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Reluctant and Aspiring Global Citizens: Ideal Second Language Selves among Korean Graduate Students

Peter Roger
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
<peter.roger@mq.edu.au>

Abstract

This interview study of seven highly proficient Korean users of English examines the role of the 'ideal second language self' as a motivator in the learning of English as a global language. It explores their perspectives on the cultural associations that English holds, the degree to which a 'global identity' is a part of their own self-understandings, and whether or not they visualize elements of an 'ideal self' in order to sustain their own language learning motivation. The findings reveal a clear sense among participants of their individual language learning goals and aspirations, but little evidence in most cases of a strongly visualized second language self. While some participants identified readily with the notion of global citizenship, others categorically rejected the global citizen label, suggesting that researchers and language teachers need to take care to avoid 'ascribing' particular identities to English language learners without regard for their individual perspectives.

Keywords: motivation, English, globalization, identity, possible selves

Introduction

> *I'm a global citizen and anything happening in the world . . . can be related to me.*

> *[I]f I were to say I have a global identity I can't really connect to anything. . . I think in that sense I can't be a global citizen.*

With the current status of English as a global language, a recent area of active research has been the extent to which learners of English as a foreign language link their learning of the language with an emerging sense of a "global identity", or even a desire to become "global citizens". Indeed, an international outlook and the potential to engage with the wider international community through the medium of English has been found to serve as a

powerful motivating force for young learners of English as a foreign language in various parts of the world (Yashima, 2002; Lamb, 2004; Dörnyei, 2005). This phenomenon embodies the view of English as a global *lingua franca* rather than solely a means of communication with native speakers of English in a handful of countries.

There has to date been little research, however, examining the perceptions of those who reside in regions where English is a foreign language, but who have at another time experienced everyday life in an English-speaking society; a Berlin-based study by Erling (2007) is one exception. Such individuals fall somewhere between the traditional categories of "foreign language learner" and "second language learner" as far as English is concerned. Intuitively, one might assume that these sorts of individuals are "true" global citizens by virtue of their experiences, but how do they perceive themselves in this regard? The current study investigates in depth the perceptions of such a group of English language users, with a focus on the way in which their English language abilities impact upon their identities in a globalising world. It also examines the role of these identities in shaping their past, present and future language learning motivation.

Literature Review

The terms "integrativeness", "integrative orientation" and "integrative motivation" have been an important part of second language (L2) motivation research over the past 50 years. The concept originated with studies conducted by Robert Gardner and colleagues in Canada. Central to the Gardnerian approach to second language learning motivation is the concept of an *integrative orientation*, which Dörnyei (2005, p. 97) defines broadly as "a positive interpersonal/affective disposition toward the L2 community and the desire for affiliation with its members. It implies an openness to, and respect for, the other cultural group and its members. . . ". The wider concept of *integrativeness* takes in three elements: integrative orientation (as defined above), an interest in foreign languages, and attitudes to the L2 community (Gardner, 1985). A call for a broadening of the conceptualization of motivation in language learning and approaches to research in the area came from Crookes and Schmidt (1991), and studies since this time have indeed spawned a plethora of motivation models and frameworks. The concepts of integrative orientation and integrativeness have, however, remained topics of great interest and debate.

In situations where there is an absence of a clearly defined L2 community that is accessible to language learners, there have been moves by a number of researchers in recent years to re-interpret, broaden or re-think the notion of integrativeness. With its role as a global language, English has received particular attention in this regard, particularly where it is learned in foreign language (as opposed to second language) settings. As well as taking into account the globalizing forces at work in the contemporary world, these reconceptualizations or extensions of the notion of integrativeness involve, at the most basic level, a shift in focus to an *internal* identification on the part of the learner with his or her own self-concept, rather than a particular *external* community of speakers. This theoretical challenge has been taken up and advanced by a number of other researchers, including Dörnyei (2005), Ryan (2006) and Ushioda (2006).

Dörnyei (2005) suggests that one approach to this reconceptualization of integrativeness involves "some sort of a virtual or metaphorical identification with the sociocultural loading of a language" (p. 97). In the case of English, Dörnyei contends that "this identification would

be associated with a non-parochial, cosmopolitan; globalized world citizen identity" (p. 97) given the role of English role as a global lingua franca. He goes on to point out that this "World English identity" would also take in aspects of what have been thought of as more instrumental motives, given the associations between English and several technologically advanced societies, and its prominence on the Internet.

Research that has explored these issues empirically in specific contexts where English is learned as a foreign language has produced some interesting findings that inform the ways in which traditional notions of integrativeness might be extended. Yashima (2002) proposes the construct of "international posture" as a relevant motivational element in the learning of English in Japan. According to Yashima, this orientation would involve an interest in international affairs, a willingness to stay and/or work overseas, a readiness to interact with intercultural partners and a general openness to other cultures.

Lamb (2004) also extends the notion of integrativeness by referring to evidence of an emerging trend towards a "bicultural identity" among young Indonesians in Sumatra. He argues that the desire to 'integrate' becomes less relevant as English loses its association with particular Anglophone cultures, and posits that individuals may look towards a bicultural identity which "incorporates an English-speaking globally-involved version of themselves in addition to their local L1 speaking self" (Lamb, 2004, p. 3). This idea of a bicultural identity consisting of local and global elements is also proposed by Arnett (2002), who argues that "young people develop a global identity that gives them a sense of belonging to a worldwide culture" (p. 777). Notions of dual identity raise questions about the potential for conflict and struggle, but as Ryan (2006) points out, the idea of an individual having multiple social identities is not new, and irreconcilable conflict between these identities is not inevitable. Indeed, the outcome of such struggle may be the creation of "contextually dependent hybrids of global and local values" (Ryan, 2006, p. 33).

