

An Exploration of English as the Medium and the Message in the “Global Village”: A Case Study

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If English is the medium, what, per Marshall McLuhan, is the message? This article explores the intrapersonal and interpersonal perceptions of power in communication of non-native English speaking students in an Australian context. Its primary objectives are to examine whether they perceive English as “power” when they communicate in English, how and why they think this, and whether there are other messages apart from “power.” Findings presented in this article, based on interviews with 28 people from 13 countries in Asia, Europe, and Latin America, imply that English is both the message and the medium by which it conveys “power,” “powerlessness,” “privilege,” “prestige,” and “pleasure.” It is perceived to be an extension of their voice, societal space, social and academic life, worldviews, opportunities for employment, positive affect (confidence, pride, positive attitudes toward the West, security, and comfort), relational identity, identity negotiation skills, identity negotiation competence, and intercultural contacts in Australia. In their home countries, English extends their face; societal space; positive identity, relational identity, personal identity, and identity negotiation competence; choices and opportunities in employment; and pursuit of higher education abroad and success. The implications contribute a new knowledge to McLuhan’s “the medium is the message” and a direction for future research.

Introduction

Human interactions have gone from face-to-face encounters when two people have a conversation, to written dialogue when postmen began delivering letters, to ear-to-ear chats when telephones came into existence, and to e-mails when the Internet was invented. Such developments in communication have spawned worldwide use of the term “globalization,” but when this phenomenon began is a matter of debate. Friedman (2007) argues that the global trend started from the year 1492, when Columbus discovered the “New World” and began a sea trade between the Old World and the New World. He described this period, from 1492 to 1800, as “Globalization [version] 1.0” because the world “shrank” from a large size to a medium size via the integration of countries. His version 2.0 saw the world “shrinking” again to a comparatively small size via the growth of multinational companies, which sought to

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Date submitted: 2009-01-28

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trade in overseas markets and utilize cheaper foreign labor. This period lasted until around the year 2000, when Friedman argued that the world had become "flat," rather than "round." This flat world is his:

Globalization [version] 3.0 . . . the world [is shrunk] from a size small to a size tiny and flattening the [world] at the same time . . . [it is] the newfound power for *individuals* (original italic) to collaborate and compete globally . . . enabling, empowering and enjoining individuals and small groups to go global so easily and so seamlessly. (ibid., p. 10)

Yet, Friedman does not address an essential factor that enables individuals to have a global share in power—the ability to personally communicate in English with others. This is true, especially for people whose English is in contrast to their non-native English speaking background (N-NESB). First, this is because the "flat" circle represents the world in which English becomes a significant medium of wider communication, where Richards, Platt and Weber (1985) regard English as a cross-cultural mediator. This can be seen via online communication; more than a quarter of the world's online language population of 729 million communicate in English (Global Reach, 2004). Second, English has dominated the world as a global language (EGL) for books, newspapers, airports, air traffic control, international business, academic conferences, science, technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music, education, advertising, and so forth (Graddol, 1996; Tsuda, 2008). Third, "standard written English is language of information storage and retrieval . . . [so] standard English is an empowering language . . . [As a result,] the world is coming to English" (Eggington, 1997, p. 42). Fourth, English, all in all, is claimed to be the most powerful international lingua franca, or the main global language (Crystal, 2003). Last, English is undoubtedly viewed as the language of globalization, and as a great economic and political power (Tsuda, 2008).

Recognition of the global status of English can be seen through various international, regional, and national aspects. For instance, the United Nations has adopted English as one of its seven official working languages, and has also selected it as one of two working languages used by the UN Secretariat. As a result, when it comes to job opportunities with the UN, fluency in spoken and written English is required. English is also a common language in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); indeed, this has come about naturally, without an official declaration (Okudaira, 1999). Six years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian was the official language solely in Russia (Singer, 1998). Citizens in the Newly Independent States study their own native tongues along with English, followed by German. Russian is no longer viewed as an elite language worthy of further study. In post-communist European countries, such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland, a major push for English teaching has also been supported (Phillipson, 2002). In Japan, Hashimoto (2002) said that, despite the nation's flourishing economy and its history of never having been colonized, English was unavoidably perceived to be an important instrument to introduce "Japaneseness" to the world. In order to cope with globalization, it was recommended as the second official language.

