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# “Ownership” of English in the Outer Circle: An Alternative to the NS-NNS Dichotomy\*

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The linguistic classification of English speakers from outer-circle countries, such as India, Malaysia, and Singapore, is often ambiguous because the Englishes they speak are considered different from interlanguages yet are not considered native varieties. This study investigates whether outer-circle speakers can be viewed as equivalent to speakers of mother-tongue varieties in terms of their *ownership* of English (Norton, 1997), that is, the degree to which they project themselves as legitimate speakers with authority over the language. An Acceptability Judgment Task was used to elicit and record talk among pairs from inner- and outer-circle countries while they judged 24 sentences. Drawing upon Zimmerman’s (1998) concepts of *discourse identities* and *situated identities*, Goffman’s (1981) concept of *footing*, and Scollon’s (1998) distinctions among the *receptor roles*, the analysis demonstrates the linguistic cues that indexed expressions of ownership through (a) references to the speakers’ own English usage, (b) human subject pronouns, and (c) the modal *can*. The results reveal variation in degrees of ownership among both groups, but similarities across outer- and inner-circle groups.

The act of labeling speakers as belonging to the categories native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS) implicitly underlies much of what TESOL professionals do. Rather than treating these as subjective categories, researchers have often applied them uncritically to the study of TESOL and English language learning despite concerns raised by researchers investigating phenomena associated with World Englishes. This study reports the results of research investigating the concept of *ownership* that derives from Norton’s (1997) theoretical stance

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\*Some of the data presented in this study were collected originally for a paper presentation (Higgins, 1999). Another version of this paper was presented at another conference the following year (Higgins, 2000).

on ownership as legitimacy as a speaker and that is expressed through English speakers' *footing*, "the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (Goffman, 1981, p. 128). Unlike Norton's critical ethnographic approach, however, the present study relies on conversational data recorded during an Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT). The analysis draws on conversation analytic (CA) methods to examine how speakers display their footing as legitimate speakers when discussing English sentences containing forms attested in both center and periphery varieties.

## THE PROBLEMATIC NS-NNS DICHOTOMY

Scholars working on World Englishes issues raise questions about which criteria should determine who can be labeled a NS or a NNS because a single norm for standard English no longer exists, particularly at a global level (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999, 2001; Davies, 1991; Lin, 1999; Liu, 1999; Mufwene, 2001; Nayar, 1997; Pennycook, 1994, 2001; Wee, 2002; Widdowson, 1994). These researchers have critiqued the NS-NNS dichotomy for being more of a social construction than a linguistically based parameter and have asserted that speakers' own ideological stances toward their linguistic identities should be more significant than the label they are given by others. Other researchers have critiqued the dichotomy for dividing groups of speakers into *haves* and *have nots* from a top-down approach without taking the speakers' own perspectives into account. Firth and Wagner (1997) criticize research that only considers analyst-conceptions of NSs and NNSs to be relevant, and Davies (1991) argues that membership as a NS in a speech community is a matter of self-ascription. Instead of labeling speakers from an analyst-driven perspective, Davies (1991) suggests defining NSs as people who have a "special control over a language, insider knowledge about 'their' language" (p. 1). Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) point out that self-ascribed linguistic identities are often not validated by others, and self-ascribed NSs are not recognized as such because the categories NS and NNS are often assigned on social characteristics rather than linguistic proficiency.

These researchers argue that it is important for TESOL professionals to understand the linguistic identities that English speakers hold because these identities have important practical implications. Given the ubiquity of English across the globe, it is likely that students who study in countries such as the United States, Canada, and England have developed orientations toward English that need to be addressed in the

English language classroom. The categorization of English speakers from countries with a long history of English usage is of particular importance due to their increasing enrollment in institutions of higher education outside of their home countries. These students may view themselves as valid speakers of English and their placement in ESL classes as wrongly categorizing them (Nero, 1997); or, they may speak a variety that they view to be legitimate, albeit one that differs from the target variety of the classroom (Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997).

In an effort to move beyond the NS-NNS dichotomy and the dominance of the linguistic norms for English associated with center countries, such as England and the United States, scholars have employed the concept of ownership to investigate speakers' ideological stances toward English. Widdowson (1994) and Chisanga and Kamwangamalu (1997) take the view that speakers in the postcolonial world may appropriate English at the grammatical level for their own contexts, thus owning the language by altering it to suit their own local purposes, divorced from the norms of the center. From this perspective, British or American English norms are no longer relevant to the speakers in the periphery nations. Taking a more critical perspective, Norton (1997; Peirce, 1995) argues that learners claim ownership of a language if they can access the material and symbolic resources associated with knowing the language. In her view, learners who view themselves as legitimate speakers of English can own English. Norton rejects the NS-NNS dichotomy for the ways in which it sets up barriers to success, particularly for those who speak a variety different from the standard English of a center nation such as England or the United States.

## **NATIVENESS IN THE OUTER CIRCLE OF ENGLISH**

The *new Englishes paradigm* is a highly relevant framework with which to critically (re)examine the classification of English speakers around the globe. This paradigm examines the forms and functions of English varieties outside of traditionally native contexts, such as Australia, Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. This framework is rooted in the work of Kachru (1965, 1976, 1982, 1983, 1986, 1997) and has developed a large body of scholarship through journals such as *World Englishes* and in numerous edited volumes (Bailey & Görlach, 1982; Bamgbose, Banjo, & Thomas, 1995; Cheshire, 1991; Pride, 1982; Smith, 1981; Thumboo, 2001b). Within this paradigm, research has focused primarily on *institutionalized varieties of English* (IVEs), varieties that are used alongside other languages in countries previously colonized by Great Britain, such as Malaysia, Kenya, Singapore, Nigeria, and India:

[IVEs] have a long history of acculturation in new cultural and geographical contexts; they have a large range of functions in the local educational, administrative, and legal systems. The result of such uses is that such varieties have developed nativized discourse and style types and functionally determined sublanguages (registers), and are used as a linguistic vehicle for creative writing in various genres. We find such uses of English on almost every continent. (Kachru, 1986, p. 19)

IVEs are spoken in what Kachru (1997) has labeled the *outer circle*, alternatively known as the second diaspora of English:

The Inner Circle represents the traditional bases of English, dominated by the “mother tongue” varieties of the language. In the Outer Circle, English has been institutionalized as an additional language . . . and the Expanding Circle includes the rest of the world. In this [Expanding] Circle, English is used as the primary foreign language. (p. 214)

To account for the presence of speakers with varying degrees of proficiency within outer-circle countries, Kachru explains that within each society there exists a *cline of bilingualism*, that is, a range of variation in terms of the functions that speakers use English for and their proficiency in the language (Kachru, 1965).

