# THREE NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR IDENTITIES AS INSTRUCTORS WHILE TEACHING IN SOUTH KOREAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

By

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To my supporters who have helped me find my “Great Perhaps.”

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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Teachers' identity construction in their teaching is important in that it is closely related to their job satisfaction and performance at school. Studies on teachers' professional identity have continuously done in the education field; however, native English-speaking (NES) teachers have not benefited from them. This study was to investigate NES teachers' identity construction while teaching in South Korean secondary schools. I wanted to understand how the NES teachers positioned themselves while acculturating in the cross-cultural context. Their efforts to reposition their identities from outsiders or guests to bridge builders and to construct their identities while experiencing many challenges showed the NES teachers' passion and competence in the profession. I asked the research question: How do three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors while teaching in South Korean secondary schools? Through conducting my research, with the three NES teachers who taught in South Korean secondary schools for eight months, I learned their stories and gained insights of their transition as teachers in a cross-cultural context. In addition, my study helped them become more conscious of who they were and what

kind of teachers they became in their teaching profession. The process of tracing back to their teaching practices and of repositioning their identities by applying narrative analysis method generated meaningful discourses in the cross-cultural context. This way of understanding storytellers demonstrated that the NES teachers' identity construction was closely connected to the idea of the relevancy of the story told with a purpose to the present time and space (Bamberg, 2012) and its relatedness to how the NES teachers wanted to be presented at the present time—their identities.

# CHAPTER 1
# INTRODUCTION

## Overview of the Study

The need for English language education in the globalized world has never been immense before and it is not exceptional in South Korea. This competitive ecology of world politics and economy have constantly influenced on the Korean English language education for its competitiveness. The nation's history of English teaching and learning as a foreign language education has been long, and financial investment and efforts in English language education has also been huge. In contrast to the high expectation about the outcome of the language education, the actual outcome seems not to satisfy the public as well as the educators. In order to "quick" improve students' English competence; the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology began hiring native English-speaking (NES) teachers in 1995. The main purpose of hiring them was to double the effectiveness of the foreign language education. Yet, the outcome did not seem to be doubled in the eyes of the public and the educational professionals, though the cost of hiring NES teachers was. Since the implementation of the English Program in Korea (EPIK) in 1995, there have been questions about the qualifications and effectiveness of native English-speaking (NES) teachers in the public school system. Compared to the enormous expense spent on the EPIK system so far, its benefits have been questioned by people involved in teaching/learning English in South Korea.

The qualifications and effectiveness of NES teachers have been the issues both for professionals in the teaching field and in the general public in South Korea. Despite the suggested guidelines for recruiting NES teachers, they are not mandate policy, NES teachers are not always hired according to these guidelines for many reasons. NES

teachers have two strikes against them, according to critics: their professional qualifications (or lack thereof) and their behavior outside school during their time off. It is not surprising that some NES teachers' inappropriate behavior outside classroom such as excessive drinking or drug use have been the center of quite a few local teachers' complaints. This behavior could be possibly explained by the fact that many NES teachers do not approach their teaching in South Korea as a career profession. In Kim's study (2003), many NES teachers' choice of South Korea was partly because of their interest in travel or Asian cultures and partly because of their unstable economic situation at their home countries. Academically, many of these teachers do not have the qualifications that the public expects. According to the recent educational statistics researched by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and provided by Congressman Sundong Kim in 2011, the NES teachers' allocation to public schools rates high, with at least one NES teacher hired in over 90% of schools; however, the numbers of NES teachers with academic qualification level were quite low. This report indicates that the hasty execution of educational policy by each local Ministry of Education—a policy that focused mainly on increasing the numbers of NES teachers rather than finding the highest qualified teachers was problematic. Furthermore, non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers' complaints on NES teachers' unpreparedness or their management skills in class seem to relate to their academic qualifications, or lack thereof. Kwon's study (2006) showed that though most students had fun in the classes taught by NES teachers, they reported that they did not learn as much as they did in local teachers' classes.

The policy of hiring NES teachers as the key to improve English language education has been intensively scrutinized among educators and policy makers and the general public in South Korea. To make a sound decision on nationwide education policy, I believe that there should be sophisticated exploration, from the pedagogical and cultural introspection perspectives, of NES teachers' qualifications and effectiveness in class. More than anything else, NES teachers' voices as well as their own perspectives of English language education have not been heard enough through any kind of academic research in South Korea. The timing is right, with the government of South Korea trying to decide whether to reduce the number of NES teachers or even terminating any employment of NES instructors for K-12 public education.

The research domain of this study ranges from the sociocultural factor of NES teachers' cross-cultural teaching and learning to NES teachers' professional identities in Korean EFL contexts and their roles in Korean society. This study, with these constructs of looking at NES teachers, was to explore how three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors while teaching in South Korean secondary schools. Exploring the issue of NES teachers with this perspective from the realm of qualitative research was expected to suggest the multiple interpretations of NES teachers in language education in terms of their preparation for teaching, challenges in the field, and competence as language teachers in a cross-cultural context. Furthermore, this study was also expected to provide possible ways to improve the language education and policy in any EFL contexts with NES teachers.

## Native English-Speaking Teachers

### English Language Education in South Korea

English is the mostly used international language worldwide, especially in East Asia, including China, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. The demand to learn English in these countries is quite high with increasing globalization. As a result of this need, in South Korea the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology initiated the national English Program in Korea (EPIK), which was designed to hire native English-speaking (NES) teachers to teach English in public schools in order to provide an authentic language opportunity to students, as well as to reduce excessive spending for parents on private English language tutoring. As a result, education policymakers expected the EPIK to level out educational opportunities for all children and youth in South Korea.

English language education in South Korea started in 1966, when Peace Corps volunteers began teaching English at secondary schools and universities. Nationwide elementary English language education began in 1995, when the Korean Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology initiated EPIK with NES teachers. With the modification of the 7th National Curriculum to concentrate on learners' communicative competence, the government started teaching English to all students, from 3rd grade up, in 1997. The EPIK is designed to develop collaborative-teaching by NES and NNES teachers and enhance students' communicative competence through authentic language use and communication (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 1997; EPIK, 1997).

Thanks to EPIK, interest in learning English has increased across the country, and many studies have been conducted on co-teaching by native English-speaking

(NES) teachers and non-native English-speaking (NNES) teachers. However, the effectiveness of NES teachers under EPIK has been questioned, and some have suggested that future English instruction in South Korea should not rely on NES teachers.

What makes this suggestion premature is that few qualitative research has been conducted on NES teachers. The only research on NES teachers in South Korea dates from the 1990s, and research from other countries has been mainly on the behavior of and perceptions between NES and NNES teachers in ESL environments. As in other EFL countries, most research in Korean EFL education has been on the co-teaching practices of NES and NNES teachers; or survey-type of research on the perceptions of NES and NNES teaching; and EPIK administrative practices (Lee, 2007). Furthermore, most studies seem to be limited to distributing surveys on students' and teachers' responses to inquiries, which are quantitative in nature. Few studies have explored NES teachers' cross-cultural understanding of students and pedagogical skills or their professional identity construction, which would lead to much clearer view of Korean EFL education—and further understanding of NES teachers in the current EFL environment in general.

**Qualification of NES Teachers**

Qualifications of English teachers can be categorized into three parts (Park, 1997; Lee, 2007; cited in Kim, 2011): academic, pedagogical, and attitudinal/characteristic aspects of English teachers. According to Park (1997), good English teachers should be equipped with an academic knowledge of English language as well as the four skills of English language—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and should be able to utilize this language ability in the curriculum.

Pedagogically, they should be able to explain the linguistic structure of English to students and efficiently manage the class (Lee, 2007; cited in Kim 2011). Finally, good English teachers should possess positive attitudes/tendencies toward students.

These principles also apply to NES teachers (Park, 1997; cited in Kim, 2011). Good NES teachers need the same qualifications that good English teachers do—they should possess the linguistic ability to communicate with students in the target language, have the pedagogical competence to demonstrate their knowledge in English so that students understand the basic rules and structure of the language, and be effective facilitators in the class. In addition, Bae (2002) said that NES teachers should have much higher language proficiency than NNES teachers or students, as well as a high degree of professional knowledge of the target language, in order to independently run classes without assistance from NES teachers.

When considering EPIK and the whole Korean English language education curriculum in South Korea, communicative language teaching (CLT) is clearly a primary issue in the English classroom. Furthermore, Brown (2007) asserted, for 21st century language teaching, it is essential to move beyond simply teaching about language. Thus, linking the previously illustrated aspects of good English teachers and NES teachers to CLT sounds reasonable, in terms of the goal of the whole English language education in the country.

**Basic Qualification Requirement of NES Teachers in EPIK**

In contrast to the idea qualifications just laid out, the basic qualifications of NES teachers required by the Korean government appear to fall woefully short. According to the application guideline listed on the EPIK website by the National Institute of International Education, an institute affiliated with the Ministry of Education, Science,

and Technology in South Korea, the applicants should use English as primary language, hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university, be proficient in English, and be in good mental and physical condition. In a study by Lee (2008), 88.6% of NES teachers hired to teach English in South Korea did not have a degree of English or related field. The percentage of NES teachers with teaching experience of 1−2 years was 42.9%, with 25.7 % of teachers having less than 1 year of teaching experience. The low requirements for NES teachers have been widely debated among the public, partly because of the issues in the media. Furthermore, the NES teacher orientation looks very superficial and almost none in-service teacher training program was provided for NES teachers.

### Local Teachers', Parents', and Students' Feedback on the Effectiveness of NES Teachers

Research by the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education in 2011 measured the satisfaction of 2,040 local teachers, 11,980 parents, and 28,761 students from primary through secondary levels regarding NES teachers' teaching. The data collection was done through online survey and interviews. With the result from the data analysis, the research team at Seoul National University gave a suspicious eye on NES teachers' effectiveness compared to the investment on them including their living expenses the government had provided, and claimed a need for more efficient NES management system. All three groups indicated their positive view on students' participation in the class, English proficiency improvement, and communicative competence in the target language. But despite the three groups' positive response for NES teachers—teachers (55.3%), parents (54.2%), and students (60.0%)—in terms of class participation, as well as their language learning experience in measurable listening and speaking skills, the

three groups surveyed preferred NNES teachers with good English proficiency to NES teachers—parents (62.2%) and students (53.7%). The participants' response looked somewhat ambiguous in that they still preferred the NNES teachers, in spite of their positive response on students' participation in NES teachers' class. This may indicate some challenging issues that NES teachers and students face in everyday life at school. However, rather than giving attention to the details of the research and finding a better solution, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education and the Seoul Municipal Council proposed budget cuts on NES program right after the survey result was released.

## Challenges Encountered by NES Teachers in Teaching Practices

**Cross-cultural issues in the Korean EFL environment.** Cross-cultural research by various scholars in both the ESL and EFL contexts suggest a new perspective on NES teachers under the EPIK system in the Korean EFL environment. Kramsch (1993) demonstrated how cultural relativity could be realized in the current context of language teaching. She said most language teachers possess a limited view of difference on texts, partly because of the filtered texts by the target community's representation and partly because of their own presuppositions, which they bring with them to the texts. Communicative competence means more than just the mastery of the linguistic system, and it is achieved through experiencing the difference of cultures between teachers and learners in the language class (Kramsch, 1993), which explains NES teachers' difficulty with cultural context and the necessity of cultural negotiation in order to fulfill the goal of EPIK as well as the current 7$^{th}$ National Curriculum.

There appear to be three main immediate problems in the Korean EFL environment. First, NES teachers seem to have little autonomy in the classroom. Most report that they usually receive little orientation before and after their employment.

Without knowing much about the current situation in the field or English language education policy, they are expected just to teach and may become confused about their position as a teacher and employee. Secondly, the fact that their own Western teaching methods different from Korean traditional teaching methods means that their techniques can be regarded as less important or less effective for college preparation compared to those of the NNES teachers. NES teachers' teaching practices are often considered as a fun activity time by Korean teachers and students without academic vigor. Lastly, there is an issue with NES teachers feeling isolated. Even though most NES teachers would like to be socially active both in and out of the classroom and have chances to make friends with the local people, they often feel alienated and do not belong to either school or local community, due to a lack of knowledge of the Korean language and culture as well as local network.

## Statement of the Problem

Overall, NES teachers' qualifications and teaching effectiveness do not seem to meet the expectations of the parents and students or demands of curriculum. Those who are involved in English language education seem to be interested in NES teachers' effectiveness in EFL teaching skills. When the cost of hiring NES teachers and the outcome of their teaching are not matched, the public expressed their unsatisfactory views toward the practice. This is partly because NES teachers are almost always evaluated quantitatively mostly through surveys and their voices are not heard enough. This means there are not enough qualitative data on NES teachers. A study on public English language education in Seoul district conducted by the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education in 2011 explored issues with the current EPIK system and the mid-to long-term education plan for the country. As a result, the current public policy discussion

around this topic is about whether to reduce the number of NES teachers or simply eliminate them entirely from the public English language education system. The gap between the high societal expectation of English language education and the actual outcome of English language education in the field demands a reform or a change to meet the needs of 21st century English language education in South Korea. In order to address this issue, a thorough qualitative study on NES teachers with a new perspective—how NES teachers perceive themselves and how they construct their professional identity that can explain the sophisticated, multifaceted aspect of cross-cultural language learning and teaching is needed.

## Purpose of the Study

Based on the literature review on NES teachers in South Korea, along with the result of the recent large-scale study mentioned earlier (Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, 2011), there is no precedent for what is suggested here. In other words, the research on NES teachers to this point has focused on the perceptions of students and NNES teachers about NES teachers or their co-teaching efforts. Furthermore, with the previously mentioned survey of students and parents conducted in the Seoul school district, an assessment of the 17-year-history of EPIK makes it look like an ineffective program, which disturbs educational policymakers as well as the Korean public, who have high expectations for native English language teachers and have paid for their comparative high salaries with their tax dollars so far. Along with incessant public demand for better English language education and the ever-increasing cost of English language education, a qualitative assessment on NES teachers seems more necessary than ever.

The primary purpose of this study, then, was to attempt to understand three NES teachers' identity construction while teaching in South Korean secondary schools. This study thus attempted to present the first-hand qualitative data of NES teachers' English teaching in terms of both NES teachers' acculturation and Korean students' learning. This case study on the NES teachers was expected to contribute to an understanding of NES teachers, their teaching practices, pre-service and in-service training for NES teachers in 21st English language education in South Korea, and potential application in global EFL contexts.

## Research Question

The research question was addressed: How do three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors while teaching English in South Korean secondary schools? Research was conducted at the three local secondary schools in the city of Jeonju, in the mid-south of South Korea, through collecting qualitative data from formal/informal interviews with NES teachers; classroom observations; and artifacts of their teaching. The duration of the study in South Korea was 16 weeks. The interview methods were expected to help me closely look at NES teachers' status with a more human ecological and cross-cultural approach.

## Significance of the Study

It seems unreasonable to judge NES teachers only with the superficial statistics on their qualifications as language teachers. The precedent researches have looked at the teachers mainly as to whether they have English-related majors; teaching certificates like TESOL, TEFL, or CELTA; and prior teaching experience. Of course, these educational expectations are important when recruiting language teachers; however, these guidelines have seemed to be the only measure for educational

policymakers to hire NES teachers for the Korea EFL environment. Moreover, negative reports about some NES teachers' behavior issues outside classroom have caused overgeneralized and unreasonable evaluation for the whole community of NES teachers.

As of September 2012, the total numbers of currently employed NES teachers are 8,530 in South Korea. More than 80% of them are from the English-speaking countries like the U.S., Canada, and the Great Britain (Ryu, 2012). Ever since the initial implementation of the EPIK system with NES teachers in South Korean English language education, the numbers of NES teachers have annually increased with the support of the government. Yet this quantitative growth of NES teachers seems not to meet the expectation of the qualitative effectiveness as the outcome of their teaching. Therefore, some educational policymakers decided to reduce the numbers of NES teachers again as a way to deal with the issue. To me, this can be a swaying pendulum between the two extremes−increasing and reducing the numbers of NES teachers. Therefore, this research, with listening to NES teachers' voices and examining their teaching in a qualitative way, was expected to suggest an alternative perspective for policymakers to make their research-based decision with NES teachers in the Korean EFL education. In addition, this study of re-interpreting and re-reflecting NES teachers' voices who have been stagnated only with the numerical methods of statistics would possibly provide an understanding of all the NES teachers worldwide in EFL contexts.

# CHAPTER 2
# LITERATURE REVIEW

Scrutinizing Native English-Speaking (NES) teachers in an EFL context means a couple of topics should be considered. In this chapter, I review NES teachers regarding research on SLA and related areas; teaching in cross-cultural contexts; and teacher identity construction.

## The Review of Literature on SLA and Related Areas

### Major Focuses on SLA

Over the last 40 years of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) education, a couple of major common themes in SLA have arisen. Some of them have changed over time in accordance with the world's economical, sociopolitical, technological, and environmental changes but maintained their pedagogical nature. Pedagogical changes among these themes seem to be related to epistemological shifts, and natural pedagogical trends and issues in the TESOL field reflect the world outside the classroom. Brown and Canagarajah each wrote a comprehensive study on continuance and change in the SLA pedagogy in 1991 and 2006, respectively.

Brown (1991) announces the four major criteria of TESOL pedagogies in his epic work about 25 years of research and practice in TESOL field. He categorizes the four major themes in SAL as 1. Focus on the learner; 2. Focus on sociopolitical and geographical issues; 3. Focus on subject matter; 4. Focus on method. In the first theme, the learner's intrinsic motivation is stressed, and s/he is expected to act as an empowered entity in his/her own life. Next, he discusses the sociopolitical and geographical issues around English as an international language, which blurs the boundaries between the inner circle (the U.S., the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, and

Canada, where ownership and norms of English originate), the outer circle (India, Nigeria, Philippines, etc., where English is a second language, with varieties dating back to the colonial times), and the expanding circle (China, Japan, South Korea, etc., where English is used as a foreign language). He also compares English-only programs that advocate WASP hegemony to English-language programs that value home languages and cultures. Brown then discusses issues on subject matter dealing with the growth of content-centered programs, whole-language approaches, and task-based instruction that differ from the traditional approach to language teaching and learning. In this case, language functions as a vehicle for acquiring the knowledge in the specific content areas. In addition, peace and environmental education can be infused in the language classes as pragmatic teaching material and to appeal to learners' intrinsic motivation. Finally, in order to enhance learners' communicative competence, Brown encourages the use of cooperative, student-centered teaching methods in the design of curricula. This ultimately is expected to lead learners to perform well outside the classroom with the absence of the teacher's assistance, which means developing learners' own strategies in actual language use.

While Brown demonstrates the stability, before the 1990s, in TESOL education, Canagarajah seems to extend what Brown discusses but in the same trajectory. When reflecting on Brown's summary of 25 years of pedagogy, Canagarajah (2006) expands his research with the changed or extended definition of the three major criteria. Unlike Brown's, Canagarajah's study presents teachers as well as learners in the sociocultural context when it comes to understanding learners' motivation, developing methods from

the ground up, and managing teachers' knowledge of subjects and their personal experiences.

Motivation in the now complex sociocultural society involves multiple, changing aspects, such as intrinsic/extrinsic and integrative/instrumental motivation and strategies for managing this multifaceted motivation will influence a student's capacity to learn a new language. Motivation is also considered as affecting identity formation (Pierce, 1995).

Meanwhile, the author reintroduces the three circles (expanding circle, outer circle, and inner circle) model devised by Kachru (1986, cited in Canagarajah, 2006) as norm-dependent, norm-developing, and norm-providing. However, the growth of the expanding circle allows more awareness of language teaching in sociocultural contexts and redefines English as a contact language, which means the balanced point of rendezvous between the target and the local language and culture. Graddol (1999) explains that the population of English speakers in expanding and outer circles is larger than those in the inner circle. Furthermore, speakers in the expanding circle use English as intra-group language more often (Jenkins, 2006). And the group members outside the inner circle have their own norms independent of the inner circle (Seidlhofer, 2004).

Unlike the binary dichotomy of traditional perspectives on language and culture that legitimize NES teachers only as authoritative figures who deliver the imposing culture and language from native countries, the new curricula with sociocultural or cross-cultural perspectives encourage partnerships between NES and local teachers and help students "shuttle between communities" in order to be proficient speakers of

English (Canagarajah, 2006). While shuttling, students are expected to acquire both linguistic and cultural advantages in interacting with NES teachers. In addition, the partnership between local teachers and NES teachers enables the curriculum to be a "ground-up construction" rather than the "top-down imposition" that demonstrates the similar application of learner strategy to language teacher education and thus implicates the sociocultural meaning construct system of student and teacher participants in the current classroom.

Compared to the recent efforts to find a mediating point between the native and local languages and cultures, Johnson (2006) demonstrates that some language teachers who have their own pedagogical values unavoidably succumb to the hegemonic practices imposed by required curricula. If the contexts where the teachers are extremely influential in shaping how and why language teachers do what they should do (Johnson, 2006) are considered, the significance of the hegemonic influence of contexts on language teachers and the importance of looking at language teachers' actual teaching practices in contexts become clear. Therefore, the language teachers' position, identified by the interaction of the hegemonically imposed norms of specific contexts, plus the language teachers' own pedagogies, appears to be relevant to looking at NES teachers in the EFL contexts, where the two different cultural norms are supposed to meet and mediate.

**World Englishes in the EFL Field**

The World (New) Englishes paradigm is a framework in the classification of English speakers around the globe (Higgins, 2011). The work of Kachuru (1997) described a diaspora of English speakers, focusing on institutionalized varieties of

English. He categorized and labeled the world in terms of three circles of English speaking communities:

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

In the field of English language teaching today, the relationship between the center and periphery has been influential on hegemonic pedagogy of language education. These terminologies of center and periphery are important, in that these can be another distinction for native and non-native English countries. The center, or inner circle refers to the advanced, affluent communities of the West such as North America, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The periphery, or outer circle indicates countries where English is a post-colonial residue including Barbados, India, Malaysia, and Nigeria. Countries that belonged to other imperial regime and are now under the influence of English-speaking center countries are also considered the periphery, or expanding circle. This circle covers countries like Belgium, France, Spain, Indonesia, Mexico, South Korea, Tunisia, and Vietnam. A large number of speaking populations in the periphery countries claim them as the speakers of New Englishes or World Englishes (Canagarajah, 1999).

Within Kachuru's classification, inner-circle speakers are labeled native speakers and the expanding-circle speakers are considered non-native speakers, but the classification for nativeness is ambiguous for speakers in the outer circle (Higgins, 2011).

The speakers of New Englishes or World Englishes possess their own norm of language use as native speakers. This nativeness does not refer to North American or

British varieties, and are not based on the norms of other inner-circle varieties. The dichotomy of native and non-native varieties seems debatable because it assumes only inner-circle varieties are legitimate. Therefore, ownership of English is regarded a better concept instead of the tricky nativeness dichotomy.

Norton asserted that categorizing native speakers and non-native speakers in terms of the binary dichotomy only prohibits the speakers from becoming legitimate speakers of English. The ownership of English, in her claim, relies only on whether the speakers see their variety as a legitimate one in diverse socio-economic contexts (1997). Ownership of English refers to "the ways in which speakers appropriate the English language for their own needs" (Higgins, 2011). So the critical point of deciding legitimate speakers is whether the speakers see themselves as legitimate speakers of English regarding exonormative or endornormative standards (Higgins, 2011).

With the increasing advocacy for local Englishes instead of standard English in EFL education, the definition of NES teachers seems to be more extended, in a sense. NES teachers are understood not only by their origin but also by their linguistic competence from cultural experiences in a much broader sense. In their case studies, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy argue that the nativeness of English language is socially constructed, and should not be understood through the lens of national origin or where a person acquired English. Further, they say, "the more English becomes an international language, the more the division of its speakers as native and non-native becomes inconsistent" (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001). They claim that unifying language backgrounds does not influence the quality of the language proficiency of the

speakers and advocate for including variety of speakers from various language and cultural backgrounds.

Looking at NES teachers through this extended definition gives a certain kind of equal, active subjectivity to the local teachers and students when they learn and adopt the foreign language and culture. And this also provides a great learning opportunity for NES teachers when they approach the local people and culture.

These studies on sociocultural and geographical aspects of the trends and issues in TESOL field indicate the roles of teachers and students and the relationship between the language teachers and students in the teaching and learning context. Yet they do not fully describe how teachers' pedagogical approach influences students' learning and how teachers and students build the meaning-making process in the cross-cultural context. In other words, the macro-study seems unconnected to the micro-practice in the previous research. My study is expected to fill the gap between theory and practice. I discuss NES teachers' EFL instruction based on the qualities of NES teachers as language teachers in the next section to extend the discussion of NES teachers in the EFL context.