The rapid spread of English seems unstoppable. Kirkpatrick (2002) points out that, on the one hand, the two dominant native English-speaking background (NESB) countries, the United Kingdom and the United States, have managed to achieve a level of monolingual-cultural promotion. At the expense of others, English is promoted via "Americanization" and homogenization of world culture, which mainly involves economic expansion and an exploitative world order (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). It involves the

English language and American culture. English is also used to strengthen and promote British culture overseas, and to increase the United Kingdom's share of the global market for international students. This push was known as the Blair Initiative (Phillipson, 2002). An international curriculum was then designed to attract foreign students to come and study not only in the United Kingdom, but also in other NESB countries. On the other hand, N-NESB countries conformed to this phenomenon, which can be seen in part through the large number of international students investing their time and money to acquire an education and master English as the medium of communication in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. These countries rank as the three largest providers of international education, respectively (Novera, 2004). Higher education for international students has become important in economic terms to these three nations (Bamford et al., 2002; Novera, 2004).

Australia has made notable achievements in the internationalization of higher education, offering globally recognized courses and qualifications for the past three decades (Hellsten, 2002; Linacre, 2007). This has attracted growing enrolments of overseas students, who provided 13% of the total revenues enjoyed by Australia's higher education institutions in 2004 (Department of Education, Science and Training [DEST], 2004). The total value of exports of education services reached AD\$7.28 billion in 2005 and AD\$10.24 billion in 2006. This made education Australia's third and second largest services export, respectively, in those years (IDP, 2006). Enrolment growth in the higher education sector has continued to increase, by 5.2% in 2006 (Australia Education International [AEI], 2006).

The dominant use and recognition of English contribute inescapably to the growth of international contacts among NESB and N-NESB people who use the language to communicate. N-NESB people have less advantage in the sense that English is neither their mother tongue nor their second language (English as used additionally in daily lives), but a foreign language. However, for them, simply acquiring the ability to speak English is deemed a valuable asset and a vehicle of accomplishment. If people are competent in English, they enjoy greater opportunities to get better jobs and social recognition. At the same time, they may feel proud of such success and appreciate greater powers of communication as their English proficiency progresses (Crystal, 2003). Then again, if they are required to interact in a world of achievement in which high proficiency in English counts, they "may feel envious, resentful, or angry. . . feelings which give rise to fears, whether real or imaginary, and fears lead to conflict" (ibid., p. 3). Lack of self-confidence may undermine the learners' thoughts.

This article aims to explore the Australian academic and non-academic context. The primary focus is on perceptions of overseas students from N-NESB in their international contacts when using English as a medium of communication and instruction. McLuhan's aphorisms "the global village" and "the medium is the message," as well as Singer's (1987) idea of perceptual power in communication are applied to this study. The topic is of personal interest because I am a student from an N-NESB country studying in Australia. Further, there is a lack of research in this area.

The "Global Village" and "The Medium is the Message"

The era of globalization has seen the emergence of advanced technologies and new means of communication, which have created new flows of information and culture that reshape humans' everyday lives in many ways. The advent of cyberspace has provided routine transmission of almost instant and

unlimited information and images. It has allowed users of the Internet to communicate instantly across the globe (Morley & Robins, 1995; Giddens, 2002). Diverse groups of people from different nations can connect and actively exchange ideas and cultural impressions if they have access to the Internet. Over four decades ago, McLuhan predicted this kind of new order as a "global village" (1964, p. 102) in which residents all around the world would be tied together via electronic media. This transition would bring understanding and empathy to citizens of the global village. Humans could no longer live in isolation, as what happened on one side of the world would affect the other.

During the Electric Age, when printing, radio, telephones and television had already been introduced and were in common use, electronic innovations, computers in particular, were also on the way. McLuhan saw that the media was part of humans' lives as it existed everywhere in various forms. Media could not be avoided. Indeed, he did not interpret the term "media" Traditionally, to McLuhan, it encompassed items such as money, clothing, numbers, games, cars, and other new technologies which "[were] so persuasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they [left] no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 26). They not only influenced how people perceived the world; they transformed society, relying upon it for "interplay and evolution" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 49). The predominant consequence of McLuhan's idea was that all media had significant characteristics in the new ways they extended the range of people's bodies and minds. For him, the content of the medium was not the message. Rather, the medium itself was the key, as he looked beyond content. In the case of television and computers, they were considered facilitators of communication. The message, in his view, was the changes or effects the medium had on humans and their relationships with others within a community. The message conveyed via television, for example, can create a gap with family and friends because time is consumed by watching different programs. Similarly, with the computer, people who spend too much time at the screen can become addicted to it and have less social interaction with family or friends.

