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Are English Learning Experiences Related to Taiwanese Female Students' Aspiration to Cross-Cultural Romance with Western Males?

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Abstract

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Desire has been a marginal topic in TESOL. This study investigated whether and to what extent English learning affects Taiwanese young females' aspiration toward western males. Four hundred ninety-nine respondents filled out a questionnaire that investigates their English learning experience and aspiration to cross-culture marriage with western males. Sixteen were interviewed. Results showed correlations between the acceptance of marrying a westerner and the following variables (in the rank of strength): 1. Preference for western movie stars, 2. Parents' attitudes toward marrying a westerner, 3. Perceptions of compliments from native-English-speaking teachers, 4. Making foreign friends as the motivation to learn English, 5. The fondness of learning English, 6. Becoming more charming as the motivation to learn English, and 7. Going abroad as the motivation to learn English. The findings suggest that the experience and motivation of English learning did influence the female students' aspiration toward western males, but not as strong as their inner motivation and the mass media.

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1. Introduction

Recently, socio-cultural issues surrounding the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) have received more attention. One of the issues is the aspiration and desire for white male English native-speakers from female non-native English learners, particularly in East Asian contexts (Bailey, 2007; Motha & Lin, 2014; Stanley, 2013; Takahashi, 2013). It is a complex issue involving several controversial discourses such as race, power, colonial history, culture, and most importantly, gender. TESOL is more than teaching English; it could have profound implications for English learners in the era of globalization.

With the global spread of English, the power structure and discourse may be reproduced through the English language teaching (ELT) industry, resulting in linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). English learning has never been purely an activity of language learning; it involves racial (Garner, 2007; Jenks, 2017), cultural (Kubota & Lin, 2009), and religious (Vargese & Johnston, 2007) implications. The (often-biased) values regarding race, culture and religion might have been passed down and disseminated implicitly via the ELT industry. People's perceptions and conceptions of other groups of people are formed in the environment in which they grow up, so education indeed plays a critical role.

If ELT teachers are not aware of the implicit power that could shape their students' worldviews and values, they could very likely become the facilitator to perpetuate the dominance of existent ideologies. While the ideology of white-male preference in cross-cultural romances has been shown to be influenced mostly by mass media and existent discourses (Garner, 2007), in recent decades, with the global spread of English and the penetration of ELT industry into early childhood, the role that ELT plays in shaping the ideology has received more attention. Takahashi's (2013) documentation of the English-learning motivation and the journeys of five Japanese female

students suggests that ELT does influence these language learners. Stanley's (2013) ethnography of male native-speaking English teachers (NEST) in China echoes Takahashi's story from the males' perspective. The phenomenon remains a touchy issue because it involves inequalities in race, gender, and languages. It is a complex issue but so far few studies have tackled this sensitive topic. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap via a large-scale survey study.

The research questions are as follow:

1. Does English learning affect Taiwanese young females' aspiration toward western males?
2. If so, what experiences are related to the formation of the aspiration?

By investigating young females' English learning experience together with their attitudes toward marrying a westerner, we hope to uncover the implicit connections between them. The study intends to arouse English teachers' awareness of this critical issue and highlight the power of the dominant ideologies in the public and the ELT discourses.

2. Theoretical Framework

Motha and Lin (2014), in theorizing desire in TESOL, particularly discuss the concept of *akogare*, a term translated from Japanese to mean longing or yearning for something, as a powerful source of English-learning motivation among female learners, particularly those from collectivist cultures who tend to be emotionally more sensitive (Keshtiari & Kuhlmann, 2016). The studies of *akogare* and aspiration for western males as a motivation for learning English have remained scarce with a few exceptions (Bailey, 2007; Piller & Takahashi, 2006; Stanley, 2013; Takahashi, 2013), but in reality, we have observed anecdotal cases that resonate with these studies. Inspired by these pioneering studies on *akogare*, we attempted to examine to what extent the phenomenon existed in the Taiwanese context, which is both similar to and different from the Japanese context that the *akogare* studies were mostly based on.