Writing on the topic of language motivation and the notion of a plurilingual identity in contemporary Europe, Ushioda (2006) also takes as her starting point recent moves towards a reframing of the concept of integrativeness. She focuses on the Council of Europe's European Language Portfolio and its Language Passport component, and the way in which these initiatives have "helped to encourage a view of motivation as the pursuit of a plurilingual European identity and transnational access and mobility" (p. 158). Like Ryan (2006), Ushioda emphasizes the dynamic and evolving nature of identity, and explores the nature of the struggle and tension that accompanies the forging of a global identity that must co-exist with identities defined along more local or national lines.

In a study that examined notions of identity amongst English learners/users in today's globalizing world, Erling (2007) explored issues of identity among students of English at the Freie Universität Berlin. From questionnaire, interview, and ethnographic data, Erling concluded that these students were:

adding other layers of identity related to their affinities with other places and communities. This suggests that students are redefining their sense of national identity in reference to the local, national, European and/or global communities they identify with. (p. 128)

These findings illustrate the sorts of hybrid identities that writers such as Arnett (2002) and Ryan (2006) have theorized.

Incorporating his reconceptualization of integrativeness into a theoretical framework, Dörnyei (2005) proposes a model that he calls the L2 Motivational Self System. The three components of this model are the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self and the learner's L2 Learning Experience. In framing his model, Dörnyei draws upon theories of "possible selves" and "imagined communities" and applies these specifically to the learning of a second/foreign language. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), the concept of possible selves refers to a type of self-knowledge ". . . which pertains how individuals think about their potential and about their future" (p. 954). They write:

An individual's repertoire of possible selves can be the cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears and threats. Possible selves provide the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization, and direction to these dynamics. As such, they provide the essential link between the self-concept and motivation. (p. 954)

Central to this perspective on motivation is an ability to shift one's thinking beyond past experiences and present conditions, and to visualize the realm of the "possible", as it applies to one's self-concept. It thus relies upon an ability to invoke *imagination* in the sense that Wenger (1998) describes as a "process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (p. 176). In the domain of language learning, it becomes necessary to consider (or "imagine") with whom one expects to use the language being learned, and for what purpose. The concept of imagined communities of language learners proposed by Norton (2001) provides a way of thinking about one's membership in a virtual language community in situations where a visible and proximate target language community does not exist. Where a learner has had previous experience living within a target language community, it seems likely that the details of any such imagined community will be affected by the nature of this past experience (Kanno & Norton, 2003). Nonetheless, the mere fact of living in an environment where the target language is not used as an everyday means of communication leaves room for the creation of such imagined communities, whether or not an individual has had concrete experience with communities of target language users in the past.

The effects of globalization on one's identity and self-concept—particularly as they affect and are affected by the learning of a global language—have yet to be tested empirically in a wide range of language-learning contexts. Ryan (2006) points out that the arguments he presents "rest on the premise that a great number of people—especially young people—around the world feel some sense of a global identity" (p. 42) but acknowledges that the validity of this premise needs to be tested by qualitative research. He also calls for research to determine whether actual learners in EFL contexts see these 'imagined global communities' as real (i.e. existing outside the realms of abstract theory). In a similar vein, Arnett (2002) proposes several further research questions that flow from his theoretical position, one of which is the extent to which people in various cultures develop a "bicultural identity" with elements rooted in global and local cultures. Dörnyei (2005) speculates that his L2 Motivational Self System may have greatest relevance in understanding motivation in world-language-learning situations as opposed to non-world-language-learning situations, but (once again) stresses the need for further research before firm conclusions can be drawn.

The present research represents a response to calls such as these to examine the applicability of these theoretical frameworks to the lived experiences of English language learners in various parts of the world. As noted above, the specific focus of this study is a group of

individuals who, although residing in a country where English is a *foreign* language, have been *second* language learners/users at some points in their lives. It is interesting to note that many of the works reviewed above contain references to the nouns *identity*, *culture* and *citizen* modified by a number of adjectives to reflect possible impacts of globalization and/or the learning of a global language (e.g., global culture, world citizen, global identity, dual identity). Given that these terms are sometimes "applied" to groups of English language users from traditionally non-Anglophone regions of the world, I was interested to know what individuals who fit this description thought about these concepts and the way that they (as learners/users of English) are sometimes characterized in the research literature. I was also intrigued by the potential for one's vision of an Ideal L2 Self to underpin the sort of motivation that leads to successful language learning, and again wished to understand more about the similarities and differences between individual language learners in terms of the Ideal Self imagery that they generated, as well as the degree to which they actually engaged in this practice.

The current study focuses on a small cohort of individuals of Korean nationality and ancestry, all of whom are living and studying at postgraduate level in Korea but have had the experience of living in other countries at some time in their lives. Their areas of study (English literature or linguistics), their solid English proficiency, and their experiences living and/or studying abroad mean that they are the kinds of people who might be expected to have a particularly clear sense of the role that English plays in their daily life (past, present and future) and its relation to their sense of self. The aims of the current study were thus:

1. To examine the cultural attributes that this group of individuals associate with English
2. To test the "resonance" of concepts such as *world citizen*, *global identity* and *dual identity* with this group of English learners /users
3. To examine the degree to which motivation self-regulation strategies that involve processes of "imagining" or "visualizing" oneself are used by these participants in maintaining and further developing their English language proficiency

As notions of 'identity' are central to the present study, it is necessary to acknowledge the complexities embodied in this particular term. For Brubaker and Cooper (2000), "identity" is highly problematic as an analytical category, as it is "too ambiguous, too torn between "hard" and "soft" meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis" (p. 18). It is important to maintain a distinction between an individual's sense of "who I am" (sometimes referred to as self-identity) and the desirable or undesirable labels or categories that may be assigned to an individual by others (known as ascribed identity). It has been suggested by Bauman (2001) that rather than talking about "identities, inherited or acquired, it would be more in keeping with the realities of the globalising world to speak of *identification*, a term that implies a process that is, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or by choice, are engaged" (p. 129). Finally, it must also be acknowledged that not all elements of one's identity are readily accessible at a conscious level, making it difficult to construct a complete picture of a person's identity from information that they are able to offer.