McLuhan, in his perspective as a professor of English literature, a philosopher, and a communications theorist, viewed medium profoundly, as an extension of man's body and mind. For example, money is a powerful form of mediating which extends humans' social values and access. It is notably seen as a language serving to transmit human knowledge, information, and culture from one generation to another. Clothing extends people's skin and is seen as "a heat-control mechanism and a means of defining the self socially" (p. 119). Number extends people's sense of joy of activities when groups gather in a theatre, at a ball, at a game of sport, or in church. Games are considered a mediated form of interpersonal communication which extend people's social selves and reflect who they are. Electric circuitry extends the central nervous system. A shovel used to dig holes is an extension of a person's hands and feet. Similarly, a spade assists a person to scoop out more dirt than with his bare hands. A microscope or a telescope is an extension of people's eyes and helps them to see more clearly, while a telephone extends their voice. Vehicles like a motorbike and a car are a great extension of the feet; they shorten travelling time and give a sense of comfort and convenience.

Some of these technological extensions of the human body and mind can be viewed in a more complicated way, since they impact or limit some human or social extensions. For instance, not only does the telephone extend one's voice, it can also limit a person's writing skill and the art of penmanship via regular correspondence (Kappleman, 2001). Similar to the telephone, automobiles are an extension of human feet, but they limit the essential act of walking and have ended up influencing the development of

cities and countries in many different ways. In cases of overuse of technology, there can be repercussions that are dangerous to human beings. For example, the overuse of automobiles as a form of transport causes pollution, obesity, road casualties, and lung disease. These results sometimes outweigh the benefit of using cars if one can commute to destinations more quickly and comfortably in other ways.

In partial response to critics, McLuhan worked with his son on what they termed the tetrad, or four laws of media, in an effort to prove that his notion about the medium was objective (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988). These four laws become new instruments, which are framed as four different questions, to look at the role of new technology in society. The first question asks, "What does the medium or technology enhance or extend?" For instance, eye glasses would extend the eyes, a phone would extend the voice, and a car would extend the feet. The second question asks, "What does it make obsolete?" Kappleman (2001) states that a car may make walking obsolete, and phones may make smoke signals unnecessary. The third question asks, "What is retrieved from the past?" Radios, for example, were restored by the innovative achievement of television. Alphabets restored the aural-oral tradition in the tribal era, while the printing press recovered manuscript culture in the literate era. The last question asks, "What does it reverse into if it is pushed to its limits or overextended?" Television reverses family ties into isolation, as the automatic act of switching on television often makes people in a family room silent. It is the same with the Internet, which keeps its users solitary or isolated. Application of the four laws of media reveals the complete circle of a medium, as well as how a new technology affects not only communication, but also society. It is concurrent that once there are changes in society, there will be further changes in technological innovation.

The Present Study and its Aims

McLuhan's (1964, 1994) two well-known aphorisms "the global village" and "the medium is the message" have been valuable contributions to media studies, as his thought and ideas, initiated back in the 1960s, remain valid, discussed and debated today in different fields of study. Discussion and debates have been carried out on issues of societal changes and impacts caused by new communication technology. Previous studies show that his aphorisms are also applied to various perspectives, including advertising, business, education, music, information and communication technology, and political economy (e.g., Andrew & Dyrud, 1996; Morris, 1997; Kwiatkowski, 1998; Lane, 1998; Carabell, 2000; Walls, 2002; Brown & Kulikowich, 2004; Morris, 2004; Dahlen, 2005; Miller, 2005; Shafer, 2007).