**NES Teachers in EFL Instruction**

The initial goal of including native English-speaking (NES) teachers in the English curriculum in the EFL context is to enhance students' communicative competence, namely, to improve students' speaking skills, which complements non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers' traditional language classes focusing on students' grammar or reading comprehension. This sounds reasonable, in that both students and NNES teachers of the target language need to develop oral communication skills, and NES teachers fit into that gap. This teaching strategy suits a

foreign language curriculum that stresses reading comprehension. But when it came to actually hiring NES teachers and maintaining their position in the EFL context, local educators and educational administrators faced some issues related to supervising NES teachers in an effective manner and how they actually perform. NES teachers' position in the teaching context is determined by how they are treated and perceived by other educational professionals (their peers). Moreover, their positions in the teaching/learning context seem critical, in that these can confirm where they are now and show them where they should be headed to improve their language instruction. Trent (2012) argues that there could be resistance between NES teachers' self-positioning and how other teachers position them, which is why collaboration between NES teachers and local NNES teachers can be productive. Researchers in the field argue for the collaboration between the two groups of language teachers because balanced collaborative teaching is believed to lead to successful foreign language teaching.

For the ideal EFL environment, Medgyes asserts that there should be "a good balance between NES teachers and NNES teachers when they complement each other" (Medgyes, 1992; cited in Medgyes, 2000). The purpose of recruiting NES teachers and including them in the foreign language curriculum would be to complement the gap between students' need of foreign language education with more focus on oral communication skills and the reality of stagnant teaching in traditional grammar-based instruction. Utilizing NES teachers as much as possible should enhance the current foreign language education.

While introducing various types of team-teaching, Tajino & Tajino (2000) describe team-teaching as an effective means of enhancing the communicative competence of Japanese learners. By reviewing a decade's worth of team-teaching in Japanese secondary EFL classes, the authors explain the benefits of collaborative work in the form of team-teaching as being two-fold: students can use English in the classroom as a means of communication with full awareness of cultural values, and NNES teachers can improve their subject-related teaching through team-teaching classes. In team-teaching classes recommended by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, students are provided a good means of communication and a chance to appreciate different cultural values, and NNES teachers gain an opportunity to develop their teaching practices. The authors acknowledge the strength of the team-teaching methodology, extending the definition of the team to those who are the part of the curriculum preparation in the EFL education. Despite the positive influence of team-teaching, Tajino and Tajino point out that NNES teachers are reluctant to give information about classroom operation to NES teachers and possess a negative attitude toward them. And the authors also found that NES teachers are underprepared for teaching in the Japanese EFL context, in that they have no experience as educators, possess little formal knowledge of the English language, and seem to be unable to control their classes. From studying the history of team-teaching in Japanese EFL classrooms, the authors assert that NNES teachers have a positive attitude towards intercultural communication and suggested that some of the team-teaching variations should be reconsidered (Tajino & Tajino, 2000).

Jeon & Lee (2006) survey similar policies and the implementation of policies on NES teachers in East Asian countries like China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea and attempted to find practical suggestions for recruiting NES teachers. They propose that collaboration between the two groups of teachers has many benefits, and seem to answer the questions Tajino & Tajino raise. The authors suggest a more enhanced training system for unqualified NES teachers so that they are more ready for teaching upon hiring. As a next step, they recommend teaching teams composed of NES and NNES teachers in EFL instruction. East Asian countries already greatly invested in teaching English could improve their current EFL education with these suggestions.

Other researchers examine the power dynamics between NES teachers and NNES teachers. In one case study of a white NES teacher in her graduate seminar in a Midwestern U.S. city, Samimy (2008) reports that the NES teacher first felt marginalized in the community of NNES teachers but through deliberate efforts and shared experience, both she and the NNES teachers learned to respect each other's differences and see "the other" as a resource for their own teaching. She explored one native speaker's identity in a context of non-native speakers, while trying to know how the NES student situated and identified herself in a community of NNES students. Data came from the researcher's reflective journal as a participant-observer, and the NES student's responses to online interactive dialogues, the final class project, and online interviews with the instructor. This study examined the NES student's identity in relationship to the identities of NNES students. The student tried to move forward in the course, not limited by the NES/NNES dichotomy. Samimy's research indicates that

teachers have a willingness to collaborate and share rather than see the other through their biases.

Most researchers address the collaboration between NES and NNES teachers in the existing paradigm of nativeness in order to overcome the resistance between the two groups, yet some researchers like Samimy begin to identify the locality outside of the nativeness paradigm in adopting English language education. TESOL programs encouraging this pedagogical paradigm feature cross-cultural training or cross-lingual activities in order for teachers to facilitate students' move into the unexplored NES context (Cook, 1999). Based on the new paradigmatic approach to the language instruction, I review teaching in cross-cultural contexts in the next section.

**The Review of Literature on Teaching in Cross-Cultural Contexts**

Teaching and learning in cross-cultural contexts involves minority students and ESL and EFL students. Discussing those students in the various contexts, scholars have posited the classroom as the rendezvous site for the different cultures and languages. Purcell-Gates (1995) says that literacy is acquired when learners are able to encode the culture of literacy and the language of print, which also should be learned and achieved as a whole. Referring to Gee's (1989, cited in Purcell-Gates, 1995) "big D" discourse, she argues that literacy can be achieved only by enculturation through social interaction with peers. Fu (1995) goes even further into the social interaction in the cross-cultural teaching and learning contexts. In order for learners to achieve the literacy of the target society, she encourages learners to share the learning experience as equal partners in learning communities. She stresses individuality as well as finding common threads between different cultures. Literacy education in the sociocultural context has been both the goal and the tool of forming citizens in a democratic society,

and respecting and appreciating both individuality as well as commonality seem to be prerequisites for successful literacy learners.

NES teachers who teach in the foreign language context are presumably expected to experience cross-cultural issues with students in class, which could depend on their own Western cultural background knowledge or the dichotomy between their culture and the local culture. The research on cross-cultural teaching in foreign contexts I review appear to be closely connected to the position and condition of NES teachers in Korean language and the cultural contexts of my study. While researchers all acknowledge the undoubted influence of the Western culture on EFL education, they manifest conspicuous interests in a couple of fields of teaching in cross-cultural contexts: cultural perspectives, the role of language teachers, and mediation in teaching and learning. In terms of cultural perspectives, they are mainly interested in acknowledging the limited cultural viewpoints of language teachers of other cultures as well as their own. They notice most teaching beliefs and approaches conducted by NES teachers are from the Western culture and their delivery to the other cultures seems to result in dispatching the dominant culture to the others—the traditional foreign language approach. This Western-dominant way of teaching seems to be still alive in the foreign language education field. Researchers also look at the role of language teachers. Once the teachers recognize their own cultural perspectives as insiders or outsiders of a certain culture, they come to be aware of their position in the cultural context as well; the NES language teachers need to respect the local culture and understand their potential teaching role as cultural negotiators and mediators. Lastly, language teachers need to know how to approach students respectfully and at which

point they should meet students after acknowledging their cultural differences and the role of teaching role in modifying the differences where cultural/language teaching and learning are realized. Their expanded cultural capacity would be the outcome of the cultural teaching practices as a result.

Researchers address the issue of the lopsided metacultural perspective of the West in cross-cultural teaching. They explain that there is a cultural lens strongly influenced by the Western hegemony through which people perceive, understand, and ultimately assimilate the dominant culture. In a case study of language teachers at a cross-cultural teacher-training seminar, Kramsch (1993) argues that most language teachers possess the limited view of difference because of the written and spoken texts, filtered through the way the target society represents itself and the presuppositions and expectations they bring with them when it comes to comprehending the texts. This case study represents the triangulated means of communication, perspectives on the three cultures, and the individual variations within each group when the participants are communicating across linguistic and cultural differences. In this way, the author tries to assess the multiple perspectives of language teachers when looking at different cultures and to make the teachers realize the thinking process is visible through triangular assessment.

The critical factor of cultural perspective in cross-cultural teaching and learning is applied in the pedagogical methods of the field. Undoubtedly, it is mostly introduced with the representation of Western culture and delivered to the local culture with the dominant standpoint. With reviewing literature on communicative approaches in Asia, Ellis (1996) tries to show the adequateness of the Western communicative approach,

which is stressed as the main goal of the EFL education in Eastern cultures. The author argues that every cross-cultural interaction relies on the assumptions each cultural group makes about the other group as well as their own. Mostly the problem arises because the assumptions lead to the inadequate and inaccurate cultural understanding of the other culture. With this, the author encourages EFL teachers to become cultural mediators, in that cultural mediators are aware of other cultural identities while keeping their own perceptive. The solution would be to find the right congruent point between seemingly contradictory cultural norms and the ability to empathize with others' experiences, which illustrates the need for positive attitudes toward differences and the ample cultural capacity of language teachers.

**Recognizing the Current Condition and Mediating Differences**

Noticing the cultural differences, acknowledging the contradictory cultural norms, and trying to find the mediation point of teaching and learning appear to be crucial in the classroom of cross-cultural contexts. In order for language teachers to move forward in cross-cultural teaching, they need to know where they are in the real school context. In other words, the teachers need to recognize what they actually do and what they need to improve on, in terms of cultural pedagogical practices, on their own.

In a study by Yang (2008), the author discusses both English and Chinese teaching methodologies, recognizing the significance of cultural issues in second or foreign language education. His own referenced experience as a graduate teaching assistant at an American college shows the appropriateness of using narrative methodology. He notices how cultural practices contradict to his previous understanding of cultural norms. Specifically, he acknowledges the discrepancy in misunderstanding each cultural group of learners. Contrary to his expectations, for

example, American students were respectful to the teachers and ranked at the top of the class because of their eagerness and hard work in class, but Chinese students did not meet the expectation of the author in terms of their attitudes and scores. He also noticed the discrepancy between the theories embedded in the curriculum and pedagogical practices−his course was initially designed to meet Western theoretical expectations, such as meaningful interaction or the input hypothesis in target language teaching and learning. However, his routine work was mainly to review material covered in previous classes with the supervising professor, which confused the author−this approach was not what he had learned would happen in his theoretical background in a TESOL program and realistic teaching practices with limited reviewing. Moreover, he found that the teaching materials mostly had a negative representation of his own culture, with issues like plagiarism and other Chinese people's behavior shown in a harsh light. He did not believe that these would be the culturally appropriate materials when he reviewed the teaching materials from his English language classes that presented everyday uses of English language. Thus, language teachers of foreign language education who encounters a discrepancy between their preconceived knowledge of other cultures, their pedagogical expectations, and their real-life experiences in the local culture need to adjust their expectations based on understanding target/local language and cultures and learners with diverse cultural backgrounds.

**Practical Suggestions for Teaching in Cross-Cultural Contexts**

All the issues raised in the previous section, such as the awareness of cultural differences, the acknowledgment of each culture's different norms, and the recognition of the current situation or difficulties that language teachers in EFL context face, can be

fully addressed by the language teachers' perceptions of teaching in the cross-cultural context. The next move, then, is to compile practical suggestions for teachers in a cross-cultural communication with students.

The researchers discussed in this section review theories and practice on teaching EFL in the cross-cultural context, while examining their own experiences in teaching foreign languages in China and Japan, to create the guidelines for language teachers who willingly try to incorporate a cultural component into their EFL teaching practices.

Degen & Ablalom (1998) try to provide much clearer perspectives on teaching strategies by Western EFL educators so that they can demonstrate the enhanced cultural capacity of language teachers through practical strategies. The authors acknowledge that cultural myopia plays a major role in judging a different culture and that this limited viewpoint of a culture can severely limit even the most experienced teachers of foreign languages. Most language teachers think they just deliver great Western approaches to locals without considering the local cultural context or any structural constraints that locals would experience in adopting these approaches. The authors claim that teaching EFL in China is like intercultural communication with obstacles such as any verbal and cultural presumptions that can cause cultural misinterpretations or cultural shock. If Western EFL teachers develop teaching strategies based on a stereotype, the frustrations that they had experienced before will be repeated constantly, according to the authors. They suggest a framework for cross-cultural teaching practices based on mutual understanding of cultural difference in learning contexts, which they expect to improve the result of EFL education. The

practical strategies for EFL teaching they suggest are including oral communication lessons in most lessons, using cross-cultural teaching materials like realia and authentic texts with the associated body language and non-verbal communication, creating a comfortable learning environment adequate to students' own cultural background, providing supplementary materials (i.e., a lecture summary, written course guides, lecture handouts) and building empathy with students. The authors also expect the more culturally sensitive students accustomed to initially experience the Western teaching approach in their regular homework and class, and that office hours outside classroom will provide ample opportunities both for teachers and students to improve their rapport.

While Degen & Ablalom (1998) describe the language teachers should use in their teaching practices in spite of the unbalanced cultural rendezvous between the dominant target culture and the local culture, Guest (2002) wants teachers to have an advanced, balanced awareness of the role of culture in the EFL class. Some research says that misrepresenting foreign cultures can result in reinforcing stereotypes and static viewpoints of looking at other cultures. He argues that any given component of a culture should not be represented as a one-for-all definition for every member of the cultural group, nor should any individual attribute be showcased as a trait of the whole group. He demonstrates the danger of relying on any fixed monolithic application of cultural components when determining culturally appropriate norms. Instead, he suggests, especially in a dynamic classroom structure composed of individuals and small groups, there should be an individualized consciousness of cultural traits. Just like people tend to consider individual behavior as personality, the author argues that

the interpretation of a foreign culture has to be assessed in the same manner. Meanwhile, according to the author, the dualism of cultural dichotomy traditionally discussed in the EFL field should be avoided. The one critical fact that language teachers should not overlook is that people tend to make adjustments outside their own culture. If that is applied to the classroom context, students are expected to modify their cultural identities when they face foreign language teachers from other cultures, who are pursuing their own teaching and learning cultural attributes. The author suggests that any focus on cultural teaching be pragmatic, linguistically universal, and socially adequate while still acknowledging and interpreting differences.

As a matter of fact, language teachers are expected to behave as culturally conscious participants who are well aware of cultural differences and limitations, yet try to find the midpoint in a teaching and learning context as facilitators who embrace students as active participants in the cross-cultural teaching and learning environment.

All the research reviewed here accesses teaching in cross-cultural contexts from the Western-influencing metacultural perspective with sub-categorized specific interests. Though these studies all agree that the current condition of EFL teaching in East Asia is not ideal and suggest possible alternatives for language teachers, they seem to fail in illustrating the actual teaching practices. I expect my research to not only show NES teachers' current difficulties and limitations as language teachers, but also describe how they manage to deal with both the reality of teaching and their ideas of it. In addition, I expect NES teachers' efforts to overcome these difficulties and limitations can show the potential for improving the current situation through culturally appropriate teaching, where detailed intercultural communication takes place between NES

teachers and students. Then understanding who language teachers are and how they teach in the field would be essential in the context of considering the teachers as the subjective agents of improving language education.

## The Review of Literature on the Identity Construction Theory

Teachers' identity is sure to be an emerging important topic in the field of bilingual and English language education; however, the two topics still play a major role in the field: native English-speaking (NES) vs. non-native English-speaking (NNES) dichotomy and World Englishes. Researchers have tried to redirect the discourse of NES vs. NNES debate with arguing "membership to one or other category is not so much a privilege of birth or education as a matter of self-ascription" (Davies, 1991; cited in Medgyes, 2000, p.356). Still, many numbers of educators use the words, despite their acknowledgement of a useless binomial, replaced with new concepts (Medgyes, 2000). This effort to find a new concept of overcoming native fallacy and freeing the marginalized NNES teachers brought about the umbrella of World Englishes in the field. In an effort to change the current binomial, there also have been researches on teacher identity in EFL context, but they were mainly about NNES teachers (Tsui, 2007). NES teachers' professional identities still have remained uninvestigated.

**Teacher Identity.** Teachers' professional identity has been considered as a separate research area; however, the concept of it is still intermingled in the one of an identity in general. Just as the concept of identity is defined in various ways in the general literature, the concept of professional identity is also addressed in various ways in the field of teaching and teacher education (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004). Moreover, teachers' professional identity has been identified as an emerging topic, so there is a limitation on the numbers of researches (Beijaard, et al., 2004).

Beijaard, Verloop, and Vermunt (2000) argue teachers' perceptions of their professional identity is important in that they influence their effectiveness in teaching practices, eligibility for changes, and capacity for improvement. They also indicated that teachers' perceptions, as "representations of their understandings of their own professional identity" (p. 750), can mean teachers' personal knowledge of the identity. Based on a research on relevant literature, these researchers suggest three common concepts of teachers: teachers as experts on subject, pedagogical, and didactical matter, in order to investigate their secondary school teacher participants' professional identity. First, though the complex teaching process has to deal with more than the knowledge of subject matter, it is still believed for an expert teacher to have sufficient content knowledge. Secondly, teachers' capability of engaging with students is related to their pedagogical aspect. In order to deal with moral and ethical dilemmas that teachers face in everyday classroom, they should make educational choices based on norms and values. The last concept is about teachers' models of teaching. Traditionally, teachers are trained to follow the models about "how the planning, execution, and evaluation of lessons should be done" (p. 752). However, shifts in society changes and research developments seem to assign a new role beyond these previous models of teaching. Based on the three concepts, the authors found three types of influencing factors for the teachers' professional identity in their research: teaching context, teaching experience, and biography of the teacher, as shown in the common concepts of teachers. Then they also discovered that both areas of subject and didactical expertise emerged as mostly present concept in their teacher participants' perceptions. This study indicates teachers' professional identities can be

identified through how their perceptions of themselves are linked to their teaching practices.

Van den Berg (2002) discusses social, cultural and institutional influences on teachers' professional identities. The author argues many of stressing elements related to government and society appear to produce teachers' perception of professional incompetence. On the continuum of this perception, they tend to have many questions about the "legitimacy of the external definition of their task" (Kelchtermans, 1994, 1996; cited in van den Berg, 2002, p. 598). This means teachers keep asking questions on whether they can make certain value-related, norm-based choices based on their professional knowledge and practices. The author claims that those questions include not only teachers' capacity but also their willingness to do it. Then he continues to explain that the negative effect of a policy environment can also influence teachers' perception of "their own self-worth" (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; cited in van den Berg, 2002, p. 599). While going through being exposed to negative influences, teachers can feel a feeling of identity loss, uncertainty, and ambiguity that they cannot achieve anything, despite individual efforts.

While van den Berg (2002) talks about teachers' perceptions as passive identities impacted by social, cultural, and institutional elements, Duff and Uchida (1997) discuss more balanced roles of personal and contextual areas in terms of teachers' sociocultural identities. They studied four EFL teachers at Japanese language school to know how their sociocultural identities were negotiated and transformed over time. The researchers found that the teachers' perceptions regarding their sociocultural identities were based on their diverse backgrounds such as their prior educational, professional,

and cross-cultural experiences. In the process of exploring social identities, they constantly negotiated as a response to changing contexts. Though the authors admit the lack of previous researches on teachers' self-image or perceptions about teaching, they assert the study related to teachers' cultural knowledge and their perceptions are essential in teacher education. They conclude teachers' personal and professional, and contextual backgrounds help them develop their sociocultural identities. They also add this characteristic of sociocultural identities can make teachers overcome conflicts regarding their sociocultural roles in cross-cultural contexts.

In terms of teachers' identity conflicts, Coldron and Smith (1999) discuss tension between agency and structure when they address teachers' constructing of their professional identities. They also talk about teachers' identity construction through personal and social context; however, they move further to describe the construction of teachers' identity as more dynamic process. However, the dynamic process has own its limitation in that teachers can modify the structure and claim their identity only when there is a tension between the two and their action is subject to structural regulations in the context. In that situation, they explain that personal identity and actions are conditioned by power relations in society. Among various choices available, teachers either choose or reject the possibilities as a form of their actions in order to confirm their professional identities. According to the authors, constructing identities in society requires taking a position in social context. The context is where an individual makes a choice and is located, which makes the identity as professional identity in case of a teacher. In other words, a novice teacher who just started to place himself or herself in a school makes choices as socialization process. This process needs the teachers not

only to acquire a pre-established location, but also to have a distinct place on their own. Then teachers' professional identities are closely related to their taking places in a school community and their relations with the socializing process. Social structures affect the location in ways of providing norms, practices, and choices. Teachers' action is limited by the social structures in that their possible choices are regulated by the norms and practices in the society.

Teachers' proactive mode in their constructing professional identities is also found in Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004)'s study on the review of previous identity construction studies. They say teachers' professional identity is related to their images of self. They also explain that professional identity is not only about perceptions and expectations about them but also about "what teachers themselves find important in their professional work and lives based on both their experiences in practice and their personal backgrounds (Tickle, 2000; cited in Beijarrd, et al., 2004). This is similar to what other researchers defined teacher identity—the outcome of personal and social backgrounds and experiences—in the previous section, but the authors stress the dynamic aspect of teacher identity just as Coldron and Smith (1999) argued in their study, indicating teacher identity as multifaceted. In their teacher identity construction process, professional identity is also introduced as a struggle because teachers should comprehend various perspectives or roles that they are subject to deal with and modify. Furthermore, they define the identity construction process more in details. Among others, they say that professional identity is an "ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences" (Kerby, 1991; cited in Beijarrd, et al., 2004, p. 122) of

"both person and context" (p. 122), and that agency is crucial because it is something teachers use to make themselves as teachers.

On the similar continuum of multifaceted teacher identity construction, Trent (2012) studied eight NES teachers in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong to have an insight of their self-positioning and their being positioned by others in the dynamic identity construction process. His study seems meaningful in that he discusses more in details about teacher identity construction with providing an alternative space for re-constructed identities as well as their identity construction process. The teachers' self-positioning was professional language teacher, as an "agent, capable of exercising control over the teaching process" (p. 113). He tried to find "linguistic, intentional goal-oriented action" (p. 115) and to confirm the teachers' signaling their "engagement in intentional action" (p. 115) to indicate their being positioned and positioning in their school context. They tried to distinguish themselves from the norms of traditional teacher or teaching about English, which they thought were the opposite meaning to their agency to become a professional language teacher. For example, being positioned by the institution as "just another [local] teacher" (p. 114) or being illegitimated by local teachers as "not real teaching," "a waste of time," and "nonsense" (p. 114) made them present "intentional goal-oriented action" to "establish a position for themselves in their schools" (p. 115). To these antagonistic relations between real and traditional teacher, the author suggests a "third space" (Bhabha, 1990; cited in Trent, 2012, p. 121) which allows the emergence of a new authority or structure as a hybrid form, free of any conflicts from being positioned by the authority, and of a new negotiating site for teachers' meaning-making and representation process.

I have reviewed literature and research on SLA, teaching in cross-cultural contexts, and teacher identity construction and found my research can fill the gap in the current perspectives on NES teachers in EFL contexts.

## Summary

The review of theories and research for this study stipulate for major issues in the field of SLA that address the current needs in ESL or EFL contexts and suggest the frame of reference for navigating overall trends in the area of SLA. Next, theories and research identified in cross-cultural contexts specify this study in terms of teaching and learning context and language teachers' negotiating process in the context. Then the review of theories and research on teacher identity construction provides a framework for the process where language teachers make decisions and take actions while experiencing conflicts in different contexts. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology that I adopted for this study.

# CHAPTER 3
# METHODOLOGY

## Research Approach

According to Sandelowski (2008), qualitative research embraces any possible subjectivity along with objective attitudes toward the collection and analysis of data. She shows how qualitative research provides detailed descriptions and interpretations of people in social, linguistic, or material situations that shape and are shaped by them. Qualitative researchers stress "the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8). Qualitative research needs researchers who can have flexible and strategic thinking and acting (Mason, 1996), which should ample the validity or trustworthiness of the study.

My study was designed to investigate how three native English-speaking (NES) teachers construct their identities as instructors while teaching in South Korean secondary schools. Its objective—to comprehend how these teachers' identities change in through repositioning—seemed to naturally lead to call for a qualitative research approach. In order to understand language teachers in contexts, in addition to their linguistic competence, one has to investigate teachers' teaching practices and their interactions with students. If the context is for foreign language education, cross-cultural issues regarding teaching and learning should also be addressed. My research question was: How do three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors while teaching in South Korean secondary schools? Data collection through interviews along with observations allowed me to access how the research subjects construct meaning and to probe deep into their transcultural relationships with Koreans.

In this chapter, I begin with the epistemology and theoretical framework of the study. Then I discuss the research design including the setting, participant descriptions, data collection, and data analysis. Finally I present the trustworthiness of the study, my subjectivity, and the limitations of the study.

## Epistemology and Theoretical Framework

It is important to present the theoretical perspective a researcher holds in a qualitative research. The theoretical perspective is about "the philosophical stance that lies behind our chosen methodology" (Crotty, 1998, p.7). Epistemology deals with the broader spectrum of our knowledge, ranging from theoretical perspective to methodology.

In the constructivism paradigm, reality is viewed as socially embedded and individually created. In other words, in this paradigm the only reality we know is presented through human thoughts, unlike in objectivism, where humans can access an external reality. In a research, knowledge in this paradigm is constructed through interaction between a researcher and participants. This means the subjectivity of the researcher and intersubjectivity constructed through a research process between the researcher and the researched. The research focus is to explore how people experience the world and how their experiences influence their construction of understandings of the world. Interviewing, field notes, observation, and thick contextualized description are commonly methods for data collection methods here (Grbich, 2007). This antipositivist approach seeks to study the social world created by humans. Science, in this paradigm, investigates the world created by humans, including natural environment to social institutions, language, culture, and belief

systems (Costantino, 2008). Among the scholars who believed in this paradigm were Weber, and Lincoln and Guba.

