Exploring the Co-teaching Practice of Native and Non-native English Teachers in Korea

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The purpose of this study was to explore the co-teaching experiences between native and non-native English teachers in the Korean elementary and secondary school context. Research data included classroom observations and teachers' interviews collected over one school semester. A constant comparative data analysis method was employed to provide an in-depth description of the co-teachers' teaching practice, the aspects of their interactions, and their professional development in a classroom setting. The findings of this study revealed that the co-teaching styles and role distributions in the co-teaching process were different depending on the non-native teachers' English proficiency and their professional relationships. It also suggested that the successful implementation of collaborative team work was deeply related to the participating teachers' willingness to cooperate and conceptions created by the dynamics of interaction between the two teachers in and outside of the classroom. Given the research result that both native and non-native teachers benefitted from their co-teaching experiences, some pedagogical implications on the improvement of co-teaching English in Korean classrooms are proposed.

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to recent trends emphasizing the practical English education in Korea, many schools have implemented the collaborative teaching methodology in which native and non-native English teachers work together in English classrooms. Since the 1980s, Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea have started English co-teaching programs in their elementary and secondary schools by inviting thousands of native English speakers to teach with them. The programs have something in common in that they have the primary goals of pursuing an effective EFL instruction in classroom
practices as well as promoting non-native teachers’ professional development through the teaching process between native and non-native teachers. When it comes to the EPIK program which refers to English program in Korea, there have been heated debates about the advantages and disadvantages in its implementation, especially in a classroom setting (Barratt & Kontra, 2000; Carless, 2006b; Yongson Choi, 2001; Herbert & Wu, 2009; Jeong-ok Kim & Byung-bin Im, 2008; Oryang Kwon, 2000). For example, some people including English teachers and educators have the skeptical views about its effectiveness, accepting the controversy about the huge budget and the uncertified qualifications of native speaking teachers. Others argue that English co-teaching programs have quite a few positive assets in terms of bringing authentic language input to English classrooms, facilitating cross-cultural understanding, and promoting non-native English teachers’ professional development. Specifically, compared to the traditional classroom where the non-native English teacher alone was responsible for all of the instruction process, a collaborative team work in which language teachers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds is able to better respond to students’ need or interests (Jui-min Tsai, 2007). In other words, co-teaching practice in the EFL context provides students with more opportunities to use the target language, promote intercultural understanding, and foster positive motivation towards communicating with native speakers of the target language (Carless, 2006a; Luk, 2001; Tajino & Tajino, 2000; Tajino & Walker, 1998).

Despite its pedagogical advantages mentioned above, the instructional framework of co-teaching and the dynamics of interaction between native and non-native teachers have not been closely explored, especially in a classroom setting. For example, much research on co-teaching in the EFL context has been quantitative in nature, focusing teachers’ and students’ reactions in relation to its advantages and disadvantages. In addition, although the underlying agenda of the co-teaching project in Korea is to promote Korean English teachers’ professional development through collaborative team work with native teachers, little is known about what teachers actually benefit from their co-teaching experiences. In light of this, the purpose of this study is aimed at exploring the co-teaching experiences of native and non-native English teachers in Korean elementary and secondary school context, with a focus on co-teaching styles and role distribution, teachers’ interactions, and their professional development. To achieve this goal, the researcher will investigate three pairs of co-teaching practice in the English classroom, based on data analysis of classroom observations and teachers’ interviews. This qualitative research will make some contributions to the field of English education in Korea, especially in terms of developing the ideal framework of co-teaching practice, promoting collaboration between native and non-native teachers, and teachers’ professional learning through their team work experiences. It will also contribute to the literature of co-teaching in the EFL context based on the in-depth considerations of its ongoing classroom practice and potential factors
II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. The Notion of Co-teaching