However, there have been no previous applications of McLuhan's aphorisms in regard to the use of English by people from N-NESB in a context of international communication. The present study, therefore, borrows the "global village" and "the medium is the message" concepts and redefines them. The former is a community or a society in Australia consisting of overseas students with N-NESB—people from different cultures and backgrounds instead of a community in the cyber media. They come into contact with one another and NESB people inside and outside classrooms for academic and non-academic purposes. The latter is the English language, the medium of communication and instruction, instead of mediated technology. The students have learned English through different processes. First, in their homeland, it is compulsory for them to study English at school as a foreign language, take an English exam to enter university, and obtain English competence to acquire greater opportunities for employment. Then, in Australia, they are required to take a standardized English proficiency test, TOEFL, IELTS, or

Cambridge, and English is no longer foreign for them, as they use it as part of their daily life. English is, in turn, a global language. They use it to extend their voice and societal space in the community. The levels of their English proficiency vary depending on their language performance, measured via standardized test results and authentic communication skills in "the global village." It can be implied that speaking or communicating in English as a global language (EGL) is the message which may convey "power" through English competence acquired by individuals.

Singer's (1987) concept of perceptual power in communication reinforces the implication of EGL as a message conveying "power," as he addresses that "an attractive instrument of power is anything possessed by one individual" (p. 108), and that "knowledge is power" (p. 113) used to influence others. If someone acquires specific knowledge, they can use it in various contexts, since they know more codes and solutions to decipher more messages in regard to the understanding of a certain problem. In the present context, the ability to communicate in English is the specific knowledge conveying "power," and this "power" may influence others culturally and socially for communication purposes. The power one possesses has an impact on one's perception. People behave as they do because they seek to reflect the ways they see the outside world. Perception is thus how people

. . . select, evaluate, and organize stimuli from the external environment . . . the ways in which [they] experience the world . . . [and they] experience everything in the world not as it is—but only as the world comes to [them] through [their] sensory receptors.
(p. 9)

As such, in order to communicate effectively and accurately, it is necessary to get to know ourselves, or our intrapersonal perceptions, first. Knowing our own perceptions of ourselves is as important as knowing our conscious perceptions of others, because the ways we perceive others, not what they are exactly like or what their motives exactly are, will determine our attitudes and behaviors toward them. This process is called interpersonal perceptions. Intrapersonal perceptions must be known before interpersonal perceptions because they help communicators, either as senders or receivers, to reach their goals of communication.

The present study underlines the intrapersonal and interpersonal perceptions of power, particularly in a non-mediated form of communication. It is aimed at investigating the implication of EGL as the message in the global village:

1. Is the message N-NESB students convey while communicating with culturally different others "power"? If yes, how and why does it convey power? If not, why is that so?
2. Are there any other messages apart from "power"? If so, what are they?

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method by means of exploratory interviews with structured, open-ended questions. The method was suitable because I was interested in seeking stories from participants based upon the key research questions, stories answering both "how" and "why" in relation to "power." The two-way conversations held with participants allowed me to draw upon reality in

the form of detailed description (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). As a result, the information garnered from this method was more likely to obtain quality than the quantity associated with statistic surveys. The number of participants was likewise small, so as to maintain the quality noted by Oppenheim (1992). The interview questions followed this example: When you communicate in English with people, you come into contact with (i.e., classmates, tutors, lecturers, administrative staff, bank tellers, and pedestrians), do you feel a sense of power? If yes, in what way, and why? If not, why don't you think so, and how do you sense it?

Twenty-eight international students from various master's degree programs from the same recognized university in Sydney voluntarily participated in the interviews, in response to my requests on campus for recruits. The participants were 7 males and 21 females from 13 different countries: Tara, Penny, Gina, Maria, Sammy, Willa, Henry, and Michael (China); Pamela (Colombia); Vince (India); Tony, Frank, and Ellen (Indonesia); Susan (Japan); Irene and Nicole (Korea); Ramsey (Mexico); Mark (Peru), Zoe (Slovakia), Kimberly and Sean (Sweden); Diane (the Czech Republic); Kate, Nina, Tiffany, Paula, and Owen (Thailand); and Daniela (Vietnam). All were assigned pseudonyms in order to ensure their anonymity. Most of them passed the minimal requirement of IELTS, 7.0 overall band. Some did not pass the test, opting instead to enroll in a direct-entry language school for various periods of time. Some used the results of the English proficiency Cambridge Tests.

