

## Understanding Self and Other: Exploring How Relational Processes Contribute to the Korean-American Cultural Experience Depicted in Chang-Rae Lee's *Native Speaker*

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### Abstract

The link between culture and language has been the focus of many recent studies. The study of culture and language offers an understanding of how 'reality' is constituted on the one hand and maintained on the other. As different cultures dictate certain patterns of thoughts and certain language structures, the integration of different cultures may cause a conflict of identity. In this study, the struggle between eastern and western identities is under investigation. The discourse chosen for analysis is *Native Speaker*, a novel written by the Korean-American novelist Chang-Rae Lee. The study is conducted through an analysis of the relational processes present in the novel. Relational processes depict an external and internal perspectives of participants' reality, as they offer attributes that describe and identify the relationship between participants. The analysis of such relationships presents a clearer understanding of the Korean-American cultural experience and of Lee's governing ideologies toward this representation.

Results: The study of the relational processes in Lee's *Native Speaker* with their variant participants allows the reader a chance to draw relations between the protagonist's view of himself and of the participants around him. These relations contribute to his journey of discovering his identity as a Korean-American, a product of two cultures.

إدراكي لنفسي والآخرين: دراسة الأفعال الكينونية في رواية الكاتب تشانج-ري لي "المتحدث باللغة الأم" التي تساهم في تصوير التجربة الثقافية الكورية الأمريكية

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### الملخص

إن الصلة بين الثقافة واللغة أصبحت محل اهتمام الكثير من الدراسات الحالية. فإن دراسة الثقافة واللغة تقدم فهما أعمق لكيفية تصوير العالم الخارجي. بينما تفرض الثقافات المختلفة تركيبتها اللغوية التي تعكس رؤاها للعالم، فإن اندماج الثقافات يطرح قضية الهوية. تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليل للصراع الثقافي بين الغرب والشرق، وتقوم على تحليل الأفعال الكينونية في نص رواية الكاتب الكوري الأمريكي تشانج-ري لي "المتحدث باللغة الأم". إن الأفعال الكينونية تصور علاقة الأشخاص بالعالم الخارجي والعالم الداخلي، فضلاً عن تحديد العلاقات بين الأشخاص. ومن ثم فإن تحليل هذه العلاقات الكينونية يوضح الكثير عن رؤية الكاتب للتجربة الثقافية المقدمة في روايته والتي تحمل ضمنياً أيديولوجيته المتحكمة في النص.

النتائج: إن دراسة الأفعال الكينونية في رواية "المتحدث باللغة الأم" للكاتب تشانج-ري لي تُلقي ضوءاً على العلاقات التي تربط الأشخاص ببعضها البعض وبالعالم الداخلي والخارجي. وبتحليل هذه العلاقات تتضح رحلة اكتشاف الهوية المقدمة في الرواية والتي تنتهي بالاستنتاج أن الهوية الكورية الأمريكية هي منتج لثقافتين لا لثقافة واحدة.

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## **1. Introduction**

The link between culture and language has been the focus of many recent studies. The study of culture and language offers an understanding of how 'reality' is constituted on the one hand and maintained on the other. According to Nisbett (2003), it has been argued that different cultures dictate certain patterns of thoughts and certain language structures. However, the problem lies in the integration of different cultures with different systems of thoughts and beliefs. In this study, the struggle between eastern and western identities is under investigation. The discourse chosen for analysis is *Native Speaker*, a novel written by the Korean-American novelist Chang-Rae Lee. In his novel, Lee recounts the story of Henry Park a Korean-American who struggles between his Korean origins and his American life. His struggle is manifested in him trying to be a native speaker of the American English language.

### **1.1 Culture**

There have been many definitions of the term culture. Tylor defines it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (as cited in Moore, 2009, p. 5). Williams (1983) refers to culture as "a whole way of life" (p. 13). Thus, culture is what forms one's view of the world. This perception of reality dictates one's conduct and, in many ways, defines one's identity.