With the introduction of team work between local and foreign English teachers, researchers and educators in Korea have used the two terminologies, co-teaching and team teaching, interchangeably in the premise that they have the same conceptual meaning related to modes of collaborative instruction. In a strict way, however, the two have a pedagogical distinction. Initially, co-teaching practice was implemented to provide support for increasing the inclusion of students with disabilities in the United States in the 1970s (Friend, 2007; Hudson & Glomb, 1997; Mastropieri, McDuffie, & Scruggs, 2007; Murray, 2004). This consisted of one general education teacher paired with one special education teacher, in an inclusive classroom of general education and special education students (Friend & Cook, 2003; Sack, 2005). In relation to its theory and practice, co-teaching does not simply mean two teachers work together. Rather, it suggests two teachers collaborating through intended interactions in order to achieve a particular pedagogical purpose based on mutual agreement. In other words, co-teaching contains a broader implication for a kind of teaching approach in which two or more instructors work together sharing the responsibility for teaching the students, whereas team teaching can be interpreted as one of the subsequent strategies of the co-teaching approach. In light of this, the term English co-teaching in this study refers to a team work of English instruction in a classroom setting where two teachers including one native English teacher and one non-native English teacher work together in the process of planning, instruction and evaluation.

2. The Major Co-teaching Models

With regard to co-teaching styles, many researchers commonly presented the five major models such as supportive teaching, parallel teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching (Friend, Reising, & Cook, 1993; Liwei Liu, 2008; Spencer, 2005; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004). The first style, supportive teaching which is often called one teaching one assisting, is characterized by one teacher taking the major responsibilities of the class while the other teacher assists students individually. In the second style, parallel teaching, students are divided into two or more groups and teachers teach the same or similar content in different classroom groupings. With the third style, station teaching, each of the co-teachers provides individual support at the different
stations. With the fourth style, *alternative teaching*, one teacher instructs the larger group while the other teacher takes a smaller group of students to a different location for a limited period of time for specialized instruction. In most class groups, the large group completes the planned lesson while the small group either completes an alternative lesson or the same lesson taught at a different level or different purposes. Finally, the fifth style of *team teaching* is implemented by both teachers who share teaching responsibilities and instruction of all students equally.

3. The Key Elements of Co-teaching Implementation

For the various styles of the co-teaching practice, a close examination of some common elements for its successful implementation will provide the insights for educators on what style they should choose and on how they actually implement each style in a classroom setting. With regard to the linguistic competence of native and non-native teachers in the EFL context, the literature review shows somewhat mixed viewpoints. For example, some researchers argue that it is almost impossible for a non-native speaker to achieve native speaker competence, no matter how well-motivated and educated he or she may be (Llurda, 2005; Medgyes, 1992). Yet others maintain that proficient non-native English speakers are multi-competent and fluent in more than one language, thereby possessing a linguistic competence equivalent to that of a native English speaker (Cook, 1999; Rampton, 1990). This suggests that there may be a lot of potential elements for the successful implementation of co-teaching, especially in a classroom setting. In this study, four different elements among other things are discussed; *common goal, shared beliefs, harmonious interaction, and cooperative process*.

First, a *common goal* can be identified as the starting point of the effective team work, which consists of the fundamental framework of co-teaching. In other words, teachers who participate in co-teaching must have a plan that is clear and mutually agreed upon so that they can reduce miscommunication and keep the spirit of co-teaching alive (Rea & Connell, 2005). Commitment to the co-teaching goals enables teachers to overcome some of the inevitable difficulties which they will encounter in the classroom (Herbert & Wu, 2009).

Secondly, like any collaborative team work, co-teaching needs two or more people with different knowledge, skills, and experiences. No two people will agree on every issue in the planning, implementing and evaluation of the team work, but sharing similar teaching philosophies or beliefs will help the overall process of co-teaching run more smoothly and effectively. More importantly, the participating teachers in co-teaching should be confident in their ability to meet students’ needs, based on a strong conviction that professional development is a critical component of the effective co-teaching practice (Freytag, 2003).
In a similar vein, teachers who plan to work together are required to share some positive beliefs and thereby creating the feeling that they are equally responsible for the learning of all students to whom they are assigned (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004).

