignment. Most of our homework assignments are so serious, but this one was fun." Also, the fact that four participants took the initiative to write an extra paragraph using KVE is an indication that some found it enjoyable. None of the respondents specifically stated that they did not enjoy the activity, although one simply said, "It was okay" in an unenthusiastic voice when asked.

Secondly, most of the participants who spoke (18) felt the activity was educational, that they had "learned" something. "It made me think carefully about what is Konglish," one junior said. "Sometimes I don't know if a word is from native speakers or Konglish, so this (activity) helped me know[sic]." One senior stated that the activity had made him think carefully about the differences between NSE and KVE, and one sophomore stated the activity had made her more aware of "what Konglish is."

A third perception that emerged, mentioned by 12 of the students, was that the activity had been "different" or "unusual" compared to other assignments. "It was kind of nice to feel it's okay to use Konglish. In other English classes, we usually are told it's wrong [sic]." One senior used the word "refreshing" when describing how she felt about doing the activity. Another reported, "I was told since middle school that I shouldn't speak Konglish. But in this homework, you wanted us to use Konglish. It was okay. Sometimes I think it's not a problem to speak Konglish[sic]."

When asked if they would recommend the activity to other students, all but three responded positively. The majority of those who said *yes* reported that the activity had increased their understanding of KVE. Of the three who said "no," one stated, "I'm not sure. It (the activity) was a little strange. It depends on the class." Another said, "I'm not sure it's necessary. It's better to learn only native speaker English. We already know Konglish." The third expressed the belief that it was better to re-write KVE into NSE in order to learn "how to speak correctly."

5 Discussion and Conclusion

This study has a number of significant implications for both individuals and institutions. To begin with, the findings indicate that, although most participants had negative perceptions of KVE, there was a clear awareness of what constitutes this variety of English as well as a vocal minority who stressed its positive aspects and legitimacy.

Those who saw KVE in a negative light did not view it as a legitimate variety of World Englishes but as imperfect and inferior compared to *inner circle* standards. This viewpoint seemed to stem from the long-standing focus on U.S. English in Korea, from feedback the students had received in their EFL classes, and from the fact that many high-stakes standardized English tests require the use of *inner circle* English. Although none of the participants claimed that KVE should never be used, the majority felt it was only appropriate for use within Korea and between Koreans. This finding corresponds to findings in previous studies (Charles, 2015; Hadikin, 2005; Hagens, 2004).

Secondly, there was strong evidence in this study that the participants had a substantial awareness and understanding of lexical features of KVE. The fact that, in the activity for this study, they made changes from NSE to KVE to 26 different words and 3 grammatical structures in the text is a significant indication of this awareness. During the focus group discussions, the participants' opinions and examples given also clearly demonstrated the fact that they were familiar with and could articulate differences between *inner circle* varieties of English and KVE. Having this awareness enables individuals to make informed decisions regarding KVE and its use.

Finally, there were also a number of participants who argued that KVE is a legitimate variety of World Englishes that represents several sociocultural aspects of Korea and could be used for communicative purposes with those from other cultures. These students expressed the belief that KVE was an important part of Korean culture that could be shared with others. This viewpoint echoes one of EICL's main tenets.

Regarding the second research question for this study, the majority of students expressed positive perceptions of the activity. They appeared to view the activity as stimulating, thought-provoking, and enjoyable. The fact that four participants took the initiative to write more than what was required is an especially encouraging sign that the activity engaged and motivated the participants. This finding serves as an encouragement for the further development of EICL-inspired classroom strategies that promote a deeper understanding of the use of localized versions of World Englishes.

Despite nationalistic movements such as BREXIT and MAGA that emerge from time to time and natural calamities like COVID-19 that put a damper on first-hand intercontinental interaction, there is little evidence that the intensifying forces of globalization will come to an end anytime soon. This being the case, the necessity for language educators to facilitate strategies that enhance intercultural communicative competence and empower individuals to make enlightened decisions regarding their language use within a global context is more imperative than ever.

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Appendix

Reading Activity

Instructions: Read the following story written in U.S. English. Then, re-write this story using as much Korean English (Konglish) as you can!

Let me tell you a little about myself. I'm a university student majoring in English. I live in a studio apartment near campus and have a part-time job at a nearby coffee shop. Until a couple of weeks ago, I also taught English at a cram school for junior high kids. In my free time, I like hanging out with friends, going to nightclubs, playing pool, going window shopping, and working out at a health club. Last weekend, I went shopping with my friend and bought a scarf, dress,

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trench coat, underwear, and a dress shirt for my boyfriend. My friend bought a couple flashdrives and a stabler. For lunch we ate cold noodles and pork cutlet. After that we went to a public bathhouse and played games at an Internet café. Next weekend I'm going on a school retreat with some older and younger classmates in my department. In the future, I'd like to be either a comedian, a celebrity, or the owner of a small business.

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