Takahashi (2013) conducted an ethnographic study on five Japanese female learners of English in Australia. In her study, the power of *akogare* as an ideological and discursive drive was exemplified in the participants' life stories. Takahashi identified the romanticized link between English and western men from media (Shohat & Stam, 2014) and English learning along with promotional materials of the ELT industry. Starting from the source of *akogare*, she further traced its consequences and how the participants' language desire interacted with their identities. Based on the ethnographic data, she proposed a model of language desire which consists of three aspects of construction and three aspects of effect. The three aspects of the construction of language desire included historical contexts that involve colonial histories, discourses of women's life course, and media. The three main effects of language desire were gendered life choices, migratory desire, and the processes of second language learning.

While Taiwan had been colonized by Japan for 50 years, Taiwanese females' status in society and in the family is generally higher than those in Japan. According to the World Economic Forum gender equality ranking (2017), Japan ranked 114th among the 144 survey countries, down from 111th in 2016. On the other hand, Taiwan ranked 38th in the 2016 report. The *push* force toward *akogare* in Japanese society observed by Takahashi (2013) should not be very strong in Taiwan as Taiwanese females do not have to pursue a romantic relationship with a western male to escape from the oppression in the local society. However, Taiwanese females cannot escape mass media and the appeal of English's linguistic capital, either (Ennsner-Kananen, Escobar, & Bigelow, 2017; Nelsona & Otnes, 2005). In schools, more than 77% of the

forty-thousand-plus NESTs with a working visa in Taiwan were male (Ministry of Labor, 2017), and the gender imbalance of NEST is similar in both Taiwan and Japan. Therefore, this study may yield some similar and different results from Takahashi's study.

While Takahashi (2013) presents the Japanese females' *akogare* stories, Stanley (2013) explores the stories of the other side, namely, the western native English speakers who are aspired by East Asian females. Her study collects interview data from male native-speaking English teachers (NEST) in China to understand the aspiration discourse in the field of ELT. While most NEST felt pampered by the superior treatment from the local, particularly their female students, one of the participants confessed feeling guilty for exploiting the privilege that accompanies their social identity as a native English speaker and western male. In general, few NEST resisted the benefits from the existent *akogare* discourse, thus perpetuating the ideology.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The target participants were Taiwanese female students ranging from junior high school to university. A total of 499 valid questionnaires were collected. 360 of them were retrieved from classrooms in northern Taiwan and the rest were collected online through convenience snow-ball sampling. Table 1 shows the demography of the respondents to the questionnaires. Among these participants, 16 university students who left contact information were interviewed after signing a consent form to better understand their thoughts and experience regarding the research topic.

Table 1
Questionnaire Respondents

	Physical form		Online
	Level	Number	Number
Junior High School	Urban	50	2
	Suburb	48	
	Total	98	2
Senior High School	Public	33	1
	Private	60	4
	Total	93	5
University	National	76	47
	Private	93	85
	Total	169	132
Total		369	139

3.2. Instruments

A questionnaire based on findings from Bailey (2007) and Takahashi (2013) was developed by the authors to investigate the research question. The questionnaire (see appendix) inquires the participant's learning experience, attitudes toward English, American movies, western stars, and native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), their motivations of learning English, and their aspiration toward marrying a western male. A pilot version was revised after 10 university students filled it out and offered feedback. The questionnaire was in Chinese, the first language of the respondents. Interview questions were follow-up questions to those in the questionnaire. For example, if an interviewee indicated in the questionnaire that she had been taught by a NEST, then questions like "can you talk about your experience with NEST" and "how did/do you feel and think about NEST" would be asked.

3.3. Procedures

This research involved a two-step mixed method. First, quantitative data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to target participants. For the participants in the junior and senior high schools, assistances from the school staffs were provided as the students filled out the questionnaires in class. Both male and females students filled out the questionnaires, but only females' data were analyzed. The data from the participants in the target colleges were collected with the help of personal network of the authors.

Moreover, an online questionnaire was sent out to the personal network to elicit responses from target participants, young females from junior high school to college. In the bottom of the questionnaire, respondents might leave their contact information if they were willing to be interviewed.

Among the 35 respondents who left their contact information, we selected 16 whose answers in questionnaires were various. The purpose of the interview was to provide a contextual basis for interpreting quantitative results. The reasons behind the connections between English learning and aspiration to western males were explored via the qualitative interview.