That said, it is certainly possible to elicit insightful reflections on aspects of personal identity from individuals, as has been done in several of the studies cited above. This is particularly the case when one is exploring (as the present study is) aspects of second/foreign language

learning. As Giroux (2006) notes, language is "the site in which people negotiate the most fundamental elements of their identities, the relationship between themselves and others and their relationship to the larger world" (p. 174). Pegrum (2008) argues that the development of global citizenship and the exploration of personal identity are in fact part of the same continuum: "as learners explore their identities and come to understand their social situatedness, they will soon perceive the connections between themselves, their native cultural practices, alternative cultural practices, and the wider world" (p. 145). These are the particular elements of the complex construct of identity that are explored as part of this study.

The term "self-understanding" has been proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) as a less ambiguous alternative that can be useful when exploring "*one's own* understanding of who one is" (p. 18). Their concept of self-understanding is also delineated by its privileging of aspects of the self that lie above the threshold of cognitive awareness, as well as its emphasis on "situated subjectivity" rather than objectively measurable dimensions of identity. Thus although the term "identity" is used throughout this paper (in line with the practice in closely related literature reviewed above), it is operationalized for the purposes of this study in a way that aligns closely with Brubaker and Cooper's notion of "self-understanding".

Method

Participants were recruited by the author by contacting a group of approximately 20 students whom he had taught six months earlier as a visiting instructor on an intensive workshop program at a major university in South Korea. All were postgraduate students working on master's degrees or the coursework component of doctoral studies in the areas of English literature or linguistics. After the necessary research ethics and institutional approvals were obtained, the researcher contacted all of these potential participants by e-mail, and invited them to respond to the e-mail if they wished to participate in the study and would be available for an interview at some point in the three week period specified. Seven students indicated an interest in participating, and each was interviewed at a convenient location either on or near the university campus.

Table 1. Participants' Experiences Living Abroad

Participant	Pseudonym	Experience living outside Korea
AR	Ah Rim	Spent several years in the UK as a young child
JM	Jung Mi	Completed undergraduate studies in the USA
JK	Jin Kyung	Lived for one year in the USA as an elementary school student
SO	Sun Ok	Lived in the USA and (for a shorter time) in the UK as an adult with her husband and children
SH	Sun Hee	Studied English for 9 months in the USA in her early twenties
EK	Eun Kyung	Studied English for one year in Canada in her early twenties
JH	Ji Hee	Lived six years in the USA, from 2nd to 8th grade

As noted above, all participants were Korean citizens born to Korean parents, and currently living and studying in Korea. All were female, and had a generally high level of spoken and

written English proficiency; many of the courses that they were undertaking were taught and assessed through the medium of English, and required the writing of essays and term papers. All had had significant experiences living outside Korea at some point in their lives, but the length of this experience and the age at which it occurred varied from one participant to the next (see Table 1). The participants were all in their middle or late twenties, with the exception of one participant (Sun-Ok) who was in her early forties.

Each participant was interviewed individually. Interviews followed a similar overall scheme, were conducted in English (as the researcher is not fluent in Korean) and lasted for approximately 45 minutes. The first section of the interview concerned participants' views on the English language, its cultural and other associations, varieties and communities of speakers. In the second part of the interview, participants were asked about their views of their own identities and the relationships between these identities and English (or other languages that they had learned or were learning). The final part of the interview asked participants to reflect on their own self-motivating strategies.

The choice of qualitative research interviews as the data-gathering tool for this study was a deliberate one. As Richards (2009) points out, interviews "can provide insights into people's experiences, perceptions, and motivations at a depth that is not possible with questionnaires" and "hold out the possibility of *understanding* the lived world form the perspectives of the participants involved" (p. 187). This emphasis on participants' perceptions and lived experiences fits closely with the research questions set out above. In using interview methodology for the present study, the author follows the philosophical perspective articulated by Holstein and Gubrium (2003), which understands that "the individual has the wherewithal to offer a meaningful description of, or set of opinions about, his or her life" and furthermore accepts individuals as "significant commentators on their own experience" (p. 6). This in turn is consistent with the stated aim of exploring (in the current study) particular dimensions of the participants' self-understandings.

The small cohort of seven participants allows a form of data presentation that preserves the nuances of the individual's responses in a way that would not be possible with a larger sample. Furthermore, it enables responses of *all* participants relevant to the three overarching research questions above to be represented, which in turn allows patterns (where they exist) to emerge both across and within individual respondents.