Participants from China, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Peru, Sweden, and Thailand are familiar with American English, because it is the dominant English variety taught at schools in their homelands and an influential language via popular culture. The participants from Vietnam and India are an exception: Daniela learned British English at school, and Vince spent several years studying Russian in Russia instead of English. Those from Slovakia and the Czech Republic are accustomed to both British English and American English, because the former is the dominant language taught at school, while the latter is the influential language of popular culture. None of the participants were familiar with Australian English.

The interviews were conducted in English over a period of four weeks, and the duration of each interview was approximately half-an-hour. Before the interview, I introduced myself and the aim of my research. During the interview, I took notes without using a tape recorder and concealed my list of questions. I did this because I wanted the interview to be informal and the participants to feel at ease to share their views and feelings about communicating in English. Kvale (cited in Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2006) suggests a conceptual framework, communicative validity, to assure the accuracy of research findings. Therefore, after the interview, I transcribed the data and emailed them to all participants for validation. A few of them made minor corrections after reading the transcriptions, and revisions were made accordingly. The validated data were then analyzed under the control of a thematic interpretative approach which focused on common themes and patterns of perception (Aronson, 1994).

Findings

Of the 28 participants, 22 think that their acquired English conveys a sense of power in "the global village," while six do not think so. The reasons behind their perceptions of power vary, and these are interpreted and grouped into the following themes: 1) the message of power, 2) the message of powerlessness, 3) the message of privilege, 4) the message of prestige, and 5) the message of pleasure.

Theme One: The Message of Power

The English acquired by Irene, Vince, Penny, Sean, Nancy, Mark, Kimberly, Maria, and Sammy conveys a sense of power. It does so because of its influential role as a global medium of communication, which extends Irene's and Penny's social life and Vince's academic and social life in "the global village." It conveys a sense of power to Sean and Nancy, particularly when the former feels in charge of his ability to express himself freely without any struggle, and when the latter feels proud that native speakers understand her English. As a result, English extends positive affect to Sean and Nancy.

Kimberly perceives that her specific knowledge, acquiring English like a native speaker, conveys a great sense of power to her because it extends her confidence after spending her first month in the global village. She could communicate exactly what she wanted to say, use correct English, and speak rapidly. She said:

I feel that I am on the same level as the native speakers although English is my second language. Also, I feel secure and confident when I can express my thoughts and feelings. It is a nice feeling to be able to communicate well in a foreign language.

Unlike Kimberly, Mark, Maria, and Sammy do not perceive that their English competence has been acquired like a native speaker, yet it conveys a sense of power to them—even in Peru, Mark's homeland. This is because Mark believes that he will be able to talk like those who have English as their mother tongue if he keeps practicing and mingling with locals. Maria believes that she is getting better in English after studying in Australia for over a year, and that her acquired English conveys power, especially when talking with culturally different others. To her, "language is the power. It gives [her] confidence and [she] prefer[s] the Western ways of thinking." So does Sammy, who feels at ease and a sense of power because she gained confidence during a classroom presentation. She perceived that her classmates received her presentation well, which they showed by saying "yes" and nodding their heads to show agreement. As such, English extends confidence to Maria and Sammy.

Theme Two: The Message of Powerlessness

The English language acquired by Daniela, Henry, Diane, Owen, and Kate does not convey a sense of power in "the global village," but rather, in their home countries. Daniela reasons that she is not a local resident, whereas Henry can hardly extend his voice and societal space in "the global village" because he can never envisage communicating like an Australian and being immersed in the society. Besides, the Australians will not think that he speaks like them, either. Like Henry, Diane and Owen do not think they can communicate like the Australians. Diane believes that there will be someone making fun of her language mistakes. Whenever Owen talks to native speakers, he feels "unconfident and inferior . . . not in charge . . . not in control of the conversation." It is Kate's perception that her non-progressed English conveys powerlessness.

Although Irene, Vince, Maria, and Penny all see their English competence as conveying a sense of power, they feel they need to improve it. In this sense, their knowledge of English conveys powerlessness.

For example, Irene has less confidence to extend her voice in front of a class. As the only international student in her class, she perceives that her lecturers do not seem to care if she understands their lectures or not. She also wishes she had more confidence to extend her voice during class discussions. Maria feels inferior to people who have acquired better knowledge of English than she has, although she does manage to gain confidence, to some extent. Vince believes that his English is not yet as good as he thought it would be because some people still ridicule the way he talks—his accent and his grammar. This, however, motivates him. His goal is to improve his English within three or four years. Penny does not think she can handle English well. When she tries to extend her voice during her presentations, her classmates do not seem to understand her. She thinks she needs more time to improve her English.