4. Results

In this section, we first present an overview of the questionnaire results before answering the two research questions. Qualitative interview results are scattered in the relevant sections in which quantitative results are presented as the latter is the main data source while the former is complementary data by design. Regarding English learning, 58% of the participants started to learn English before kindergarten, and coincidentally 58% of them showed a positive attitude toward English. The main reasons to learn English were for future job and going abroad as over two-thirds of the participants indicated so. 40% of them selected "making foreign friends" as one of the reasons to learn English. Half of them usually watched American movies or TV programs, while 79% had a

positive attitude toward Western movie stars. 85% had been taught by a NEST, and 59% anticipated to be taught by a NEST. 49% the participants regarded that NESTs often gave compliments to students.

As for aspiration for westerners, 48% of the participants indicated that their parents would hold a positive attitude toward a family member who marries to a westerner. Only 16% revealed

that their parents would be against it. 46% would consider emigration with only 18% would not. The key question is their acceptance to marrying a westerner, and the result is shown in Table 2, in which the majority has no comments, but the positive group outnumbers the negative group by more than four times. In the next section, we explore the correlation between English learning and aspiration.

Table 2

Can You Accept Marry a Westerner?

Choices	Counts	Percentage
Absolutely yes	40	8.0%
Yes	108	21.6%
No comment	320	64.1%
No	25	5.0%
Absolutely no	6	1.2%

RQ1: Does English learning affects Taiwanese young females' aspiration toward western males?

Correlations and independent t-tests were conducted to examine the potential relationships between English learning and aspiration. There is a weak correlation between students' English level and their acceptance of marrying a westerner. The higher a student's English level is, the more likely she can accept marrying a westerner ($r=0.126$ $p=0.005$). The more the students liked learning English, the more likely they can accept marrying a westerner ($r=0.179$ $p=0.000$). It makes sense that preference for English correlates higher than proficiency level

in English with acceptance of marrying a westerner since the desire for English can easily be extended to the desire for an English-speaking partner/husband. When one likes something, one tends to also like someone with that something.

Further analyses show that their motivations play more important roles than their attitudes toward (learning) English. The independent t-tests suggest that about 40% of the participants who learn English in order to have foreign friends are significantly more likely to accept marrying a westerner ($t=6.453$, $p=0.000$, effect size=0.278) as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

English-Learning Motivation of Making More Foreign Friends as a Key Factor

	Mean (Standard deviation)		Independent t-test	
	Make foreign friends (N=201)	No (N=298)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Accept marrying a westerner	3.6 (0.77)	3.1 (0.66)	6.453***	0.000
Parents' reaction to marrying a foreigner	3.8 (1.03)	3.4 (1.04)	3.570***	0.000
Emigrate to another country	3.7 (0.95)	3.2 (0.93)	5.262***	0.000
Like Western movie stars	3.7 (0.89)	3.2 (0.95)	5.703***	0.000

*** $p < 0.001$

Those who learn English to make foreign friends showed quite different patterns from those without this motivation as the former tended to like Western stars, consider emigration, and their family were more open to cross-culture marriage. These questions are related in that they point to an open/welcoming attitude toward the outside world and westerners. While it may be true that those who were more open to the world tended to have a higher motivation to learn English, to a certain extent, the discourses in the English teaching and learning environment also reinforce the preference and acceptance to foreign cultures. For many students, 'foreign' equals to 'western':

Q: How do your family think of marrying a westerner?

A: My mother think it is great; she watches Taiwanese TV shows that invite many foreigners to the show, and she would say something such as German was more strict and orderly, the mixed baby is much cuter, and the baby might be smarter.

媽媽會覺得很棒，因為有看台灣為外國

人做的綜藝節目，例如德國人比較嚴謹啊、混血兒比較好看啊、可能會比較聰明啊等等的。

The participant used *foreigners* and the example she offered was German. The cute mixed baby in the public discourse in general also refers to a baby whose parents are a Taiwanese and a westerner. A relationship, particularly a romantic one, with a westerner is usually regarded as a form of social capital, which boosts students' confidence about themselves. English as the dominant global language further strengthens the association of English learning and befriending foreigners.