Findings and Discussion

English and its Cultural Associations

At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked about the 'cultural associations' that English had for them. Lamb (2004, p. 14) questions the relevance of asking about learners' attitudes towards "English speaking cultures", arguing that English is no longer associated solely with Anglophone countries. A central question for the present study was thus the degree to which the contemporary global patterns of English use influenced the immediate cultural attributes that these participants associated with the language. For Ah Rim (AR), the role of English as a lingua franca did indeed seem to have influenced her perspectives on this question:

> AR: well the first image is of sort of like a global language so actually it doesn't really connect with one single well particular country (.) but I (..) the

> first image is as a global language and then ah (..) because I (.) well used to live in England I think of England or Britain and then America Australia New Zealand ((laughs)) Canada [right] yeah and then like India Africa well (.) and then come to think of it like it's used almost as a second language in (..) all over the world so yes (.) but I mean like it's not like um (..) it doesn't have a specific culture (.) it has an English culture I guess I mean ((laughs))
>
> I: right (.) and so would English culture then for you be associated with a particular country or (..) in your mind or is it more like um–
>
> AR: not really but I mean it's more like you know um (.) the image I feel from a global company ((laughs)) (. . .) a sort of dominating kind of company [I see] sort of like that you know

Ah Rim's colourful analogy of English as a dominating global company with its own culture that is not intimately connected with a particular country appears consistent with the contention (discussed earlier) that the association between English and predominantly Anglophone societies appears to be loosening. However, this view was not one that was shared by other participants in this study. Jin Kyung (JK), for instance, associated the language with the USA and the UK, despite an obvious awareness of the concept of "World English":

> JK: so when I use (.) English I feel like oh this is (.) like more like American or this reminds me of Americans' (.) like attitudes towards (. . .) me or their kind of culture or their attitudes toward living (.) so I think (.) is it related to the question?
>
> I: ((re-phrases question))
>
> JK: ah ah yeah you're talking about like World English [yeah yeah] yeah I think like I heard (.) heard many times about World English and we studied it with you before but still I think I relate it to mainly American [OK] and a bit British. . .

The views of Sun Hee, Eun Kyung and Ji Hee also revealed that any weakening of association between the English language and the well-known Anglophone cultures is certainly not a universal phenomenon:

> SH: I think (. . .) the biggest culture ah that I imagine is (.) America maybe (. . .) and then (.) England
>
> EK: I think several cultures [mm hm] not several but maybe a couple of like English and American cultures especially [OK right uh huh] but I visited Australia but I don't know (.) I don't think Australian culture really affects my English
>
> JH: well first perhaps because I learned English in the States I automatically connected English to the US and then ah after studying English literature here at (*University*) um (.) I discovered that (.) there were so many other cultures that were using English as a mother tongue (.) and so now I'm more open to that (. . .) there are different types of English like there are Britishisms or there are (.) whatever and um (.) I've been realising that there are many different

> cultures that are connected to English but still the one that most comes to mind first is the American culture

Ji Hee's response in particular raises two interesting points. The first is the obvious influence of the communities outside Korea in which participants may have lived for various periods. As noted earlier, all participants had lived abroad for periods ranging from nine months to several years, some as children and some as young adults. The second is the fact that all of these individuals are students of English literature or linguistics. Jin Kyung (a linguistics major) was well aware of "World English" and yet this did not appear to have altered the deeper cultural associations that English held for her. Ji Hee (a literature major) talks of her discovery that "there were so many other cultures that were using English as a mother tongue. . . ". Perhaps that fact that, in literature, a language is a vehicle for personal and cultural expression and that authors of literary works rarely write directly in languages other than their mother tongue (relying instead on translations done by others) reinforces the link between a particular language and the cultures of those who use that language as a mother tongue.
The remaining two participants responded in unique and contrasting ways. For Sun Ok, the English language was closely associated with the culture of English speaking people and their way of thinking:

> SO: umm. . . people's way of thinking and (.) so we (. . .) already talked about the different ah culture (.) between Korean culture and American (.) English (.) [OK] speaking culture (.) for example in Korea um the older first so the food is served to the oldest first and there ah (. . .) foods are served to the children first [right right] (..) it's completely different [OK] English speaking people are rather (.) open-minded or they are (.) extrovert I think rather than Korean [OK mm hm] (.) Asian style is rather introvert I think [right right] (.) this might be my prejudice but I think ((laughs)). . .
>
> Sun Ok went on to expand on what she saw as some of the differences between different groups of English speakers—Americans, British people and Australians in particular. The links that Sun Ok makes between language, culture and ways of thinking are very different from the perspectives offered by Jung Mi:
>
> JM: to me it's not that different from (.) Korean 'cos sometimes lot of people (.) like Korean people (. . .) like for example I have a friend and when she acts very independently (.) you know I would just think that 'oh she's like American, or he's like American' [OK] so it's not (.) some Korean people have that Americanness inside [right] so it's not (.) the language itself (…) you know I don't differentiate it [OK] (.) so it's pretty much the same (..) um yeah
>
> I: right so um you don't lo- you don't associate the language strongly with a particular culture ┌or
>
> JM: └right

As will become evident later in the discussion, the view that Jung Mi expresses above is consistent with her views on identity as being an "individually" constructed concept. The distinctions between conceptualizations such as those expressed by Sun Ok and Jung Mi are significant, I would argue, as they reflect a tendency either to "group" people according to

national background or culture (Sun Ok), or to resist such grouping and see people in more individual terms (Jung Mi). This in turn has profound implications for the ways in which one might associate oneself with speakers of a particular target language. A tendency toward grouping would mean that one would have to consider the alignment that one would adopt in relation to the "other" group (e.g., try to join it, stand outside it, or move back and forth between groups). By contrast, a more individual perspective would suggest that the amount of "movement" necessary to engage with particular speakers would depend more on their individual attributes than on any notion of a more broadly determined cultural profile.