Theme Three: The Message of Privilege

Frank and Michael view their English competence as conveying a sense of power, both in the global village and their homelands. The former thinks this way because he believes that, if he cannot communicate in English, he will not be able to extend his voice in “the global village.” The latter thinks that, in the global village, his ability to communicate well in English is not a thing meant to extend one’s face or show off, but a tool to extend his voice and societal space.

Both Mark and Maria see their ability to communicate in English as a social extension in regard to employment and opportunities for education. Mark emphasizes his view that “of course, if you know English like the native, you can do whatever you like in [the global village]. You can have a good job or any job.” Maria believes that, if she speaks English well, she will influence others to offer her a better job in the global village—something which is very important to her. In addition, she thinks that she will enjoy living there more, and that she will feel confident and comfortable. As such, English extends both of their success, as well as Maria’s social life.

Tara, Zoe, Susan, Frank, and Pamela perceive their oral performance in English to be a tool for international communication. The first three point out that such an ability will extend their world because it simplifies communication, as well as travel across all borders. Zoe particularly recognizes that, as a person from a small nation of five million people, her knowledge of English shrinks the world. Frank and Pamela consider their English skills to be tools to extend their voice and societal space by means of networking with other diverse cultural people. Frank has specifically made networks with people from the Philippines and Thailand. Pamela additionally extends her voice in order to relate herself to more people, and she imagines that she will never stop learning and acquiring English, because it is not her first language.

Theme Four: The Message of Prestige

English skills influence people culturally and socially in some societies. The value of the ability increases because the majority does not acquire it. Thus, those acquiring English gain a higher social status. For example, Zoe notices that, in Slovakia, respect is extended to the one who acquires a foreign language, especially English, because the older generation does not speak any foreign language. Nina, Tiffany, Paula, and Owen echo this sentiment, believing that their higher levels of English skills would

extend them an enhanced social position or respect in Thailand. Owen specifically sees that English is an attractive instrument to influence others socially and culturally in Thai society, extending his mind in its uniqueness and difference from others. Similarly, English extends Henry's social value because it "represents the richest part of the world." His success would also be extended if his Chinese friends could see that he could speak English well and integrate himself culturally into another society.

Theme Five: The Message of Pleasure

Ellen is the only participant who views her ability to communicate in English as an extension of fun. She does not feel that it conveys any sense of power, although she is confident in her English competence. In her home country, sometimes she uses it as a means to socialize with her Indonesian friends, but the purpose is only to practice their specific knowledge. When she works with her foreign colleagues, she feels pleasant and does not regard her English knowledge as a source of power. She feels rather relaxed when extending her voice with foreign people.

Discussion

Data from the interviews reveal that English, used as the medium in the global village, is itself the message which conveys not only "power" for nine participants but also "powerlessness" for nine participants, "privilege" for nine participants, "prestige" for six participants, and "pleasure" for one participant. Theme one suggests English as the message conveying "power," answering the first key research question. Themes Two, Three, Four, and Five answer the second question.

The ability to communicate in English, or "specific knowledge," conveys either power, powerlessness, privilege, prestige, or pleasure (or some combination thereof) for the participants because they have learned and utilized English through different processes. First, in their homelands of 13 different countries in Asia, Europe, and Latin America, they studied either British English or American English. This suggests that the United Kingdom and the United States have achieved success in terms of monolingual-cultural promotion (Pennycook, 1995; Kirkpatrick, 2002). Yet, the participants have not acquired the specific knowledge like a Briton or an American because they study it as a foreign language, which means they use it not as part of their daily life, but only for a specific purpose. It indicates that their acquired knowledge was unlikely to be adequate for meaningful, appropriate, and effective communication in *the real world* (Ochs, 1996; Kramsch, 2002).