The second most influential predictor for the acceptance of marrying a westerner is the motivation to become more charming by learning English (see Table 4). When a student believes that being able to speak English will make herself more charming, she is significantly more likely to accept marrying a westerner ($t=3.958$, $p<0.001$, effect size=0.175). This is not surprising, but only 95 (19%) participants selected this reason as their motivator.

Table 4

The Motivations of English Learning to be More Charming

	Mean (Standard deviation)		Independent t-test	
	To be more charming N=95	No N=404	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Accept marrying a westerner	3.6 (0.84)	3.2 (0.69)	3.958***	0.000
Emigrate to another country	3.7 (0.96)	3.3 (0.96)	2.955**	0.003
Like Western movie stars	3.7 (0.97)	3.3 (0.94)	3.616***	0.000

** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

The English-learning motivation of hoping to go abroad in the future also correlates with the acceptance of marrying a westerner ($t=3.182$, $p<0.01$, effect size=0.141; see Table 5), though not as strong as the motivation of making foreign friends. The correlation patterns are

similar, but nearly two-thirds of the participants revealed the desire to go abroad, much higher than those who learn English in order to make foreign friends, among whom (N=201) 85% (171) also selected going abroad as one of the reasons to learn English.

Table 5*The Relations of English-Learning Motivation to Go Abroad and the Aspiration*

	Mean (Standard deviation)		Independent t-test	
	Wanting to go abroad N=332	No N=167	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Accept marrying a westerner	3.4 (0.74)	3.2 (0.72)	3.182**	0.002
Emigrate to another country	3.5 (0.96)	3.2 (0.96)	3.762***	0.000
Like Western movie stars	3.5 (0.90)	3.0 (0.97)	5.528***	0.000

** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

In sum, proficiency in and preference for English are found to correlate with acceptance of marrying a westerner ($p < 0.01$). Three motivations to learn English, namely, to make a foreign friend, to become more charming, and to go abroad, also relate to the acceptance of marrying a westerner significantly.

RQ2: What experiences are related to the development of the aspiration?

In addition to motivations to learn English, students' exposure to native English-speaker teachers (NEST) also correlate with their acceptance of marrying a westerner. The higher the female students anticipated to be taught by a foreign teacher, the more likely they could accept to marry a westerner ($r = 0.240$ $p < 0.001$). Similarly, those who preferred to be taught by a foreign teacher tended to accept marrying a westerner ($r = 0.240$ $p < 0.001$). The more students believed foreign teachers often give compliments to students, the higher the students anticipated to be taught by foreign teachers ($r = 0.298$ $p < 0.001$).

The perception was also supported by the interview data, in which most of the young female interviewees agreed that NEST gave more compliments than local Taiwanese teachers. Jenny (pseudo name) replied that her NEST 'were kind, humorous, and often praised students (外師親切、幽默、常常鼓勵學生)'. Macy said that her NEST in the cram school said 'good job' all the time. Although compliment was only a small facet in social interactions, the cultural habit adds to the romantic imagination for the young female students in Taiwan (Chen, 2010).

The formation of the desire or *akogare* for English-speaking westerners seemed to coincide with the physical developmental stages. As Table 6 shows, high-school participants on average had the highest acceptance to marrying a westerner. The mean (M) grows from 3.1 for junior-high participants to 3.5 for high-school participants, and then declines to 3.3 for university participants. Compared to other participants, high-school participants also regarded their parents holding a positive attitude toward marrying a westerner the most (M=3.9).