Two important points emerge from these participants' responses to questions about the culture or cultural attributes that they associate with English. Firstly, the findings suggest that caution must be exercised in generalizing about the way in which young adult users of English around the world regard the cultural loading of the language. Even in a group such as this, which share many common demographic characteristics, strikingly contrasting views are readily apparent. The second point is that individual views of the cultural associations of English may reflect deeper ways of seeing the world. For instance, some may look to group people according to shared ancestry or cultural attributes, while others may see the world as a collection of fundamentally unique individuals.

English and Identity

One premise underlying the concept of an Ideal L2 Self is that the second language in question must, in some way, be a part of one's sense of self, or at least the self that one would like to become. In addition, questions relating to an individual's sense of a "global identity" would seem to take in the sorts of feelings that they have about the languages that they speak and the degree to which they form part of who they are. For these reasons, then, participants were asked "Is English (or any other second or foreign language that you speak) in some way part of your identity, or do you regard it simply as a skill that you have?"

All but one of the participants reported that they felt that English was indeed a part of their identity. Two of the participants, Sun Hee and Eun Kyung, spoke in terms of their "intellectual" identity. Sun Hee also generalized this to Korean people in general:

> SH: ahh .. I think that English is very big part of my identity [ok] and I think it's a big part of Korean people's identities ((laughs)) [mm] cos (. . .) English is (. . .) more than important ah to Korean people and um as kind of a like (.) symbol of the (..) high intellectual people or something like that [ok] so if ah if I really if I ah cannot (. . .) speak English tomorrow (.) I feel like ((I'm)) falling down (.) from my present status
> (. . .)
> For me it's more than a tool I think (. . .) as I said it's kind of a big part of my identity or ah the part of ah the intellectual identity [yes yeah (.) OK] something like that so (.) it's more than a tool. . .

Eun Kyung was similarly definite in her response, but expressed her sentiments in more personal terms:

> EK: yeah definitely because it's a really (.) big part of me and you know I accumulated the English language knowledge and intelligence you know since I was really young (.) so if I just lose it in [yeah] a moment then it's kind of a

> disaster [yeah yeah yeah] to me (. . .) even though it's not English language if it's um like a memory of my childhood you know (.) it's same I think

These responses were consistent with comments prompted by other questions in the interview. A common theme was that people who could speak English well are frequently seen by others as "intelligent" and that appearing to converse fluently in English in public spaces can also give the impression that one has been fortunate enough to live or study overseas. Two contrasting critical stances could be taken to this intellectual prestige associated with English language abilities. From a linguistic imperialism perspective, it could be seen as a disturbing state of affairs belying a tendency to bestow intellectual value on something merely by virtue of its associations with economic and political power. From another perspective, however, admiring the ability to use a foreign language could be seen as a respect for linguistic knowledge and for the ability to interact with those outside one's own national and cultural sphere. However one might interpret these attitudes, and whether or not they are regarded as misguided, it is important to recognize that they do exist.

Jung Mi was another participant who also considered that English was an integral part of her identity, in that it allowed her to express ideas that she found difficult to express completely in her first language:

> JM: right it's part of who I am (.) when (.) I mean Korean is like um mother tongue but sometimes I have to speak in English (..) it's like I have to because like (.) when I want to say certain sentences like I have to speak those in English (.) if I say it in Korean it doesn't sound like I express myself enough

As noted above, a pattern can be seen to emerge in Jung Mi's responses, in which her identity is defined with reference to her own individual norms (self-expression, in this case) as opposed to the norms of an external group. Once again, her perspective contrasts with that of Sun Ok, who also saw English as a part of her identity but once again linked it with 'Western' ways of thinking, and something that allowed her to entry into a particular society:

> SO: English is ((a part of me)) because I learned a way of thinking through English (.) Western way of thinking (. . .) so when I speak English (.) I think I belong to that group (.) I think I'm not excluded from that society

Ah Rim, who spent several years as a young child in the UK, also seemed to feel that English was a part of her identity, but her response is somewhat less certain than that of some of her peers:

> AR: um I guess it influenced me a lot I guess well I'm not sure I mean I actually can't imagine me without speaking English [right] I guess it does have a part of myself (..) well I'm not really sure ((laughs))

Interestingly, the other participant who had spent a number of years as a child living in an English-speaking society, Ji Hee, did not see English as a part of her identity:

> JH: personally I don't think that it is part of my identity (.) I think it is something that I acquired in life and (.) it may have changed who I am a bit but (.) I don't think just the language itself changed me perhaps my experience [right] living in a different place changed me but I think other people view English as a large part of my identity um ((coughs)) when I first came to Korea when I was in eighth grade I didn't imagine that people would see me that way

> but I've had people (.) other students from other classes come to see me (.) like an animal in a zoo you know [yeah yeah] 'that is the girl from America who speaks English' and I've had teachers have me come and (.) they kind of order me 'say something in English' [right right (.) like a performing act yeah] yeah (.) so I think other people think that English is a very essential part of my identity but I personally don't feel that way

Intuitively, one might predict that individuals such as Ah Rim and Ji Hee would be most likely to consider English as a part of their identities, as they had spent some of their formative years in countries where English was a part of their daily lives. While Ah Rim cautiously accepts the idea that English is a part of herself, Ji Hee says quite clearly that she does not feel this way.