Following Kachru’s model, inner-circle speakers receive the label NSs, and expanding-circle speakers are typically regarded as NNSs; however, the classification of IVEs who reside in the outer circle is ambiguous at best. Although clear arguments have successfully shown that the Englishes they speak are distinct from *interlanguages* (ILs) in a number of ways (Kachru, 1997; Lowenberg, 1986; Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986), speakers of these varieties are still not characterized as NSs. Instead, these speakers are continually referred to as speakers of *non-native varieties* (Lowenberg, 1986), *institutionalized varieties* (Kachru, 1982), *second language varieties* (Prator, 1968), *indigenized varieties* (Moag & Moag, 1977), *local forms of English* (Stevens, 1992), and *associate languages* (Nayar, 1997).

Scholarship in the field of new Englishes has taken the very positive step of demonstrating that these varieties are not simply deficient versions of the inner-circle Englishes by illustrating the systematic and patterned ways in which these Englishes exhibit variation. However, what remains problematic is that, despite the documentation and acceptance of these linguistic innovations as the natural outcome of “the context of situation which is appropriate to the variety, its uses and users” (Kachru, 1983, p. 10), these new Englishes are still called *nonnative varieties* that follow *nonnative norms* (Bamgbose, 1998; Kachru, 1992a; Stevens, 1992; Thumboo, 2001a). Because it has become widely accepted that speakers in the outer circle have altered English by indigenizing and institutional-

izing it, we should recognize that speakers of these Englishes are now following their own *native* (i.e., locally relevant) norms. The term native here does not refer to British or American varieties but to varieties such as Filipino, Malaysian, and Indian English. This proposal should not be confused with taking the view that speakers of the outer circle wish to sound like speakers from Australia, Great Britain, or North America. On the contrary, many studies have demonstrated that outer-circle speakers do not aspire to be like English speakers from the inner circle; in fact, they often consider speech that resembles *received pronunciation* (RP), traditionally considered the prestige dialect of British English, to be pretentious (Bamgbose, 1992; Kachru, 1976; Sey, 1973; Tay & Gupta, 1983). If one is to take a more critical perspective on the use of these terms, then there ought to be consideration of the possibility that some speakers in the outer circle are NSs in their own right (i.e., NSs of Singaporean English, Fijian English, Kenyan English, and so on). This view adopts a pluricentric understanding of English norms that is not based only on the inner-circle varieties.

In fact, it may be more helpful to avoid the use of the terms NS and NNS altogether in reference to English speakers because of the problematic assumption that (standard) inner-circle varieties are the only legitimate, and hence de facto, target varieties for outer-circle or expanding-circle speakers. Mufwene (2001) explains that the continued use of these two terms creates an unhelpful dichotomy among speakers and perpetuates the view that “only a minority of speakers around the world speak legitimate varieties, the rest speak illegitimate offspring of English” (p. 139). Even the terms inner circle and outer circle can be viewed as divisive. As Mufwene (2001) writes,

the danger of subscribing to such a position lies in us linguists perpetuating biases similar to the distinction *inner circle* versus *outer circle*, which presents some varieties as peripheral or marginal, and in accepting distinctions which are social but not academic nor useful to understanding language evolution. (p. 139)

## OWNERSHIP OF ENGLISH

The concept of ownership is seen as better suited to describe English speakers' proficiency because it avoids the overly static dichotomies that inner-outer circle, or NS-NNS, produce. Ownership, itself, is a construct that requires careful analysis because it is viewed as referring either to *indigenization* or *legitimacy*.

## Ownership as Indigenization

In research on IVEs, the term ownership has been used to refer to the ways in which speakers appropriate the English language for their own needs. For example, Chisanga and Kamwangamalu (1997) use this term to refer to the indigenization of English in South Africa by means of lexical borrowings, morpho-syntactic transfer, and semantic extension. Their study illustrates the productive processes that exemplify the ways in which speakers have appropriated English for their own use, and it is representative of a long tradition of similar research, such as that by Kachru (1983), Lowenberg (1986), Platt, Weber, and Ho (1984), and Thumboo (2001b).

In his plenary address, entitled “The Ownership of English,” Widdowson (1994) also used the term ownership to refer to the ways in which speakers appropriate English for their own use. He argues that NSs no longer have sole authority over which forms are grammatical because norms and standards are no longer only created by communities of speakers from mother-tongue contexts. He criticizes the application of exonormative standards to international varieties of English for measuring speakers’ proficiency and describes indigenization as an alternative way of viewing mastery over the language. Widdowson (1994) states, “You are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your own, bend it to your will, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form” (p. 384). The flexibility of the English language and the pluricentricity of norms have become the emphasis of this line of research; however, the issue of whether IVEs can or should be considered equivalent to native varieties of English, in terms of legitimacy, remains to be fully investigated or theorized.

## Ownership as Legitimacy

Norton (1997; Peirce, 1995) conceptualizes ownership as legitimacy within a broader framework that is useful for examining the complex linguistic identity of IVE speakers. She argues that the categorization of speakers into NSs and NNSs sets up a dichotomy that prevents learners from owning English because they are prevented from becoming legitimate speakers of it. Her study of immigrant women in Canada (Peirce, 1995) shows how the binary distinction between the language learner and the target language (TL) culture is problematic because a learner’s *investment* in the TL is the product of the learner’s social identity in relation to the social world. One of the participants in her study, Martina, developed investment in English due to her role as primary caregiver in her family. Though she initially relied on her children to translate for

her because of her lack of proficiency, over time she invoked her identity as mother and wife to resist being marginalized by the TL community. Martina describes her experience of negotiating her rent with her landlord in a journal entry (Peirce, 1995):

The first time I was very nervous and afraid to talk on the phone. . . . After ESL course when we moved and our landlords tried to persuade me that we have to pay for whole year, I got upset and I talked with him on the phone over one hour and I didn't think about the tenses rules. I had known that I couldn't give up. My children were very surprised when they heard me. (p. 22)

From this perspective, the learner's progress requires developing a relationship with the social world around her that involves a sense of legitimacy as a speaker of English. Viewing language as a form of *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1977), Norton writes, "If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources" (Peirce, 1995, p. 17). In other words, speakers' investment in English yields legitimacy for them because it allows them to participate more fully in their societies, equipped with all the necessary resources. In later work, Norton (1997) reveals how speakers' investment in the TL ultimately leads to ownership via a sense of the right to speak (i.e., legitimacy as a speaker): "If learners of English cannot claim ownership of a language, they might not consider themselves legitimate speakers of that language" (p. 422).