Table 6*Different Perceptions of Different Age Groups*

	Mean (Standard deviation)			ANOVA
	Junior High N=99	Senior High N=92	College N=306	<i>f/p</i>
NEST give compliments	3.9 (0.95)	3.9 (0.97)	4.5 (0.75)	22.840/0.000
Parents' reaction	3.7 (1.07)	3.9 (1.00)	3.4 (1.01)	10.479/0.000
Accept marrying a westerner	3.1 (0.73)	3.5 (0.81)	3.3 (0.70)	4.734/0.009

As puberty starts in junior high school, when females reach high school stage, they tend to become more aware and knowledgeable of the

romantic relationship. But many would still have fantasies about their future romances. The environment for highschoolers is not so diverse

as in the university. University participants would consider more about marriage choices as an interviewee from a national university (more prestigious) revealed her concern of marrying a westerner: *'though he may have better economic conditions, but cultural differences could be a critical issue (雖然經濟上應該不錯，但文化差異可能是蠻大的問題。)*'. On the other hand, interviewees from a private university seemed more naïve:

The main attraction is to see the real western world and live in the West for many years (by marrying a westerner). Having a mixed-blood baby is also one of the reasons. Don't you think mixed-blood babies look very attractive?

主要誘因是希望看看真正西方的世界，可以好幾年都生活、住在西方。可以有混血寶寶也是誘因之一，不覺得混血寶看起來就很有吸引力嗎？

They aspired to the western world and looked up to the west without showing an understanding of the reality. Most interviewees who expressed such a view had never been to a

western country. Thus, marrying a westerner remained a fantasy, not a possible reality for them. And this particular fantasy may explain why high school participants have the highest acceptance of marrying a westerner; since they know little about the reality of the western world, they tend to be influenced easily by the media.

The main source of the aspiration seemed to be western movies and cultural products. The participants' acceptance to marry a foreigner correlates with their preference of Western movie stars ($r=0.362$ $p<0.001$). Their experience of watching American TV shows and movies should have contributed to this preference as shown in Table 7 that those who watched US TV or/and movies, about half of the participants, were significantly more likely to anticipate and be fond of NEST, and thus accepting marrying a westerner. The influences of celebrities and movie stars are powerful toward young Taiwanese female students during their adolescence period; furthermore, the influence of media was persistent and long lasting.

Table 7

The Influence of American TV Shows

	Mean (Standard deviation)		Independent t-test	
	Watch US TV N=250	Seldom N=247	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Anticipate NEST	3.9 (0.82)	3.6 (0.81)	4.233***	0.000
Like NEST	3.9 (0.8)	3.6 (0.72)	5.152***	0.000
Accept marrying a westerner	3.4 (0.73)	3.2 (0.72)	4.091***	0.000

*** $p < 0.001$

In the interview, many female student participants stated that they had the habit of watching American TV series, and they regarded the movie stars as handsome. Becca, one of the interviewees from a private university, revealed that *'compared with the style of Korean men, European and American styles are more attractive to me, because their facial appearances are clear-cut, more handsome. [比起韓國男生的型，比較喜歡歐美男生的型，外型比較深邃，比較帥。]* Physical appearance is one of the main points that young female

students value when considering a romantic relationship, with nine out of the sixteen participants mentioned the appeal of the physical appearance of westerners.

In addition to mass media, parents' attitudes also shape young females' aspirations. The ideological discourses have been existent for a long time, and the beliefs and preferences for the West may be reproduced within families. Not surprisingly, those whose parents were more supportive of interracial marriages also

showed higher acceptance of marrying a westerner ($r=0.35$, $p<0.001$). Jenny, a junior student in a public university, used the term *no big deal* to describe marrying a westerner:

It wouldn't be much of a big deal for my parents if I marry a westerner, maybe because my parents often go abroad. Therefore they wouldn't think it's a big deal [intercultural relationship]; plus if I marry a westerner, a mixed baby is also good looking. In the past, they gave me a go to try to date a foreigner boyfriend.

[跟西方人結婚沒什麼大不了的吧，可能因為父母經常出國吧，就覺得沒有什麼大不了的事情，也覺得如果我跟西方人結婚的話，混血兒也很好看，之前有給過我試試看跟外國人交往的念頭。]

Jenny's statement reveals that she attributed her parents' open attitude toward marrying a westerner to their ample experience abroad. Her family had a positive perception about her marrying a westerner, as the last sentence seems to suggest an encouragement. The underlying assumption seemed to perceive those who make a big deal of marrying a westerner as lacking a global worldview. Her parents accepted an intercultural relationship because they often traveled abroad. We can sense the proud declaration of the support Jenny received from her parents. The use of 'westerner' in the first sentence and 'foreigner' in the last sentence again illustrated the common perception among

Taiwanese that equates foreigners to westerners.