Perhaps the most interesting comment that Ji Hee makes is that English is a part of the identity that many other people *ascribe* to her. She does acknowledge that her experience living in a different place has changed her, but makes a distinction between the collective impact of this experience as a whole and any impact of "English" on her identity. It is clear from her answer that her ability to speak English was a source of fascination to some teachers and fellow students during her school days, and perhaps their preoccupation with this most obvious manifestation of living overseas reinforced the distinction between a deeper sense of identity (the sum of all formative experiences) and readily observable differences (such as language abilities) that can be used by others to categorize individuals in ways that may not correspond to the way that they see themselves. There is perhaps a lesson here for researchers and language teachers, which is that people whom we may assume to have incorporated their English language abilities into their identity or self-concept may not in fact see themselves this way at all.

World citizens?

As noted above, one of the aims of this study was to test the resonance of concepts such as 'world culture', 'global identity' and 'global/world citizen' with this particular group of individuals, given that these terms are appearing with increasing frequency in the research literature on motivation and language learning. There is also a growing body of literature on various theoretical conceptualizations of 'cosmopolitanism', which has at its core the 'belonging' of all humanity to a single community. Although the unifying basis of such a community and the role (if any) for national, ethnic, religious and other attachments are subjects of vigorous debate (see Calhoun, 2003; Beck, 2006; Fine, 2007), moves towards "global" constructions of culture, identity and citizenship are implicit in cosmopolitan theory. The degree to which such concepts were in fact represented in the self-understandings of the participants in this study (with objective proficiency in a global language and various experiences of living abroad) was therefore of interest. Two questions were posed:

- Is it possible (in your view) to talk of a 'world culture' or a 'global identity'—or are these largely imaginary concepts?
- We commonly describe a person's citizenship based on his or her nationality (Canadian citizen, Korean citizen, Australian citizen, etc.). With the era of globalization has come the term 'global citizen' or 'world citizen'. Some writers have suggested that many young people today see themselves as having a 'dual identity';

for instance, someone from Korea may see himself or herself as a Korean citizen AND a world citizen at the same time. Does this describe you, or not?

Perhaps the most unexpected finding here was that the two participants who had lived outside Korea for several years as young children did not identify personally with the idea of having a global identity. While Ah Rim was tentatively accepting of the idea that English was a part of her sense of self (as discussed above), she was quite unequivocal on the question of being a global citizen:

> AR: well for me definitely no ((laughs)) [definitely not?] yeah definitely not because I mean if I were to say I have a global identity I can't really connect to anything [right] yeah (.) it is very imaginary I think (. . . . . .) I can't be objective you know ((laughs)) well with problems concerning Korea and Japan (.) or Korea and America I can't be neutral (. . . . . .) I think in that sense I can't be a global citizen ((laughs))

For Ah Rim, the need to "connect" with a particular country made it impossible for her to feel like a global citizen. The potential for conflict that she alludes to between her national identity and a hypothetical global identity is reminiscent of the various conflicts inherent that have been recognized as an integral part of the pursuit of a bicultural identity (see Ryan, 2006 and Ushioda, 2006, for instance). Ryan (2006) suggests that globalization does not present individuals with an either-or choice, but allows them to construct "contextually dependent hybrids of global and local values" (p. 33), and Arnett (2002) also acknowledges that hybrid rather than bicultural identities may be more usual in some contexts. Ah Rim, however, has not proceeded down either path, and despite her very high level proficiency in the current global language, she does not feel a personal affinity for the concept of global citizenship.

The idea of a global identity also did not resonate personally with Ji Hee, the other participant with significant childhood experience living in an English-speaking country:

> JH: I've had people who discover that I speak English to this level (.) um I've had people say that they're really surprised because I seem so Korean and I think [yeah yeah] I'm making an unconscious effort to stay Korean [mm hm yeah] and I've been thinking I am Korean and I am different from (.) perhaps Americans and perhaps other people of the world [right right] and so for me um (.) I don't really think that I have a global or international identity

Like Ah Rim and Ji Hee, Jung Mi also saw the concepts of world culture and global identity as notions that existed in the realm of the imaginary. Unlike these respondents, however, her response did not refer to a particular connection with one country or culture, but instead to the uniqueness of individual identities, a theme that characterized her answers to previous questions as well:

> JM: I think it's kind of imaginary (. . .) I don't really define myself as being a citizen in one culture [right] I think of myself as more like (..) just me (.) you know I mean I'm Korean I speak English but that doesn't mean I'm in between or (. . .) I think of myself as more like American or Korean I'm just me I'm Jung Mi and no one's like me (. . .)
>
> so um I asked the question many times (..) in the past you know "who am I?" you know [yeah] but um yeah I think I have my own culture and I created that

> own culture within me by speaking Korean and English both (. . .) I mean there are so many people out there who speak both languages that doesn't mean they have the same culture

Jung Mi's response highlights the point that (at least for some individuals) classifying oneself as a global citizen still involves claiming membership of a group of sorts. While some who do see themselves as global citizens may see this as a move away from a unitary national or ethnic identification, it could be argued that the term implies a common group membership or shared culture with other global citizens. Dilemmas of this sort are explored in detail by Calhoun (2003), who argues that "a sense of connection to the world as a whole, and of being a competent actor on the scale of 'global citizenship' is not merely a matter of the absence of more local ties. It has its own material and social conditions" (p. 543). Jung Mi's comments here demonstrate also that for some, perceptions of what is central to their identity or self may be quite separate from "facts" that describe them, such as their country of origin or the languages that they speak.