Weber focused on an individual's action in human experience. Understanding the meaning of action is essential because it is the initial point for explaining why an action occurs. Weber tried to connect the divide between explanation and understanding. His influence on the constructivism paradigm is the focus on a participant's motivations.

Lincoln and Guba (1994) took on constructivism in their social science research. They claimed that reality is ontologically relative, multiple, socially based, and local and specific in nature. The epistemological basis was subjective, transactional knowledge. According to Lincoln and Guba, the social constructions of a constructivist inquiry should be elicited only through the interaction between an investigator and respondents. The final goal of the constructivist inquiry would be "a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions" (1994, p. 111).

My research topic was to study how three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors in South Korea while teaching English to secondary students. In order to understand the teaching and learning events or each participant's meaning-making process through social interaction in and out of class, I adopted constructivism as a theoretical framework for my study. The research documented their growing process as language instructors and identity affirmation. All the communications between me and these subjects throughout the research process provided opportunities to understand how they re-considered and re-configured their identities. In the course of 16 weeks or

4 months on-site research, as teachers with similar as well as different backgrounds and experiences, I and my research partners shared ideas and our knowledge about teaching and learning in cross-cultural contexts. The whole research process was a meaning-making process for the participant and the researcher.

## Selection and Description of Settings and Participants

Learning about how people think who they are leads a researcher to speculate on participants' perceptions of their surrounding environment and their self-concepts. In this section, I present the environment of the educational system where three teacher participants are situated and their individual contexts, and backgrounds for each participant, in order to provide initial ideas for understanding the native English-speaking (NES) teachers.

### Official Requirements of Native English-Speaking (NES) Teachers in South Korea

As of 2013, Jeonlabuk-Do (Jeonbuk) province has a population of 1,871,000, and its capital, Jeonju City, 651,000. There are one capital city, six metropolitan cities and nine provinces in Korea. Compared to the capital city of Korea, Seoul, whose population is 10,192,057, Jeonbuk province is a less populated small city.

According to a 2012 Ministry of Education report on NES teacher allocation in the country, only 26.69 percent of schools in Jeonbuk province had NES teachers. A couple of principals at local middle/high schools explained this partly due to insufficient funds for NES teachers and partly because of test-driven curriculum and demand in Korean schools. Furthermore, rural areas far away from main cities are the least-preferred locations for teacher candidates. They also said this is why elementary schools have more NES teachers than the secondary schools because the secondary schools have to focus on preparing students to take college entrance exams.

According to the website, the English Program in Korea (EPIK) run by the Korean Ministry of Education, the goals of employing NES instruction for English language education are to promote students' English competence at the primary and secondary levels and to enhance Korean teachers' English oral communication skills at public schools through advanced language teaching practices and cultural sharing. The primary reason to hire NES teachers is to assist Korean English teachers in class with their proficient English skills. The minimal requirements for NES teachers are as follows:

1. Be a citizen of a country where English is the dominant language,
2. Hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university,
3. Below 62 years of age,
4. Be mentally and physically healthy,
5. Have a good command of the English language, and
6. Have the ability and willingness to adapt to Korean culture and life style.

EPIK Retrieved from http://www.epik.go.kr

The basic contract period, which starts in March for spring semester and in September for fall semester, lasts one year with 22 class hours per week. NES teachers are given 18 days paid-vacation per year.

NES teachers recruited by the National Institute of International Education (NIIE) are provided with pre-service training/in-service online training issued by the Ministry of Education. All NES teachers must complete an online orientation (17 hours) before s/he comes to Korea, pre-service training (30 to 45 hours) before their school assignment, and online in-service training (15 hours) during their teaching in order to continue their employment as teachers in the country.

Though the minimal requirements posted on the EPIK website do not specifically indicate a preference for NES with an education degree, some Provincial Offices of

Education (POE) like the one in Jeonbuk requires NES instructors with teachers' license or teaching certificates in TESOL or TEFL.

Regarding NES teacher trainings, the Provincial Office of Education (POE) offers two workshops annually, which is one per semester, besides 60 or more hours of pre-/in-service trainings provided by the NIIE. The POE and the Regional Office of Education (ROE) do the annual evaluation for NES teachers through which each school gets an official assessment of NES teachers and the POE or ROE reviews the evaluations. The evaluation determines whether a teacher's contract is renewed.

The office expects educational coordinators or supervisors as counselors for the teachers as the support system for NES teachers both in and outside of their schools. The office also suggests that NES teachers volunteer for the community and learn Korean language and culture.

**Three Native English-Speaking (NES) Teachers and Their Schools**

The three teachers involved with my research teach in South Korean secondary schools. The structure of secondary schools in Korea is quite different from that in the U.S. The grade levels range from seventh through ninth for middle schools and tenth through twelfth for high schools. High schools are not included in the compulsory education in Korea but the schools and their teachers are supported by the government, whether they are public or private. Secondary schools are divided into two kinds: one is called general secondary schools, which is for anyone who want to further their education at the secondary level, and the other is schools for special purposes, which are more like U.S. private college preparation schools.

I recruited three NES teachers through each school's principal at three rural middle and urban high schools: D Middle, R Girls' High School, and T Girls' High

School, all in Jeonlabuk-Do province, in southern South Korea. D Middle is a co-ed school located in a rural area near Jeonju City, the capital of Jeonlabuk-Do province, and R Girls' High and T Girls' High Schools are in Jeonju City.

The total enrollment of students at each school is: 180 ($7^{th}$–$9^{th}$) for D Middle School; 1,080 ($10^{th}$–$12^{th}$) for R Girls' High School; and 1,079 ($10^{th}$–$12^{th}$) for T Girls' High School. One of the schools, R Girls' High, was where I conducted my pilot study. All three schools are public schools and each has one NES teacher. The schools stressed on the development of students' English proficiency, which has led me to choose these schools as my study contexts. R Girls' High was named as "Leading School for English language education" by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology in 2011, and in that year 242 out of 1,200 students acquired certificates for oral English proficiency through a one-on-one, daily English certification program. For enhancing students' practical real-world English skills, teachers at R Girls' High let students participate in groups of 3–5 students focusing on speaking and writing activities in class. Due to their stress on English language study, I thought these three schools could be good for my research settings.

Identifying participants is as important to qualitative researchers as selecting contexts. That's because they try to investigate the perspectives of participants, while quantitative researchers focus on samples and subjects (Hatch, 2002). For participants of my study, I looked for NES teachers involved in active teaching and learning in public middle or high school contexts. The principals of all three schools approved my study, and at the time of initial contact, they had hired their NES teachers and kept track of the their work throughout their employment. In November, 2012, I sent the participant

consent letters and received their informed consents. Three NES teachers I contacted all agreed to participate in my study. Hatch (2002) asserted that planning for the context of qualitative work is important in that "initial contacts with research participants or gatekeepers set the tone for the rest of the study" (p. 45). They actively responded to my emails before the initial meeting for the research and generously shared their teaching and learning experience with me during the research. The teachers showed an interest in my research result and its potential impact on the Korean educational system. All three NES teachers live in Jeonlabuk-Do (Jeonbuk) province. Ann lives in a small town, a suburb of Jeonju, while Randy and Veronica reside in the city of Jeonju, where their schools are located.

**D Middle School and Ann**

Ann works in D Middle School. The school is surrounded by paddy fields and some apartment buildings, which partially shows the area's upcoming change as a satellite town with a new administrative division. D Middle has a polyurethane track, a soccer field, and a basketball court as its sport facility in the front yard where students play sports during lunch break.

In order to enhance the students' English language competence, the school administrators hired an NES teacher, and expected to meet the increasing demands of the satellite town development. Considering many students who are rarely exposed to native-English speaking people, school administrators and faculty strongly believe having an NES teacher would provide good learning experience for students, though they realized the NES teacher's teaching may be quite independent from the school's own curriculum. The NES teacher's class is considered as a special English class with a focus on conversational English. The NES teacher co-teaches with Korean teachers,

but the co-teacher's role is to help the NES teacher with managing students' behavior or translating English into Korean in class, but do not really teach any lessons or skills.

The school has the student population of 180 from 7th–9th grades. It has two classes for seventh and eighth grades, and three classes for ninth grade. Each class has 25 to 27 students, with a homeroom teacher and an assistant homeroom teacher, and most students come from rural family backgrounds. The small class with two homeroom teachers deems a close teacher-student relationship. Students take seven classes a day and have 3–4 hours of English classes per week. Students appear very polite. They would bow and briefly chat whenever they meet me on the hallway. All the people in the school such as the school principal, the teachers, the staff, and the students, have lunch together in the school dining room every day, which is like a big family.

**Ann**

Ann is a white female and smiles and laughs a lot. She is from New Zealand and has learned some basic Korean. She is very close to her mother and regularly communicates with her online. On her mother's birthday, she sang a song accompanied by the ukulele, recorded it, and uploaded it on her Facebook for her mother. She came to be interested in the Korean culture through her Korean friend in New Zealand and decide to teach in Korea.

Ann received her bachelor's degree in ocean biology from New Zealand and used to do part-time tutoring while studying in college. It has been almost two years since she started teaching English in Korea. During her first year, she taught elementary school students in Jeongup, a rural area in Jeonbuk province, and since then she has taught at four different schools in the Wanju area—two middle schools,

including D Middle, and two elementary schools. At D Middle she teaches seventh through ninth grades, seven classes total. She said that she shares resources with other NES teachers at other schools, because they designed their own curriculum, independent from the school one. For the support for her teaching instruction from the educational administration, she took some random lectures on speech and the required online courses. Ann seems to embrace every opportunity to learn about teaching, and apply what she learned to improve her teaching practices.

She has her own classroom called English Media Room which is equipped with a PC and a big screen, connected to computer screens on each table for students. Ann uses a lot of game-based activities, and each lesson has a structure with several activities. In her lessons, Ann utilizes various multimedia resources such as video clips and pictures to pique the students' interest in learning English, and make her class enjoyable for students. Many of her lessons are content-based so that students learn the target language while also learning subject-related knowledge such as science or geography. I witnessed a successful case in one of class observations where students were supposed to build a strong paper bridge enough to hold some books with ten sheets of paper. I thought the activity especially supports students' literacy learning with using motor skills, and students were to use English as a communicative tool to accomplish a science project (Researcher notes, 5-28-13).

Three of her Korean co-teachers assist students with their English-Korean translation and keep an eye on students' behavior issues, which Ann thinks helps her run classes more easily. It doesn't seem like she spends any time with other Korean

teachers outside the classroom. If needed, school administrators communicate with her through her co-teachers.

Ann is interested in Korean culture, multicultural education, and women's studies, but seems to not be involved in the local Korean community. She also seems to respect cultural differences, and is concerned that many Koreans see Westerners from a colonial perspective. She works hard in her teaching to counter against the Eurocentric views. For instance, I noticed in her class material that she used culturally neutral names like Antarctica in the geography lesson, instead of using Euro-/Western-centric ones like North American or Western European countries (Researcher notes, 4-2-13).

Ann is very outgoing, active and often plays basketball with her students. She loves to travel to other parts of Korea a lot with her boyfriend, who is also an NES teacher in the Jeonbuk province. The couple enjoys traveling to other Korean cities and trying Korean cuisine. They also enjoy performing musical pieces with their band at a local club, where she spent time with other NES teachers in town.

**R High School and Randy**

Randy teaches in R High School, a girls' high school located in Jeonju City. The school is located in the bustling mixture of commercial and residential districts, and most of its students live in the city. However, once you enter the main gate of the school, any hint of noise subsides with its subdued atmosphere. R High's volleyball team has kept great records, and as if reflecting its outstanding sport spirit, the gymnasium stands by the main gate. R Middle, a co-ed middle school, is right beside R High. R High is renowned for its excellence in English language education and for the students' excellent performance at nationwide English competitions. For its excellence

in subjects like English and science, R High was named as the best exemplary school by the Ministry of Education in recent years. Thanks to the school's excellent performance in English, the ministry gave the school about $5 million for a new English Town Building equipped with six English-only classrooms and multimedia resources like SmartBoard and individualized PCs.

Due to excellence in English language education, the school was named as the model school for English language education for 2013. The school principal hosted 2013 Jeonlabuk-Do KOTESOL (Korea Teachers of English Speakers of Other Languages) Conference with the topic of "Putting It All Together," where and Korean English teachers and NES teachers from all the schools in the area to attend to share ideas and knowledge in English teaching. The school administrators work hard to further improve the school's English language education, so as to become the center of English language education for the regional secondary schools.

R High has tenth through twelfth grades with ten classes and each class has 37 to 38 students, with the total student population of 1,080. Students take 10 classes every day and 4–7 hours of English class per week. In addition to having classes with an NES teacher, this school allows students to have extracurricular activities in English such as English theater, English newspaper, and English clubs. The students here are like any teenagers full of energy, very respectful to the teachers and reflect the school's high standard of discipline.

**Randy**

Randy is a white male from the U.S. and has parents and two brothers. Recently he visited his home and returned to Korea with his parents to show them what his life was like here. He has a military background, and was stationed in Seoul in the past.

He had been interested in teaching English to Korean students and after he was discharged from the army, he decided to go back to college in the States.

Randy received his bachelor's degree in theater. He has quite good vocalization and pronunciation. Before he came to R High School, he taught at some cram schools for kindergarten/elementary levels in Jeonju City. It has been a year since he started teaching at R High School. He teaches 10th and 11th grades for 20 hours a week. Randy is very eager to improve his professional teaching practices with updated pedagogical theories in TESOL field. He liked to do a research on teaching methods and became interest in a teaching methodology, called Task-Based Teaching. Randy designed a syllabus and published two textbooks grounded with this pedagogy for each grade with the support of the principal at school and has used the books with the students since then. He always seems to be well prepared for every lesson he is teaching.

Randy believed in teaching English for communicative purposes. He required regular writing and many oral presentations for his students. In one of my observations, he modeled writing on his own and let the students compare and contrast between their writings from the previous class and the teacher's writing. The activity integrated reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and he taught grammar in the context of writing. (Researcher notes, 5-29-13). I could tell that his students enjoyed writing and interactive dynamic instruction.

Randy wished he could receive more feedback about his teaching practices, but he seemed to not receive any from both his colleagues and school administrators. Though Randy shares his office with other teachers in the main building, he prefers to

stay in his own room preparing for his teaching, called the SKY Room, which is located in the English Town Building. His classroom is equipped with a SmartBoard connected to a PC. Despite the state-of-the-art multimedia resources, he feels awkward and distant when it comes to the communication between him and the school or him and the students, due to the physical distance between his room and the main building. Outside the regular classes, he joins students with various club activities or English camp throughout the year, and has a good relationship with the students.

Randy enjoys his life in Korea. He makes trips to places somewhere he has not been before whenever he can. On weekends, he takes a drum lesson from an American drum coach. Sometimes they gather to perform as a band, and hang out with other NES teachers. He used to go out often for social gatherings, but tries to focus on his work more recently.

**T High School and Veronica**

Veronica teaches in T High School, a girls' high school in Jeonju. The atmosphere of the school has a serious but friendly feeling partly because it is a Catholic school and partly because it is beside the historic Catholic Church. T Girls' Middle School is right beside T High. The school's location in a tourist hub, Hanok Village—a traditional Korean village, provides an opportunity to students to practice their English through volunteer work with foreign tourists. The school stands right in the middle of the large historic site of the city, surrounded by traditional Korean houses and shrine.

This school has an extensive study-abroad program, which sends as many students as possible to other countries to study. For its outreaching program, the principal said that the school tries to improve students foreign language skills not only in

English but also in other languages like Japanese, Chinese, or French. Like other Catholic schools, this school has a variety of school events following the Catholic calendar.

Each grade, from the tenth through the twelfth, has ten classes with the school population of 1,079. Each class has 36 to 38 students. Students have 10 classes per day, 4–7 English classes per week. The sound of laughing and chatting among the students during recess seems to represent the students' bright personality.

**Veronica**

Veronica comes from a mixed-race family with Japanese-American father and Italian-American mother, and can speak English, Japanese, French, Korean, and Italian. Her family resides in the eastern part of the U.S., and her mother, a university professor, seems to exert a major influence on her career. Veronica is very energetic. As soon as I saw her at our first meeting, I felt her strong energy in everywhere around her. Before she came to Korea, she worked as a youth organizer, co-running an arts workshop for inner city children for two years in Los Angeles.

Veronica majored in ethnic studies and taught Japanese at a language immersion camp for one summer during college. She planned to enhance her teaching practices and pursue a career in higher education. Veronica started to teach at T High School about a year ago. She teaches tenth and eleventh graders for about 20 hours a week. She came to Korea as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant assigned by the Fulbright Scholarship Program, and has three other Fulbright fellow-colleagues in Jeonju City. They manage to have a weekly meeting to plan lessons and are interested in critical literacy. These teachers all appeared to having settled down quite well in the Korean community and enjoyed the life in Korea (Researcher notes, 3-16-13).

Veronica also has her own English classroom with a big screen connected to a PC. She expects students to feel comfortable in her classroom and get away from the stress they have in other regular classes. A lot of multicultural, social, and political power relation issues are included in her curriculum with the use of various video clips, visual and audio device. In one of her classes on "Perspectives," Veronica let students make a sound narrative after listening to some soundscapes made of natural environmental sounds like the sounds of weather or human/animal vocalizations, and express their opinions. In the activity, students were supposed to make a soundscape in groups and present it to her. Then she recorded each group's sound with her cell phone and played it through the speaker during the whole class review session. The students looked so excited from the beginning of designing a sound plot to the end of appreciating sound narratives. Even the invisible sound can be her resource for teaching different perspectives and students seemed to enjoy the process of appreciating different perspectives and making sound narratives, as she was there as their facilitator in their learning process (Researcher notes, 4-4-13).

When she first came to the school, she tried hard to make relationships with Korean people, in order to get to know the Korean culture well. She learned some Korean from the teachers and communicated with them in Korean. The Korean teachers used to invite Veronica to their homes for the Korean holiday parties. Some parents invited Veronica over the Korean cuisine. She seems to have managed to adjust her life in Korea.

Veronica's lively personality extends into her personal life. On weekends, she meets her Fulbright colleagues or Korean friends for social gatherings. She sometimes

pursues outdoor activities, cooks and eats Korean cuisine, and goes to the movie theater or shopping with friends. She and the other Fulbright scholars are supporters of independent films, and I saw movies with them, especially when the Jeonju International Film Festival was held in Jeonju City. I found even in choosing movies, Veronica displays her critical literacy beliefs (Researcher notes, 4-29-13).

As presented in the introductory section of this chapter, to know the environment surrounding the participants and its possible influence on their perceptions should suggest an initial, essential understanding in navigating their identity as a language teacher in the Korean EFL context.

## Study Design

This study was conducted between November 2012 and June 2013, 8 months total and had three phases. The three phases are presented in the table below and a brief description follows the table.

Table 3-1. Study timeline

| Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Nov. 2012–Feb. 2013 | Feb. 2013–Mar. 2013,<br>Mar. 2013–May 2013 | May 2013–June 2013 |
| Initial contact through emails<br>Informed consent<br>Rapport building | Initial formal interviews<br>Class observation<br>Ongoing informal interviews | Final formal interviews<br>Member checking |

In the first phase (November 2012), I contacted the NES teachers through principals at each school and shared brief introduction of my study and myself with the teachers via email communications. When I went to Korea in February, I visited the schools to talk with the principals, and attained the teachers' contact information to arrange an initial meeting. In February when the teachers came back from winter

vacation, I went to each school, met with the teachers, and received informed consents from the teachers. The electronic communication prior to the actual initial meetings with participants helped them become more interested in the research topic and eagerly share their ideas in the initial interviews. In the constructivist way, the first phase enabled the participants gain awareness of themselves as instructors.

I conducted the initial formal, semi-structured interviews regarding their previous experience and beliefs about teaching and learning in English language education in the first part of the second phase (February–March 2013). Then I started to build rapport by trying to be of help to them as a teacher-assistant and talking casually with them during my regular visits to their classes for observation in the latter part of the second phase (March–May 2013) when the classroom observations and informal, open-ended interviews after each class observation continued. The interviews were conducted based on my two observations of each NES teacher per week. Right after each observation session, I interviewed participants with my brief interpretation of the observation. Each interview was open-ended, and the participants were freely able to explain the day's teaching and to re-interpret my interpretation. The interactions during this phase were critical to both the researcher and the participants in that those interpersonal communications allowed the both parties to re-acknowledge/reconstruct the events happening in the classroom and to create more developed knowledge through the reconstructing process.

The third phase (May–June 2013) covered final formal interviews and member checking. I conducted final individual interviews and inquired about the participants' overall experiences during this period. Member check, as an optimal strategy for

increasing validity, is “a transaction between researchers and participants whereby data are played back to participants to ensure that researchers get it right” (Sandelowski, 2008, p. 502). Member checking was done after all data were collected to evaluate the following: whether (a) I as a researcher accurately rendered their experiences; (b) I fully captured the meaning those experiences had for them; and (c) my final interpretive accounts of those experiences did justice to them (Sandelowski, 2008). I let the teachers make a collage about what they thought of themselves as instructors. While making collages about the NES teachers by using photos of them and some texts from magazines, the NES teachers and I could confirm their beliefs in themselves as language teachers. By considering our experiences during the research, we as learning participants in our constructivism community could confirm the knowledge we earned and the perspectives we re-configured through the process.

## Data Sources

The following table presents the data entry, and the timing and the aim of data collection. The detailed illustration of the data sources follows the table below.

Table 3-2. Data sources

| Entry | Duration/Frequency | Collection point | Aim |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interviews<br>Semi-structured initial & final interviews | 45–60 min./Two per participant/128 U.S. letter pages | Beginning & end of study | Understand participants’ prior experiences/changed perspectives |
| Interviews<br>Open-ended ongoing interviews | 10–30 min./after each observation/256 U.S. letter pages | Throughout the study | |
| Observations/<br>Field notes | 50 min.<br>Two times weekly per school/a pack of mini legal pads | Throughout the study | Secondary data |

**Interviews**

Interviews are efficient methods in a qualitative study, through which researchers can explore participants' experiences and interpretations (Hatch, 2002). Qualitative researchers choose directive means to inquire what is happening to participants. In order not to be distracted by the need to write everything down and risk missing critical information on-site, researchers audio-record (or video-record) the interviews of their participants. The benefits of recording interviews suggested by Firmin (2008) are as follows: a) researchers are allowed to think freely while the interview processes; b) researchers can compare interviews with previous or future statements of the participants; c) recording participants' words guarantees the integrity of the study; and d) researchers are able to capture the true intents of participants. On qualitative researchers' stance toward participants, Spradley (1979) says the following:

> By word and by action, in subtle ways and in direct statements, [researchers] say, "I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you would explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?" (p. 34)

Whether an interview format is unstructured or semi-structured, fruitful data production from the interview depends on the researcher's ability to fully understand and interpret participants' verbal and non-verbal representations during the interview process. Interviewing as a type of data collection method seems to fit well with my epistemology of constructivism and to be adequate to answer my research question, in that I need to comprehend participants' experiences based on their descriptions of ongoing events, as well as my own understanding of them.

All the interview conversations through two different types of interviews—semi-structured and open-ended interviews—were digitally recorded and transcribed. I recorded every conversation with a digital voice recorder, connected it to my computer, and transcribed it using ExpressScribe, which enabled me to re-create each conversation while muffling the background noise or modifying the speech pace, synchronize my thinking and feelings as a researcher of the particular interview session, and present a verbatim transcription.

## Types of Interviews

### Formal, initial, and final semi-structured interviews

Formal interviews are pre-planned in qualitative studies with observations. It is common to interview participants before and after observations. Researchers usually note how many times they plan to conduct formal interviews in the description of studies.

I set the agenda but still left room for the participants to be more spontaneous in their responses. In these semi-structured interviews, I, as the researcher, had more control over the topics; however, I needed to develop rapport with participants and probe the range of topics because there was no fixed range of responses to the questions. Semi-structured interviews mean that the researcher wants the resulting text to be “a collaboration of investigator and informant,” and “the researcher has more control over the topics of the interview than in unstructured interviews” (Ayres, 2008). The shift of my role as the researcher in the study let me have a more balanced and efficient position, moving back and forth between being the comprehensive observer who could approach the participants in the wholeness of the research setting and to the controlled interviewer, who could focus on the participants’ individual characteristics.

The reflexivity of the researcher was built around on my role as an assistant observer researcher in relation to the participants in the research context in this phase.

My research question was intended to learn how NES teachers constructed their identities in regard to their pedagogical beliefs in the field of school. The initial semi-structured interviews led me to recognize the pedagogical basis for their teaching, and the final semi-structured interviews enabled me to confirm my understanding based on what I observed and heard in the previous interviews and observations.