Since English is foreign to the participants, it is necessary for them to study hard to pass the minimum requirement of a standardized English proficiency test—IELTS, TOEFL, or Cambridge—in order to pursue higher education in the global village, the society where the local variety of English is disorienting to them. Some participants who were unable to pass the English test enrolled in a direct-entry language school in Australia instead. After the participants had arrived in the global village, the medium of English shifted from being a foreign language to a global language, one used to communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This suggests that their initial process of communication started when they learned English and included any opportunities they had to practice the language at home. The process then continued in a new cultural and social context, a context in which they encountered new challenges

that influenced their intrapersonal and interpersonal perceptions of the world. They may or may not perceive progress in terms of their levels of English knowledge conveying "power" via communication in English (Singer, 1987).

Intrapersonal Perception of Power in Communication

At an intrapersonal level, all participants are aware of both the importance of English in the global village and their own perceptions when communicating in English with culturally different others. In one sense, seven participants perceive English as the message empowering them (del Carmen Méndez García & Cañado, 2005), and it is the global medium of knowledge and contact for three people. It extends one male's feeling of being in charge when communicating with others and one female's feeling of control when contributing her knowledge in the class. One person feels that she improves her English, and another speaks like a native speaker. At the same time, the power of communication notably extends three people's confidence, further extending one person to think positively about the West and another to feel secure. In addition, two participants perceive English, as the message empowering them, to be tool to extend their voice and societal space in the global village. Without it, they feel they cannot communicate with culturally different others and may be lost.

In another sense, the message of English does not convey power to five participants in the global village for reasons of identity negotiation, (poor and native-like) English levels, and expectations. One lady does not think English extends her social identity of belonging in the global village (Turner, 1987). Two people feel that, regardless of how good their English may be, the message of English will never convey a sense of power to them, since they believe it is impossible to communicate like native speakers. One man feels inferior and unconfident when talking to native speakers because he believes they always speak English better than he does. English does not extend his feeling of uniqueness or being different from anyone else. One woman feels unable to meet her expectation to make progress in English, so English does not extend her expectation.

The message of English also conveys "privilege" to nine participants. Two of those perceive that the ability to communicate in English well, like a native speaker, will extend their success in career opportunities (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Such an ability extends one woman's feelings of comfort and sense of security, as well as her sense that she has an advantage in getting a good job in the global village and negotiating her identity in the community (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Two people think that the ability to speak English is a privilege as a tool for international communication—an extension that goes hand in hand with their perceptions of a "shrinking" world. It extends one woman's voice with other nationalities and one man's network with people from various countries. One person specifically sees speaking English well as a means to extend her intercultural contacts. This suggests that English is a privilege tool extending one's social life and friendship (Duszak, 2002) and relational identity (Hall, 2005).

The ability to speak English also conveys privilege to some participants from Peru, Indonesia, Vietnam, Slovakia, and China. That ability is seen to extend their success because it enables them to advance at work and pursue higher education. English extends their choices and improves their opportunities in employment and study abroad, because the majority of the people in those countries

cannot speak English well (Pennycook, 1994; Guilherme, 2007). There is also demand for people able to speak English well because many multinational corporations have bases in these participants' home countries.

Interpersonal Perception of Power in Communication

At an interpersonal level, only one participant perceives the message of her English to be conveying power. For her, this is the case because native speakers understand what she says, and she is able to negotiate with them. English extends her feeling of pride (Crystal, 2003) and identity negotiation competence (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Four participants do not see the message of their English conveying power. As an example, one of them was ridiculed by native speakers, although he could make himself understood. It was primarily because his accent and incorrect use of grammar were seen as strange by native speakers. Despite this, he was not discouraged, and he aimed to overcome these difficulties in the next three to four years. One woman blames her teachers, whom she feels do not seem to care about her being the only international student from an N-NESB in the class. She wishes she had more confidence so she could participate more effectively in class. Another woman feels that she needs more time to improve her presentation skills and gain confidence when she talks, as she does not feel that people fully understand her academic English. Yet another woman's confidence in her ability to communicate drops and turns to a feeling of inferiority when she perceives that she is talking to someone who speaks better than she does. This may suggest that English distinguishes between "us" and "them" (Duszak, 2002). Ridicule, inferiority, and lack of confidence are byproducts of inadequate competence in English, conveying powerlessness, and discounting the participants' identity negotiation skills (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