Sun Hee was also of the view that these were largely imaginary concepts—at least in the Korean context, where she suggested that a pervasive sense of "nationalism" meant that it would take a long time for the concept of world citizenship to take hold. It is at this point relevant to consider one of the findings of Erling's (2007) study of students at the Freie Universität Berlin. A common trend that Erling identified was a reluctance among those participants born and raised in Germany to "embrace" their identity as Germans, beyond an acknowledgement of the country as their home and the source of their factual citizenship. As a country that was occupied for a period during the twentieth century, Korea does not have the sort of history that might engender a reluctance to acknowledge or take pride in one's national identity. Indeed, there was no evidence of any such reluctance among the participants in this study. In examining the way in which young people in different parts of the world identify themselves as international, global or world citizens, it is thus important also to take into account the history of individual nation-states as an influencing factor.

For the remaining three participants, the concept of the "world citizen" did have some personal resonance. Sun Ok responded to this question by referring to her son, who speaks English very well and is able to immerse himself completely when interacting with a group of English speakers. This ability, she points out, would potentially enable him to live and work long-term outside Korea. Although she did not say so explicitly, it appeared that she considered her son to be an example of a global citizen of sorts. Sun Ok's reference to living and working in other countries was the dominant theme in the responses of two other participants. Both Jin Kyung and Eun Kyung pointed out that an ability to use English gave people the flexibility to move around, rather than being restricted to one particular country. For Eun Kyung, this was evidence that the concept of world citizenship did in fact exist, even though she noted that there was no "substance" (such as a certificate) to make it concrete.

For these participants, an ability to use English seemed to confer some of the advantages of a global visa, although such a concept remains for the moment in the virtual or metaphorical realm. Or does it? These participants would perhaps be interested to learn of the Council of Europe's European Language Portfolio (ELP), which has as its goals the promotion of language learning and plurilingualism among the citizens of member states (Ushioda, 2006). One component of the ELP is the Language Passport, which (according to Ushioda) is "intended to facilitate access and mobility in professional and educational spheres across

Europe" (p. 152). Such instruments amount to a reification of precisely the sort of mobility facilitation that these participants associated with a good functional proficiency in English.

In responding to this question, Jin Kyung added a reference to her own sense of engagement with human interest stories from around the world, and concluded: "Yeah I'm a global citizen and anything happening in the world (. . .) can be related to me." This raises the question of whether or not one's identification as a global citizen might be related in part to the degree to which one has a natural empathy for and interest in the lives of others—both in one's own immediate environment and around the world. To what extent (if at all) can being a global citizen be separated from these particular personality attributes?

Visualizing as a motivator

In his discussion of the Ideal L2 Self, Dörnyei (2005) refers to the gap between one's "actual" self and one's "ideal" self as a source of motivation to strive to bridge the gap and achieve the potential that one visualizes for oneself. The practice of imagining or visualizing a goal and harnessing the energy created by this vision has been discussed by a number of researchers. Markus and Nurius (1986) assume that possible selves are something that all individuals have and are able to reflect upon. As Dörnyei (2005) points out, however, not everyone is able to conjure up a vision of a "highly successful" possible self, which is of course necessary if (as has been suggested) motivation is to be driven by the gap between what one sees as one's actual and ideal selves.

Overall, it was difficult to find clear evidence among these individuals of an "imagined" or "visualized" self of the kind that former Olympian Marilyn King describes in Murphey (1998). King in particular makes a distinction between "willpower" (to which many people attribute the success of elite athletes) and a "vision" (which she claims is the real driving force that keeps them in training). In trying to convey the sort of imagination or visualizing that the interview questions were exploring, it was sometimes necessary to provide participants with detailed examples, to the extent that there was a danger of putting words into the interviewees' mouths, rather than tapping into their own experiences. It proved difficult to distinguish between *wanting* a particular outcome, *trying* hard to achieve it, and actually *visualizing* oneself reaching the desired goal. Even when participants answered affirmatively to the idea of "imagining themselves" performing a particular task, it was sometimes still not clear what role a true vision had played. Ah Rim's comments illustrate this difficulty:

> AR: I'm not sure about the visualizing but I really wanted to be fluent and (. . .) I started you know writing diaries in English and you know quite just to be fluent (. . .) I wasn't really very knowledgeable with the (.) um conversational words or ((inaudible)) so I started watching ah English movies with English captions [mm] and stuff like that so I (.) sort tried to be fluent in English but (.) I'm not sure about the visualizing part ((laughs))

Her answer to a later question is also consistent with this view:

> AR: yeah again like I just tried but I'm not sure if I had a specific goal [ok] in my head so (.) because um I even thought of trying to write poems in English when I was in university as an undergraduate [uh huh] but I didn't really imagine myself writing a very high quality kind of ah (.) text but was just trying to get there

When participants did volunteer ways of imagining themselves, these imaginings sometimes overlapped with career goals (such as being a good teacher, professor or novelist) and it was again unclear to what extent (if at all) the participants invoked actual imagery in relation to these goals. Questions about more specific imaginings elicited affirmative responses from some of the participants, although these tended to be very brief responses, and when participants did expand on them it was usually to relate an experience that they had already had, or to talk about a concrete goal, rather than to describe a vision of themselves in the future.

Perhaps the closest response to an imagined future self was one expressed by Jin Kyung. When asked about whether she had ever imagined herself writing a very high quality text (such as a research paper, poem or novel) in English, she responded "yeah that one really makes me study English. . . ". She continued by saying that when doing practice writing for the GRE, she sometimes had thoughts along the lines of "someday I will. . . " or "I could become. . . ". It is interesting also that she linked this sort of self-imagining with her motivation levels with regard to English study, as the theory of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Dörnyei, 2005) would predict. This sort of response, however, was the exception rather than the rule, and overall a strong link between motivation to study English and the use of imagining or visualizing techniques was difficult to establish from the interview data gathered here.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that the desire to become a global citizen or forge a bicultural (global and national) identity was certainly not a universal aspiration among these participants. No doubt influenced to some degree by their experiences living abroad, many in this group saw English as a language that retained strong cultural association with Anglophone countries (predominantly the United States and the United Kingdom). The findings also suggest that visualizing one's Ideal L2 Self was not a prominent self-motivational technique used by these individuals, although eliciting information on participants' use of this strategy proved difficult to achieve without leading them to respond in these terms.