Norton developed her conceptualization of ownership to refer to second language acquisition among immigrants in Canada, but the issue of legitimacy she focuses on is also relevant for speakers from the outer circle. If these speakers are invested in their local varieties and view them as forms of symbolic capital, it follows that their standard (i.e., target) variety is a local variety, and, hence, that they view themselves as legitimate speakers of English. Of course, the concepts of legitimacy and ownership apply to all groups, whether in the inner, outer, or expanding circle. For example, researchers in Great Britain (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997; Rampton, 1987, 1995) and the United States (Goldstein, 1987; Zuengler, 1989) have shown how speakers of nonstandard varieties, IL speakers, and IVE speakers orient themselves toward varieties of English that are not the standard, inner-circle variety for the purpose of expressing group solidarity or social identity. For all these groups, the determining factor in owning the English language is whether the speakers view the variety they use as being a legitimate variety in a social, political, and economic sense.

Though the issue of legitimacy is relevant for all groups of English speakers, the situation for IVE speakers is complicated by historical relations with the inner circle as the source of standard English. Many

IVE speakers' ability to develop investment in the local variety of English is thwarted by the frequent problem of "linguistic schizophrenia" (Kachru, 1992a, p. 60), that is, the conflict of speaking a local, sometimes stigmatized, variety while simultaneously deferring to an inner-circle variety (typically the RP dialect of British English) as the standard variety. Consequently, the question of determining who speaks legitimate English hinges upon whether speakers view themselves as legitimate speakers of English vis-à-vis exonormative or endonormative standards.

Additionally, IVE speakers do not have equal access to the claim of ownership. Given the inequitable social, economic, and political histories of certain groups in colonial and postcolonial contexts, relatively few populations have achieved full access to English via English-medium schooling, the primary setting for acquisition of English (Kwan-Terry, 1991; Pennycook, 1994). In addition, governments may block claims to ownership. Wee (2002) illustrates a case in which legitimacy is withheld from speakers who claim English as their mother tongue. He explains that, despite claims by a growing number of Singaporeans of all races that English is their legitimate mother tongue and the primary or only language of the home, they are not recognized as NSs of English by the government. Instead, the Singaporean government prefers to assign NS status following ethnic lines instead of linguistic ones to preserve multiracial harmony in Singaporean society.

## Legitimacy Expressed Through Conversation

Norton's (1997; Peirce, 1995) conception of legitimacy is a personal, amorphous stance that is constructed and revealed through discourse; therefore, careful examination of language users' discourse should provide novel perspectives on legitimacy. In particular, three sets of constructs are useful for analysis of conversation. First, what is constructed through talk are the learners' *discourse identities*, which are shaped by their *situated identities*. According to Zimmerman (1998), "Discourse identities bring into play relevant components of conversational machinery, while situated identities deliver pertinent agendas, skills and relevant knowledge, allowing participants to accomplish various projects in an orderly and reproducible way" (p. 88). Zimmerman contrasts situated identities with *transportable identities*, which are characteristics such as gender or ethnicity that "travel with individuals across situations and are potentially relevant in and for any situation and in and for any spate of interaction" (p. 90). For the present study, however, I classified ownership as a feature of situated identity because legitimacy over English is not a static aspect of identity, as Peirce (1995) has shown.

Second, I analyzed the conversation for the way it demonstrates the



speakers' footing, Goffman's (1981) term for the position or alignment an individual takes in uttering a given linguistic expression. For Goffman (1981), speakers may shift their footing from the *animator*, "the sounding box . . . the body engaged in acoustic activity," to the *author*, "someone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed," to the *principal*, "someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken . . . a person active in some particular social identity or role, some special capacity as a member of a group, office, category, relationship, association, or whatever, some socially based source of self-identification" (p. 144).

Throughout the task used in the research, participants took on the discourse identities of recipients, as they were in the position to respond to the sentences they were presented with. They also took on discourse identities, such as speaker-recipient, questioner-answerer, and interrogator-interrogee, when debating the acceptability of the sentences with one another. These shifts in discourse identities provided opportunities to see whether they aligned with one another as speakers with the situated identities of people holding legitimate authority over English.

The third set of concepts, *receptive roles*, provides further elaboration to the concept of footing. I used Scollon's (1998) receptive roles—*receptor*, *interpreter*, and *judge*—to identify the nature of the interactions because the participants were being asked to respond to utterances that had already been produced, in written format. Scollon's category of receptor parallels Goffman's (1981) animator, as this person receives the communication and does not evaluate it. The interpreter, the counterpart to the author, construes a meaning from the communication. Lastly, the judge evaluates and validates the communication, similar to the principal in Goffman's framework.

To investigate ownership of English through the concept of legitimacy, I compare the situated identities of speakers of outer-circle varieties of English to those of inner-circle varieties through the examination of three aspects of conversation that reveal receptor, interpreter, and judge footing.

The purpose of the study is to further explore Norton's (1997; Peirce, 1995) concept of ownership to see how speakers' talk enacts identities that carry legitimacy as English speakers. I chose CA methods to analyze talk recorded during the performance of an AJT containing 24 English sentences. Because Norton was interested in the relationship between her participants' English learning and their social positions as immigrants in Canada, she employed ethnographic methodology involving diaries, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. However, acknowledging the reality that many IVE speakers are reluctant to overtly claim ownership of English because of a lack of confidence in claiming their ownership, deference to inner-circle norms, or even governmental policy that labels them as NNSs, I avoided asking explicit questions that might

trigger participants' metalinguistic judgments about their language use. Instead, I chose to rely on a close analysis of the talk that occurred during the AJT to provide a window into both inner- and outer-circle speakers' degrees of ownership toward English.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

A total of 16 speakers of English participated in this study who, on a geographic level, represented inner- and outer-circle countries. Each country was represented by two dyads. The outer circle was represented by participants from India, Malaysia, and Singapore who had been in the United States for less than 1 year and were enrolled in an advanced ESL composition course at the same university. The students from the outer-circle countries were placed in this course based on their scores on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and an evaluation of their writing skills by ESL staff. The students from Malaysia and Singapore were of Chinese ethnicity, a factor that potentially distinguished them from their classmates of non-Chinese ethnicity, who shared the same home country but may not have shared the same degree of ownership of English due to a variety of historical factors that have led to advantaged access to English for many Chinese people in these two countries (Pennycook, 1994). Similarly, the Indian participants were all upper middle-class students who had benefited from private education, a tradition of higher education in their families, and regular exposure to English from a very young age.