Nisbett (2003) introduces how different cultures entail different views of the world. He points out that human cognition is not universal; the way people think and the way they perceive reality differ from one culture to another. He illustrates this by demarcating the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. While the former draws its principles from ancient Chinese, especially, Confucian philosophy, the latter bases theirs on ancient Greek philosophy. Nisbett (2003) argues,

[the] collective or interdependent nature of Asian society is consistent with Asians' broad, contextual view of the world and their belief that events are highly complex and determined by many factors. The individualistic or independent nature of Western society seems consistent with the Western focus on particular objects in isolation from their context and with Westerners' belief that they can know the rules

governing objects and therefore can control the objects' behavior. (p. xvii).

Thus, while Easterners think of the world in a holistic manner, Westerners have a more individualistic view of the world. These differences influence beliefs and in turn conducts. Nisbett (2003) claims that these differences are the reason why Asians (Chinese, Korean and Japanese) excel at understanding relationships, while Europeans and Americans are better at classifications.

Nisbett (2003) further argues that these differences are captured in language. He explains that in Chinese, Japanese and Korean, there are more than one word denoting the pronoun "I". Their use reflects the importance of relationship between the self and the other. For example, in Korean "I" can be "sheo" or "na". The former is used when the speaker desires to speak humbly of himself; that is, when the conversation takes place with someone of a higher degree. "Na" is used when both speakers are of equal footing. Nisbett states that grammar also reflects such differences. He states that English grammar, for instance, is "agentic" giving the example 'He dropped it.' as opposed to 'It fell (from him).' (Nisbett, 2003, p.158).

Thus, while culture reflects understanding of the world, language represents this understanding. Llamas and Watt (2010) argue that language "not only reflects who we are but in some sense it is who we are, and its use defines us both directly and indirectly" (p.1). In this sense, language reflects identity.

### **1.2 Identity**

Grad and Rojo (2008) believe that while the definition of identity has been attempted by many scholars in many fields, one thing that can be agreed upon is that identity is usually defined within social ground. They maintain that one definition can be borrowed from the works of Fairclough and Wodak as they describe identity as "a unifying framework of research about the individual's processes of creation of meaning whilst participating as a social actor in all spheres of social activity" (as cited in Grad & Rojo, 2008, p. 4). In other words, identity is the translation of cultural and social influences that help understand the world.

Joseph (2004) maintains that the role of language is not restricted to communication, for it “reflects” and “makes” who we are (p.9). He further maintains that the choice of language use in addressing someone can determine one’s level of education, social background and sometimes can leave good or bad impressions. This emphasizes how languages can be used to convey identities.

Accordingly, this study aims at showing how language analysis helps reveal one’s identity and in turn one’s understanding of the world. The study approaches fields such as literature, language, ideology and identity to conduct the analysis. The analysis is based on investigating how language is employed to construct identity and represent underlying ideology. The analysis is conducted on a selected literary discourse. The work chosen is Chang-Rae Lee’s *Native Speaker* which explores a marginalized identity by portraying the Korean marginalized identity within the dominant American society.

## **2. Methodology**

Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014) introduce relational processes as part of their lexico-grammatical tools of analysis. They argue that exploring the relational processes presents a better understanding of the ideational function of a given discourse.

The ideational function deals with representation. How reality is represented in the text is explored through this level of analysis. The relational processes capture both the outer and the inner worlds as they are associated with the acts of being (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The main participants in relational processes depend on whether the relational process is attributive or identifying. By attributive, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) present a process in which a Carrier is ascribed with an Attribute; in identifying processes, on the other hand, an Identified encodes an Identifier or an Identifier decodes an Identified. There are also three types of relational processes: intensive, possessive and circumstantial. Halliday (2004) draws up the difference between these three types using equation forms. He maintains that in intensive relational processes ‘x is a’, in possessive processes ‘x has a’ and in circumstantial ‘x is at a’ (Halliday, 2004, p. 216). In these equations, the ‘x’ stands for the

Carrier or the Identifier and the ‘a’ stands for the Attribute or the Identified.