**Informal, on-going open-ended interviews**

Informal interviews take place on the research site and provide chances for the participants to describe their experiences, which the researcher has just observed (Hatch, 2002). Unstructured or open-ended interviews can be helpful when a researcher needs to probe into the investigated topic. Thus I relied on informal interviews as an ongoing research method to complement each observation session for my study. The open-ended interview questions have the “grand tour” and “mini-tour” questions suggested by Spradley (1979). For example, I asked a broad question, “Once you just finished teaching, please tell me what you think about your own class today.” that made the participants describe the whole observation session in general. Then I asked other open-ended questions, such as “You mentioned x as your (un) usual teaching practice, please tell me more about how you think about it.” that had more detailed and probing characteristics. With these “mini tour” questions, I used my own interpretation of the observation for deeper probing into the topic.

Informal interviews enabled me to understand what I observed by my asking questions of the participants of the events. The interview was also a meaning-making

process after each observation, filled in the information I missed, and enabled me to gain an understanding from the participants' perspectives.

**Observations**

Participant observation is a data collection method where a researcher participates in everyday activities to gain insights into life through observation in the natural setting. Usually data are recorded in the form of field notes while the researcher remains as unobtrusive as possible (McKechnie, 2008). Participant observation provided more detailed and accurate information about participants so that I could identify the connection between what my participants said in interviews and how they actually performed in teaching. The aspect of looking at everyday events in the natural context and of seeing what was unsaid allowed me to adopt the versatile researcher role, moving back and forth from complete observer to participant-observer throughout the study.

The participation of observation should be balanced and strategic, according to Hatch (2002). Taking a certain role as a researcher or participant in the study and gradually shifting that role are crucial in this type of data collection. My role as an assistant to NES teachers in a class benefited initial rapport-building with the teachers in order for me to be welcome in the observational environment, and later to engage participants in the interviews as well. My role as an observer allowed me to approach the participants' perspectives of the teaching and learning experiences from a different perspective and to construct meanings along with my own understanding of their experiences in the socio-cultural approach. In other words, the shifting role of the researcher in the observation enabled me to utilize both an emic and an etic approach to the research samples.

Qualitative researchers discuss the multifaceted role of a researcher in an observation, which claims a more strategic role for a researcher even after he or she shifts to an observer role. McKechnie (2008) supports the idea, saying that "the purpose of an observation study, the characteristics of the observer, and the nature of the setting all contribute to the choice of an appropriate research role." Of late, more researchers are using the term "membership" to include an observer's peripheral role through active to full membership, which demonstrates the more dynamic role of a researcher even in the observation itself. The researcher role I took on during observations also was dynamic in that I was fully aware of my identity as an educator in the learning and teaching context and my reflexivity as a researcher in the field, and acted in the dynamics of my researcher role.

### Field Notes

With complicated data collection intersected, it is easy for a researcher miss or forget certain details. Field notes were used as a secondary data collection strategy in my research site. I wrote down the details of each my observation and interviews after every time I spent time with participants. The moments could be when I had a short break at school or got into my car after school. This researcher's version of artifact became a rich data source along with other data sources I have already described.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis is "a systematic search for meaning," and the general data analysis process is conceptualized as "asking questions of data," according to Hatch (2002, p. 148). Data analysis is also accessed as "an integral part of qualitative research and constitutes an essential stepping stone toward both gathering data and linking one's findings with higher order concepts" (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2008).

The when and how of data analysis will depend on each study, but many qualitative researchers recommend analyzing data as early as possible. Deborah K. and Will C. van den Hoonaard suggest five features of qualitative data analysis: a) simultaneous data collection with iterative gathering and analyzing processes, b) the practice of writing memos during and after data collection, c) the use of coding, d) the use of writing as a data analysis tool, and e) the development of the data analyzed relating to the existing concepts and literature.

### Methods of Analysis: Identity Narrative Analysis and Dialogic/Performative Narrative Analysis

A narrative here refers to "a life story that the researcher weaves from threads of interviews, observations, and documents" and narrative analysis can be defined as "a family of analytic methods for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form" (Riessman, 2008). Grbich stipulates that "much of our communication is through stories and that these are revealing of our experience, interpretations and priorities" (2007, p. 124). By looking into participants' everyday experiences in the environment through a story lens, I tried to listen to what the participants said and acknowledge how the participants constructed meaning from their lived experiences. In Clandinin and Caine's illustration, "each story told and lived is situated and understood within larger cultural, social, and institutional narratives" (2008). My study with narrative analysis started with the self-reflection of a researcher and the participants, continued with iterative analysis processes from ongoing interviews, and finally mediated and represented selves in broader cultural, institutional, and social contexts.

The data analysis method adopted in this study is a combination of Bamberg's (2012) narrative and identity analysis and Riessman's (2007) dialogic/performative

narrative analysis. I used this hybrid narrative analysis method adopted from the two renowned scholars in the qualitative research field in order to validate interpretations of the events in a particular environment and to expand the interpreter's understanding to the meta-analysis level (Gil-Garcia & Pardo, 2006). I wanted to investigate the participants' identity change and their reconfiguration of identities through my research and some of each scholar's method seemed to fit well with my research question. Bamberg talked about "agency," in which a narrator's tendency to position his mode of storytelling occurs in accordance with the environment where he/she lives and experiences with other people. When agency is detected in narratives, it results from a narrator usually taking "self-positioning." This positioning is how the narrator situates him-/herself "in line with the temporal/spatial arrangements" (Bamberg, 2012, p. 23).

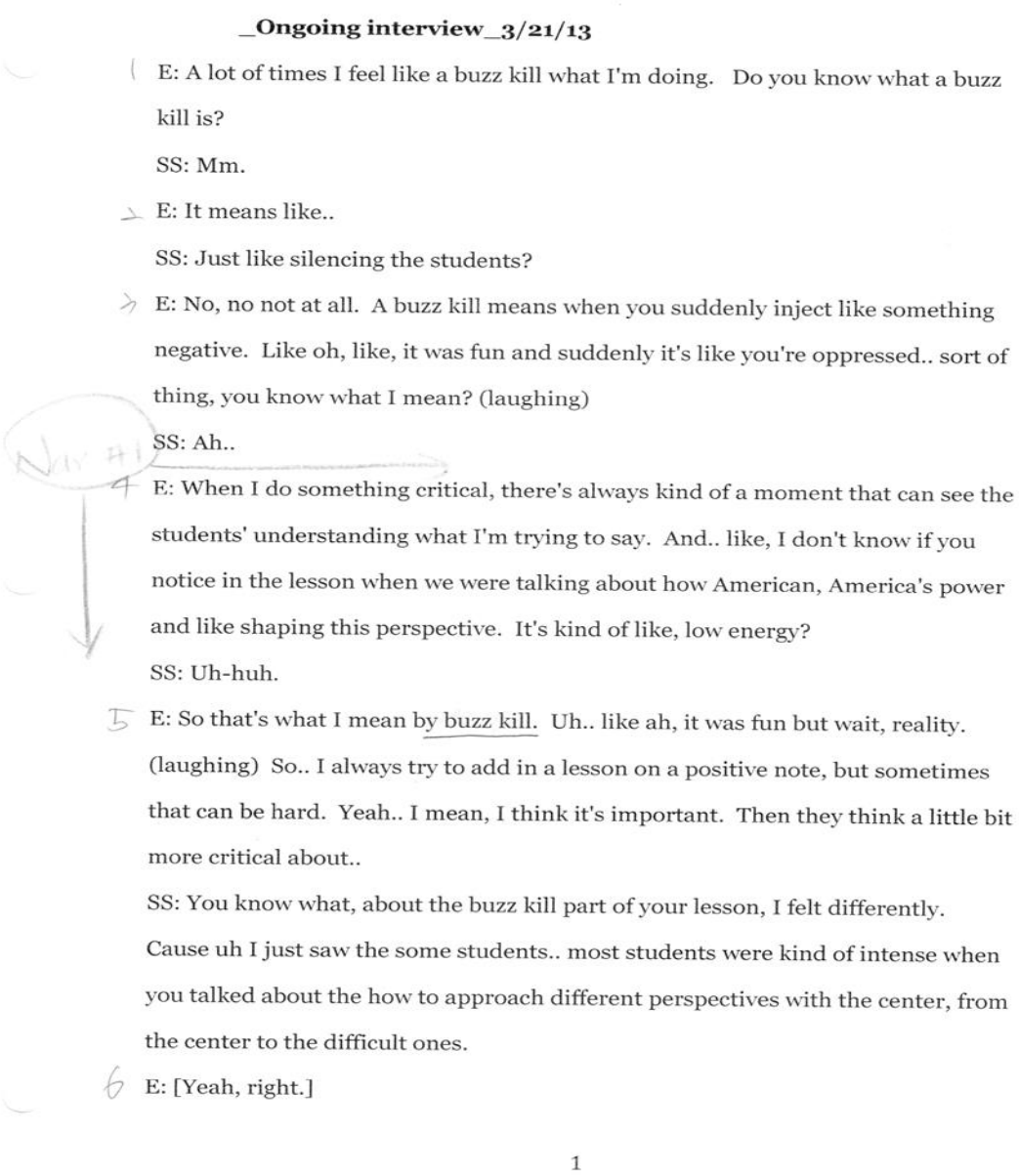
Riessman (2007) introduced dialogic/performative narrative analysis. According to her, emphasizing the performance in narratives does not mean identities are not authentic, but rather that identities are situated and completed by the audience's response. Through narratives of a performing narrator, Riessman suggests researchers indicate performances of identity. The "preferred self" (p. 112) in the narrator's performances sometimes can be presented with various linguistic features—direct speech, asides, repetition, expressive sounds, and verb tense. She also explains the importance of contexts when it comes to comprehending the "hidden dimensions of power" (p. 115) in the narratives. The contexts should include any public issues dissolved in the personal stories as well as the audience, the researcher—what Riessman described as a distinguished feature of dialogic/performative narrative analysis.

## Procedures of Analysis

### Analyzing primary data: interviews

The primary data analysis process covered formal initial and final interviews, as well as informal ongoing interviews. In analyzing interview data, there were three stages: 1. Identify narratives, 2. Data analysis, and 3. Data synthesis.

**Identify narrative.** At the initial stage of Identify narratives, I read through the three participants' interview transcripts and selected what I thought were the important and essential narratives in terms of my research question. My own criteria for identifying narratives were based on exploring narrators' identity and agency. Identity is about a narrator's perceptions of a self and his/her related feelings toward the surrounding people and the environment. Agency indicates more active role of a narrator, an agent. It is about posing an active mode and making choices against a structure or a system which limits the agent's boundary within it. Based on these criteria, any meaningful parts of interview content were selected for narratives. The list that I made with selecting throughout the interview transcripts had 137 narratives in total: 36 for Ann, 57 for Randy, and 44 for Veronica. The Figure-1 shows one of the listed narratives.



**_Ongoing interview_3/21/13**

1 E: A lot of times I feel like a buzz kill what I'm doing. Do you know what a buzz kill is?

SS: Mm.

2 E: It means like..

SS: Just like silencing the students?

3 E: No, no not at all. A buzz kill means when you suddenly inject like something negative. Like oh, like, it was fun and suddenly it's like you're oppressed.. sort of thing, you know what I mean? (laughing)

SS: Ah..

4 E: When I do something critical, there's always kind of a moment that can see the students' understanding what I'm trying to say. And.. like, I don't know if you notice in the lesson when we were talking about how American, America's power and like shaping this perspective. It's kind of like, low energy?

SS: Uh-huh.

5 E: So that's what I mean by buzz kill. Uh.. like ah, it was fun but wait, reality. (laughing) So.. I always try to add in a lesson on a positive note, but sometimes that can be hard. Yeah.. I mean, I think it's important. Then they think a little bit more critical about..

SS: You know what, about the buzz kill part of your lesson, I felt differently. Cause uh I just saw the some students.. most students were kind of intense when you talked about the how to approach different perspectives with the center, from the center to the difficult ones.

6 E: [Yeah, right.]

1

Figure 3-1. An example of listed narratives

**Data analysis.** Once I completed identifying narratives, I tried to analyze each narrative in accordance with my hybrid version of data analysis method at the Data analysis stage. With the hybrid analysis method, I had three factors from each scholar, Bamberg and Riessman, as I have already discussed. From Bamberg (2012), I had 1. Constancy vs. change across time, 2. Sameness vs. difference, and 3. Agency. From Riessman (2007), 1. Identity, 2. Social contexts, and 3. Linguistic devices. Figure-2 presents an example of this analyzing process. While analyzing narratives with these factors, the secondary data like observations along with field notes helped me remember the atmosphere and context of the interview day—the participants' mood and interactions with students—and understand their narratives related with the people and the environment from a comprehensive perspective. The 137 listed-narratives from the previous stage were thus narrowed down to 62 master-listed narratives after this analysis. In addition, I applied additional factors of Title, Unique characteristic, and Main analytic insight to cover each narrative more inclusively and to support the other major factors from the analysis method at this analysis phase. Then all these methodologically selected analyzed data were put into tables and each participant came to have a set of tables as seen in Figure-3. In other words, each narrative analyzed by the factors from the analysis method and additional factors was presented in a table for respective participants.

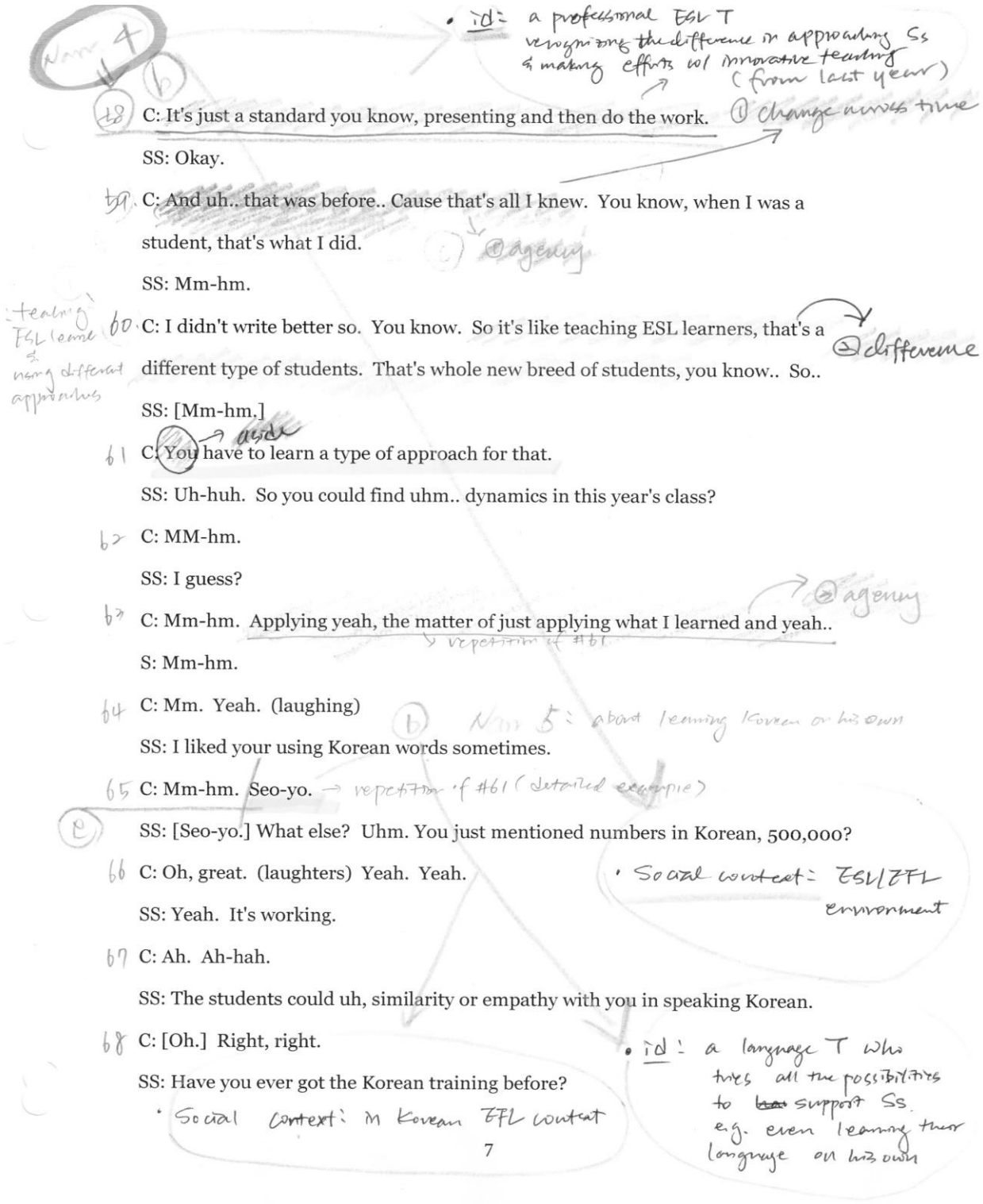



Figure 3-2. An example of master-listed narratives

| ID | Title | Constancy vs. Change across time | Sameness vs. Difference | Agency | Identity | Social context | Linguistic Devices | RQ | Unique characteristic | Main analytic insight |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Int 2 | *Marginalization*–his initial experience with the authority as a recipient rather than a challenger | Change across time (#23 & 25)–due to physical position/ environment change | N/A | World-to-person (#30, 35, 36, & 46) (recipient) | Going through different teaching environment made him feel less active and he was in a position of being directed by the authority | With little teaching experience, it looks natural he did not take the control in teaching especially in the Korean context. | Repts (#30, 35, 36 & 46) | ✓ | Medium–this narrative shows his passive attitude, unlike the most of his later stories. However, it is meaningful in that the example of passiveness is rare in most his stories. | He mainly talks about his prior experience with the authority, which describes he had been the recipient in the narratives. |
| >3 | *Counteractive*–insufficient teacher trainings mismatching with the purpose of the NES recruiting system & his will to change | N/A | Using "us" as a member of the NES group (#58 & 59), contrasting to "they" indicating the authority (#60) | World-to-person–Confused, not ready, & vulnerable (#50 & 53);<br><br>Person-to-world–a will to change the system on teacher training (#56) | Feeling confused bet. not-ready-to-teach vs. a will-to-change, blaming the system for under-preparedness | Counteractive to the prevalent prejudice on some NES teachers➔ indicating the flaw of the system | Repts (#48) | ✓ | Very high | This is very intriguing narrative in that he just converts his challenges to the counteractive moves. He shows a strong agency and assimilates himself with the qualified NES teacher group here. |

Figure 3-3. An example of analysis table

**Data Synthesis.** At the last stage of Data synthesis, I repeatedly looked at each factor among narratives, following the vertical direction of each factor in a table, and tried to find key words, patterns, and gaps among them. Based on this, I drew concept maps for the six major factors: Title, Constancy vs. change across time, Sameness vs. difference, Agency, Identity, and Social contexts. Figure-4 clockwisely presents concept maps of Social contexts, Identity, Agency, and Constancy vs. change across time. With these clearly visualized outcomes of tables and concept maps, I again looked to commonalities, differences, gaps, repetitions, or even negative cases among the criteria of Agency, Identity, and Linguistic devices. This let me look at the data within and across narratives and participants and have a comprehensive perspective on

the previously analyzed data. Based on this synthesis process, I wrote synthesis notes for each participant where I provided narrative examples and justified my synthesis algorithm.

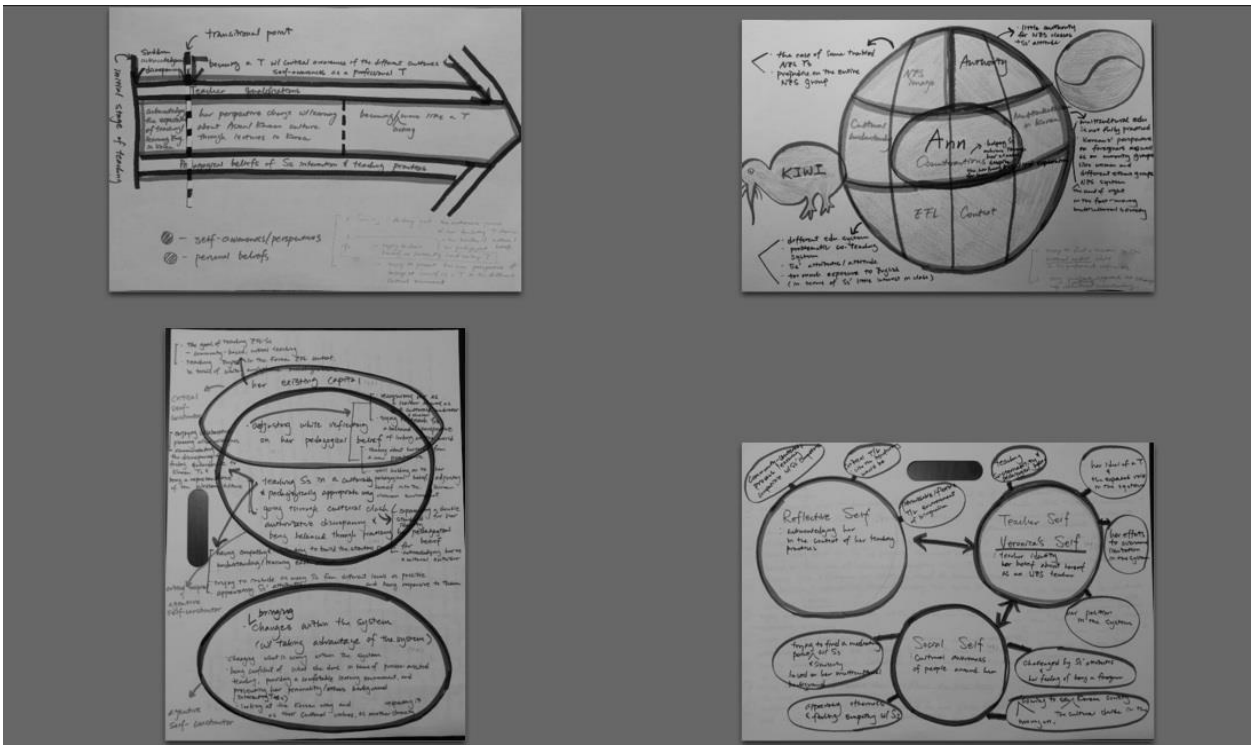



Figure 3-4. Examples of concept maps

## Trustworthiness of the Study

Lincoln and Guba examined the trustworthiness of a research study involving credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as replacing the traditional validity components of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity respectively (1985). In other words, qualitative validity in qualitative research studies can be assured by these four elements. These are also evaluated as freeing qualitative researchers of being forced into the quantitative model, so I assess my study in terms of the criteria suggested by Given and Saumure (2008).

First, credibility is sure to be found in the study, because I as a researcher tried the right data collection and data analysis on the continuum of the research design throughout the study, accurately assessed the data, and answered the research questions within the theoretical framework by describing the phenomenon in question. Furthermore, the hybrid analysis method confirmed the compatibility between the outcomes analyzed by factors from the two renowned methodology scholars, so the stable outcome assured the reliability of the data analysis process along with its result within this research.

Transferability discusses the study's applicability in other contexts. I assessed this study based on the literature of EFL education and with my understanding of NES teachers in EFL cross-cultural contexts across the world. It is quite reasonable that a study of NES teachers in South Korea could be applied in other EFL contexts worldwide.

Next, I presented the whole data collection and analysis process in detail. As a result, any researcher who wants to conduct the kind of research I have executed and discussed here will be able to reproduce it methodologically in other similar EFL contexts. Going one step further, other researchers who want to do similar research to mine may pursue a similar analysis of the phenomenon. Realistically, I daresay that my research can be the initial point of other similar research, which can be the positive etic application of this qualitative research.

Lastly, in objective research, data is considered to be unbiased. Confirmability is about matching the interpretations and findings with the data. Data should be the footage of every data collection and analysis process. I have worked on data

analysis/synthesis procedure during fall 2013 semester at UF with Dr. Mirka Koro-Ljungberg, who kindly shared her time and provided rigorous academic support. She actively supported every aspect of methodology, from research plan through data analysis to data synthesis as the data auditor and eminent qualitative researcher.

**Subjectivity Statement**

A subjectivity statement is intended to indicate who researchers are in relation to what and whom they are studying. A subjectivity statement includes an autobiographical element, but also describes the individual researcher in relation to the research participants (Preissle, 2008).

**Personal experience as an EFL teacher in Korean EFL context**

My teaching experience as an EFL teacher at a public middle school in Seoul, South Korea inspired me to investigate the topic in the EFL field. Of course, the public demand of some innovation in EFL education with NES teachers is also relevant; however, my intention to explore the area started from my teaching experience. Unlike other non-native English teachers, I was able to teach middle schoolers as an NES teacher thanks to my education at a U.S. graduate school and my English competency. Even though I was a Korean native who had undergraduate degrees at Korean universities, I was treated as an NES teacher academically and was culturally separated from the non-native English teachers in South Korea. This was quite a unique experience for me, and it also helped me have empathy with the NES teachers in my study. This empathy was also shared by the participants in my study who could relate to me as a fellow NES teacher. I am sure that my shared identity with my research participants provided with certain insights to my study.