The inner-circle participants were represented by two dyads of middle-class, White speakers of standard American English. All participants completed a questionnaire in which I asked them to list the languages they speak (see Table 1). The U.S. participants all characterized themselves as monolingual English speakers with limited proficiency in foreign languages, such as Spanish, German, and French. The questionnaire also asked the outer-circle participants, "How do you describe your use of English in your home country?" Their answers offer an initial understanding of their orientations toward English. Even though these speakers had all been classified as ESL students by the university they were attending, their self-classification showed differing views on this label.

**TABLE 1**  
**Linguistic Repertoires of Multilingual Participants**

Participant	Home country	Languages used	Participant's self-classification of English usage
Karthik	India	Tamil, Hindi, English	one of my languages as a multilingual speaker
Mina	India	English, Hindi, Sindhi, French	second language
Anand	India	English, Gujarati, Hindi	one of my languages as a multilingual speaker
Pradyuman	India	English, Hindi	one of my languages as a bilingual speaker
Mein-Yhee	Malaysia	English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Malay	one of my languages as a multilingual speaker
Jasmine	Malaysia	Chinese, English, Japanese, Malay, Cantonese, Mandarin	one of my languages as a multilingual speaker
Stephanie	Malaysia	Mandarin, Malay, English	second language
Lucy	Malaysia	English, Malay, Cantonese	second language
Sook-Yin	Singapore	English, Mandarin, French	one of my languages as a bilingual speaker
Kenneth	Singapore	Chinese, English, Malay, Mandarin	one of my languages as a multilingual speaker
Tony	Singapore	Mandarin, Japanese, English	second language
Ee-Hong	Singapore	Malay, English, Mandarin	one of my languages as a multilingual speaker

*Note.* All names of participants are pseudonyms.

## Task

An AJT was chosen for the task so that participants would engage in conversations about the acceptability of English sentences. The purpose of using the AJT was not to see whether participants accepted specific forms, but to elicit and record talk that might contain within it their stances toward English. I intentionally paired participants who shared the same backgrounds because I felt that the imbalance in power due to the different degrees of legitimacy historically accorded to inner- and outer-circle varieties of English would have led to an atmosphere in which the outer-circle participants did not feel at ease to fully express themselves with inner-circle coparticipants. Pairing outer- and inner-circle speakers would have maintained the divide between the center and the periphery that sustains the lack of legitimacy of outer-circle Englishes because it would have placed the outer-circle speakers in the position of having to respond to the center in order to claim their

legitimacy as English speakers. Pairing participants with similar backgrounds avoided the center-periphery orientation while still allowing for the potential outcome that the outer-circle dyads would produce exonormative standards through their talk, an outcome that would suggest that these speakers do not attribute much legitimacy to the local, indigenized varieties of their home countries.

The AJT sentences were presented only in written form to keep phonology from becoming a contributing factor to participants' evaluations of the nativeness of the English (cf. Smith, 1992). It should be noted that previous research has used AJTs to assess speakers' attitudes toward particular forms of local varieties of English (e.g., Sahgal & Agnihotri, 1985; Soo, 1991), but the goal of such research was to assess the acceptability of certain forms common to local Englishes. The 24 sentences I chose (see Table 2) for the AJT included grammatical and lexical forms used in descriptive research on IVE speakers (Cheshire, 1991; Kachru, 1992b; Platt, Weber, & Ho, 1984). I took 10 of the 24 sentences directly from attested grammatical varieties and manipulated another 10 to be ungrammatical by (a) intentionally pairing tense and aspect violations of syntax, (b) including lexical items that should violate morphological productivity principles in word formation, and (c) devising lexical items and topicalization structures that had not been attested. I used the remaining 4 sentences as distractors. I included varieties of English that speakers would and would not have likely encountered before so that they might discuss them differently depending on familiarity.

Participants from the same home country were asked to work together to evaluate the sentences and complete the AJT form. They were told that the purpose of the study was to better understand the ways in which people judge English sentences and were asked to circle on the form the strategy they had used to decide on their answer (see Figure 1).

The participants were left alone to complete the task while I recorded their discourse on an audiocassette. I also used a videocassette recorder as a back-up recording device and to identify which speaker was talking. Although nonverbal behaviors may well indicate another set of levels at which ownership can be examined, I limited my study to just the talk produced among participants. I set no time constraint because this factor might have limited discussion of sentences. I used CA methods (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) to transcribe the recorded discourse (for transcription conventions, see the Appendix).

**TABLE 2**  
**Acceptability Judgment Task Sentences**

Type and sentence	Country where attested
Neologism	
1. If a passenger on a preponed flight shows up at the time written on his ticket and finds that the plane has already left, he should be entitled to a refund.	India
2. I am sorry for the botheration I have caused you.	India, Malaysia, United Kingdom
3. The gloriosity of the sunset made us wish that we had our camera.	Invented
4. The perfectity of a new computer program can only by tested by running it.	Invented
Countability of nouns	
5. The school was able to buy new computer equipments for the students last year.	India, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore
6. Many researches have shown that smoking cigarettes is dangerous.	Ghana, India, Malaysia, Singapore, United Kingdom
7. The children fell in the muds near the swamp behind the house.	Invented
8. I picked up a rice from the floor and threw it away.	Invented
Topic-comment structure	
9. English they have declared the official language of Kenya.	India, Nigeria
10. TV I don't usually watch because I have too much homework.	Malaysia
11. Outside the boys they like to play even if it is extremely cold.	Invented
12. For research papers, the students, they use computers to type them.	Invented
Tense/aspect	
13. She was having a headache and could not concentrate on the lecture.	India, Nigeria, Kenya
14. I have read this book yesterday.	India
15. Jones breaks the record for the highest number of invented goals per game this season.	Invented
16. Every time we go to the movies, my father bought popcorn for us.	Invented
Prepositions	
17. It is difficult for me to cope up with all the work that my boss gives me.	Malaysia, Singapore
18. The student requested about an extension for her research paper because she was sick for five days.	India, Nigeria, South Africa
19. After you have read the instructions, please fill the form so that your request can be processed.	Invented
20. After the meeting, the managers discussed about the possibility of raising their invented employees' salaries by 10%.	Invented (possibly undergoing codification)

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**TABLE 2 (Continued)**  
**Acceptability Judgment Task Sentences**

Type and sentence	Country where attested
Distractors	
21. Although many students have studied English for more than five years, many of them have not mastered punctuation skills.	India, Kenya, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa
22. One of my instructor told me that when a person learns a language, he or she also learns the culture of that language.	Malaysia
23. In the presidential election last year, he won by substantial majority.	India, Malaysia, Singapore, United States, United Kingdom
24. Your daughter will attend the University of Wisconsin next year, isn't it?	India, Malaysia, Singapore, United Kingdom

*Note.* Except for the distractors, the first two sentences in each category are attested. The second two are invented based on productive morphological rules in English (neologisms and countability of nouns), misplacement of the topic in topic-comment structure, violation of punctual/nonpunctual distinction in tense and aspect, and unattested combinations of prepositions with verbs. Distractor sentences include variation in subject-verb agreement, articles, and tag question concord. The attested forms may occur in additional Englishes to those listed.