Thirdly, any teachers who want to implement the co-teaching practice successfully are required to foster the social interaction skills such as conflict management, creative problem solving and positive interdependence. Specifically, face-to-face interaction is one of the most important factors in designing action plans of co-teaching and discussing various instructional problems (Dieker & Murawski, 2004). Individual co-teachers will also find that they are functioning at different interpersonal skill levels, depending on their previous training, personality styles, and communication preferences.

Finally, given the fact that co-teaching is substantially designed on the basis of promoting communication and collaboration between two teachers, cooperative process can be served as the most important factor for the successful implementation of co-teaching. Specifically, cooperative process involves many components such as co-planned lessons, mutual problem solving, shared classroom responsibilities, and appropriate work distribution in evaluation (Rea & Connell, 2005). Thus, two teachers need to cooperatively plan, instruct and evaluate a class in order to take advantage of the unique competencies and experiences of each teacher (Buckley, 2000; Spencer, 2005).

In summary, the literature review shows that co-teaching is a quite challenging task in spite of its potential advantages because it requires a lot of pedagogical qualities from teachers (Carless, 2006a). They include mutual trust and respect, time for planning and preparation, sharing roles and responsibilities, open-mindedness and flexibility, patience and commitment, and support from administrators. This suggests that the overall effectiveness of co-teaching, to a large extent, lies in co-participants’ attitude and effort.

4. The Review of English Co-Teaching Program in Korea (EPIK)

The EPIK program in Korea, which started in 1995, was created to improve the English speaking ability of students and teachers in Korea, to foster international exchanges, and to reform teaching methodologies in schools. Unlike many EFL positions in Korea, EPIK is sponsored by the government and its regulations, including salary and working conditions, are explicity designated in the employment contract. For example, native teachers are required to attend a mandatory 10 day professional training session. Thereafter, they begin their placement and start to work together with their co-teachers in a classroom setting. With regard to its classroom practice, some studies reveal that the Korean co-teachers responded that they faced lots of difficulties, largely because of lack of communication, cultural conflict, and the native teachers’ inability to control the class (Kwon & Kellogg, 2005; Yongson Choi, 2001). In contrast, other studies show that native teachers thought
that local teachers spoke too much Korean in class and therefore reduced the opportunity for students to be exposed to a natural English environment (Carless & Walker, 2006; Shin & Kellogg, 2007).

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Research Questions

In order to explore both native and non-native English teachers’ co-teaching practices in the Korean elementary and secondary school context, the following research questions were posed:

1) How are the co-teaching styles manifested in the classroom?
2) What are the aspects of teachers’ interactions in co-teaching practice?
3) To what extent and in what ways does English co-teaching contribute to the professional development of native and non-native teachers?

2. Participants

Table 1 summarizes the participating teachers’ educational backgrounds and co-teaching experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-teaching teams</th>
<th>Age (gender)</th>
<th>School level</th>
<th>Educational backgrounds</th>
<th>Co-teaching experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native teacher</td>
<td>36 (F)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>B.A. degree in Marketing</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native teacher</td>
<td>25 (M)</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>B.A. degree in English Education</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native teacher</td>
<td>28 (F)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>M.A. degree in International</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native teacher</td>
<td>45 (M)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Relations</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native teacher</td>
<td>30 (M)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>B.A. degree in Tourism</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native teacher</td>
<td>48 (F)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>B.A. degree in English Education</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 30 elementary and 31 secondary schools in Mokpo, a city in the Jeollanamdo province, the researcher contacted 12 schools implementing co-teaching practice with both native and non-native English teacher working together. Except for five schools, including two elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school, all of the school principals and teachers rejected the research project, giving such responses as teachers’
busy schedules and the pressure for their class to be observed by others over a long period of time; one semester. Prior to the launch of the investigation, the researcher visited each school and had a 30-minute meeting with each co-teaching member. In the meetings, the researcher provided an explanation of the survey framework including the goal, classroom observation and interview schedules, protection of their privacy, and contributions that the investigation was expected to make to EFL education in Korea. Based on the results of the meetings, the researcher made a final decision to choose three co-teaching teams which gave the most positive responses. One team at elementary, middle and high school level was chosen to participate.