**College teaching experience in the U.S.**

My experience of teaching undergraduate students in the U.S. was a great cross-cultural experience. I have two undergraduate degrees from universities in South Korea and a master's degree from a university in the U.S. As a doctoral student who can speak both Korean and English, I taught pre-service teachers at a university in a U.S. university. As an instructor from a different cultural background, I had a lot of meaningful experiences with my students in cross-cultural contexts where I was able to relate to my research participants, and vice versa in ways of sharing cultural and academic experiences. My belief that I was a good language teacher was determined by my successful cultural code-switching and my mediation between the Korean and American cultures. I found enjoyable about teaching students was that both I and my students had benefit from our mutual cross-cultural learning and teaching experiences.

## Limitations

This study has its own limitations as qualitative research. Though I presented thick description as an in-depth analysis of the participants, the question of subjectivity in this qualitative study still remains as a debatable issue. Furthermore, the small numbers of participants and schools can be another problematic issue for those who anticipate a broad and extensive set of data in the research.

Another limitation of this study is about a variety in the few data set. Seeing participants at different stages in much longer time period would be better to critically see the process of their identity position and reposition. I only had participants who already started to teach and had a limited perspective on the stage of each NES teacher's career path. Likewise, I had a limited viewpoint on teachers at different grade levels in that I had one NES teacher at a middle school and two teachers at two

different high schools. The variety in the data set could have provided richness in the whole research.

However, I conducted the research at public educational institutions and tried to focus on the meaning-making process with systematic data collection, analysis, and synthesis process with the participants, which resulted in qualitative findings on the researched topic.

## Summary

This study began with the research question—how three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors while teaching in South Korean secondary schools. Based on the constructivism paradigm, I conducted a research for the three phases and collected data from November 2012 and June 2013. In the first phase, I communicated with the NES teachers through emails and built a rapport with them. I conducted the initial formal, semi-structured interviews in the first part of the second phase and informal, open-ended interviews after each class observation in the latter part of the second phase. I conducted final formal individual interviews in the third phase. The interviews helped me understand the NES teachers' pedagogical beliefs in the field of their teaching and allowed me to check on what I observed and perceived in the course of interview and observation sessions. To analyze the data collected, I adopted identity narrative analysis and identity construction theory to derive distinct features in the narratives and to examine the commonalities among the inductively selected data. As a way to reinforce the trustworthiness of the study, I did member checking for research validation. In the following two chapters, I present findings from the previously suggested data analysis process.

# CHAPTER 4
# BEING POSITIONED AS FOREIGNERS

## Overview

By analyzing the data with the combination of Bamberg and Riessman's narrative analysis methods and by scrutinizing the inductively drawn findings with Trent (2012)'s professional identity construction theory, I tried to answer to my research question–How do three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors while teaching in South Korean middle/high schools?—and to understand the NES teachers' re-configured teacher identity in the cross-cultural contexts through this research.

From the data analysis process, I particularly drew on the data analyzed with Bamberg's agency and Riessman's identity in terms of what I define agency and identity in this study. As I mentioned previously in the Chapter 3, Bamberg's agency is about a narrator's self-positioning himself/herself in relations with the surrounding environment, and Riessman's identity discusses the performance of a narrator's identity. Both efforts are mainly for presenting the narrator as an agent who can be viewed to actively proceed his/her identification process. Then identity in my study is about what a narrator feels and perceives in relations with otherness in a certain context, and agency is about what the narrator actually can proactively do—making choices and taking actions—against the structure or system limiting his/her individualities. With this analytical approach based on the two scholars' notions and my own definition for this study, I examined the data to the criteria of agency, identity, and linguistic devices and to the Trent's identity construction theory. In his research on eight NES teachers in Hong Kong's primary and secondary schools, Trent (2012) noticed NES teachers

perceived the challenges caused by the local authority to their self-positioning as professional language teachers:

> Whether the subject positions that NETs believe were made available to them by local English teachers and school managers suggest potential conflict with their own self-positioning and, if so, how NETs report responding to this conflict (p. 107).

He explains the role of any conflicts that NES teachers deal with may affect their identity construction, and discusses their counteractions between the different subject positions. The counteractions are often presented in linguistically "goal-oriented actions" (p. 115) in their narratives. In order to overcome the antagonistic relations, the author suggests having a "third space" (Bhabha, 1990; cited in Trent, 2012, p. 121). In the newly established third space, teachers are expected to present their own pedagogical beliefs and to take actions, free of any conflicts from the authority.

The journey of identity construction for the NES teachers was indeed a process of balancing their teacher identities—from equilibrium through disequilibrium to reshaped equilibrium—just like a structure of narrative works. In a structure of narrative, a setting and a problem are introduced, then a conflict is presented and characters confront the conflict, and finally there comes a resolution through the characters' resolving it. In other words, I examined how these teachers repositioned their identities from being positioned to self-positioning and how they empowered themselves as bridge builders while experiencing differences and conflicts, which led them to re-configure their identities as professional language instructors in a cross-cultural context.

In the following section, I explain the characteristics that I found from the data analysis in terms of two of the participants' positions—being positioned by authority, and

by culture and community. Self-repositioning as bridge builders is elaborately discussed in the following Chapter 5.

## Positioned as Foreigner Teachers

The teacher participants talked about their challenges by the lack of autonomy, NES fantasy, and the extracurricular characteristic of their courses at school. They were confident of their qualifications as language teachers but felt helpless with having much less autonomy in class than most Korean teachers. In other words, their individual perception of themselves as language teachers were threatened by the conflicting issues in the course of being positioned by the school authority. Participants also wanted to be treated as qualified language teachers but felt they were only seen as native speakers of English who were eligible for teaching speaking. In the defined norm of their classes, they felt disoriented in between what they wanted to do and what they could do in their teaching practices along with the restricted autonomy and the role of teaching speaking to students.

### Positioned by Authority

#### Teaching without autonomy

Participants seemed to think Korean teachers' having more decision-making roles at school was not based on their linguistic competence in the target language but on the cultural/linguistic nativity background. Though the participants all had an autonomy issue when they compared their condition to the one of Korean teachers, each teacher also had additional ideas on autonomy.

Ann seemed very controlled and confident of what she was doing, especially in working with her co-teachers. However, she also seemed to find it difficult to work with co-teachers she considered under-qualified. Though they had more autonomy in class,

and their English competence was not good enough to teach the students fluency, she presented her willingness to try out new teaching practices with her co-teachers. She also presented her role as "my role," contrasting with her co-teacher's explaining role and her fellow NES teachers' "teaching something from power." She described her feeling from having little power at school when she compared her situation with her fellow NES teachers at other schools, and expected the rewarding feeling or outcome from teaching with little power would not be sufficient. In the last sentence using the subject of "you" instead of "I," she tried to confirm the importance of having autonomy at school with referring her case to the audience's and therefore indicated her lack of autonomy in the context.

Ann: I think…my role should be with the co-teacher…[I'm] doing…most of the interactions with the kids…the interaction [is] not just for the lesson, but to interact with a foreigner…to have a co-teacher is quite important for the explanations…I think my role is okay here…now…I still think it's important. Especially my co-teachers, some of their English ability isn't that high…I think it's important they will be able to speak proper English to the kids…I want to practice the lesson with the co-teacher and they're same what I'm trying to do, maybe…I know some of my friends in Jeonju…So they have to uh, kids are graded, so they have to do well in their English class. And so they can teach something from power. But here is different…I'm just here for speaking…And I only see these kids once a week, once a couple of weeks…I think I've been probably a teacher…Sometimes a little frustrated…I think it depends on your school situation, it's to…how much control you can have, what you can do. (Final Interview, 1.)

Like Ann, Randy also went through different teaching environment which made him feel less active and he was in a position of being directed by the school authority. Randy also did not feel in control in the school environment. He frequently used the terms "they wanted/had/asked/bring me" when he talked about getting directions from the school authorities, indicating his feeling of vulnerability and confusion when others made decisions for him about how he should teach. He tried to show the level of

intensity of what he felt about school authorities with the repetitive they+verb+me sentences. The one-way direction from school authorities became even burdensome challenges especially when he related it to his little teaching experiences or teaching trainings. He presented him as a teacher with little autonomy and professional trainings.

Randy: They wanted me to start doing the Friday class. Every Friday, the students will learn, like, theater…Last year…we did a play for a competition. Competing against other schools. And they had me direct it. And the students wrote it. [And they] asked me to direct it, and uh, we won the competition. That was really cool…And also from what I understand the year before I came here, they had that theater class. But then last year they decided not to do it. I don't know why, but now they bring me back to…so…There are a lot of challenges. Uh, you know, when I was a college student, I didn't study education. I didn't study teaching English as a second language. And you know, it was in theater. When I first came back to Korea in 2010 as a teacher, uh, you know, the training I had was like two days of shadowing a teacher. And the teacher was a Korean man who spoke Korean to students. And there wasn't really much I could learn from watching that. And I think that the first year was, wow, I mean, it was an eye opener. That was also really scary because you know, because I'm inexperienced, I was just worried that. (Initial Interview, 2.)

Unlike Ann and Randy, Veronica did find common ground with her Korean teachers. She said she initially felt empathy with them when they showed their support for her. However, she also explained that she felt different from them when it came to teacher autonomy issues. Her trail era for adapting herself to the Korean system was also her time of trying to figure out what her position was in the system. That was very hard for her, considering her being present in the different cultural context where Veronica showed her subordinate feeling to other Korean teachers in terms of teacher autonomy.

Veronica: I came in with like, so much energy and struggled a lot at the beginning to clarify my place in the school and figure out what it was I was doing…But I think that people were very supportive anyway. Even though they were

> confused by my teaching style. And uh, really welcomed me very warmly and also kind of reminded me that I didn't really have the status of a teacher because if I tried to make a decision…it would almost always be taken away, which is understandable because you know, I don't know the system. How can I make a decision if I don't know what's going on. But then you just feel like, I wasn't a real teacher and I was a child that you know, the other teachers, Korean teachers are just like making all these decisions for me. As I didn't have any kind of ability, wasn't an authority figure, and…When I first came, much more than that, I had a lot of like, trouble demanding authority for the students…So I didn't know the context usually. (Ongoing Interview, 7.)

The discrepancy between her teacher role in the field and the limitation of the system seemed to give her a dilemma. She was exempted from the core of the system but had to accomplish her role as a teacher in charge of her students. Veronica showed her confusion in finding her teacher identity when she talked about her role in the Korean school system—being a teacher who has no real power but has to teach students with authority and with care.

> Veronica: I think the main thing is that I'm not really part of the Korean education system. So a lot of times, it's very unclear what my role is supposed to be even with the school…I'm not a real teacher. Like, I'm a teacher but I don't give grades. I don't have real power. But at the same time, I still have to teach. I'm an authority figure. I don't have the same legitimacy as Korean teachers. So a lot of times I feel like students kind of see me as a distraction or a way to have fun, which is fine but I'm still a teacher. And a lot of times, I don't know how to navigate that…[but] there are advantages to that. Because I'm not really a teacher, students feel more comfortable sharing certain things with me or seem to be more friendly because I'm not in this kind of authority position. (Initial Interview, 1.)

Discussed subjects regarding autonomy ranged from fellow NES teachers to Korean educational administrators. The diversity in the group seemed to show the level of each participant's frustration that they felt as helpless novice language teachers in the Korean EFL context. Their goal of becoming competent language teachers and practicing various teaching strategies only led to the lack of autonomy in their teaching practices. In addition, the participants seemed to feel most Korean teachers had more

autonomy with the native advantage. Some of them they described had little linguistic competence of the target language and little teaching experiences, which made the participants relatively feel deprived of autonomy in teaching.

**Seen only as English-natives**

All three participants seemed to suffer from cultural prejudice at their workplaces, in that the expectations of them as Westerners were relatively lower than those of the Korean teachers. Even though they were Westerners—not the usual victims of prejudice in Western society—they were not perceived as individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds, but only as idealized stereotyped whites by Koreans. Koreans' idealized idea had been probably constructed through information and images reflected via Western media resources, which was strikingly different from the participants' self-awareness. This was difficult for them, especially because it was inconsistent with their perception of the fact they were teachers who were supposed to be respected by most Koreans. The fact that teachers and students were not the exceptions for cultural prejudice seemed to be shocking to teacher participants because their expectations for being teachers in South Korea were high and were based on the historically high respect for teachers in the country. Many Koreans showed a preference for Westerners, which bothered them to normally function as language teachers as well as to represent their cultures. This in turn could affect the Korean students, who in this worldview may be led to have a very limited view toward Western-society and people. As I could notice the preference in a survey done for 246 8$^{th}$ graders by Jeonlaman-do Office of Education in 2011, students were asked to answer to the question, "We are going to invite NES teachers. If they are all competent in English, which ethnicity will you prefer?" Although students who answered, "Doesn't matter" were 43%, the

students who said, “I prefer Whites” were 33%, which was twice as races with colors. To the second question, “If you think Whites look cool, why is that?” almost 80% of the students showed racial favor for whites based on their representations in media (Jeolanam-do Office of Education, 2011).

The NES teachers also had to deal with Koreans’ perception of Westerners based on the misbehaviors of some NES teachers and general stereotypes about Westerners. Koreans typically tended to think the Western culture stands for Americans—all white, all rich, and all culturally open-minded living in the American dream. They were skilled at differentiating themselves from the misbehaved NES teachers and at pursuing excellence in their jobs despite the challenges they faced. It would have been difficult to define their individualities when they tried to stay away from some Westerners with behavior issues and fix the misrepresented images at the same time. While Koreans couldn’t accept misbehaviors of some Westerners, they still favored the stereotyped Western representation and even wanted to appreciate it in the presence of my teacher participants. This clearly showed Koreans’ cultural double standard when they approached foreigners—still having a colonized perspective but assessing cultural outsiders from their own nationalistic perspective. In addition to the cultural discrepancy they felt, Koreans’ lack of multicultural understanding seemed to greatly influence their own understanding of the Korean culture.

Though the teacher participants were fully aware of their pedagogical beliefs, their actual expected representation as NES teachers seemed to not reflect what they want to do and what they can do. They wanted to improve their teaching and become pedagogically positive educators as freshmen in the profession, but the limited role

seemed to make them feel a discrepancy and hinder them from getting closer to the locals. Unlike the simple definition of the role for NES teachers—teachers for speaking only—all three teachers seemed to be under great pressure due to a discrepancy between their aspiration to become educational professionals and the imposition of their limited role in school.

Ann mentioned there had been a big gap between her expectations for her teaching role and the way the system and the public valued English language education. According to Ann, she used a structured lesson where students were supposed to do a combination of four skills together, but she was forced to soon admit the reality of her position as providing merely a speaking role in class (as opposed to an interactive one). She expressed her belief that a qualified teacher should have an educational effect on students. In doing so, she clearly presented herself as teaching in a meaningful and enjoyable way, which was different from the expected role of NES teachers and some misbehaving NES teachers. Using "you" in "you came to school/you didn't put any effect/you are lazy" when she built cases of an unqualified NES teacher and using "I" as in "I want to come to school" when referring herself when she talked about her own definition of a qualified teacher, Ann tried to draw the audience's attention to the issue and make a clear contrast between the two bad/good cases. As she regarded some of NES teachers' misbehaviors as a personal thing, Ann showed her intention of definitely wanting to keep herself from the troubled group. She also meant those lazy NES teachers are only individual cases but they cannot be generalized as typical Westerner's behaviors—not all Westerners are lazy, having parties, and not working hard and being responsible for their teaching.

Ann: I have each structure—drill, intro, warm-up, mini-activity, mini lesson, and a warm-down. I don't like that but most teachers are happy you're here to speak English…I think if you're lazy and bad teacher, you know what, in some places, I think you came to school and didn't put any effort and you are very lazy, even being very difficult, like, I want to come to school and enjoy it with the students. But that's a personal…thing. And the teachers might be here just to party, and so…yeah, I guess it's a personal thing. (Initial Interview, 5.13.)

What seemed to be interesting was how even an idealized stereotype or a misrepresentation toward different cultural groups could be an obstacle for NES teachers in dealing with students. Ann noticed misrepresented images of Westerners that were deeply rooted in her students. She used a direct quote of a conversation between a student and herself to create a real-time atmosphere for the audience. She provided her insights into the situation:

Ann: They just still can't believe that they're seeing a foreigner. And that's so overwhelming for them. And it's so exciting but also like, some of the attitudes towards foreigners and some of the ideas are quite sort of skewed…So I think to be able to like, interact with the kids and show to…that we're normal…My elementary students are and [in] their textbook, one of the characters is a black girl…Some of students like…They won't say black students' lines or she's dirty or they laugh…And I think…to have a foreign teacher…to have a black foreign teacher is…it's…cultural learning…My students come up to me, "Oh, teacher. I'm so ugly. I have to have jewelry or something." That makes me so sad. But like, you can say, "Oh, no, you're so beautiful and please don't do that." [I think it's] Because they think that and they really idealize the ways or the ideas of the ways which is how Westerners love or how they act and so, I think to be able to some, sort of correct some of those ideas and introduce sort of, you know, ideas to them because I think a lot of what they say on TV isn't real. (Ongoing Interview, 1.)

Just as Ann did, Randy seemed to also go through a confused period resulting from his recognition of the mismatch between the established NES image/purpose and stereotype, and his own ideal teacher figure. Caucasians are usually looked highly upon by the Korean public because most people believe Westerners speak politely, behave gently, and look more handsome than Asians, probably based on what they see

from Hollywood movies. Randy wanted to be presented not by the pre-established image of whites but by what he is as a person. As a native English speaker without an ESL/EFL teaching background, he had some difficulties with dealing with issues that resulted from the expectations from Koreans about him based on their ideas about whites. Koreans expected Randy to be a white who would speak supposedly Standard English and have sophisticated manners just like good-looking white males do in the media. His perplexity even got worse when his image was used without his permission to advertise an NES program—a large photo of him appeared on the advertisement banner with the catchphrase, “Learn from foreign teacher” at a private cramming school. Instead of being favored in Korean society only for superficial reasons, he wanted to be seen as a language teacher who could do a good job. Randy seemed embarrassed by the discrepancy between what Koreans want from him and what he wants to be appreciated about what he does. His perception of the discrepancy was reinforced by his Korean colleagues talking about the purpose of NES teachers in Korea—for teaching speaking only. In order to present the purpose of NES teachers, he referred to his Korean colleague’s words and switched from the first-person voice, “us” (as in “the students need to practice talking to us”) to the third-person voice, “foreigners” (as in “why the foreigners are used”) and “they” (as in “and they work in this”) to give the account an impression of an official definition. At this time, Randy felt “the foreigners are used” for this limited purpose rather than appreciated as real language teachers. But he did show his ambivalence about this perspective, when he changed the word he chose to describe this feeling from “used” to “hired.”

Randy: I think that in South Korea there could be some kind of uh, the way the foreigners are viewed, uh, we have this innate ability to speak English,

> and so we can work as foreigners…that kind of expectation is…it's very easy for people to not meet that expectation because like I said, they haven't had a training in education, they haven't been trained to teach…Last year in Hyoja-dong…they took a photo of me, made a banner and hung it on the side of the building. They had my face on the banner. And uh, it said something in Korean like, "Learn from…foreign teacher" whatever…I really hope that I'm doing good…I really like that, you know, actually fulfilling whatever I'm supposed to be doing…The photo wasn't that good…But that was basically it. I only talked to other people about this, [to] co-teachers and they told me that…the students need to practice talking to us. And…that seems to be [a] general answer among Koreans of why the foreigners are used…Probably chose the wrong word. That's why foreigners are…hired. And they work in this you know, here. (Initial Interview, 9.11.)

While he struggled with the NES teachers' idealized image, Randy had to deal with Koreans' prejudices because of other, troubled NES teachers. Those teachers had become famous for their misbehaviors in and out of the classroom. Randy devoted a lot of energy to representing himself as a sincere and competent teacher who was different from those other teachers and who could be considered representative of qualified NES teachers. He did not understand the behavior of the other teachers, and he pointed out that it was the NES teachers' responsibilities to prepare themselves for teaching, in the circumstance of not knowing that there were no teacher training and that EFL experience was not required. Randy gave his own opinion about why NES teachers' qualifications were insufficient compared to Koreans' expectation for them. According to him, the reason why some NES teachers with little experience were hired was that Koreans had vague expectations related to native speakers' innate ability to teach. He blamed the Korean NES system for creating these false expectations and he said that the programs' low requirements for NES teachers let some under-qualified NES teachers into the system. With repeatedly using the subject "you" in "you gotta guide/you gatta train" and thus calling for the audience's acute attention, he tried to

stress the importance of the recruiting and training functions of the NES system. Randy criticized the under-preparedness of the NES system with explaining that it existed not for thorough support system but for only recruiting NES teachers.

Randy: They do the illegal drugs and stuff. It's not everyone but I mean…it doesn't surprise me that something like that would happen. But I'm not gonna put any blame on the foreigners because they come to teach when it comes down to it. You know, they get hired with very minimal like…requirements. It's so, of course they take a job like that, you know. It sounds awesome to hear: a free room, everything. So it's not their fault. But I think it needs to be…the system has to change like, we talked about this before. You gotta guide your hiree, new employees, you gotta guide them, you gotta train them, you know, which I don't get here at all. (Ongoing Interview, 5.)

In the meantime, Veronica seemed to feel she was obligated to be a positive representative of Western culture in order to meet Koreans' expectation for her based on their way of looking at her. It must have been very difficult for her to accept a pre-established teacher image of being a lively, entertaining native speaking teacher, which was very different from her own self-perspective of becoming a professional teacher with critical pedagogy. Most of time, having little autonomy at school only made her feel powerless as a teacher, and she could not express her frustration due to the expectation that she, as a foreign teacher, be always polite and care-free just like most American movie stars are presented in the media. She tried to live up to the stereotyped expectations as Westernized perceived by Koreans because she thought it was the expectation for her as a language teacher, which only frustrated her:

Veronica: [Be]cause I was frustrated by all the limitations…what I was doing and it would be a lie to say that I was always positive. But at the same time, I felt like I couldn't express like any negative thoughts to Korean people and especially the students and teachers. So I worked very hard to maintain this image of like, a positive teacher and very positive, very happy and…I can definitely be that way. I want to be but it's a psychologically strange, like always performing that image…I think that's why I felt so tired after the first semester. (Ongoing Interview, 7.)

Veronica seemed to be confused by the expectations of NES teacher from the educational authorities compared to her own teaching goals. Her role in the classroom was supposed to teach English as a native speaker, but what and how to teach English were not specified for her. Most of the rime, she tried to find a way to put her pedagogical beliefs into practice and occupy the position she wanted in the system while dealing with the reality of the NES system as implemented at her school. She talked about the unspecified role of NES teachers in the system:

> Veronica: A lot of times…the role of English teacher is so unclear. And also they don't really tell you what they want from you, at least my experience, like, their expectations are, there are no expectations. I think that when I first came, it was like, okay, you're teaching English, but it was like really I mean, there was no structure. There was no expectations, there was no curriculum…I don't know what they want. And it seems like they don't want anything specifically. They just want me to be there teaching English but that could mean so many things. So I just take it the way I want. (Initial Interview, 2.)

All three participants presented their hardship of finding an adequate role as language teachers because of a discrepancy between their pedagogical beliefs and the imposed role/image by the Korean authority. Even though they intended to become professional language teachers, they were only native English-speaking teachers with a limited role in the system.

**Teaching courses as extracurricular**

The participants seemed to feel a gap between their own expectations for an NES teacher and about what they actually were able to accomplish in their classrooms. Most English classes for NES teachers were supposed to focus on improving students' speaking skills and the NES teachers seemed to feel excluded from the core curriculum. For NES teachers, their English classes were only the fringe course separated from major content-subjects.

Ann talked about her challenges with her students in her class. Due to the extracurricular nature of her class, students' behavior was not predictable and controllable as many students' attention was distracted in the lost communication without co-teachers' active support. With the diverse dynamics of students she faced in her class, she seemed to have a hard time though she had a high expectation for her teaching practices. In the teaching context where co-teachers were not helpful and students expected to have a play time, Ann had to be very flexible in order to match her goal and the circumstances in each class every day. Moreover, her expectation for teaching in a different country seemed altered after she came to know what students' expectations were for learning English. Her students' eagerness for learning English was not as high as she had expected because she believed they felt little need for it or felt like they had already been exposed to English enough. Some students showed little interest in class because they were exposed to those kinds of Western style teaching outside school, which she noticed little student motivation in her classroom. Despite the challenge, she seemed to think positively about it when she came to face students' less motivated attitude.

Ann: I felt…teaching English is being something tout [in that Korean people think highly of English competence therefore English teachers are highly respected in South Korea]. And that will be very important to say that, but they do…these kids want to go for engineers and things like that, studying in Korea. Maybe English doesn't seem to be important to them, I thought…a lot of them don't rarely care about English. That's what I thought of it little different. (Final Interview, 4.)

Like Ann, Randy seemed to feel frustrated when he was actually placed in his teaching environment. Contrast to his goal to unfold his pedagogical beliefs through teaching practices, the actual teaching environment was far from his ideal one. Though he had acknowledged the ridiculousness of NES teachers' class—that there was no

common ground for communication between native English-speaking teachers and native Korean students—and therefore its insignificant status in the system, he felt frustrated when he actually had to deal with students in his classroom. His frustration was clearly presented with his constant questions about the problematic NES class and its effectiveness in the system in a form of direct speech. The following vignette explained his questioning on NES teachers' classes as regular courses.