## Analysis

My analysis of the participants' situated identity relative to the AJT sentences was based on the language of the actions the participants took as they shifted their footing from receptor to interpreter to judge to evaluate the sentences. Throughout the analysis, I looked for recurrent patterns that would offer points of comparison on how dyads oriented to the acceptability of the sentences, following Goffman's (1981) advice

**FIGURE 1**  
**Sample AJT Item**

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The children fell in the muds near the swamp behind the house.

OK                      Not OK                      Not Sure

Corrected Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you decide?      It sounds right/wrong                      grammar rule                      guess

Other method: \_\_\_\_\_

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that “linguistics provides us with the cues and markers through which such footings become manifest, helping us to find our way to a structural basis for analyzing them” (p. 157). Three linguistic patterns that emerged from the participants’ talk reveal aspects of footing:

1. references to the speakers’ own English usage
2. the use of human subject pronouns
3. modal usage

These linguistic features can be related to shifts in footing from the receptor to the interpreter to the judge, the entity whose position or beliefs are being applied to the utterance. They were therefore used to analyze participants’ footing so that I could compare ownership between the inner- and outer-circle groups.

## RESULTS

For the sake of comparison, I used the discourse of one dyad from each country per example. The discourse showed the typical pattern that emerged wherein one member of the dyad would read the sentence aloud and the dyad would then discuss the sentence. Eventually, the dyads would come to an agreement so that they could complete the AJT form for each of the 24 sentences. Whether from the inner or outer circle, all dyads displayed similar linguistic cues and markers that indexed the authority they invoked to judge the sentences and, therefore, their degree of ownership over English.

### Reference to Own Usage as a Display of Ownership

The most remarkable similarity in the discourse among all of the speakers is the references made to their own usage as the norm for deciding if a sentence was acceptable or not. This type of discourse reveals an orientation to English that self-ascribes the speakers as legitimate members of the group of speakers with authority over the language. Sometimes, the difference between what they reported as their own usage contradicted their reports of usage they had heard. The first example below is followed by the first turns of talk from a pair from each country. Each dyad’s response to the lexical item *botheration* illustrates the similar ways in which the participants moved from being receptors (if they read the sentence aloud) to being interpreters (offering their understanding of the sentence), to being judges (when they determined whether the sentence was acceptable and then offered their basis for their judgment).

I am sorry for the botheration I have caused you. (AJT Sentence 18).

1. India (Dyad A)

- 1 M: I think it's okay.  
2 K: Botheration?  
3 I've never used that word. I've heard people use that word, but,  
4 M: I=  
5 K: =°botheration°  
6 M: I'm sorry for the botheration I have caused you. I hate to bother you, that's-  
7 K: I'm sorry for bothering you. Simple, easy,  
8 M: Ha ha.  
9 K: sweet.  
10 M: Yeah, that's simple, easy, sweet too but (.) um,  
11 K: This one I'm sorry for the botheration I've caused you. It sounds too long and cranky  
12 to me.  
13 M: Ha ha. But I guess it's still correct.  
14 K: Yeah, I think, maybe it is. I've heard people use it. I never use it though.

Mina (M) and Karthik's (K) talk attests current usage of the archaic word *botheration*, a form that has been documented as occurring in India, though it is interesting to note that they disagree over whether it is a legitimate word. Karthik assumes the role of the interpreter in Lines 2 and 5 when he pronounces *botheration* with question intonation, and then again with low volume, revealing that the problem with the sentence is due to this lexical item. In Line 6, Mina illustrates her shift from receptor to interpreter and then to judge as she rewrites the utterance to meet her criteria for acceptability. In Lines 3, 11–12, and 14, Karthik documents his shift from receptor to judge, revealing the means by which he determines *botheration* to be ungrammatical. This excerpt reveals the range of standards among Indian speakers of English and also points to the ways in which these speakers rely on their own usage as a guide for what they consider to be correct English, despite what they have heard.

2. Malaysia (Dyad A)

- 1 M: [I'm sorry for the botheration-  
2 J: [I'm sorry for the botheration-  
3 M: ha ha ha- Is there such a word?  
4 J: I'm sorry for the for the (.) trouble I have caused you.  
5 M: Yeah, inconvenience, whatever, but not botheration.  
6 <misuse of word.>



- 7 J: I'm sorry for the trouble I have caused you.  
 8 M: Trouble, inconvenience, anything lah.

In Excerpt 2, Mein-Yhee (M) and Jasmine (J) act as receptor in unison, and their simultaneous hitch right after their reading of *botheration* signals their shared orientation to the word as being problematic. Mein-Yhee's laughter in Line 3 points to her judgment of the word as unacceptable, and her question selects Jasmine as a capable judge because the question positions Jasmine as a knowing answerer. Jasmine's suggestion, "trouble," invokes the interpreter, and Mein-Yhee's turn in Lines 5 and 6 signal shared linguistic norms as the basis for finding *botheration* unacceptable and for revising the sentence.

### 3. Singapore (Dyad A)

- 1 S: I am sorry for the botheration I have caused you.  
 2 K: No such thing as botheration. I'm sorry for the bother I  
 have caused you. Um, °for  
 3 the bother I've caused you, °  
 4 S: >Trouble?<  
 5 (1.0)  
 6 [Certainly,  
 7 K: [Yeah, I think it sounds better.

Excerpt 3 shows strong confidence from Kenneth (K) that the sentence is not acceptable due to the fact that, for him, the word *botheration* does not exist. In Line 2, his footing can be interpreted as that of the judge, the source of authority for making the judgment, though his replacement of *botheration* to "bother" does not get taken up by Sook-Yin (S). Instead, like Mina, she suggests an alternative, "trouble," to signal her rejection of "bother" by enacting the role of author. Kenneth's agreement (Line 7) reveals a shared linguistic norm in regard to the final version of the sentence.