And the only rationale provided was again the physical appearance of her potential child, showing that the preference for a westerner husband to a great extent hinged on a simple unsophisticated reason. No interviewee mentioned diverse culture or creative children as a reason for their positive attitude toward marrying a westerner. Most of those who accepted marrying a westerner indicated better environment and economic prospect in the West. One interviewee conjectured that "maybe our children will be able to speak English" and hinted that English could be a benefit associated with a marriage to a westerner.

In sum, the aspiration for western males is found to be correlated with 5 dimensions, which include 11 factors as shown in Table 8. When we rank the strengths of the correlations and effect sizes for independent t-tests, we found that the following types of the participants were more likely to accept marrying a westerner: (1) those who liked western stars, (2) those whose parents showed a positive attitude toward marrying a westerner, (3) those who perceived that NEST often gave compliments, (4) those who learn English to make foreign friends, (5) those who anticipated and preferred NEST, (6) those who watched US dramas, (7) those who liked English, (8) those who learn English to become more charming, (9) those who learn English to go abroad, and (10) those with higher English levels.

Table 8
Five Main Dimensions of Influence on the Aspiration

Acceptance to marry a westerner	Independent t-test/Correlation		
	Factor (rank)	Effect size/r	p
Media	Watch US Drama (6)	0.180	0.000
	Western star (1)	0.362	0.000
Motivation	Foreign friends (4)	0.278	0.002
	Charming (8)	0.175	0.000
	Go abroad (9)	0.141	0.000
Family	Parents acceptance (2)	0.350	0.000
NEST	Anticipation (5)	0.240	0.000
	Preference (5)	0.240	0.000
	Compliment (3)	0.298	0.000
English Learning	Preference of English (7)	0.179	0.000
	English level (10)	0.126	0.005

5. Discussion

As the summary of the results suggests, media and family contributed most to the aspiration for western males, while the influence of NEST ranks the third. Their English-learning motivation and preference had weak but significant correlations. While the discourses of mass media and family education are beyond the scope of this study, we would like to discuss more the roles NEST play in shaping the aspiration and what ELT policymakers and teachers can do to raise our students' critical awareness of the hidden ideologies in mass media and public discourses.

The White NEST (WNEST) discourse (Garner, 2007) has a long history and continues to shape the worldviews of young learners around the world. Those who frequently watched US TV and movies were more likely to idolize (white) western stars, and not surprisingly, these female students showed the highest willingness to marrying a westerner. Though the US TV and movies recently have used actors of various races to cater to the global market (Shohat & Stam, 2014), the powerful white-supremacy ideology may still permeate the public discourses, thus perpetuating the discursive construction of the desire for white males by Taiwanese (and many more eastern) young females. The older generations are even more likely to be influenced by the discourses because when they were young, the American dream was on its height and the US TV and movies almost monopolized the media field.

The third stronger factor is the perception of NEST as giving much compliment to encourage students. In Confucian cultures, people believe that efforts are more important than talents, so discipline and practices are important in education. Cortazzi and Jin (2002) used the term 'cultures of learning', which have a great influence on students' worldviews. Taiwanese parents and teachers seldom praise children compared with their American counterpart due to the traditional Chinese culture of learning as reflected in the common proverb: spare the rod, spoil the child. Therefore, NEST with their

complimenting comments, encouraging attitude, and friends-like approach to the student-teacher relationship (Wu & Ke, 2009) may plant stereotypical seeds in the young minds of their students, particularly adolescent female students who in their puberty fantasize future romances drawing from their impressions of different groups of males.

While cultural differences are the cause of the complimenting tendency from NEST, students probably would not be aware of it if their teachers do not mention this. Most NEST were also not aware of the potential influence of their natural behavior of complimenting their students as they enjoyed the privileges and positive stereotypes from the local society (Stanley, 2013). The reality of the majority of NEST being young males probably will not change in the near future, but NEST should be aware of the potential consequences that they natural cultural tendency to complement their students may have on fueling female students' aspiration for western males. Local teachers can also explain the cultural differences in the aspect of a teacher-student relationship and interaction patterns to their students.