Randy: When I was in the army…I met a woman who was an English teacher and so, my first question was "Wow, you speak, you teach English, right?" "That must mean you speak Korean, right?" And she was like, "Well, I don't speak Korean." So I was like, "That's impossible! How does that work? That doesn't make any sense"…So I just kind of thought that…that there is some kind of system in place, as far as how you train the foreigners like, there's some kind of thorough, like, really good. And then I came here, it's like, doesn't exist. And so and then I got to classroom and…the kids were like, very unforgiving. Like, it was very scary. And I was just like, well, "How does this work? And doesn't work?" And "Why does it last so many years?" You know, the idea and haven't people already seen the flaws? (Initial Interview, 5.)

Like the other two teachers with an inadequate teaching condition, Veronica tried to have sustainability in her teaching, but it was difficult to maintain her stance in the environment where her course was considered as a sidelined speaking course. Veronica definitely felt she was apart from the core system, but she also seemed to acknowledge that there is little thing to do in her position set by the authority. Her teacher role in school along with her teacher evaluation were all connected to what her course meant in the system. Veronica seemed confused by what she believed to be meaningful was unsustainable in the system.

Veronica: A lot of times I just feel like…I don't know what my importance is at school…Because like, what am I really giving the students? I guess it's very unclear. If I want to create a system where I can measure their progress…but nobody's telling me to do that. So I don't know how the school knows my impact is or just no way to measure that really…I feel like what I'm doing is not necessarily sustainable. Like when we said that

> I stay here because I felt like [I should] try to continue relationships and really build up this [program]…the curriculum extends throughout students' education, [it shouldn't just be that] [a] teacher comes, and [the] teacher goes, and [then a] new person comes. (Initial Interview, 2.3.)

Each participant addressed their doubt on the importance of their courses when the courses were seen as extracurricular courses. Furthermore, no feedback on their teaching practices and no specified role from the school authority added their doubt on the importance of their courses.

**Positioned by Culture and Community**

**Experiencing different gender expectations**

Ann and Veronica showed their experience of the double standard on female Westerners in South Korea. Unlike Randy who only had to deal with the idealized representation of white Westerners, these two female teachers were burdened one more cultural disparity in their workplace.

Ann's experience in South Korea contributed to her thinking that cultural education should be emphasized in the current education. On one of observation days, there came a male co-teacher who was there to deliver some snack for Ann. He was not the male co-teacher described in her narrative, but he definitely reminded her of her past experience. In her narrative, some of her male co-teachers criticized her appearance, which humiliated her. It was also an experience that was completely out of her realm of experience and expectations. In South Korea, the people usually do not expect decent women to play soccer. Rather, they think it is only for men's or boys' sports. Women without make-ups are not socially acceptable even among women's group, not to mention among the men's group. This example also showed her existing cultural norm as a female collided with her male colleagues, which apparently impacted

her self-confidence as a female. Her experience explained Koreans' cultural norm on gender appearances and their expectation for appropriate gender behavior. Along with the different gender expectations she had to deal with, Ann's recognition of Koreans' cultural misrepresentations of minority groups added her understanding of their gender prejudice. She often noticed students were warned by some Korean colleagues' racist remarks with negative representations of women from certain ethnic groups. She frequently used direct speech when she described what was said about gender misrepresentations to plainly deliver her emotions to the audience.

Ann: And some like…co-teachers, sometimes they'll say things…Argh, no. That's kind of rude. I was just different…And like, sometimes take a deep breath, [tell yourself] "that's okay." Just like little things like…"You play soccer well…for a girl." Then I was like, Okay. Or, "You need to put make-up on, because you look sick." Wow. That's sick. That's alright. That's a sick truth, but just like, he was like…I wouldn't like to be a woman here forever, because I think…but maybe this is a very strong opinion…There seems to be sometimes different roles for me, and different roles for them and yeah…This is just 'cause I was brought up where I can do anything. Or thought I could do anything. I don't know. It's a different side, different societies, value different things…But I can see how unfair it is, sometimes…I just cry, little bit sad…For a woman, how appearance is so important. They have to go have surgery and things like that…But the whole emphasis doesn't matter as long [as] they look good…But in New Zealand, obviously the women aren't known for being the most beautiful. We just wish it was a cliché. We don't care, so I don't know. But I'm sure you understand completely…That is just my point of view…Maybe we should change the way, ways to look at others, not the foreigners but I mean, but different Korean people, or different Korean cultures… And it's like we talked about, Vietnamese and Cambodian women, Filipina women. They come here and just like, I've heard co-teachers telling students "Oh, if you're naughty, if you're lazy, you'll get a Vietnamese wife." Like, it's a forbidden thing. But it's like, it's just one of those things that will change, I guess…in time. But there's also great things about Korea. (Ongoing Interview, 3.)

Like Ann, Veronica also had to balance out cultural differences when she experienced a double standard for her female identity at school. While Ann presented a lot of emotions regarding what she went through as a woman in the different cultural

context like telling a very personal story, Veronica did it in rather a rational way and described how her perspective of the world had been affected and changed by the Koreans' perspective on women. In the course of experiencing different cultural contexts and perspective changes, Veronica decided on her position as an outsider to Korean culture and adopted her own cultural assessment for each unique situation. The overall cross-cultural experiences were thought to be all related in her belief. She seemed to have a critical perspective of understanding otherness—about gender and ethnic beliefs—and to recognize how to be positioned by it, through her direct experience of differences as an outsider of the culture. This made her fully acknowledge her position and expected behaviors as a female teacher in the Korean context.

> Veronica: I think when I was in college, I became a little bit doctrinal uh, like, became a little bit dogmatic and like in my beliefs…and I was very strong-minded and had like, very black and white thinking about the world. I think even two years later, I can see myself still reverting to that for some like, this is right, this is wrong…Kind of like comparative thinking. But these experiences really challenge me, because it's become so apparent in my experience that there really is no good and bad. There is no positive and negative…And I think my experiences show me that everything is blurred. Everything is complicated…In many situations, this is very abstract. This is very abstract but I'll try to give you a few examples to demonstrate what I'm saying…When I was in the U.S. I was very conscious of gender. Like, I see myself as a really strong female. And so, when I came to Korea, it was confusing because like here, I see, I feel that I am a woman oppressed…even as a foreigner. But how do I evaluate that when I'm not part of the culture…how do I evaluate, understand my and others' experiences about passions as a woman in a different cultural context…there is a difference in how I evaluate this situation. (Final Interview, 3.)

The two female teachers experienced the same kind of gender discrimination as Korean females despite the fact they were foreigners, and expressed their cultural disorientation by the double standard on some of minority groups including females in

South Korea. Each female teacher's approach to the problematic issue looked different but it was believed to influence their teaching practices as well as their pedagogical beliefs.

**Isolated from school community**

The three participants underwent challenging time with Koreans while they tried to negotiate their own cultural perspectives with Koreans. Considering the fact that students were the closest people who they interacted on a daily basis and the level of interaction was supposed to be high in the teaching and learning environment, it was presumable all the participants presented the interactional issues with Korean students.

To her bewilderment, Ann came to recognize Koreans' little exposure to diverse cultures. It seemed like after when she started to settle in the Korean community, she began to realize the delicacy of cultural nuances from Korean people, which in turn, defined her role and position as an outsider, distant form the Korean community. With inviting the audience to her side of telling a story (as in "you've lived in the states"), she tried to have an empathy with her when she explained how hard it was to live in a totally different culture. With using asides as in "it will stop where you're foreigner/everyone is nice to you," Ann created a real-time atmosphere to convey her feeling of cultural remoteness to the audience.

Ann: This is just cause I was brought up where I can do anything. Or thought I could do anything. I don't know. It's a different side, different society values different things…It is very hard and you've lived in the states and…it's just really frustrating…So that's probably my…main downside to being here…And it will stop where you're foreigner, everyone is nice to you, ah-ha, it's okay. It's just a Korean way. But I can see how unfair is sometimes. (Ongoing Interview, 3.)

Meanwhile, the feeling of having little autonomy affected Randy's relationships with his Korean colleagues. He was an NES teacher with limited responsibility and that

caused him to not fully be adapted to their community. To illustrate these differences, there was also a physical distance between the one building where the Korean teachers worked and the building where he mainly stayed each day. He reminded the audience of the location of the main office from her memory in order to indicate the actual distance between the two office buildings. Though he said "we're never having problems," he admitted "this sometimes, the break time…I can't stand" when he had to stay in the same office with his Korean colleagues. Even if he thought himself as being adapted to the Korean culture in his workplace, he was not so because of the physical and emotional distance that separated him from his colleagues.

> Randy: Well, there's also the office over there. You know, I think you met them one time there. And there's an office where I have a desk with five other teachers. They're all English speakers working there. And uh, they're nice. I enjoy, yeah, talking to them sometimes. So if I have a break, I go in there absolutely…I mean, if I can go the full seven classes. I'd be totally fine with that…as long as I've prepared a lesson. Because this, sometimes, the break time just, I can't stand. Because they never ask me what I'm doing, and how my classes are going. They have, they mainly focus on their own you know, jobs. So and it seems like, they're pretty busy people. Pretty busy individual…I used to go over there to ask for help a lot but…They talked to the students to get to figure out how things are going on in my classroom. So we're never having problems. Absolutely not. (Ongoing Interview, 3.)

Randy felt the similar isolation from staying in a different building and the feeling detached from his students. When he said of an episode when students did not show up in one of his classes without a notice, he presented a total frustration. I could read his feeling of devastation because I had observed his class with the students related to the issue right before the interview. The circumstantial excuse was understandable—it was a national emergency drill day and the students had to skip one class period—but the fact that only Randy was not given any information on that because he was away from the main building seemed to make him feel troubled. What he felt worse about it

was no student showed up for any notice for their absences. With referring to one of his Korean colleagues, Randy suggested his efforts of making himself comfortable with the issue, however he seemed to suggest a connection between his cultural identity at school and poor communication with Korean teachers and students. In presenting his Korean colleague, he used the present tense in order to give a factual and definitive tone for what could have actually happened in her account. Though he considered all the circumstantial issues, he still seemed to feel aloof like an outlier.

Randy: One of my co-workers and something interesting…She believes that if it had been her…they also want to have come to the class. That's what she said. But now, her case, she doesn't have a room I do. She goes to their actual room, so she can't really test that. But like she said that she was in a room separated, then she feel they probably would not have come, you know…I was like, well, it doesn't have to do with…being a foreigner, you can have the level of communication as far as the Koreans do. Therefore…they're little timid about talking to me. (Ongoing Interview, 5.)

As Ann and Randy did, Veronica thought there was little consideration for cultural mediation or sophisticated characterization for different cultural groups like NES teachers in Korean society, which would worsen the already unclearly defined role of NES teachers. The norm of defining cultural identity was different and she seemed to clearly acknowledge each side's cultural perspective based on collectivism vs. individualism. Veronica described how she perceived herself was totally different from what most Korean teachers and students identified her at school. Koreans' collective assumption about her looked simple and definitive as in "I'm a minority/I'm a foreigner/I'm Baekin, while her personal description of her cultural individuality seemed more subjective and complex.

Veronica: I'm a minority, even if here because of how I look and uh, my cultural background, to the students, I'm a foreigner, I'm Baekin (white). But that is not how I see myself. So it's been like, a negotiation between navigating how like, other people in Korea experience me as an American

> and somebody who's perceived as white, versus my experience which is much more complicated than that…But I think, while that has been like, personally difficult, uhm, and sometimes has blurred into my teaching as my personal difficulty that I faced…It has the most of time only been advantageous and in terms of like, me be able to understand the complexity of what I'm doing also be able to accept and understand like, a cultural difference between me and the students, because this is something that I already do with my own family and like with friends. (Final Interview, 2.)

Veronica often had to deal with students' behavior issue in class but tried to understand it and also to set appropriate boundaries. When she talked about some students' attitudes in her class, she tried to understand them considering their circumstances—preparing college exams—but described she still seemed to struggle with the range of tolerance with students' misbehavior issues, which I could understand from her facial expression when she dealt with the misbehaving students during observation.

> Veronica: It's just they seem very distant to me. With the exception of four or five people, they seemed very removed…in the class. Like on the one hand, I understand that because Suneung (KSAT) and like other responsibilities but I have other classes that are also second graders, but they're not like that at all. So I think it's just they came during the class…and behaving like that. They just seem very distant. So…I think also another thing is that a lot of them bring cell phones to class, so I thought…just like before…"Please don't use it during class" but they kind of fall back into the pattern of using it. So I think maybe I'll have to address that. (Ongoing Interview, 8.)

In the course of getting to know each other, the NES teachers and their students sometimes faced uncomfortable incidents that were opposite to their existing beliefs, and went through small cultural turbulences in their everyday classroom. Despite the NES teachers' positive attitude toward otherness and their efforts to become culturally aware educators, it must have been hard for them to feel belonging to the school community.

## Summary

In Chapter 4, I examined the participants with two perspectives by applying Bamberg and Riessman's narrative analysis methods and by finding similarities among the filtered data through Trent's identity construction theory: NES teachers positioned as foreigner teachers by authority and by culture and community. While they felt alienated in their professions, they indicated their feeling the lack of autonomy, the discomfort from being only seen as English-speaking Westerners, and the uneasiness of teaching extracurricular-like courses. In terms of feeling like outsiders of the Korean culture and community, they addressed a double standard on gender issue and their feeling like guests despite cultural insiders' hospitality. They all presented a sense of discrepancy in both aspects of professions and culture/community. However they tried to be seen as well-prepared professionals, they were limited to function as native speakers of English teaching extracurricular course. What they really wanted to do was stuck in the clog of the limited autonomy and pre-established image of English native speakers. Cultural misrepresentation made them feel misplaced when the participants thought they were accessed not by their cultural standard but by Koreans' way of looking at them. The teacher participants seemed to feel discouraged because they felt only treated as outsiders, despite the fact they were welcome as guests. Moreover, what they believed to be their own Western cultural perspectives was ignored and they were assessed with the Korean value and standpoint, which they felt stripped off from their distinct Western identity and gauged with indigenous Korean perspective. The next Chapter 5 demonstrates the NES teachers' identity developing from being positioned as foreigner teachers to positioning as bridge builders.

# CHAPTER 5
# POSITIONING AS BRIDGE BUILDERS

## Overview

In the previous Chapter 4, the teacher participants seemed to perceive the antagonistic relations between what they wanted to be and how they were actually positioned in the system. They expressed feelings for their professional, cultural, and emotional experiences as foreigners in their narratives. Despite various occasions of frustrating experiences, they did not let them discontinue practicing their pedagogical beliefs. In the following section, I explain how the NES teachers presented their agency, "capable of exercising control over the teaching process," (Trent, 2012, p. 113) with their teacher identity by making self-directed choices and taking counteractions as bridge builders within the given circumstances. It was meaningful in that the counteractions were done by their making efforts in the course of developing their thinking and teaching against the challenges, which was solely fulfilled by their self-driven and self-determined actions. Furthermore, their efforts seemed valuable in that they turned challenges in the school environment into what most Korean teachers could not achieve in students' cultural and linguistic learning. They replaced themselves to a new position by their own efforts to connect the two different cultures and to negotiate their own identities in the meantime. They created a "third space" (Bhabha, 1990; cited in Trent, 2012, p. 121) where they could be out of the static conflict situation and taught their own way with professionalism and cultural awareness. The NES teachers proved themselves as professional language teachers through their self-positioning with the newly established representations of selves.

## Positioning as Professional Language Teachers

Although the participants were challenged by some issues at workplaces, they all showed constancy in maintaining confidence in their profession. As discussed before, the teacher participants presented two problematic issues related to their profession—teaching without autonomy, seen only as English-natives, and teaching courses as extracurricular. How they managed to narrow the gap between their pedagogical beliefs and the circumstantial issues and to reposition their places were well presented in their narratives of professionalism—teaching with freedom and using professional knowledge—and of cultural awareness—accommodate students' need and learning the language and the belief in bilingualism.

### Positioning with Professionalism

#### Teaching with freedom

Feeling with little autonomy in class appeared to be an obstacle for the NES teachers, however, they soon acknowledged they could do something their own with the given resources within their boundaries. Being unable to do anything they wanted did not mean they could not do anything at all. They came to think they were able to do everything within their classrooms. Their existing confidence as language teachers seemed to be the basis for their passionate teaching practices. The teacher participants turned the challengeable issues into their advantage in their teaching practices. Thus, teaching with limited autonomy became teaching with freedom.

Ann self-assessed her effort to try innovative teaching techniques and her confidence in her own teaching practices, in spite of being given little autonomy at school. Ann was confident enough to present herself as a prepared, controlled, effective, and self-directed teacher in her narratives. Ann's confidence in her teaching

was shown in most sentences with their positive representations and with the self-assertive subject, “I.” Ann, presented as in “I,” is the agency in her actions and making changes. Her professional confidence seemed to be the foreground for her to move forward in practicing her own way of teaching in the system. According to Ann, there was no fixed curriculum for NES teachers, which gave qualified NES teachers like her some freedom to teach the way they wanted to. Ann’s critical insight into her own actions and the environment around her made her take actions to raise the level of critical awareness in her classroom. Although she was in a limited environment, she tried to be flexible with facilitating her pedagogical beliefs and providing a comfortable, enjoyable learning environment for students.

Ann: I have been through all different, many different situations. So and each is quite different from…I think you just have to be really flexible in order to meet the situation…Yeah, just, every day is different…I think [my] strengths [are], maybe trying to make sure it is fun—I’d rather they have a little of fun ‘cause I know all [of] their classes can be quiet. Taking notes [is] a little bit serious. I want them to enjoy English…as well as learn it. But [I want them to] not be scared of it and [ensure that] nobody’s scared to speak to us, and I always try to make sure that can be fun…I always keep positive. Like I said, I am in a very different situation. That’s always to be good to keep an open mind and be flexible in the classroom which I’ve always got. If something is not working, I’ve always got something that I can do instead…And some schools are very strict…but like in middle school, I’m lucky, sort of been given freedom to teach. That was for me to do speaking…I feel like having more freedom to do some quite cool things. (Initial Interview, 3.5.)

Like Ann, Randy felt he had little autonomy at school; however, he seemed to recognize the requirements of qualified NES teachers as language teachers and to feel the need to change himself, which looked evident in the changes of his teaching. Randy seemed surprisingly confident in his preparedness and teaching practices. He presented himself as having a consistent confidence about his teaching from when he started as in the present time, saying, “I feel the same…I feel satisfied,” (Ongoing

Interview, 2.) and, “I don’t personally feel like my confidence has gotten any, has improved. I think it stayed the same this year,” (Final Interview, 3.) leaving some challenging issues as temporary frustrations. The reason, he suggested, was his nearly perfect constant preparedness for teaching. Basically he showed himself as a hard-working teacher, always trying to be prepared for class. He described his will to be perfect in his teaching as “do it the right way” (Initial Interview, 7.), which showed his strong personal belief in what he did. In addition, from the negative experiences Randy had with his colleagues and the exemplary cases presented by his fellow NES teachers with whom he had worked at the previous school, he learned valuable strategies that he could apply to his teaching. He said his experience with the under-qualified fellow NES teachers made him struggle, but also prompted him to be very responsible and well prepared for his lessons, saying that “what I’ve learned [is]…that I’ll be prepared because of that,” (Initial Interview, 13. & Ongoing Interview, 1.). He wanted to show not all NES teachers are like those who get drunk, do drugs and are lazy and irresponsible in their teaching.

Randy seemed to find his own way of teaching in the cross-cultural context that addressed his problem of encountering a conflict between his pedagogical expectations to improve as a teacher and the little or no support by the system. He described publishing his own textbooks as “huge breakthrough” after a long dark tunnel, which he felt he was finally entitled to teach freely with his own professional way. Publishing textbooks and teaching with them were meaningful for him because the outcomes were all resulted from his efforts in the limited environment. His expression of “a

breakthrough" even brought the audience's strong empathy with him just like a reader experiences a satisfaction after a long challenging journey.

> Randy: I think that the first year was, wow, I mean, it was an eye opener. That was also really scary because you know, because I'm inexperienced, I was just worried that…I still, I still have that little of that fear and…I think one of the things I wish for…if they sort of encourage more training for people like myself…Last year was like a breakthrough for me. That was a huge breakthrough. At the beginning at R High, I still struggled a lot…I found…some information about a teaching approach called Task-Based Teaching. And…I was, like, "Wow, this is great!"…I designed a whole syllabus…I wrote these workbooks. And the school published them for me. (Initial Interview, 6.)

Just like Ann and Randy, Veronica also seemed to be confused by the expectations for NES teacher from the educational authorities different from her own teaching goals with little autonomy and no structured curriculum. These vague expectations were in sharp contrast to her specific goals for her classroom. Most of the time, she tried to find a way to put her pedagogical beliefs into practice while dealing with the reality of the NES system as implemented at her school. She described her ideal teaching goal as helping students express themselves in the course of learning and intended to improve her initial perception of the situation—a useless teaching job with which she could not unfold her critical pedagogy. To do that, she had to create an ideal teaching/learning environment. In addition, she tried to effect changes with the resources she had, which also was based on her pedagogical beliefs—letting students heard in the process of learning. In the following vignette, she used intentional expressions for goal-oriented actions—"to help students/can use English/to create changes/to my advantage/try to create positive relationships/freedom to do."

> Veronica: There are different ways I can teach English…I want to use English to help students kind of stress themselves and like, find their voice and feel comfortable with themselves. I think that a process is much bigger than just learning English. And English is my way of facilitating that bigger

> process…I don't have those skills [for understanding students and their backgrounds] since I'm not Korean. So I think at first I felt like, my job was kind of useless…Not useless, but I just didn't believe in my job…But then as time went on, I realized how open-ended this job can be, especially for my job is. As I don't have very main force to work with...I can use English to do a lot of different things, not specifically about the language, more about building community…I think that it's possible to create changes within that system. So I work as, me trying to use the flawed system to my advantage, try to create positive relationships with the students, making them feel good about speaking English…And also they don't really tell you what they want from you, at least my experience, like, their expectations are, there are no expectations. I think that when I first came, it was like, okay, you're teaching English, but it was like really I mean, there was no structure. There was no expectations, there was no curriculum. It's good because now I have freedom to do whatever I want. (Initial Interview, 1.2.)

Veronica worked hard to be a great teacher. She had been working together with her NES colleagues from Fulbright program to build curriculum with the same goal. They all worked at different schools but got together once or twice a week in order to design lesson plans and share ideas from their teaching. She was proud of the collaborative work and to be sure of the positive outcome of their group work to overcome her teaching circumstances—the lack of autonomy and the limited role as an NES teacher:

Veronica: Yeah, we meet after classes end. Usually about once or twice a week and start to talk about teaching and plan the lesson together. And…it's really nice because we can also compare how the lesson is going…At the beginning of the week, when we were first trying to teach a lesson…We can email each other about how it was going…This went well for me, the students go well for me…I really like teaching the same lesson as like that because we can all sort of work together…to improve the lesson for each other…So yeah, that's really great. (Ongoing Interview, 1.)

It is well addressed in their narratives how the three NES teachers all worked hard to take advantage of their so called "out of the system" stance to implement their innovative approach based on their teacher qualifications like pedagogical beliefs, preparedness, and flexibility.

**Using professional knowledge**

Despite the participants' pedagogical beliefs and their goal in teaching, they were hardly be seen as prepared educational professionals but were only shown simply as native English speakers. They were novice teachers who just had started to teach in the Korean school system, however, their passion for teaching and professional achievement was beyond functioning just as native speakers of English. Still, the feeling of being foreigners at school often led them to feel subordinate in their course marginalized at school. As counteractions, these NES teachers tried to practice their professional knowledge in their classes. Whether they were pedagogical beliefs or teaching methods, everything they did in their classes seemed worthwhile because they as NES teachers allowed students to learn something in a meaningful way while they tried out their firm beliefs in the field of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the experience of teaching and learning between the teacher participants and students was another field of sharing each other's cultures, which made their use of professional knowledge so meaningful, which reinforced their teacher identity as professional language teachers.

Ann presented her pedagogical beliefs that allowed me to take a glimpse of her general beliefs in teaching and students. Ann's pedagogical goal that learning should be process-based and student-centered was well described in her narratives. In process-based class, students are supposed to learn through working individually or with peers. The important goal of this learning is not a product of learning but students' learning by doing something meaningful. This process-based class can only be fulfilled in the student-centered environment where students' educational interests are put first rather than teachers or school administrators. Unlike focusing on teaching acquiring

skills in a teacher-centered environment, she tended to present her way of goal-oriented learning through which students are expected to be motivated by their intrinsic goals leaning to the educational success. Her goal-oriented teaching seemed all connected to her teaching based on process learning and specific attention to teaching integrated four language skills. Though Ann acknowledged her role limited to teach speaking only, she tried out teaching integrated four language skills in her class. She did not contend what she had to do and moved forward to teaching with more advanced methods and benefiting students as a result. She also designed lessons with diverse activities and made students enjoy what they learned through them, which facilitated students' learning well in her teaching practices. Ann seemed to be energetic about her lesson plans she constantly tried new activities and ideas, which showed her continuous efforts to improve herself as a professional educator. I could see her efforts when observing her class. She not only concentrated on creating new lessons, but also tried hard to encourage students to be actively involved in her class. She constantly moved around each table of a group to ensure students' following her direction and helped them do their work in her class. Students also seemed so eager to do various activities and to learn in her class in that I frequently heard students' saying "What are we going to do in class today?" when they came to her classroom. Ann used intentional goal-oriented purpose clauses using such as "to learn some meaning/to change something/have tried to keep the fun" and connected them to "forceful statements of necessity," (Trent, 2012, p. 115) like "have to work on" to indicate their significant involvement in the meaningful actions for changes.

