

Phonological Pitfalls for English Teachers in Korea: The Importance of Understanding Contrastive Phonology

By Steve Garrigues, Ph.D.

An essential element of effective spoken communication is “good” pronunciation. And “good pronunciation” effectively means avoiding miscues and ambiguity. Each language has its own phonological structure which contrasts with that of all other languages, and which creates unique problems in the accommodation of English sounds. The end result of conflicting sound distinctions is often miscommunication. For example, what a difference a single sound contrast can make between saying “That’s the long way” and “That’s the wrong way.” Or consider how often the question “Will you live here?” has been misunderstood for “Will you leave here?” in Korea. What a difference a single vowel sound makes! From a communicative point of view, the aim of achieving “good English pronunciation” for EFL learners should NOT be to sound like some kind of native English speaker (and which NS model should one aspire to emulate anyway?). Rather the goal should simply be to communicate effectively with minimal ambiguity and confusion. This means being able to distinguish and produce sounds in the target language (English) that may not be distinguishable in the primary language (Korean in this case).

All EFL teachers in Korea, whether Korean or native-speaker, realize that there are certain sounds that cause Korean students more trouble than other sounds. But there are other issues that may not be so apparent, which tend to be overlooked by many English teachers. And there are underlying reasons for all pronunciation problems, which lie in the phonological structure of the two languages. Many of these are what we may call “phonological pitfalls” because they are of-

ten unexpected and unrecognized by Korean English teachers and NESTs alike.

An understanding of Korean and English contrasting phonology can help identify the underlying causes of specific pronunciation issues, and offer practical approaches for teachers in guiding their students to master those sounds. This presentation takes a practical approach to dealing with: (a) why there are problems with specific English sounds for Korean speakers, and (b) how to approach the teaching of English pronunciation for Korean speakers.

The Presenter



Dr. Steve Garrigues holds the position of Professor at Kyungpook National University in Daegu, where he has been teaching since 1986. He is also an adjunct professor with UMUC Asia and has been teaching classes in anthropology, sociology, and Asian studies since 1985. He did his BA in Japanese history at Sophia University in Tokyo, and both his MA (Colorado State University) and PhD (Lucknow University, India) are in cultural anthropology. Most of his life has been spent in the Asia-Pacific region, including 8 years in Japan, 4 years in India, 6 years in Tonga, and over 25 years in Korea. His research interests are in intercultural communication, comparative semantics, and ethnomusicology. In addition to his academic work, Steve is a passionate photographer. He has been a member of KOTESOL from its very beginning.

(This is the first of two presentations scheduled for the April 14, 2012, Gwangju-Jeonnang Chapter Meeting. See page 3 for information on the second presentation and presenter.)

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The Gwangju Communicator, the Chapter's monthly newsletter, is prepared by Dr. David Shaffer.

■ Joining Korea TESOL

Who May Join

English teachers of any level or nationality are eligible to join KOTESOL. We welcome native and non-native speakers teaching at primary schools, secondary schools, language institutes, colleges and universities, and other organizations. University students may join as student members.

What Memberships Types Are Available?

- **Individual 1-Year Membership** (40,000 won)
- **International 1-Year Membership** (60,000 won / US\$60.00)
- **Undergraduate Student 1-Year Membership** (20,000 won, Documentation required)
- **Lifetime Membership** (400,000 won)

How to Join

Apply by using the online membership form at <http://www.koreatesol.org/>. On the front page, click on "Membership" in the menu, and follow the directions.

Paper membership application and renewal forms are available at Chapter meetings for those who prefer making a hard-copy application.

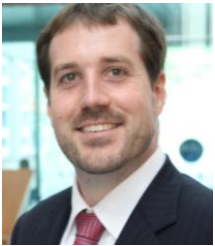
Membership payment may be made by:

- Bank transfer to **KOTESOL**: Korea Exchange Bank account number 630-006952-841
- Payment in cash to the Chapter Membership Officer at a Chapter Meeting

The NEAT: Background, Practice, and Consequences

This presentation is an exploration into the new English test that will theoretically be replacing the English portion of the KSAT in 2015, the NEAT (National English Aptitude Test). It will start by looking into why the government decided to change to this new test, and then look at the individual components of the test and what this test will mean for us as English teachers. This presentation will be a mix of lecture and workshop, with audience participation actively encouraged.

The Presenter



Brad Serl is from British Columbia, Canada. He graduated from Thompson Rivers University in 2001 and came to Korea in early 2002. He has worked at private language schools, public high schools, and universities, and currently works as a coordinator at Busan University of Foreign Studies in their teacher training program. He has been happily married since 2002 and enjoys mountain biking, cooking, and all manner of geekery. Brad is currently President of the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter of KOTESOL and Chair of the 2012 KOTESOL National Conference Committee.

Chapter Members in the News

February 4. **Dr. David Shaffer** presented on *How Far English Teaching and Learning Has Come in Korea* at the Gwangju International Center's GIC Talk series.