Relational processes depict an external and internal perspectives of participants’ reality, as they offer attributes that describe and identify the relationship between participants. Thus, exploring the relational processes in *Native Speaker* sheds light on the relationship between Henry, the main participant, and other participants like Lelia, other Koreans, his parents, his son, his job, Kwang and the setting. Henry’s views of these other participants present a clearer understanding of his cultural experience and of Lee’s governing ideologies toward this representation.

### 3. Analysis

Lee’s narrative discourse begins with the departure of Lelia, the narrator’s American wife. As she leaves, she hands Henry, her Korean-American husband, a list in which she pronounces her judgment of him. As representative of the American identity, Lelia’s definition of Henry summarizes the American view of ‘other’ identities.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
	I	was		who		p. 1
Her answer		was	a denial		of everything	p. 4
You		Are	B+ student		of life	p. 5
			illegal alien			
			emotional alien			
			genre bug			
			yellow peril: neo-American			
			stranger			
			follower			
			traitor			
			spy			
			false speaker		of language	

**Table 1: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee’s (1995) *Native Speaker***

This opening shows who Henry is from a White American perspective. He is a product of their definition; that is, he is expected to be seen from whatever angle they provide. Accordingly, Lelia ‘denies everything else’, for she is only conscious of her view of him. For her, he is never an

accomplished person; no matter how hard he tries, he is always a 'B+ student'. This distinction could connote his being a second-rate citizen, which means that according to Lelia's verdict, he will never upgrade to become an A student. In addition, Henry is viewed as an 'alien'. This alienation is seen as 'illegal' and 'emotional'. The former can be related to the political nature of his citizenship, since Henry is only a second generation American from a Korean origin. The latter, on the other hand, refers to the cultural difference. For Lelia, Henry's expression of emotions is very different from hers, and as a powerful participant she decides that such difference makes him an alien and a 'genre bug'. Such attributes can be seen as racist, for she does not tolerate difference and immediately views them as 'bugs'. Racist view can also be seen in the attribute 'yellow' in which she associates him with his skin color, which is different from hers. Because of these racial comments and alienating strategies, Henry becomes a 'stranger' who can be nothing but a 'follower' due to his weak stance in society. Moreover, his double identity makes him a 'traitor' and 'a spy' from Lelia's perspective. Most importantly, Lelia labels Henry 'a false speaker of language', which means that he will never be a native of the language and so he will never belong to the land.

This list was compiled after Lelia's marriage to Henry for some years. If marriage is to be seen as an attempt of cultural integration, the list is a sign of its failure.

Identified	Relational Process	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
it	was	the list	of our sad children	p. 13

**Table 2: an Example of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995)**

***Native Speaker***

So, Henry compares the list to his sad children. This comparison depicts the list as a product of marriage and being seen as sad stresses the fact that it is a failing marriage.

It is important to note that Lelia's view does not change much from her first impression.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
	your face	is		part of the equation		p. 11
You		are not	a native speaker			p. 11

**Table 3: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

These relational processes present Lelia's first impressions of Henry. On the night of their first meeting, Lelia decides that Henry is 'not a native speaker' mainly because of his 'face'. This racist view does not change, even after Lelia decides to step down from her powerful position as a white American and marry Henry.