Six participants—from Slovakia, China, and Thailand—perceive that the ability to speak English well conveys the message of prestige (Lefkowitz & Hedgcock, 2002). In these countries, people's ability to communicate in English extends their social status, simply because there are comparatively few people who can speak the language. In China, this language ability can be a cultural and social extension of wealth. People look up to those who speak English similar to native speakers and can thus be part of English-speaking society, because that ability connotes a measure of success in life. Apart from being respected and successful, English extends one Thai man's sense of being unique or different from others in Thailand, or his personal identity (Hall, 2005), because he has seen that people pay a lot of attention to such an ability, making it a cultural and social extension of wealth there. He feels his English can extend his face at home because he can communicate better in English than most. Being respected extends the participants' identity negotiation competence (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

Meanwhile, one woman perceives the message of English to convey pleasure, because it is an extension of her relational identity (Hall, 2005) with her Indonesian friends and foreign counterparts. When she communicates with them, she sees that they have similar perceptions of her, that speaking English extends "fun" or "having a great time" with friends—not that it is for power over anyone. Use of the language to work out what her foreign counterparts are trying to say does not convey the message of power or privilege to her. She simply enjoys understanding, as it allows her to feel happy and relieved.

The application of McLuhan's (1988) four laws of media can crystallize the role of English as the medium of communication and the message in the present context. English conveys power, privilege, prestige, and pleasure if the participants perceive that they communicate well in English. An individual's ability to communicate in English is an attractive instrument of these "4Ps," extending his or her voice, societal space, social and academic life, worldviews, opportunities in employment, positive affect (confidence, pride, positive attitudes towards the West, security, and comfort), relational identity, identity negotiation skills, identity negotiation competence, and intercultural contacts in the global village. In their home countries, English is also an attractive instrument, extending their face, societal space, relational identity, personal identity, and identity negotiation competence, as well as their choices and opportunities in employment and their ability to pursue higher education abroad and, ultimately, success. English also makes the participants' "4Ps" obsolete, rendering them powerless if they perceive that they cannot communicate in English effectively or like a native speaker. In addition, English retrieves power, privilege, prestige, and pleasure once an N-NESB person perceives progress in his or her communication skills and gains confidence. English further reverses into a global language which is not the property to any group of NESB people, but the medium for all who can speak it. This implies that, in the world of N-NESB people, English is an attractive instrument of a sense of power, privilege, prestige, and pleasure, extending their well-being.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the current era of globalization, English has spread very fast. Its spread does not seem likely to stop (Kirpatrick, 2002), as it is being driven by Americanization and homogenization of world culture (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), the "Blair Initiative" (Phillipson, 2002), and Australia's achievement in internationalizing its higher education (Hellsten, 2002; Linacre, 2007). The findings imply that English is the medium and the message, intrapersonally and interpersonally perceived as an extension of the human mind. It is a powerful form of mediating which particularly extends N-NESB people's voice, societal space, social and academic life, worldviews, opportunities in employment, positive affect (confidence, pride, positive attitudes towards the West, security, and comfort), relational identity, identity negotiation skills, identity negotiation competence, and intercultural contacts in the global village. It further extends their faces, positive identity relational identities, personal identity and identity negotiation competence, choices and opportunities in employment, and allows them to pursue higher education abroad and success in their home countries.

The extension of English is used as a vehicle for N-NESB people to gain both local and global shares in power and privilege, and a local share in prestige and pleasure. English is therefore the medium and the message which conveys not only power, but also powerlessness, privilege, prestige, and pleasure. These "5Ps" appear to affect N-NESB people's state of wellbeing both positively and negatively, depending on how they perceive their English competence. This implies that not only does English extend N-NESB people's minds, but it also impacts their wellbeing and identity. Such impact is worth further exploration, since human wellbeing has become a global focus in terms of human security and development, as shifted from national security (Haq, 1995). The implications contribute a new knowledge to McLuhan's "the medium is the message" and a direction for future research.

This study investigated N-NESB students' intrapersonal and interpersonal perceptions of power when they communicated in English in the global village. The study has a number of limitations, in that it was restricted to a small sample of 28 N-NESB students and a qualitative research method. However, it gives some indications of the students' perceptions of power in their communication at interpersonal and interpersonal levels in the present context.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep gratitude for the reviewer's comments and all of the 28 subjects' voluntary participation.

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