There is a wealth of literature on English as a global language, and the patterns of English use as a lingua franca in the modern world (with non-native users of the language outnumbering its native speakers) are well documented (cf. Crystal, 2003). Despite this, English remains for a majority of these participants a language that they associate with the people for whom it is a mother tongue, and the culture(s) of those who speak it as a mother tongue. For most of the participants, this is conceived in terms such as "Western culture", "American culture" and "British culture". The general loosening of ties between English and traditional Anglophone cultures observed by researchers such as Lamb (2004) was not observed with these participants. Perhaps this can be partly explained by the fact that all of them had had experience living for varying periods of time in such countries. There was certainly a recognition of the instrumental value of English language skills in their own country (for employment, university entrance and travel opportunities) but for most participants this awareness existed alongside cultural associations with the language that remained, for the most part, American or British.

Of the two participants who did *not* associate English with the cultures of traditionally Anglophone countries, one saw English as having its own culture (likened to that of a dominating global company). This rather elegant analogy is one that could be explored further in future research focusing on metaphorical characterisations of the cultural associations that English has for various stakeholders around the world. The other participant regarded "culture" as something more individually constructed, and questioned the idea of a set of cultural attributes being linked to a particular language.

On the question of English as a part of their identity, all but one of the participants agreed that it was, at least in some respects, a part of who they were. Specific associations included English as a part of their intellectual identity, a source of influence in their life, a way of learning new ways of thinking, and a means of expressing ideas that could not be expressed with identical nuance in their mother tongue. The group was split, however, on the question of whether they felt in a sense like "world citizens" with dual national and global identities. Among those for whom these concepts had some resonance, the discussions centred around the view that a working knowledge of English facilitated one's ability to travel and live overseas, and one participant spoke of her feeling of connectedness to people in many parts of the world. Interestingly, however, three of the seven participants categorically rejected the notion of themselves as world citizens.

These findings suggest that researchers need to exercise caution when ascribing the title of "world citizen" to individuals who may, by external appearance, fit this description very well. The responses of these participants show that some will reject this idea because it is perceived to lack a connection to anything tangible (as opposed to a nationality-based concept of citizenship). Conversely, others may reject it for precisely the opposite reason: that it may imply a connection to other world citizens based on a common ability to communicate in English. This, for some, is not sufficient grounds for a common categorisation. For those who do embrace the idea of being a world citizen it would be instructive to explore further the degree to which this is linked to individual personality traits, and the degree to which it arises from (and/or motivates) experiences with language learning and living away from one's own country. As noted earlier, comparisons with the findings of Erling (2007) suggest that the affective ties to one's national or ethnic identity are likely to be profoundly influenced by national historical factors, and this in turn may have a major influence on whether or not individuals who are members of certain groups will tend to embrace openly the idea of dual or hybridized identities.

Finally, the use of imagining or visualizing oneself as a self-motivating strategy is certainly worthy of further exploration. Success in mastering a language to a high level of proficiency can be facilitated by a variety of factors, both internal and external to the learner. The fact that strong imagery or visualization of goals did not appear to be a pervasive feature for these learners suggests that situational factors, aptitude and other sources of motivation may have played more significant roles in their success. It proved quite difficult to ask the interviewees about their use of this strategy in an open and non-leading manner; to convey the idea of imagining a possible self, it was necessary to provide detailed examples, which sometimes met with a cautiously affirmative answer that was then difficult to interpret. It sometimes appeared that the concept of 'imagining' was ambiguous, suggesting that interview design and line of questioning could be improved in future studies. Perhaps the presentation of "non-

linguistic" examples of possible selves prior to an exploration of participants' imagined L2 selves would help to illustrate the concept without leading them unduly in the process.

Many of the themes that have emerged from the discussion of the data from this qualitative exploratory study could inform the design of quantitative data gathering instruments for future studies that aim to encompass a broader range of participants. Some potential points of focus for such future research have been identified in the paragraphs above. The present study involved English language and literature postgraduate students, and it would be interesting to build on the findings to explore attitudes and perceptions on these issues across multiple disciplines at a similar university in Korea, or among participants from other spheres of society.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that a variety of individual factors and personal experiences, as well as pervasive attitudes that exist within the society in which individuals find themselves, must all be taken into account in the exploration of some of the innovative conceptualizations of "integrativeness" that are now appearing in the literature. In particular, researchers and language teachers need to exercise caution in making generalized assumptions about the ways in which individual learners and users of English around the world see themselves in relation to the language, and the role that an imagined self might play in their language learning motivation.

About the Author

Peter Roger is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. He holds qualifications in medicine and applied linguistics, and his areas of interest include individual differences in second language acquisition, workplace and professional communication, and the assessment and rehabilitation of bilingual aphasia.

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Appendix: Transcription Conventions

(.)	-	short pause (< 1 second)
(..)	-	longer pause (> 1 second)
(. . .)	-	words omitted
[ok]	-	interviewer's interjection
((laughs))	-	non-verbal cue
have	-	emphasized word
dual identity	-	key point (as highlighted by the researcher)
┌or └right	-	overlapping speech

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