Ann: I don't like that but most teachers are happy you're here to speak English…I don't know, but it's not low expectations but it's like a very

> different style. Well, a lot of students and the teachers mostly speak right English quite well. I mean, to read and write English. But speaking…I guess they want to have that interaction. Like here in the school in particular, their English is higher. So I'm trying to like…writing and speaking or reading and trying to mix a couple of sentences. But they're definitely more speaking-based. They've asked me to do…But I think, to have a plan and take some goals throughout the year about you and your students to achieve. [For example], not just playing a game but…[have] a purpose for them to learn some meaning, revise later on…Unless you revise something, it [learning]'s not gonna necessarily stick and…I think to give them to look toward so that they come here not just sake of class. It's like…they come here and want to do to change something…I've tried to keep the fun, but I've tried to have something like activities each week…but I have some new things I have to work on this semester. (Initial Interview, 6. 9. 13.)

Like Ann, being a professionally competent teacher was Randy's top priority. The flaw in the system made Randy feel decisive about being more self-assertive in the teaching field because he believed his lack of autonomy partly came from his being under-prepared in teaching. Randy had expected pre-service teacher trainings when he first arrived in Korea and to have faced a lot of challenges due to the lack of any proper pre-/in-service teacher trainings and preparations for NES teachers at schools. After going through the frustration of putting into a teaching position without preparation, he came to have his own idea about the way it should work, Randy sought outside help by doing his own research to set up a structured curriculum, learning from colleagues, and finding his way to make it as his unique plan. He talked about a teaching method, task-based teaching that he applied to his own textbook and gained confidence from it. Some of the resources in which he was interested included a successful project case in the U.S. Randy gave the impression that he used the U.S. case to affirm his teaching practices. He appeared to be confident about his teaching method, discussing a newly applied technique similar to his own.

Randy: I saw something on the news that's kind of interesting. There's one little district in Kentucky. They're teaching their American students—not [with] language learning, but just…history class—they're doing task-based, project-based lessons. And they're trying to make that one little part of Kentucky an example for the whole state, [to alter] their education system. That's very cool…Just applying for language like, that makes sense. But you're talking about history, science, and math, it's like, wow, yeah, I can feel that. It's a good way. (Ongoing Interview, 4.)

He also tried to use the professional resources available to him to improve himself. By joining a professional education organization, he showed his will to improve his teaching. He described himself as seeking professional opportunities to be a better language teacher, saying that he had recently joined KOTESOL, a group of foreign English teachers who meet once a month to discuss their teaching. Randy used goal-oriented expressions like "to put that in my plan" or "for presentation" linked to his actions to become a competent teacher and proactive changes in identity positioning.

Randy: The group of English teachers like me meets once a month. I just joined that recently…I want to come in and… if I'm here for presentation, somebody gives something, that'll be like, "Oh, wow, that's really okay." And I'll probably make a note of it. And I'll find a way to put that in my plan…So stuff like that definitely has influence on what I'm doing. If I have just good ideas, so if I read something in a book, and I will be like, "Oh, that works!" (Final Interview, 5.)

As the other two teachers put professional knowledge and practices as a top priority in their teaching, Veronica talked about her teaching critical pedagogy. She was confident of what she was doing in her class and adroit in presenting her well-established pedagogy in her narratives. Making students critically think was her main goal in her teaching, so the following learning theories like community-centered and process-based learning were all on the same trajectory of her critical pedagogy. In one of the classes I observed where she presented the two world maps—the Mercator's map and the Peters' map, Veronica tried to explain different perspectives and the

intentions behind them. The two maps are world maps but each is different in that the Peters criticized the distorted image of much bigger northern hemisphere in the North American and Eurasian countries on the Mercator's map. The overemphasized image of the countries were thought to be a part of imperialism. At first, students did not fully understand what she was trying to do, but soon they were intrigued by Veronica's facilitating questions and started to answer to her questions. Students' timid response turned into active interactions between them and the teacher, and among them. She addressed her critical pedagogy well enough to intrigue the audience's interest by frequently asking direct questions in the following vignette.

Veronica: When comparing the Mercator's map to Peters' map…That section and I pointed out that the more familiar, the American perspective. I think that's a kind like a turning point for them. They understand little bit more of what I'm trying to say…I like the part a lot. What is the center of Korea? What is the center of these maps? Not Korea. What is the center of America? Then why are we so comfortable with the American ways or patterns on this map? Why is it strange when Africa is in the middle? I think like, asking those questions helps students bring them outward. So yeah, overall, it's just a really good lesson…I think each time gets better. (Ongoing Interview, 2.)

Veronica added that the real learning came not from only obtaining certain outcomes, but from the process of their thinking and doing meaningful activities. In order to achieve what she wanted to do, she facilitated mutual learning process for both the teacher and the students. She described the continuous improvement of students' learning with tracking down her teaching history, which indeed was from her own record on her teaching practices that I was able to see during observation.

Veronica: I think that like, teaching is a process. And since like, the beginning, all my experience at T High, which is mostly before you came about like since, two years ago. I have been able to…like witness a significant change in the way to students engage in the creative thinking…at the beginning, students were not as willing to be creative and many students didn't take the exercise seriously. But at the same time, there has been a

> noticeable shift…in how they engage those ideas…It's definitely been really exciting for me to see how the students continued to change in response to the creativity…It's…creativity, critical thinking, and dialog. (Final Interview, 1.)

In conjunction with her belief in process learning, she practiced project-based learning to differentiate her instruction for different levels of students. Through her teaching, students were supposed to learn English with a low intimidation level and to focus on the process of what they were doing, and she thought students could learn English through this process of doing projects without feeling intimidated.

Veronica: I really believe in project-based learning but then having that actual project, like not just English because that's really hard, especially for lower level students to be engaged in. And it's a project that's more open-ended, students of many levels kind of adopt their project to their level ability…I really like that…about a more artistic lesson…that allows them to kind of learn English without actually realizing [learning without feeling intimidated] that they're learning English by themselves [not afraid of making errors or willing to take risks in learning]…re-learning how to learn as a process without realizing [without feeling intimidated]. (Ongoing Interview, 5.)

She extended the range of her own pedagogical beliefs from her expected role of teaching only English speaking skills to the optimal language-learning environment for students. Veronica talked about creating a community-centered teaching/learning that developed students' linguistic competence. In that community-centered learning environment, students cooperate together to accomplish each project. Veronica believed students could only learn something meaningful by doing student-driven activities. When I sat in her classes, I could see that students looked so comfortable in her community-centered environment and never feared to venture to do new things.

Veronica: This lesson is a little bit unusual. Actually most of my lessons involve more speaking and more presentations…But this lesson is a lot of producing things. Like charts, drawings, and…so, there's a lot of time where they're working independently. So I'm trying to get them to talk more by going around while they're working. Talking to them one-on-one

> and asking them questions. So they're still speaking, mostly just to me than to the class. It's fine but I think that I'm trying my best to make sure that uhm…lessons are…community-centered as much as possible, where I'm not the center of the conversation at the time. And I think that if I'm talking to students one-on-one…it's still kind of this relationship of teacher and student, you know, responding to the teacher as opposed to like, students talking to each other, which is very difficult. (Ongoing Interview, 1.)

The NES teachers had little teaching experiences prior to their positions at schools; however, their passion and confidence in teaching based on professional knowledge and their efforts to improve teaching practices led them to move forward in the field of teaching and learning while providing students with more critical and meaningful learning opportunities.

**Positioning with Cultural Awareness**

All three teacher participants culturally felt unbearable as foreigners in their situation. As Westerners, the teacher participants had thought that they were open-minded enough to understand other people from different cultures and eager to share cultural knowledge with the others. However, the reality they met in school was totally unpredictable and they felt alienated from the difference between what they believed and how they were appreciated/expected in the Korean cultural context. Overall, they wished to be a part of Korean community but they were treated only as outsiders or guests. The Korean host community yielded their space and welcomed the NES teachers into their cultural circle, but it seemed to be restricted to offering hospitality to foreigners as guests maybe because the local people liked their guests' presence but wanted to keep a certain distance from the outsiders.

In order to overcome the conflicting issues, the teachers as bridge builders tried to find similarities with students and to help students be more culturally aware learners.

They went further to think about how students could become educated global citizens from their teaching and how they could reach as many students from diverse cultural backgrounds for example, students from low SES backgrounds, as possible.

Teacher participants also acknowledged the importance of learning language and sharing cultures in their teaching. They understand that teaching a language is hard not to teach its related culture, as language and culture are closely linked together. They believe they cannot teach language skills separate from its related cultural knowledge since the two are closely connected. Having those beliefs in mind, the NES teachers tried to learn Korean in order to get closer to Korean people and presented their critical pedagogical perspective on Korea's English-only language policy over NES teachers' class.

Against the forced monolingualism in their classes, the teachers took proactive actions of bilingualism allowing Korean as well as English as communicative tools. They believed that it was okay to let students use their first language while learning English, as they did not think using L1 would interfere with L2 learning. Whether they had experiences as ESL or EFL learners, they all seemed to understand their students' difficulties in the English-only environment and to make their classroom as a linguistic and cultural mediating field.

**Accommodating students' need**

The teacher participants tried to include the contents of the Western culture while teaching language skills to their Korean students. They first noticed their students' stereotypes of the Western society, people and culture and tried to explain their perspectives and let students have an opportunity to learn about their home culture as they did about the Korean culture here. They presented their efforts to learn about

Korean culture, to teach diverse perspectives of the world to students, and to include as many students from diverse backgrounds as possible in their teaching. All those efforts were meaningful in that the teachers expected students to benefit from their teaching, which they could not get from the Korean teachers.

Ann has been on the process of changing since she first started teaching. When she began her teaching in South Korea, Ann soon noticed a difference between what she believed an effective way of language learning and how the Korean students was taught to learn English. That became a tipping point at which her prior efforts to change became viable as a more concrete from of change—by thinking hard on learning about the Korean culture and its people. From the transitional point, her attitude changed and she started to be interested in learning about different cultures. To prove her intention, she attended lectures on Asian/Korean cultures and was deeply impressed by them. She expressed her feelings for teaching different cultures by reflecting on her own cultural learning experience.

Ann: So, I think, kids need to be taught, that sort of totally understanding of how Confucian mind set, which is really different and living here, I was saying how important it is to understand that. Yeah, I had like, Korean friends at school and they started to say it's hard and there was a lot of pressure on them, even when in school, from their parents. And I, and I knew about it. I thought I understood it, but I didn't. I didn't understand their extent and importance. It's for like Korean kids to do well what I can do with clay…like for their parents and their families. (Ongoing Interview, 3.)

As she underwent a lot of cultural collisions at school, Ann looked back on her past experience of different cultures and what she had learned about them in her home country. Once she had accumulated experience of Korean culture, Ann devoted herself to teaching how to understand other cultures. She thought that the education is essential in the globalized society, and urged that both New Zealanders and Koreans be

educated in the context. She also talked about her initial teacher role/identity regarding cultural understanding. The last sentence in the following vignette seemed like a bold statement demanding the audience's conformity with her position and defining the purpose of her presence in Korea.

> Ann: I was thinking more about sort of what my job is. And then how I come in and teach English but also I think, and I, we talked about the cultural thing. And that sounds obsolete, sounds sort of like an excuse. Uh, just being here and being…from different country. I think in Korea, like I've talked to some people about it and I think it [to be able to come and teach in Korea] is really important, 'cause Korea is the only place I've been apart from India. That's just crazy…You still get stared at, that's why you're here really. (Ongoing Interview, 1.)

Her critical insight of how students can benefit from having an NES teacher is tied to her advocacy for teaching about other cultures and for people from Korean minority groups, including students from low SES backgrounds. She began to ask questions about herself and extended her range of understanding to societal minorities, including her students from low SES backgrounds. Her attention to minority groups included her students from low SES backgrounds. Her thoughtful reflection on these students' situations outside school made her appreciate more acutely the importance of cultural education in school.

> Ann: A lot of my kids just don't speak any English. And I think like, especially in my rural schools, don't have one. So any outside interaction and their parents can't afford to send them to…that kind of it. So, and their teachers don't speak English. So I think it's good to, to have us here. I think it's important for us to get involved in Korean culture and show that we can, we're interested in their language, and things like that. (Final Interview, 7.)

Ann talked about her potential role in teaching students to understand other cultures to foster students' better cultural understanding. When she indicated students' prejudice on differences, she stressed the importance of teaching them how to

appreciate otherness, saying, “That’s no one’s fault…We have a chance to…to change a little” (Ongoing Interview, 1.). With noticing the need of teaching how to understand and respect otherness, she tried to help students be more culturally aware in her class. Through this process, she intended to confirm her role with saying, “I think that’s really…like, another important part of our job…Well, you can’t write it down and record and evaluate someone’s cultural like, value. But I think it is there" (Ongoing Interview, 1.). With her continuous effort to adapt to the newly learned culture, Ann said she found herself more like a teacher in the cultural learning process. She said, “I’m going home and I am still in teaching and all, I speak like a teacher all the time!” (Ongoing Interview, 1.)

While Ann started her role as a cultural bridge builder from acknowledging differences and learning about different cultures, Randy returned to the initial purpose of why NES teachers came to South Korea. Randy’s reflection on this issue of why NES teachers were in South Korea made him go further into thinking about language learning through cultural sharing as indicated when he talked about “why they [NES teachers] are here and…it’s not just about [students’] learning the language [through NES teachers’ teaching] but it is also about…[both sides’] sharing a culture” (Ongoing Interview, 5.).

Randy wanted for his relationships with students and teachers at school to be fundamentally humane, as he did not want to be presented with Koreans’ idealized Western perspective. He thought being treated special as guests or outsiders only let him feel more distant from the local people. Then trying to understand and appreciate what students had was connected to Randy’s cultural awareness. Korean students

usually produce positive responses to teachers even when they do not understand completely about a topic. Giving negative responses to teachers are considered as incomplete or incompetent learners in the Korean learning context. Randy first was not aware of this students' attribute but gradually came to recognize it. When he noticed the students' cultural attribute, Randy started to think hard on cultural issues in his class. At this point, he seemed to well recognize his position as an outsider of the Korean culture. Instead of imposing his viewpoint, he tried to be a cultural mediator for students, with step-by-step descriptions and repetition of his directions in class. He was clearly aware of the difference of teaching EFL learners compared to native English speakers, and acknowledged that he needed to "learn a type of approach for that" (Ongoing Interview, 1.). He talked about the difficulties of communicating with his students and made sure they understood what he was saying. At the end of each class, I could see that he tried hard to make sure every student understood what he gave students as a direction. The following vignette presented his lively experience with his students with frequent uses of direct speech and asides.

> Randy: Well, I guess one thing that's I suppose something that I should probably work on trying to…get over is…You run into students, like one or two students totally understand exactly what you're trying to say…But you, only you, only the teacher knows how important it is to keep explaining. Because you, from experience with the same exact lesson, you go to like, three different groups of students and find that they're doing exactly what you told them not to do…Then you have to explain it again to everybody to make sure that. So that's why it's totally necessary. So, you know, you run into students, like "Yes, yes, yes, OK! OK! OK! We understand," "We got it." But you're like, "No, no, no no, no," "I'm not finished talking, I have to keep talking." So I had to like, train, work on getting over. And students got used to your teaching way…I think they know it too well. I may be wrong but I think that they think they know what to expect. But…they actually probably, in some ways, don't. In some ways they are probably right, and in some ways, they're wrong. (Ongoing Interview, 2.)

Just like Ann and Randy, Veronica also tried to find a meeting point and to empathize with students based on her multicultural background/understanding. She was sure to have a more comprehensive understanding of students with her own personal multicultural background and experiences at home. She said her biracial heritage as an Asian American let her be more aware and understandable of differences and made her look more familiar to Korean students. She presented her personality and ethnic background as teacher qualifications and felt confident about using them in teacher-student relationships. Her diverse cultural background seemed to help her narrow the cultural gap between the students and her.

Veronica: I think that I want to create an environment where like a person or students feel comfortable and express themselves…I think that students generally seem to be comfortable around me. They seem to be comfortable with me as a person and they seem confident in their ability to speak English in front of me…Teaching students is that especially with the cultural difference, it's very hard to reach that kind of equilibrium in the classroom…I think one is my personality…like on the surface, I'm pretty approachable. And so that's good…But then also I think like, I have a lot of backgrounds and not just like pedagogy in teaching, but also like because I'm mixed race. I grew up in a family with one parent who's Asian, and one parent who is white. (Final Interview, 2.)

Veronica learned to appreciate and share the differences of Korean culture. She tried to understand Koreans' unique way of presenting themselves and to respect it as their cultural values. Through her relationships with students in and outside of class, she encountered culturally unfamiliar experiences, but soon began to understand them as needing to be appreciated as well. In talking about a Korean teacher's comments on students, she said those sounded like insults at first, but the teachers turned out to use a kind of rhetorical devices, irony, in order to boost students' confidence. Then she suggested a similarity with her students in sharing capitalistic backgrounds. According to Veronica, learners are obligated to learn in a designated way and to produce certain

outcomes that were the goals of education in the capitalistic society, which she and her students had in common. She believed people are expected to fulfill a certain level of achievement in order to have a decent position in the society because it values the ownership of means of production and distribution, and the members are to be effective producers. Against the prevailing culture in most classes, she tried out a counter-cultural lessons and encouraged students to be more critical through self-driven activities. Veronica believed her class was not supposed to force students to learn about her Western culture but to have a critical/respectful perspective of different cultures. I could see students' learning of critical perspectives whenever I noticed their active presentation of their viewpoints in my observation. Veronica asserted the importance of identity construction process not only of herself but also of her students, which meant critical processes just like she addressed at the end of the following vignette.

Veronica: Whereas here, I think like the approach to like, developing students is more like maybe it's because less individualistic but for example, like people achieving a lot more here and especially authorities are not, it's like kind…about certain aspects of students' identity. For example, oh you know, like, "Your face is ugly today," maybe like, "I don't want to face that." Or…Like kind of like, insult the students in a way that culturally for me, is extremely inappropriate, for like a teacher-student relationship. But then I realize is that it's not that inappropriate, it's just like a different approach to…it's like an approach that I think in some ways, creates tougher skins…Our culture is based on result and production. Especially in Korea, right now very competitive….Because it's so competitive, my classroom is like, be more counter-culture in that way. Yes, I want to challenge you, but I'm not going to force you. And I'm not going to discipline you because I think in other ways, both of us like, I think one thing we have in common is that both of us grew up under capitalism. The students and me, we, both of us are under capitalism. And we both were forced to produce a certain product in a job and validate our identity…the point of this class is not to learn about my life as an American, or for me to teach you my culture. And it's not even to exchange cultures. It's not even that. They will understand that just through my teaching. I don't have to address that

specifically but I can't address it, 'cause it's a critical process. (Final Interview, 4.)

She said that the Korean classroom under the capitalism system is mainly focused on good production as a result of learning. Then the teacher is supposed to be the owner of the means of production in the classroom and students are the ones who should make products in the course of learning. If that applied to her classroom, the teacher would be a big beneficiary so she needed to take extra care of students considering their weaker position. As indicated in the following vignette, she seemed to constantly ask herself about what her teaching really was and how she influenced students. She indeed self-assessed her teaching and reflected what she thought she learned, from teaching in everyday class to updating her practices.

Veronica: This is a very important job, so what should I do to make it important for my students? But the way the system is set up, it will benefit the teacher more than students, I think…but again, that's me benefiting from being in this position…So I really wish that it was more of an equal exchange of benefit. (Initial Interview, 6.)

The NES teachers all faced cultural differences when they initially interacted with Korean students and teachers. However they gradually came to understand Koreans' cultural attributes, to grasp the circumstantial understanding, and to be responsive to the students' need as a result.

**Learning the language and the belief in bilingualism**

Trying to learn Korean and using it in their classroom were connected to their gestures as cultural bridge builders. They cared about all the students from diverse backgrounds and wanted to teach multiple perspectives to students, then learning and using Korean in the forced monolingual classroom became their proactive tool in cultural sharing and learning.

Ann's attitude toward different cultures must have come from her firm belief in cultural value. This basic cultural belief was integrated with her teacher figure and influenced her attitude in interacting with Korean people. She started to speak Konglish in order to communicate more easily and frequently with the students. In one of my observation sessions, she even had a lesson on comparing Konglish and Standard English where both she and her students seemed to enjoy so much of a variety of available language options. Ann thought of Konglish as not "a good English," which is understandable considering the fact that she did not have a background in linguistics or cultural studies. Even though she did not acknowledge of using World English on her own, she seemed to focus more on the purpose of English as a communicative tool, which showed her thinking on cultural mediation. She seemed to contrastingly explain a process of her acculturation when she said "I've forgotten all my English" and "you start to use your little Konglish." Her "all English" has become her "little Konglish," which she meant a meaningful changing process though it quantitatively went decrescendo. She indicated that learning Korean and its culture meant so much for her. To give a full sense of the changing process to the audience, she used an aside as in "you start to use your little Konglish."

Ann: Now, I'm going home and I am still in teaching…I speak like a teacher, all the time!...I've forgotten all my English. And sometimes…having taught here for so long, you start to use your little Konglish…which isn't good English…But they understand, by the way…I mean…I think that's okay…I mean, to get a point across. That [using a combination of Korean and English is]'s okay. (Ongoing Interview, 1.)

As Ann did, Randy had a positive cultural awareness that people from different cultural backgrounds should show to respect each other, and tried to be considered the same as Koreans, telling Koreans to "treat me like a Korean person" (Ongoing

Interview, 5.). In reality, it seemed like he felt isolated because he was not treated like a Korean; however, he tried to empathize with students in the teaching and learning environment. Though he did not have any experience as an EFL or ESL learner, he tried hard to understand how confused and overwhelmed the students could be in an English-only environment. This was definitely not the expected outcome of teaching/learning with NES teachers as the authorities designed the program, but Randy and his students definitely experienced it that way. Randy was not sure about whether monolingualism and bilingualism was the best method for learning English, but he tried to balance students' incompetence in English and the English-only policy of the monolingual English class. In this narrative, Randy talked about students' perspective of their teachers and presented his intention to work hard on the issue of relating to his students because he could understand his students' confusion when he converted the situation to the one where he himself, an L2 learner had to communicate with monolingual Korean teachers (who were his students).

Randy: I would say…[Language teacher is] someone who…was able to explain things in a way I can understand…That's all I really kind of expect…So, you know, if the teacher's doing their job, they put in the time they prepare, then the student knows this. Even if the student doesn't focus, they can still have some kind of respect for that teacher…Whether or not they're prepared, [teachers] explain things well enough, so they can be understood…Language teaching… I mean, as a student, I've never really thought about that students' perspective…And I've never had, I've never been a student, and I've never had the teacher who I could not communicate with. So…it's hard for me to say what I would expect you know…as a student, right. In that circumstance where I was like L2 and they were like yeah, that was a target language. And they would want that wasn't trying to talk to me...So…Well, definitely it's much better than last year…I learned about…I studied…I took it by myself and studied things…I'm really uh, satisfied with…how I've come along. (Final Interview, 2.)

Just as the other two NES teachers, Veronica tried to learn Korean in order to be able to communicate with Korean teachers and students. With her ability to communicate in Korean, Veronica seemed to feel empathy with students and think she provided a comfort zone where she could reduce their intimidation in language learning. Veronica tried to provide a more comfortable learning environment. She believed that the simple fact that she could understand their Korean made students feel comfortable, which she thought would give students a kind of relative confidence of using English. She took actions of using Korean in order to carry out her goal "to clarify what I was saying in English" and ultimately could "improve students' understanding."

Veronica: I think that's pretty different, actually, from a lot of my friends who speak mostly English with their teachers. I speak almost, like, all Korean with the teachers…I speak English with the students and Korean with the teachers. So even with the English teachers, I speak Korean. So and I think that's actually kind of rare…At the beginning, I didn't speak Korean and wouldn't have to think about this. And I just spoke English but…Then I realized that if I use some Korean to clarify what I was saying in English, that can really improve students' understanding during class…Because they just understand so much of it quickly and also their rapport with me and their comfort goes up so much, because it shows that like, I'm making them comfortable, understand them, think in their language, and that makes so much of a difference. Because it's more of an exchange, and not just be fondly English which is them…There're some people who really believe that monolingualistic education is the way to go, but I'm definitely not...Even though a lot of times my Korean is not correct, or you know, it's cute because my pronunciation is different. I think that they find it endearing. Obviously my Korean is imperfect, and I can't expect your English be perfect, either. You know, similar situations…So I think it's good to acknowledge that, and work from there as opposed to ignoring [it]. You know, the fact that they're Korean—that is who they are. (Initial Interview, 8.9.)