### 4. USA (Dyad A)

- 1 J: I am sorry for the botheration I have cause you. (0.5) hh..  
 2 (0.5)  
 3 P: Hmm,  
 4 J: Botheration is >NOT A WORD.< (0.5) I don't think.(0.5)  
 5 P: [I don't think so either.  
 6 J: [Well, it's not okay:  
 7 J: I am sorry=  
 8 P: =for the trouble.

Very similarly to the Singaporeans, the U.S. dyad in Excerpt 4 judge the sentence unacceptable because they reject it as part of their lexicon.

Jill's (J) reading of the word combines her receptor role with the interpreter role as her stress midway through *botheration* marks it as being problematic. Line 4 is a clear statement of her view of the word, though it is interesting to see that she ameliorates her confidence with a quick mitigating statement, "I don't think." This excerpt offers evidence that standard English speakers of the inner circle are not necessarily the ones with the most authority or self-confidence in English; Jill's response in Line 4 and Paul's (P) in Line 5 both show more hedging than did the Singaporeans' or the Indians' responses.

The next example shows the ways in which the participants reacted when faced with an unattested neologism. Though all of the participants deemed it unacceptable, they shifted their footing to the role of the judge in ways that sometimes differed from the first example above. The dyads from India, Singapore, and Malaysia gave more reasons for their judgments than did the U.S. dyad, who were quicker to judge the word *gloriosity* as being unacceptable.

The gloriosity of the sunset made us wish that we had our camera. (AJT Sentence 20)

#### 5. India (Dyad B)

- 1 A: Gloriosity hh.=  
 2 P: =Gloriosity hhh..  
 3 A: Ooh, sounds, so hh..=  
 4 P: The glorious, the glorious, uh  
 5 (1.0)  
 6 A: I think gloriosity is wrong.  
 7 P: It is. ha ha ha,  
 8 A: It's just so wrong hh..  
 9 P: I've never used that word (.) the gloriosity.  
 10 A: I've never heard that word before-  
 11 P: The glorious nature of the sunset [made us  
 12 A: [I mean I've heard the  
 word glorious but not  
 13 gloriosity. That sounds like too: (.) too glorious man. It  
 just=  
 14 P: =I would just say the glorious sunset made us wish we had  
 our camera. The  
 15 glorious sunset, you know.

The focus on the word *gloriosity* followed by a laughter token shows both speakers' orientations to the word as being problematic. Interestingly, the authority that the participants refer to comes from two different sources. Pradyuman (P) shifts his footing to that of the judge in

his statement, “I’ve never used that word” (Line 9). Anand (A) judges the word based on what he has heard, so the authority is an entity potentially outside himself (Line 10). It is possible that he is somehow trying to bolster the authority behind the footing of Pradyuman’s judge, but he does not refer to his own usage to do so.

#### 6. Malaysia (Dyad B)

- 1 L: The gloriosity-
- 2 S: I’ve not heard about that though.
- 3 L: The gloria,
- 4 S: No. The glorious- well:
- 5 L: of sunset made us wish that we had our camera.
- 6 What is the root word of gloriosity? Gloria?
- 7 S: Or the beauty of the sunset.
- 8 L: Yeah, CAN. (0.5) better.
- 9 S: I’m not sure but beauty would be better. Not just beauty, but
- 10 L: Is there such a word? Is there such a word glorissity?
- 11 S: I’m not sure, I’m not sure.
- 12 L: But it [sounds wrong.
- 13 S: [Could be wrong.

Similarly to Anand, Stephanie (S) relies on what she has heard as the basis for her judgment. She does not rely on her own usage, nor does Lucy (L). Instead, the young women seek an alternative word and display an uncertainty about the existence of *gloriosity* (Lines 9–13). This uncertainty indexes a lesser degree of ownership in this sequence of talk.

#### 7. Singapore (Dyad B)

- 1 T: The <glorious> sunset made us wish that=
- 2 E: =>No< no such gloriosity, right?
- 3 T: Yeah.
- 4 (1.0)
- 5 E: The glorious sunset made us wish that we had our cameras.

In Line 1, Tony’s (T) drawn-out pronunciation of the word *gloriosity* points to the word as being problematic. Ee-Hong (E) orients to Tony’s concern and asks Tony to draw on his own authority to judge the sentence. The question format of this judgment has the same degree of confidence as the Malaysians’ judgment (Excerpt 6), but here, the Singaporean young men’s discourse displays no doubt about whether the word is part of the English lexicon.

## 8. USA (Dyad B)

- 1 S: The gloriosity hh. of the sunset made us wish that we had our camera.  
2 Okay, it's not a word. Not a word anyone would use.  
3 C: It's not a word but (.) do you want to say the glorious sunset made us wish that  
4 we had a camera or?  
5 S: The glory of [the sunset.

Of interest in Excerpt 8 is Sally's (S) Line 2, where she says that *gloriosity* is "not a word anyone would use." By using the word *anyone*, her talk indexes her as the judge for the group of English speakers to which she belongs and on behalf of whom she speaks in making her judgment. Her use of *anyone* and the judgment that ensues legitimize Sally as a speaker with authority, a speaker with ownership of English. The U.S. dyad here agrees more quickly than the other dyads that the word is not acceptable and spends less time debating the acceptable word form.

One explanation for this difference is that the outer-circle speakers may have more experience with neologisms of this sort because they have lived in contexts in which they are likely to have encountered Englishes with a great deal of variance than the inner-circle U.S. speakers. In Singapore, Malaysia, and India, it is possible to encounter Englishes on a continuum, from pidgin varieties to acrolectal varieties, that mimic RP in every way but phonology. On the other hand, the middle-class, White U.S. speakers in the study are likely to be more limited in the varieties of English that they encounter, and, according to informal discussions with them after the study was carried out, the majority of speakers they interact with share very similar social and linguistic backgrounds.

## Pronouns and Co-occurring Modals as Displays of Ownership

In many of the discussions about AJT items involving countability of nouns, speakers made judgments using the statement *you + can + say/use*, where they related their opinions to what is possible to say in English. Generic use of *you* became particularly revealing because, according to Goffman (1981), pronouns index the source of authority, or the judge role, in Scollon's terms. Goffman explains how pronouns are implicated in shifts in footing to the role of the principal: "Often this will mean that the individual speaks, explicitly or implicitly in the name of 'we,' not 'I' . . . the 'we' including more than the self" (p. 145). In these contexts, generic use of *you* that can be replaced by *one* indicates that the pronoun cannot exclude the addressee (Kitigawa & Lehrer, 1990). By using this type of generic *you*, the speakers in the dialogues below include their

interlocutors as members of the group that can or cannot say particular utterances.