On the other hand, Henry does not view himself in the same way.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
I		am	an amiable man			p. 6
I		can be	most personable, if not charming			p. 6
I		am not	a seducer			p. 6
I		am	hardly seen			p. 6
I		was	a comely shadow			p. 49
	I	have been		every version of the new comer		p. 149
who		is	fearing and sad		always	p. 149

**Table 4: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

Henry's description of himself can be seen as defensive. He says that he is 'an amiable', 'personable' and 'charming' man. The attributes can be seen as his invitation to be loved, which results from his feelings of alienation. Thus, as Lelia's relational processes alienate him and depict him as an 'alien' and a 'stranger', he addresses his readers and tells them that he can be a very good company and a lovable person. His defensive response denies Lelia's claim of being 'a traitor' or 'a spy', as he rejects being 'a seducer'. This denial can be seen as his awareness of his weakness that prevents him from playing such a role. This awareness is emphasized in his acknowledgment of his being 'a comely shadow' who is 'hardly seen'. Thus, Henry's position in society can be seen as secondary, for he is only a shadow; however, as he aspires to rise, he becomes a 'comely' one. Furthermore, Henry's description of himself could also be

seen as his way of blaming the Americans for not welcoming him. Henry has always been ‘the newcomer’ who is always ‘afraid’ and ‘sad’. This rejection of the American society could be seen as the chief factor driving Henry to be who he is.

Lee’s *Native Speaker* presents other participants who, alongside Henry, speak for all the marginalized identities in America.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
The children		had	all kinds of articulation problems			p. 2
they		were	nonnative speakers			p. 2
someone		is	bigger		always . . . than you	p. 42
you		have	traditional issues . . . parental, intimacy, trust		Like all of us	p. 124
	we	were		the school retards, the mentals, the losers		p. 218
	Blacks and Koreans	seem		meant for trouble	in America	p. 168

**Table 5: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee’s (1995) *Native Speaker***

The possessive relational processes define the kind of problems that result in the intensive relational processes. Because immigrant children ‘had articulation problems’, they are ‘nonnative speakers’, which establishes their position as ‘the retards’, ‘the mentals’ and the ‘losers’ who always have personal issues with their parents – who belong to the marginalized identity, and potential loved ones – who belong to the dominant identity. As a result, they are unable to build trust and are always ‘meant for trouble’, because there is ‘always someone bigger than them’ who rejects them and works on bringing them down.

Furthermore, Lee epitomizes the marginalized identities struggle in America through the character of ‘Ahjuhma’. Henry’s father brings her to



America after Mrs. Park's death. As Henry's father feels the need for a woman in the house, she comes to be in charge of the house chores. The significance of her character lies in the fact that all the marginalized characters in the novels are introduced after they have settled in America, Ahjuhma on the other hand depicts the cultural experience of a newcomer from the moment they arrive till they die.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Page
	she	was		some kind of zombie	p. 60
She		didn't have	a hobby		p. 60
She		must be	so lonely		p. 62
she		's	a total alien		p. 72
she		's	completely bizarre		p. 72

**Table 6: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

Henry identifies Ahjuhma as a kind of zombie, which stresses her inability to belong in America. Other characters, who belong to marginalized identities in the novel, have families and want to build a life in America, and this forces them to coexist and accept their stance in the American social structure. However, Ahjuhma seems to have come to America for financial reasons. She does not believe in the American ideal, and thus her coming to America means a zombie-like state in which she is physically alive but spiritually dead. This is emphasized in the fact that she has no hobby. The possessive relational process denotes how she does not have one single thing that she loves to do. Lelia decides that Ahjuhma is 'lonely' and Henry's friend claims that she is 'an alien' and 'bizarre'. These verdicts complement each other; because she is a stranger to the American culture, she behaves in a 'bizarre' way, which drives her away from others who either belong to the dominant culture or want to be part of it; accordingly, she becomes 'lonely'. This estrangement symbolizes the marginalized cultural experience in America, especially those who are unable to accept or to abide by the dominant culture norms.

Lee's characterization of Ahjuhma presents another dimension to the depiction of the marginalized identities. While most characters are marginalized even though they attempt to abide by the norms dictated by the dominant culture, Ahjuhma is also marginalized as she sticks to her

own cultural habits. This sheds light on the problem of marginalized identities and how they are rejected no matter what they do – if they change colors, they are rejected for being ‘false’, and if they stay true to their colors, they are still rejected for being ‘aliens’ and bizarre’.