English as a bridge to the world certainly plays a role in the formation of the aspiration discourse (Kubota & Lin, 2009). But most students still associate English with the English-speaking world and its native speakers, despite the movement of English as an international language (EIL) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the field of TESOL (Bayyurt & Akcan, 2015; Ke, 2010; Matsuda, 2012). TESOL teachers should broaden the scope of English to introduce the whole world, not only the English-speaking countries and their cultures. Teachers should also be aware of the potential biases in the teaching materials that portray the western world as better and normatively correct (Xiong & Qian, 2012).

Critical pedagogies have been shown to have the capacity to construct multicultural discourses in an English classroom that arouse students' awareness of the existent racial and gender ideologies in ELT (Chun, 2016). Most English

teachers may be too keen on delivering linguistic knowledge, thus ignoring the potential implications that English education has on local students. If teacher educators do not bring up such critical issues, existent ideologies are very likely to perpetuate because those who love English, usually female students, tend to have an aspiration toward native-speaking westerners, and they are more likely to become an English teacher, thereby unconsciously conveying their aspiration to their female students.

This study examined the relationship between the aspiration for western males and English learning based on a survey of 499 Taiwanese young females and interviews with 16 of these participants. The results show that media, family influence, and perception of NEST in terms of their tendency to compliment ranked as the top 3 factors related to the aspiration. The presence of NEST and their interaction patterns with pupils played an important role in fueling the aspiration for a westerner husband. The participants' motivation to learn English as well as their preference toward English also positively correlated with their aspiration. The results confirm that English learning experience was indeed related to Taiwanese young females' aspiration to the cross-cultural relationship with western males, with NEST playing critical roles.

The complimentary behaviors from NEST have been identified as a potential source of the aspiration for western males. Further studies could utilize in-depth interviews to uncover other sources of the aspiration to better understand how the aspiration is formed. How the presence of overwhelming male NEST in English classes in expanding circle countries influence students' perceptions related to gender stereotypes could also be explored (Appleby, 2014). Teaching-oriented studies could examine the effectiveness of critical pedagogies in arousing students' awareness of their unconscious beliefs as well as changing them.

This study demonstrates that race, gender, and English are intertwined. While mass media continues to shape youngsters' ideologies, English teachers, particularly in high schools,

could help their students dispel the stereotypes which they absorbed from the public discourses as the findings of this study suggest that high school students were found to have the higher aspiration compared to junior high and post-secondary students. As our moral responsibility, English teachers can and should help create a better world by planting progressive seeds in the minds of our students.

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Appendix

The Questionnaire

Please check					
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female			
Age	12–15 Junior High	16–18 Senior High	19–23 College	Others, ___ years old	
1. Do you like learning English?	<input type="checkbox"/> Love	Like	Ordinary	Dislike	Hate
2. Why do you learn English? (Click all that apply)	Make foreign friends	Become more charming	To go abroad	Future job	Others
3. When did you start learning English?	From birth	Preschool	Kindergarten	1 st grade	3 rd grade
4. What's your English proficiency level?	Excellent	Good	Average	Bad	Terrible
5. What kind of Movies and TV series	Hollywood	Japanese/	Chinese	Others_	I don't

do you watch in daily life? (Click all that apply)		Korean			watch
6. Do you like Western movie stars?	Love	Like	Admiration	So so	No
7. Have you taken courses by NEST*?	More than 10	5-10 times	3-5 times	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 times	No
8. When learning foreign languages, do you expect to be taught by NEST?	Look forward to	Yes	No preference	No	Avoid
9. Do you like courses taught by NEST?	Love	Like	No preference	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Hate
10. Do you think NEST often give compliments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently	Sometimes	Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Few	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely
11. If a family member marries a westerner, what would your parents' reaction be?	Support	Slightly support	<input type="checkbox"/> No Comment	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Against	<input type="checkbox"/> Against
12. Can you accept marrying a westerner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Certainly Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No Comment	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Certainly No
13. If possible, would you immigrate to another country?	<input type="checkbox"/> Certainly Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No Comment	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Certainly No

*NEST: Native-English-speaking teachers