The use of *can* in these contexts expresses the idea that something is possible because certain characteristics or conditions exist; this type of *can* incorporates permission, possibility, and ability (Coates, 1983, p. 86). In the AJT discourse, sentences are deemed acceptable by the speakers based on the condition that they not violate the linguistic norms the speakers hold. Therefore, use of the recurrent syntactic frame *you + can + say/use* indexes ownership among speakers who use it in their judgments.

I picked up a rice from the floor and threw it away. (AJT Sentence 10)

#### 9. India (Dyad A)

- 4 K: Picked [up the rice from-  
5 M: [Picked up rice and threw it away.  
6 That's grammar rule ha. (.) Not okay=  
7 K: =What do you have if you just have <one grain>?  
8 M: No [even if you have one grain its still rice.  
9 K: [Even if I know, I know.  
10 Picked [up rice, yeah.  
11 M: [Yeah.  
12 M: Oh [not okay.  
13 K: [Not okay.  
14 M: You can't even say I picked up the rice from the floor and  
threw it away.  
15 [It's wrong.  
16 K: [Yeah: can't, can't say that.

The use of *can* enacts the role of principal in Excerpt 9, as it indexes Mina (M) and Karthik (K) as people with authority over English who are able to assert what is possible to say in the language. They realize that the physical possibility of picking up one piece of rice exists (Line 7), but the sentence is not grammatical for them because it is not what an English speaker can say (Lines 14–16).

#### 10. Malaysia (Dyad B)

- 1 S: I pick up a ri:ce from the floor and threw it away –heh.  
2 (0.5)  
3 A rice. A grain of rice? Because rice is kind of like plural?  
4 L: Yeah, that's right if its-  
5 S: A grain of rice.  
6 L: Yeah.  
7 S: A grain.  
8 (2.5)  
9 L: But who, a grain of rice ha ha,

- 10 S: Sounds-  
 11 L: -hh.. Usually ha ha a few rice.  
 12 S: Yeah.  
 13 L: Wait a minute. A grain of rice?  
 14 S: It could be a grain, it could be uh: (.) I picked up a handful of rice, you know?

The Malaysian dyad's discourse above shows less conviction in terms of the modals or pronouns regarding the status of *a rice* (Line 1) than the Indians' discourse. However, Stephanie's (S) reception of the sentence with a sound stretch on *rice* reveals that she interprets the word as being problematic in some way, as does her repair of the troublesome word and Lucy's (L) agreement (Line 4). Interestingly, though, Stephanie's statement, "It could be a grain" (Line 14), evinces her knowledge of what is possible to say in English, and she offers this possibility by replacing *a rice* with "a handful of rice."

#### 11. Singapore (Dyad A)

- 1 K: Okay. I picked up-  
 2 S: >A grain<.  
 3 K: No, you can't pick up a rice.  
 4 S: Yeah [a grain of rice,  
 5 K: [A grain of rice, uh-huh.

When receiving the sentence in Line 1, Kenneth (K) shifts his footing from receptor to judge with his hitch and unfinished reading of the phrase *a grain*. Kenneth's statement, "you can't pick up a rice," makes use of the generic pronoun *you*, which can be understood as meaning *anyone*, thus indexing "any English speaker," in conjunction with "can't," indexing the role of the judge as he invokes his authority to evaluate the sentence. Sook-Yin's (S) agreement and the pair's simultaneous pronunciation of "a grain of rice" reveal a shared linguistic norm in regard to how to talk about rice.

#### 12. USA (Dyad B)

- 1 C: Ha ha. I picked up a rice from the floor and threw it away.  
 2 I guess you just say I picked up rice.  
 3 (0.5)  
 4 Would you say some rice?  
 5 S: Or a piece of rice.  
 6 C: A piece?  
 7 (1.5)  
 8 What do you think they're saying?  
 9 (0.5)

- 10 I guess I would say (.) I picked up rice from the floor  
because (0.5) ri:ce can be  
11 one grain or many grain(s).  
12 S: I would never say I picked up rice from the floor.  
13 A little rice, or some rice or (0.3) a piece of rice  
14 I would never just say rice.  
15 C: I pick, I can say I picked the rice up from the floor.  
16 S: But that's that would signify plural. Plurality though. This  
is a rice so they're  
17 trying to use say singular.  
18 C: But there's no singular form of rice.  
19 S: Right, so you say a piece of rice or a grain of rice. I picked  
up a grain of rice from  
20 the floor hh..  
21 C: Yeah, I understand what you saying but,  
22 S: So how do we want to correct it?

In Excerpt 12, Craig (C) offers a repair to *a rice* with his statement, “I guess you just say I picked up some rice,” though his use of “I guess” displays less confidence than the unmitigated statements made by the Indian or Singaporean dyads. A possible reason for his mitigating statement may be due to his dilemma over choosing “some rice” or “a piece/grain of rice,” as the ensuing dialogue shows. This excerpt shows that these inner-circle speakers (from the same hometown) do not agree on how to correct the sentence, and they show this disagreement through use of pronouns and modals. In response to Sally’s (S) statement, “I would never say just rice,” Craig’s Line 15 indexes him as a speaker with authority by using “I can say I picked the rice up from the floor.” Craig and Sally both use “I” to clearly show that they feel comfortable judging the sentence, based on how they would speak. The discussion continues, but in the end, they decide to write down both of their corrected versions of the sentence, reflecting their differing linguistic norms for the ways to refer to *rice*.

The next example on the AJT is based on an attested form in many outer-circle countries. This example illustrates the number of methods that the participants employed to judge the sentence and demonstrates how all of these methods incorporate shifts from interpreter to judge. In addition, it nicely illustrates how, for some members of both the inner and outer circle, no single set of norms was definable as the source of authority.

She was having a headache and could not concentrate on the lecture. (AJT Sentence 13)

13. USA (Dyad A)

- 1 J: She was having a headache and could not concentrate on  
the lecture.  
2 (0.5)  
3 P: She was having a headache should be:,  
4 J: uh, I've never heard it put that way.  
5 She had a headache.  
6 P: Having a headache. [could be:  
7 J: [She has a headache.

Excerpt 13 shows how one of the U.S. dyads relies upon the same methods for judging the sentence as several of the outer-circle dyads by referring to what they have heard, not what they would say themselves. Jill's (J) Line 4 is quite similar to statements made by Anand (Excerpt 5, Lines 10 and 12) and Stephanie (Excerpt 6, Line 2).