*Native Speaker* does not only offer the white’s view, it also presents how the whites are viewed. Henry’s view of Lelia sheds light about his perception of the powerful participants in America.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
She		was	very white			p. 8
an average girl		has	no mystery		anymore	p. 9
Lelia		is	wonderful		mostly	P. 147
her eyes		are	wide-set			p. 147
she		has	a prominent nose			p. 147
that		seem	just right			p. 147
	She	must be		the worst actor	on earth	p. 147

**Table 7: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee’s (1995) *Native Speaker***

While the first two relational processes above are provided as Henry and Lelia first meet each other and the second set are Henry’s view of Lelia as she comes back and they begin living together. It is significant to note that the view does not change much; Henry is interested in how Lelia is different from him physically and socially. He first sees her as ‘very white’ and then he comments on her ‘prominent nose’. This physical description is what sets the whites apart from the Asians in America; while Asians are ‘yellow’, Caucasian Americans are white, and while Asians usually have low nose bridges, Caucasian Americans are usually characterized by high nose bridges. Moreover, Lelia admits that she is ‘an average girl’ who has ‘no mystery’ in her first conversation with Henry. This mention of ‘mystery’ could be related to the Orientalist view of the east as a mysterious place. This view explains Lelia’s interest in Henry. To recapitulate, Henry’s interest in Lelia is because she offers him what he does not have, and Lelia’s interest in Henry lies in his being an eastern mystery which gives her life some adventurous flavor. This difference is what makes Henry see Lelia as ‘mostly wonderful’, for she is a ‘wonder’ to

him. The difference is also stressed in the fact that she does not hide anything, which makes her ‘the worst actor on earth’. This last intensive relational process could be interpreted in two ways; first, it is an emphasis on the cultural difference, while Henry’s an ‘emotional alien’ who prefers to silence his emotions, Lelia is very outspoken about how her views and about how she feels. Second, the fact that Lelia is always out in the open, while Henry is always hiding something reflects their status of social power; the powerful does not need to hide, and it is up to the weak to follow whatever view they offer. The weak, on the other hand, has to hide their feelings and views, because rejection means ostracization.

Lee’s relational processes about Lelia shed more light on the different identities when contrasted with Henry’s views of his parents.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
display of emotions		singled	a certain failure		between people	p. 28
	She	possessed		the most exquisite control	over the muscles of her face	p. 28
my father		was	not modern		obviously	p. 53
my mother and father		were	wary		always	p. 129

**Table 8: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

The way Henry talks about his parent shows how they represent traditional Korean figures. His father is ‘not modern’, which means that he sticks to his traditional Korean attitude instead of adopting the modern American one. His mother also believes in Korean attitudes as she sees ‘displays of emotions’ as a failure and accordingly ‘controls’ her muscles in a way that hides those emotions. As Henry’s parents stay traditional, they present a threat to the mainstream Americans and so his parents are ‘very wary’ not to clearly display any signs that would invite rejection.

While Lelia and Henry’s parents are two extremes, Mitt, Henry and Lelia’s only child, could have been a successful mediation.

Carrier	Relational Process	Attribute	Circumstance	Page
Mitt	wasn't	all white or all yellow		p. 120
Mitt	would be	A greyhound, a wispy thing, gentler and more tender of step	than we	p. 128

**Table 9: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

The intensive attributive relational processes depict Mitt as a hybrid between the two races. This hybridity would make him belong to both cultures and make him a finer figure with his 'wispy', 'gentler' and 'tender' attitude. However, his death indicates that even such product is rejected by the American society.