March 10. The 2012 Gwangju KOTESOL Conference featured seven presentations by six Chapter members:

Maria Lisak presented *The Big Share: Smartphone Apps, Podcasts, and Microblogging – the Mobile Classroom*.

Vivien Slezak discussed *Reflections on Self-Reflection: Looking Back on Our Teaching Day*.

Ynell Lumantao reported on *Brainstorming for Writing*.

Dr. David Shaffer gave a presentation on *Why Extensive Reading? – Support from the Literature*, and did a pecha kucha presentation on *Teaching and Learning EFL: Facts and Fictions*.

Henry Gerlits presented a pecha kucha on *Helping Students Construct Knowledge: Paulo Freire's Problem-Posing in the Classroom*, and **Julien McNulty's** pecha kucha was *Brought to You by the Letter "E."*

March 31. The 2012 Seoul Chapter Conference was held at Sookmyung's Women's University in Seoul. Gwangju Chapter was represented with two members presenting.

Julien McNulty presented the workshop *I Like Apples: Using Emotion, Tone, and Non-Verbal Communication in Effective Sentence Writing* and his pecha kucha *Brought to You by the Letter "E."*

Dr. David Shaffer spoke on a study he conducted, *The Voice of Language Learner Journal Writing*, and also the pecha kucha *Myths and Misconceptions in Language Teaching and Learning*.

April 7-9. **Dr. David Shaffer** was in Kunming, China, judging The 21st Century/China Daily National English Speaking Competition. Dr. Shaffer was selected as the Korea TESOL representative to the event.

About Korea TESOL and the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter

Korea TESOL, also known as KOTESOL, is a professional association of teachers of English to speakers of other languages. The nationwide organization has been serving English teachers, administrators, and interested individuals in the field of English education since 1992. KOTESOL has ten active chapters across the nation and holds annual national and international conferences. The Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter has monthly meetings, usually the second Saturday of the month, which contain two one-hour presentations or hands-on workshops on topics related to English language teaching, such as classroom methodology, activities, and management. Meetings are presently being held at Chosun University in Gwangju. Admission to Chapter meetings is free, but we encourage your participation as a full member. (Membership information is on page 2.)

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL April Chapter Meeting

- Time: Saturday, April 14, 2012, 1:30 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University (Gwangju), Main Building (본관), Room 5210.

Schedule

- 1:30 pm:** Registration and Welcome
- 2:00 pm:** FEATURED PRESENTATION 1:
Phonological Pitfalls for English Teachers in Korea
 Dr. Steve Garrigues (Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter Vice-President; Kyungpook Natl. Univ.)
- 2:50 pm:** Refreshment Break
- 3:10 pm:** FEATURED PRESENTATION 2:
The NEAT: Background, Practice, and Consequences
 Brad Serl (Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter President; Busan University of Foreign Studies)
- 3:20 pm: Swap-Shop Session: Focus on Must-Have ELT Books for Teachers**
 Introduce your Favorite ELT Books.
 Also Share your Teaching Ideas and Classroom Activities.
 (Open to All Attendees. Handouts welcomed.)
- 4:30 pm:** Announcements
 Drawing for Prizes
 Closing
- (Admission is free. Membership is encouraged.)

Upcoming Chapter Events

May 12, 2012. Chapter Monthly Meeting
 ■ *KICK STArt: Student Task-based Activities for Kids Intensive Camps*
 Nate Kent (Chosun University)

June 9, 2012. Chapter Monthly Meeting
 ■ Presentations TBA

July 14, 2012. Chapter Monthly Meeting

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

April 21, 2012.
Jeonju-North Jeolla Regional Conference
English Teachers as Chameleons: Adapting to a Changing Context
 GeunYoung Girls H.S., Jeonju, Jeonbuk

May 20, 2012.
Reflective Day with Dr. Thomas Farrell
 Reservations Contact: kotesol.rpsig@gmail.com
 Meeple Café, Sinchon, Seoul

May 19, 2012.
2012 Franklin SpellEvent: Korea Event
 Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

May 26, 2012.
The 2012 KOTESOL National Conference
Drive: Putting Students at the Wheel
 Busan University of Foreign Studies, Busan

Upcoming Korea ELT Events

2012 DisCog-SSK Joint Conference
Electronic Media and Communication
 April 21, 2012; HUFSS, Seoul

WCSEL-1: The 1st World Congress of Scholars of English Linguistics
Issues in English Linguistics
 June 26-30, 2012; Hanyang University, Seoul

KELTA 2012 International Conference
Implementing Speaking and Writing Tests of English in an EFL Context: Problems and Tasks
 May 26, 2012; Korea University, Seoul

2012 KATE International Conference
English Proficiency for All: Narrowing English Gap
 July 6-7, 2012; Sookmyung Women's Univ., Seoul