14. USA (Dyad B)

- 1 C: She was having a headache and could not concentrate on  
the lecture.  
2 (0.3)  
3 That sounds okay.  
4 (0.3)  
5 S: I would say she had a headache and couldn't concentrate  
on the lecture.  
6 C: That's getting really nitpicky. This is an understandable  
English sentence. I mean,  
7 And it (.) doesn't (.) openly violate a lot of rules.  
8 S: I'll just write um: that's not right.  
9 C: A political statement by Miss S\_\_ K\_\_.  
10 S: We'll: I wouldn't make it.

Excerpt 14 shows how two U.S. speakers disagree over whether a sentence is acceptable and shows how they enact the role of judge quite differently. Craig (C) feels the sentence sounds acceptable, but Sally (S) is adamant that her own usage should be the guide.

Excerpts 15 and 16 show how members of the outer circle find the same sentence acceptable based on the way it sounds. They focus on the conjunction in the sentence instead of the verb.

15. India (Dyad A)

- 1 K: She was having a headache (.) and so: could not  
concentrate on the lecture? Maybe?  
2 M: To me it sounds okay.  
3 K: Sounds okay?



- 4 M: She was having a headache and could not,  
 5 K: Oh yeah.  
 6 M: So and could not concentrate.  
 7 No, she could not concentrate on the lecture, because she  
 was having a headache.  
 8 K: It's just a different way of saying it though.

16. Singapore (Dyad B)

- 1 T: Okay, she was having a headache and could not  
 concentrate on the lecture.  
 2 (0.5)  
 3 Sounds right?  
 4 (0.5)  
 5 E: Okay.  
 6 T: She was having a headache, and hence, I think right  
 sounds better.  
 7 E: It doesn't matter hh.. It doesn't matter. It wouldn't matter  
 to me,

Finally, Excerpt 17 shows that one of the Malaysian dyads deems both “was having a headache” and “had a headache” as acceptable. Their discourse reveals the possibility of multiple, coexisting linguistic norms for speakers.

17. Malaysia (Dyad A)

- 1 M: She was having a headache and could not concentrate on  
 the lecture.  
 2 (3.0)  
 3 I think it's okay.  
 4 (3.0)  
 5 J: Mm.(.) Or she had a headache and could not concentrate  
 on the lecture. She was having,=  
 6 M: =She was having a headache like say she was having a  
 [headache  
 7 J: [She was having a headache when  
 8 while in class, while a lecture, she had a headache and  
 could not concentrate on the  
 9 lecture. hmm. [She was having a headache she was,  
 10 M: [But is there anything wrong with this I  
 mean we don't need to change if  
 11 that's that's not wrong, right?  
 12 (2.0)  
 13 J: She had a headache, and [was-  
 14 M: [Why do you think that she was  
 having a headache is wrong?

- 15 J: I didn't say it was wrong.  
16 M: Then it's oklay. Hh..

## DISCUSSION

This study of speakers' orientations toward English norms questions the division between inner and outer circles because, in terms of ownership, members of both groups displayed similar indicators of authority over English. The ways in which speakers from both circles shifted roles from receptor to interpreter to judge followed noticeably similar paths as the speakers invoked their own usage or used the syntactic frame *you + can + say* to assume the role of judge in evaluating the sentences. Not all speakers invoked the same means to judge the sentences, however, and the various means by which they judged the sentences point to varying degrees of authority over English, even among inner-circle speakers. More often, though, the speakers from the outer circle displayed less certainty, or lesser degrees of ownership, than did the speakers from the inner circle.

This uncertainty among outer-circle speakers may be the result of their experience with multiple and conflicting norms for English. For example, it is surprising that the Singaporeans all rejected the use of "researches" or "equipments" as countable nouns when these particular forms have been attested multiple times in Singapore as well as in the United Kingdom (Lowenberg, 1986; Platt, Weber, & Ho, 1984). Their rejection of the forms may come from their exposure to American English norms, or else they may have acquired a heightened awareness of the features of Singaporean English, which are stigmatized in other regions of the world. In contrast to the outer-circle dyads, though, the discourse among the inner-circle pairs rarely showed doubt, a finding that indicates a great deal of self-confidence and a firm sense of legitimacy among the U.S. speakers that they are in an authoritative position from which to judge English. For both sets of dyads, the data show that speakers from the same countries may assume the role of judge with equal confidence, yet may still disagree with their partner, a finding that reflects the existence of different linguistic norms for all speakers.

This study is limited in its analysis of ownership because it only examines the situated linguistic identities expressed during an experimental task. The participants may orient to English very differently in other contexts, such as in an ESL class or in a conversation with a speaker from the inner circle. Furthermore, it is important to stress that the potential for ownership should not simply be applied to all IVE speakers because equal access to English is not present in outer-circle countries. Moreover, ownership is not meant to be a binary measure similar to the

NS-NNS dichotomy or the inner-outer-circle division; speakers may have varying degrees of ownership because social factors, such as class, race, and access to education, act as gatekeeping devices. Even expanding-circle speakers from nations such as Korea or Brazil may have high degrees of ownership, particularly those who are educated in private, English-medium schools or those whose socioeconomic status affords them ownership of English. Conversely, it is important to acknowledge that the concept of ownership extends to speakers of nonstandard varieties in the inner circle, as they are often marginalized and perceived as speaking deficient, illegitimate varieties of English, a fact that often yields few opportunities for such speakers to feel as though they own English in any real sense.

Despite these limitations, this study suggests that IVE speakers who have not traditionally been considered on par with NSs of inner-circle varieties of English, or who might not overtly claim ownership in other contexts, may in fact orient toward English in very similar ways to speakers from the inner circle. With a better understanding of how speakers orient toward English, researchers will have a clearer starting point from which to understand language development among language learners. Furthermore, from a more practical point of view, English language professionals will benefit from knowing how their students orient toward English. If teachers are aware of which variety of English their students consider the TL to be and the degree of ownership the students display to that variety, they will better recognize students' language abilities and more fairly measure their linguistic achievements.

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## APPENDIX

### Transcription Conventions

(.)	micropause
(0.5)	half-second pause
[	talk in overlap
-	cut off
=	latched talk
:	sound stretch
hh..	out breath
↑	rise in pitch
CAPS	loud volume
<b>XX</b>	emphasis
.	falling contour
,	falling-rising contour
?	rising contour
°XX°	whispered
<XX>	slowly enunciated speech
>XX<	quickly enunciated speech
S__ K__	talk omitted for anonymity