The American's rejection of Henry – who is ready to adapt to whatever makes him a native, his parents – who stay true to their origins – and his son – who had the potential to intermediate the two extremes force Henry to be a spy.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Page
We		were	spies		p. 15
	Our work	is		but a string of identities	p. 30

**Table 10: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

Henry's being a spy can be seen as his desire to belong. His job is identified as a 'string of identities', which is something that he longs for. Henry's Korean background allows him to work with Southeastern Asians for American clients. This ability to blend with people who share his origin makes him feel at home and the fact that he is working for the American satisfies him. That is why his job is very significant to him.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
it		had	no walls			p. 21
the place		went	very wrong		for Lelia and me	p. 21
it		was	an inappropriate temperature		often	p. 21
	The apartment	became		a little city	with naturally separate habitats	p. 22
	The expanse and room	were		easy excuses	for not seeing each other	p. 22
Here		were	no walls			p. 25
	Only Hoagland	had		a private office		p. 25
Our building		was	a five-story professional office			p. 26

**Table 11: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995)**

**Native Speaker**

These relational processes present how Henry feels about his apartment with Lelia and in contrast how he depicts his office. The apartment 'had no wall'. The walls symbolize the barriers which the intercultural marriage has broken, but instead of dissolving those barriers, the walls lead to much space that gave excuses for Henry and Lelia 'not to see each other' for who they really are and what they really want. Henry's view that 'the place went very wrong' for him and Lelia shows that breaking these barriers was not very successful; it led to an uncomfortable atmosphere where 'the temperature' is often 'inappropriate'. He identifies the place as 'a little city' with 'different' inhabitants. On the other hand, the office where Henry works also has no walls, but his feelings are different. The walls at his office only separate Hoagland, their American boss, from the others. This means that the space was shared by marginalized identities who had a lot in common and this does not disturb Henry, as opposed to the way it does by sharing uncovered space with an American. Moreover, Henry refers to his office as 'professional' which again gives him a sense of belonging, even if to a profession, in this estranged land.

Lee's depiction of Henry's job as a spy is also significant as he compares between the marginalized characters and the Americans through this job.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Page
we		weren't	patriots		p. 15
	Americans	made		the worst spies	p. 160
Hoagland		was	typically American, crazy, self-indulgent, too rich in time and money		p. 43

**Table 12: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995 )  
Native Speaker**

Henry explains that the reason they take this job is not to serve America, for they 'were not patriots', but it is because their marginalized identities is what makes them eligible for this job. That is to say because Americans belong to a dominant identity – and as a result they are very clear about who they are, they 'make the worst spies'. Such a job needs people who can blend in and dissolve in a 'series of identities', something which only marginalized identities can do. However, it must be noted that their job at the end serves the American; their boss is Hoagland who is portrayed, as a typical American who is 'self-indulgent' and only cares about satisfying his own needs. Thus, as Henry's last two assignments, with the Filipino therapist and with the Korean-American senator Kwang, bring him closer to his origins, he struggles with his job that mainly serves the American identity.

Lee's depiction of John Kwang, the Korean-American senator and potential mayor, may be seen as a catalyst that augments Henry's struggle between the two identities. In addition, his depiction can also be seen as another cultural experience that emphasizes the marginalized identities' struggle in America.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
I		had	ready connections		to him	p. 129
	one	was		an outlying version of the other		p. 129
he		didn't seem	afraid			p. 129
	Kwang's power base	was		every last Korean vote in the district and then most of the Chinese		p. 132
	I	am		here	for the hope of identity	p. 304
	which	may also be		mine		p. 304
John Kwang		was	Korean			p. 21
	John Kwang	was		slightly younger than my father		p. 21
John Kwang		is	a media darling			p. 33
the people		are	against bilingualism			p. 33

**Table 13: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

Henry quickly identifies himself with Kwang, for he 'had ready connections to him'; they both represent the same identity, as 'one was an outlying version of the other'. However, Kwang offers Henry more than just a Korean-American figure in America, Kwang presents a chance of success, a chance of holding powerful position in the American society. While Henry always compares Kwang to 'his father' – being 'Korean' and 'slightly younger', Kwang is different for 'he didn't seem afraid'. He symbolizes the struggle for 'identity', and that is why he looks for support from people who understand his struggle, namely 'every Korean vote' and 'most of the Chinese'. Kwang represents a heroic figure, and so he 'is a media darling' but only to his supporters because 'the people', that is the

Americans, 'are against bilingualism'. They want to remain dominant and on top of the social ladder. In other words, Kwang epitomizes the Korean-American struggle in America – the desire for belonging, the struggle and then the rejection.