Veronica was intentionally distant from Korean educational authorities because they did not accept students' individuality and their identity, and she found the forced monolingualism policy to be contrary to her expectation for Korean culture, her pedagogical belief, and her belief in multilingualism. Though she initially thought the

Korean cultural element in education system encouraged students to be confident and productive, she asserted that the authority's monolingual policy in NES teachers' class was not compatible with the cultural merit for students' learning. She strategically used "we" and "they" as affiliating and detaching words in different occasions.

> Veronica: I think like, one thing that…I've been really inspired by from being here in Korea is that there isn't actually much about emphasis on self-esteem…which like, I think very productive. Because I think in U.S., like, we focus more on individuals and their confidence. And like, why they don't have confidence is like, really judgmental if people are not confident. Whereas here, I think like, the approach to like, developing students is more like, maybe it's because less individualistic but for example, like people achieving a lot more here and especially authorities are not, it's like kind...about certain aspects of students' identity. (Final Interview, 4.)

These NES teachers tried every way they could to reach to their students. Their learning the language and culture allowed them to embrace otherness, and its application in their teaching showed them a way to be proactive to the imposed policy of monolingualism for benefiting students.

## Summary

In Chapter 5, I scrutinized the commonalities and traced the participants' identity changes through their making choices of voices, modifying positions in time and space, and reconfiguring selves as a result. Against what the NES teachers felt as conflicting issues in their workplaces, they seemed to find their own way to improve themselves by narrowing the gap between the two worlds. In trying to do so, they seemed to realize and present what they could really do based on what they had already perceived. The process was fluid and their stances were mature enough to deliver their narratives as professionally and culturally legitimate. In the meantime, the participants were sure to feel empowered with newly established identities as bridge builders. The teachers' reconfigured identities were powerful in that they were self-driven and drawn from

efforts to make connections with Koreans and from wants to belong to the Korean community. The teacher participants presented themselves to be cultural mediators through their repositioned, empowered identities.

The teacher participants' perspectives that allowed me to assess their strategies to overcome challenges showed how they valued differences and modified their strategies for acculturation. Then their identity change from foreigners to bridge builders through their forthright narratives presented the teachers as proactive in overcoming conflicts over the course of negotiating process.

# CHAPTER 6
# CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

## Overview

With the epistemology of constructivism paradigm and narrative analysis, I examined three teacher participants' narratives to learn how the three NES teachers construct their identities as instructors in South Korea while teaching English to secondary students, which was my research question. Narratives are "typically told for a purpose: most generally, to make something inside the story world (i.e., aspects of the there-and-then of actors, experiences values or morals) relevant to the here-and-now of the act of speaking" (Bamberg, 2012, p.101 & 102). Horsdal (2012) explained that our life story narratives present "a configuration of our experiences in all these communities, or place in both a physical and relational sense" (p. 20). With these scholars' words in mind, I shared the participants' stories, helped them see their reconfiguration process, and tried to understand what they wanted to present by constructing their own meanings from the lived experiences through conducting interviews during the research.

My teacher participants were the perfect examples for narrative analysis. Thanks to their candid and detailed narratives, I could link theory and practice, and identify what I really wanted to know with my research question. By using a hybrid analysis method, I could see their identity construction process of being positioned as foreigners and actively positioning as bridge builders, and find some commonalities among each position they imposed through their narratives.

## Significance of the Findings

### The Process of NES Teachers' Identity Construction

This study was designed to investigate NES teachers' identity repositioning and construction in a cross-cultural context. Adopting Trent (2012)'s teacher identity construction, I could see how they presented the process of constructing their identities—from feeling alienated as guests to becoming empowered professional language teachers while living and teaching in South Korea. When the NES teachers initially acknowledged that their identity positioned by the Korean authority, culture, and community was not what they had expected as a professional teacher, they expressed feelings of frustration, confusion, or isolation. At the same time, they wanted to differentiate themselves (or their perception of themselves) from the imposed teacher identity by the local people. In other words, two sets of "logic of equivalence" were set around the "nodal points" (p. 120). One was about the teacher identity that was positioned by the local authority and community around the nodal points—teaching only speaking, native speaker fallacy, and prejudices on otherness. The other one was about the teacher identity that they already had as a novice teacher around the nodal points—providing an enjoyable and comfortable learning environment, being prepared teacher, teaching critical pedagogy, and others. The antagonistic relations between the two categories caused the participants' critical stance where they wanted to detach themselves from the opposite category of identity. To overcome antagonism and change the conflicting situation, the NES teachers presented their agency as professional language teachers through their "intentional goal-oriented actions" (p. 113). Through this identity process, the teacher participants showed how their teacher identity changed from being positioned as outsiders of the system by the locals to self-

positioning as bridge builders through taking proactive actions. The outcome of the process was a “third space” (p. 121) where the teachers could present their identity as professional teachers and negotiate any conflicting issues through their newly established structure and norm.

## Identity and a Sense of Belonging

### Native fallacy in EFL learning and teaching

The teacher participants in my research opened a door to Western people and culture in the field of EFL education in South Korea. They not only showed their potential as cultural mediators but also as competent English language users. When a native speaker fallacy still prevails in the educational context of the country, their belief in multilingualism in the classroom seems to lay weight on the issue of World Englishes. There has been a great attention to World Englishes and their speakers, but it still remains an unsearched area in practice. Seeing native speakers as automatically having competence in their language only presumes their innate competence of the language, but it actually indicates the native speaker’s advantage in grammatical competence (Canagarajah, 1999). Despite increasing understanding of this fallacy, it still prevails in the education field.

The native speaker fallacy can be traced back to the initial linguistic introspection of what mother tongue really means. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989) defined mother tongue as: 1. the language(s) one learns first, 2. the language(s) one knows best, 3. the language(s) one uses most, and 4. the language(s) one identifies with. They argue that definitions of 2. and 3. indicate competence and function of the language users, which is irrelevant to the language they first learned. If the first learned

language does not fulfill the best known and most used notions of mother tongue, native speaker preference in EFL contexts would be controversial.

The Korean EFL context is not exceptional in that the native speaker fallacy strongly influences its foreign language education, in spite of the government's efforts of improving Korean English teachers' language competence and recruiting more linguistically competent Korean English teachers. The NES teachers were skeptical about hiring "any" native speakers of English for teachers in the Korean EFL context just because their first language is English. They were confident of their pedagogical beliefs and did not doubt they could unfold their beliefs in actual teaching. All they wanted to do was do what they should do as teachers and professionally improve themselves to be better teachers. Other than being recognized only as native speaking teachers, they really wanted to become professional teachers and continue their professional learning after getting into the Korean education system. As they were novice teachers who just started to teach in the country, they were eager to learn as many helpful things as possible for their actual teaching practices. However, the offered courses from the NES system were not sufficient in that they were mostly online workshop at the initial stage of recruitment. What was more problematic was if a teacher is recruited through a different route such as Fulbright, the teacher is supposed to be managed through the program, though s/he is under the NES system.

More than anything else, the biggest problem was that the NES hiring system randomly recruited any native speakers of mainstream English with any college degrees and unfortunately their expectation for the chosen NES teachers, regardless of their

qualifications, was so little as the NES teachers' autonomy was only limited to teaching speaking only and as their teacher positions were not professionally respected.

**Stereotype of Western culture and people**

Although people in South Korea believe the nation has made great strides in addressing it, racial discrimination for foreigners sometimes can still seem extreme. The proposal by UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was recommended to the country, but the Korean government has not accepted it so far. Many people of color are not fairly treated in South Korea just because they have dark skin. They are discriminated against only because of their skin color, regardless of their nationalities. There have been reports that people of color are not treated well at workplaces, are mistreated by passers-by on the street, and are not fairly dealt with in academia. The unestablished notion of racial equality in South Korea seems crucial in that it easily turns into racial favoritism for Westerners who have fair skin color. Without laws that protect people against discrimination, racial favoritism, and racial discrimination will continue.

Koreans' misconceptions for whites may include: 1. Westerners have fair skin color, blonde hair, and perfect facial and body structures; 2. Westerners are well mannered, and 3. their culture and language are supreme. What is interesting is that my participants' did not find the bias Koreans felt toward them to be at all positive. Although they are all Westerners positioned to get favors in terms of racial preference, they said they were uncomfortable with being used as hype for white favoritism. The NES teachers sometimes expressed frustration about discrimination of South Asian people or even of themselves as Westerners. They seemed eager to be acknowledged as human beings, not as foreigners. The unestablished law on racial discrimination on

people of color and the disinterest in multicultural education seem to closely relate to racial favoritism for whites in South Korea.

If racial favoritism is generalized among the local people and if young people learn it as a way of customary practice, it should not be simply ignored in the field of education. Language and culture cannot be separated from each other and that same theory should apply to students' learning through multicultural education. Each language reflects the speakers' worldviews so speakers of different languages share unique perspectives of the world. Holliday defined small cultures as "a process of making and remaking (p. 247)" and as "the composite of cohesive behavior within any social grouping, and not to the differentiating features of prescribed ethnic, national and international entities" (p. 247). From Holliday's small culture perspective, foreign language classrooms allowing multilingualism and multiculturalism can be a field of dynamic, ongoing process where students learn through meaningful process while they negotiate with each other and with the teacher (Holliday, 1999). I try to examine the participants in the context of small c culture where diverse individualities are crucial while I see them as entities whose worldviews are greatly influenced by their language.

However, the monolingual speaking-only class with NES teachers will not produce any meaningful outcome for teachers as well as students in terms of respecting small cultures in EFL classroom. The purpose of such a class does not even match with cultural sharing in the process of teaching and learning between two different cultural entities. What was surprising was the participants' proactive approaches to dealing with the monolingual speaking-only class, which they applied their professional knowledge such as content-based or task-based teaching/learning to the extreme

environment, demonstrated students' improvement, and promoted student-teacher relationships. Their teaching was not only limited to the teaching techniques like four skills integrated instruction but also extended to their pedagogical beliefs of knowing/benefiting each other through the meaningful learning process in bilingualism. The NES teachers really tried to include every student in their teaching and learning process, through which they respected students' individual background and expected all the students to learn something meaningful.

**Poor behaviors of some NES teachers**

When the Korean government wildly encouraged NES teaching, a lot of NES teachers poured into South Korea for teaching positions at public schools or in the private sector. As the numbers of teachers were great, the filtering system for qualified teachers did not seem to work well. The NES system that looked to prosper forever started to show some negative signs. Some of the teachers were reported for their misbehavior such as drug abuse or child molestation. The news about the these teachers not only added to the public's negative impression of the whole NES teacher group, but also badly hurt most NES teachers who were devoted teachers. The so-called "tourist-teachers" who had just graduated from college and so did not have enough teaching experiences tended to go with one-year contracts and misbehaved in/out of school. As soon as the media covered the news about the misbehaving teachers, Koreans' perceptions of the teachers started to deteriorate. On the side of most NES teachers, this seemed unrealistic because they had been praised for their English competence and awarded a lot of benefits for the last few years, and suddenly they were dropped to the bottom of the system in the eye of the public.

In their narratives, my NES teachers constantly stayed away from the troubled group and tried to present themselves as professional educators, despite all the prejudice on the NES teacher group. However, what Korean English teachers seriously considered was that the misbehaving teachers' wrongdoings were directly connected to poor teaching practices. The NES teachers who had to deal with these issues over some NES teachers' poor performances other than teaching itself only wanted to focus their attention to their professional improvement and cultural sharing in their field, but the reality did not allow them to appreciate what they had. As ways of professional developments, they presented individual efforts such as joining educational conferences, and designing and sharing quality lessons through collaborative work with other NES colleagues in the region.

**Providers of native language and people**

My participants demonstrated their wanting to become qualified language teachers rather than just earning more money in a short period of time as some trouble-making teachers expected. They tried hard to be valued as professional educators, so that the teachers applied critical literacy pedagogy, four skills integrated instruction, and task-based teaching as ways of practicing their pedagogical beliefs in their teaching.

Unlike the NES teachers' efforts and expectations for idealistic EFL class, the class Korean administrators wanted them to teach was speaking-only. Students seemed to regard NES teachers' course as extracurricular fun time with native speakers, and Korean teachers seemed to want the course to be an opportunity of students being exposed to the native speakers of the target language. The fact that the NES teachers were not allowed to grade students and their class was not related to the preparation for Korean Scholastic Assessment Test (KSAT) let them feel lack of

autonomy in teaching. Even though they were allowed to teach whatever they wanted in their class, the NES teachers still acknowledged the freedom to teach as the extracurricular version of the limited freedom.

As mentioned earlier, one goal of the national English Program in Korea (EPIK) is to enhance students' communicative competence through authentic language use with NES teachers (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 1997; EPIK, 1997). This also means the program is designed to help students' both academic and cultural English learning through interactions with native English-speaking teachers. If the original goal of the EPIK is like that, then the field circumstances what the NES teachers had to deal with—teaching only speaking, detached from communicative teaching and learning, were probably disconcerting.

As a matter of fact, students do indicate advantages of learning with NES teachers. Ma (2013) interviewed 30 secondary students studying in different schools in Hong Kong and discussed a couple of advantages of NES teachers' teaching compared to NNES teachers: facilitating learning, good English proficiency, and teaching styles. I also heard feedback from students and find similarities in benefits of NES teachers' teaching while I conducted this study in South Korea. The presence of NES teachers in the English curriculum still imposes the importance of learning English as foreign language. If NES teachers' being a linguistic model (Cook, 1999; cited in Ma, 2013) and their English proficiency as reference criteria (Stern, 1983; cited in Ma, 2013) are seriously considered in the Korean EFL teaching and learning, the initial goal of their inclusion in the English curriculum should not be neglected. In each class, my teacher participants offered non-threatening discourse environment for students to communicate

both in English and Korean when they were required to fulfill specific works, continuously checked on the students working in groups, and made themselves available as socio-linguistic reference. The initial goal of EPIK—increasing students' communicative competence through authentic language use—and students' need of learning the target language indicates the NES teachers' advantages in EFL context.

**Agency, Actions, and Reconstructed Identity**

**NES teachers' responsibility**

Though the NES teacher participants were only supposed to teach speaking to students, they obviously had teacher responsibilities of culturally caring and linguistically supporting students based on their beliefs in critical pedagogy.

First, they all tried to understand students' attributes and facilitated their learning through connecting the students' individualities. As Cummins discusses teaching students in culturally diverse contexts without a bilingual program, he indicates students' accessibility to interaction with users of English as an advantage for students' English learning and developing a sense of belonging to the target language society. He also claims the interaction should be connected to teachers' instructional basis appreciating students' cultural backgrounds (Cummins, 1994). In order to enhance critical pedagogy in the EFL context, the NES teachers tried to build a healthy relationships with students by acknowledging differences between the two cultures, learning about Korean culture, and sharing the experiences to create a middle ground for acculturation. When they met even totally different cultural issues with students, they tried to comprehend the details in a bigger frame to approach students' circumstances. While doing that, they came to reach the area of multicultural education where students could learn how and

why they should respect otherness and choose to learn regardless of their SES backgrounds.

The NES teachers' efforts to maintain their teacher responsibilities also led them to facilitate bilingualism in class. Providing an adequate environment where students can learn based on individual cultural backgrounds and prior learning experiences came from their care for students and through relationships with them. In a monolingual classroom, students' learning anxiety level can go up because they cannot clearly present their ideas in the target language due to the incompetence in the target language, according to the study by Andrade and Williams (2009). The chances are great that anxiety negatively influences on students' competence and their willingness to speak (Hashimoto, 2002; cited in Andrade & Williams, 2009). If students' possible high learning anxiety in the NES teachers' class influenced their competence in the language, the NES teachers' providing a bilingual environment would have an enormous heuristic impact on students' learning indeed. The teacher participants indicated the effectiveness of the bilingualism both for student confidence and language learning improvement. Against their obligation as NES teachers to abide by monolingual policy over students from diverse backgrounds, the teachers seemed to establish the newly defined teacher responsibility of facilitating students' communicative competence through bilingualism in class. Rather than following the forced monolingual policy, they sought their way of teaching in bilingualism to find students' individual voices and to help them learn in the course of it.

**NES teachers' professionalism**

In the environment where the NES teachers were seen only as native speakers, the teachers initially felt confused between what they believed and wanted to do, and

what they were supposed to do—teaching speaking only. However, they did not cease to move forward and tried out teaching practices based on student-centered learning and critical pedagogy. The participants shared some of their Western professional knowledge—goal-oriented teaching, process-based learning, community-based learning, and task-based instruction in their structured curriculum. Even though they were novice teachers in the unfamiliar Korean cultural context, the teachers did their best to create an environment of reciprocal learning through cultural interactions.

The traditional way of teaching in South Korea is teacher-centered, lecture-based, grammar-translation teaching. The purpose of grammar-translation teaching is for students to learn to read and translate sentences in isolated fragments and to ultimately lead them to mastering the target language. Whatever the main purpose of the method is, it is not appropriate for the current Korean ELF context for two obvious reasons: 1. It is not compatible with communicative language teaching (CLT) addressed in the goal of the current English curriculum, 2. A type of method cannot fulfill the mission of covering the students' linguistic, cultural, and emotional scopes, which in turn can be designed and accessed under the umbrella of pedagogical approach.

Meanwhile, communicative language teaching (CLT) focuses on learners' pragmatic and authentic use of the target language for meaningful negotiations as a pedagogical approach. Further, CLT places more weight on fluency than accuracy in learners' utterances, does not restrict its goal to linguistic competence and the learners should be able to use the language effectively in an impromptu context (Brown, 2007). It naturally comes to student-centered learning—focusing on their learning process, based on students' goal of learning, and parallel with learning through interactions with

peers as well as teachers. My participants' teaching practices seemed to all inclusive to CLT spectrum and that matches with the goal of the current Korean English curriculum, enhancing students' competence in the use of English. The NES teachers let each class work in pairs or groups to enhance students' collaborative work, trying hard to listen to students' voices, focusing on students' gradual improvement rather than on their final outcomes, and letting students learn from sharing with peers and the teachers. It was unfortunate that their real duty in the field was only limited to teaching speaking unlike the purpose of the curriculum and the NES program, however, their actual practices were impressive enough to beat the worst discrepancy in their classroom.

**NES teachers' motivation**

When discussing NES teachers' motivation in teaching English overseas in her study, Mullock (2009) explains the most participants were interested in traveling and working in Asia and assumes the most accessible legal form of work for them could be teaching English. As satisfactions of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL), she presented intrinsic satisfaction among three types of motivations in teaching English overseas.

Mullcok addressed major themes from their intrinsic satisfaction: positive personal experience and feelings and altruistic rewards. My teacher participants thought hard on the issue of who the educational beneficiary from their teaching practices. They contemplated not only the effects of their teaching practices but also how much students actually could earn from them. In other words, their deliberate connection between the two seemed to form a type of confidence as well as a pure joy of teaching for them.

The confidence and joy gained from a balanced approach to their students' learning was tied to their personal feelings. The participants all talked about the critical point for their change in their narratives. From learning about Korean/Asian culture, through publishing textbooks, to being linguistically competent in Korean, they said seeing their personal and professional growth as an individual and as a teacher meant a lot to them.

Also, finding a newly defined oneself seemed to play a great role in my teacher participants' satisfactions, which became their motivation to become a better teacher. This feeling of altruistic reward can be formed through the interactions with other people in a different environment. While the teachers tried to adapt to the new world and to get accustomed to its people, they came to realize a certain level of discrepancies and felt empathy with others in the course of balancing out the differences, adjusting themselves to the difference, and modifying the differences between the two. In the meantime, they were able to see themselves from different perspectives and to have a totally new feeling about themselves related to otherness, from which they could experience a new satisfying feeling from concerning and supporting otherness.

Even some unsatisfactory extrinsic factors concerning payroll, job security and promotion (Mullock, 2009) did not keep the teacher participants from seeking their full joy in their teaching practices. They tried to detach themselves from misbehaving NES teachers who were there for making money for a short period of time and doing socially unacceptable misdeeds. Further, they were not stuck in keeping their job security but expressed their concerns over unsustainable NES system for teaching/learning continuity. In spite of acknowledging all the negative conditions they had, the NES

teachers continuously tried to identify themselves in the dynamics of their life in the Korean context with trying to improve themselves as professionally and culturally balanced human beings.

## Implications for Literacy Learning and Teaching

The NES teachers in my study showed a great example of having qualified NES teachers in the Korean education system for three reasons for our learning about NES language instructors and instruction: the hiring standards for NES teachers, how to prepare NES teachers for teaching and how to make them feel like professional and at home in a cross-cultural context, and how to make them feel useful as more than just native speakers.

I believe recruiting qualified teachers is the foremost thing when it comes to hiring NES teachers. Whatever the condition of a system—even if it has enormous flaws or it is under-performing—nothing can beat qualified, competent educators in the field of teaching and learning, and my participants proved it.

Despite the challenges and discrepancies they met in the course of teaching and living in South Korea, they were not deterred by any of those and continued to grow as competent language teachers. Rather than staying away from the otherness in the unfamiliar environment, they tried to learn from the people within the boundary. They were equipped with teacher responsibilities, professionalism, and more important than anything else, the motivation to teach. It is evident that they have potential as professional educators despite the fact that they were not initially educated and trained as educators.

These participants also showed their potential as professionals who can perform communicative language teaching (CLT) in the Korean EFL context, which would

improve students' linguistic and cultural understanding of the target language through natural utterances and interactions with NES teachers. The fact that the teachers use CLT in their classroom means they allow bilingualism for the optimum interactions with students. Encouraging students' pragmatic and authentic language use in class also showed a way to think about educating English ownership and to use language and culture integrated teaching as benefits of learning from NES teachers.

In addition, the NES teachers proved their advantages as native speakers in two ways. They used their best resources as native speakers in that they were able to have an unrehearsed discourse with students using authentic material and language use. Then, their multitudinous understanding of language teaching/learning made students care about ownership of the target language as well as their first language. It was probable that their critical perspectives on the process of teaching and learning and the interactions with students contributed to overcoming native speaker fallacy and defining a new pedagogical approach as professional NES teachers.

## Practical Suggestions

From findings and discussion of this study, I came to have some suggestions for future NES teachers and their teaching in South Korea in terms of recruitment, job security and autonomy, and multicultural education.

Since the controversy around misbehaving NES teachers, the Korean government has raised its bar to recruiting only native speaking teachers with TEFL or teaching certificates. However, critics are skeptical of the requirements in terms of assessing teachers' qualifications only with certificates not with their flexibility, responsibility, and teaching experiences. In addition to depending only on this superficial standard in recruiting, Koreans' racial and dialect preferences for the native

speakers from the inner circle countries can limit opportunities for potential teacher candidates to apply for teaching positions in South Korean public schools. It seems that more heuristically qualified and culturally conscious standards need to be set up for future in-service teachers. I expect experts who have cultural and professional experiences in both cultures will be able to contribute to designing and operating a more updated recruiting system.

NES teachers who have potential as professional educators are thought to possess teacher responsibility, professional knowledge, and strong motivation to guide students. Once NES teachers are evaluated as having those qualifications, they should be entitled to have same status as any Korean faculty and be part of school community, not as foreigners but as independent, autonomous entities at schools. The autonomy they have in class will enable them to unfold their potential and to help them lead students to more emotionally comfortable and intellectually challenging learning environment, which is the supreme condition for student learning.

NES teachers' competence and function in their first language and their cultural competence with learning and experiencing multicultural representations in the Western society can be advantageous in teaching well-represented Western culture to Korean students. Based on pedagogical approach like communicative language teaching allowing more linguistic and cultural capacity for both teachers and students, NES teachers will be able to teach Western culture, children's literature, film, and family value/tradition with diverse and critical perspectives.

## Further Research

If I will have a chance to conduct the same research, I would like to do it exactly the same in a different context with different participants. That is because of my desire

to confirm my research's credibility and transferability. I wonder what the result would be if executed the same research in a different EFL context like other EFL countries. My senior, Dr. Dhanarattigannon who teaches college students in Thailand showed her interest in my research topic and that became my interest in the potential of the future research. Many EFL contexts have similar circumstances and problems, so I would like to know how the similarities and diversity would be revealed by conducting research with more time and a wider variety of subjects, such as Korean colleagues' perspectives and students' voices in different contexts.

## Concluding Thoughts

My participants were so generous with their time and in sharing their experiences. Even more, they were such great teachers that they were already doing the best thing they were able to do within the limited resources. It is my great pleasure to make them be more conscious of how wonderful things they really did. During the research, the teachers used to ask me when they would be able to read the finalized work. They seemed to believe that my research would really help the not-so-helpful NES system change and current and future NES teachers' improvement in the profession. I am so honored that my participants believed in me and expected my study to contribute to the society and its people, which indeed became my driving force for completing this study.

I really would like to give my thanks to the wonderful teachers and their schools for making this research possible and meaningful.

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