It is also important to explore some of the relational processes depicting Henry's relation with the setting. The setting, as a participant, sheds light on Henry's American and Korean surroundings, which in turn reflect his cultural experience.

Carrier	Identified	Relational Process	Attribute	Identifier	Circumstance	Page
The Korean restaurant		had	two floors			p. 176
the tables		were	large enough			p. 176
	The Korean table	is		a lesson in plates		p. 176
	This	is		a city of words		p. 319
The people		were	thin			p. 76
they		looked	almost fat			p. 76
they		were	thin			p. 76
They		were	of all kinds			p.77
The shouting		is	in a language		in the street	p. 319
they		are	all here			p. 319
Everybody		has been	a good citizen			p. 324
	It	is		a line of quiet faces		p. 324

**Table 14: Examples of Relational Processes in Lee's (1995) Native Speaker**

Lee's use of relational clauses to depict Henry's relation to the setting can be seen as his way of allowing the reader to see for himself the setting of New York in which many identities lead a life. Henry not only introduces American settings, but also Korean ones. The Korean settings could be seen as significant for two reasons. One, they show how Koreans have established a place for themselves within the American society, which again reflects how they respond to the American rejection by constructing places that remind them of their home. Two, the Korean setting offers the reader an insight into the Korean culture and its



customs and traditions. Thus, the description of the Korean restaurant, which is frequented by many Koreans in America, depicts the cultural traditions of restaurants and table setting in Korea.

As for the American setting, Henry's description of the place emphasizes the existence and the marginalization of the nonnative identities. Henry sees the people walking down the streets as people belonging to all kinds and all races. Their shouting in the street in different languages resembles their different backgrounds. Nevertheless, this rich picture is inhabited by 'thin' people. The attribute 'thin' refers to the fact that people walking through the street are nothing but flat characters, who although look 'fat' and 'round', they are one-dimensional characters who only sees the world through the two extremes: natives and nonnatives.

By the end of the novel, Henry quits his job and helps Lelia in her speech therapy classes. In these classes, they deal with nonnative children. In this 'city of words', Lelia announces that the children have behaved 'as good citizens' as they stand in 'a line of quiet faces'. The 'quiet' opposes the 'city of words', but Lelia, the white American, declares that this is the way to become a 'good citizen': by learning to speak the native tongue and standing quietly in a line. Henry has nothing to offer but to help.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, the relational processes with their variant participants allow the reader a chance to draw relations between participants and a vivid visualization through the attributes and identified presented. Such depictions and relations complement the overall picture of the marginalized struggle in America and the depiction of their cultural experience.

Relational processes identify the relationships between participants of the discourse, on the one hand, and their relationship with the world on the other. Relational processes reveal how characters see each other and how they respond to the surrounding reality. It is interesting to find how the majority of the relational processes introduced in the discourse are of intensive attributive nature. This suggests that such relations are socially

based and hence they could change, for they do not define the characters nor restrict them to a certain class of identification.

As Henry struggles between his native Korean tongue and the American English language, he goes through a self-discovering journey. In this journey, he looks at his parents who mostly stick to their native tongue as they find hard to adapt to the new language. He also runs across John Kwang who at first articulates the language beautifully, but then as he loses in his war with the dominant power, he develops a heavy accent. In contrast, he meets, Lelia a white American speech therapist who teaches non-natives to speak a native-like manner. Henry ends his journey with Lelia, which shows how he chooses America; even though he struggles hard to become a native speaker, he knows that he will never get rid of his face. That is when Henry comes to the conclusion that his identity lies not only in language but also in his race. Therefore, it is up to the Americans to embrace the promoted image of plurality and multiculturalism and accept him for who he is.

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