3. Data Collection Procedure

In this study, the data collection methods included classroom observations and interviews in that the trustworthiness of qualitative research depends on the collection and use of a variety of empirical materials, observed by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In order to observe the co-teaching activities more effectively, the researcher chose to be a peripheral membership observer, which allows the researcher to observe deliberatively the phenomenon under investigation, not intrusively influencing the events (Adler & Adler, 1994). The duration of the survey was one school semester, from September 2009 to February 2010, based on the academic year.

Observations in this survey took place throughout the school day; incorporating lessons, meetings, and co-teachers’ lunch breaks. Observations also continued during any extra-curricular work and after school. The researcher observed each pair of co-teachers’ classes once a week and the times of observations for each team were determined by the teachers’ preferences. In the classroom, the researcher wrote field notes concerning interactions between the native and non-native teacher, approximate class time spent by each teacher, teachers’ pedagogical roles, and their physical expressions. In addition to classroom observations, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the brief and casual meetings between native and non-native teachers before and after classes, writing down field notes without participating in their conversation.

Each teacher had three interviews scheduled separately in the beginning, middle, and the end of the school semester. Prior to conducting the survey, the researcher designed the interview questions in order to examine the teachers’ backgrounds, teaching experiences, and their perceptions of co-teaching practice (see Appendix). Table 2 summarizes the number of classroom observations and timeline of interviews for each co-teaching team.
4. Data Analysis Method

In order to answer the research questions, both observation and interview data were analyzed based on three different perspectives including teachers’ collaborative practice, interactions, and professional development. With regard to data analysis procedures, the researcher first established a database by editing the survey texts of the observation field notes and interview transcripts, and then sorted out the redundancies. Specifically, two strategies were employed sequentially in the analyzing process (Merriam, 1998). The first stage of analysis was within-case analysis, by which the researcher examined each case comprehensively in order to learn as much as possible about the teachers’ co-teaching experiences and contextual variables. In the second stage, after analysis of each case was completed, a cross-case analysis was performed to seek a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases. Finally, the categories and themes derived from the constant comparisons were interpreted, thereby answering the research questions.

5. Limitations of the Study

Unlike the quantitative research, the nature of qualitative research is to explore the aspects of a particular social phenomenon, based on a broad range of observational and interview data in relation to social interaction in a given context. Thus, given the fact that this study collected data from only three pairs of co-teaching teams in the same region, it is difficult for the researcher to claim that the results from this qualitative method can be applied equally to other situations or teachers. Yet the analysis results of teachers’ unique experiences participating in this survey can provide some insights for other practitioners who plan collaborative language teaching in the EFL classroom context.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the co-teaching practices between native and non-native teachers in the Korean elementary and secondary English classroom setting. In this section,
Exploring the Co-teaching Practice of Native and Non-native English Teachers in Korea

observational and interview data analysis to answer three research questions is presented in three different parts. The first part describes how English co-teaching was implemented by the three pairs of teachers involved in the study. The second part focuses on the teachers’ interactions and the third part discusses the teachers’ professional development regarding co-teaching in the Korean EFL classroom.

1. Co-teaching Styles and Teachers’ Role Distribution

As the first step for understanding the overall framework and styles of co-teaching practice in the classroom, the researcher observed how the two instructors including native and non-native teacher collaborated and what roles they took in their team work. Table 3 summarizes the teachers’ role distribution based on their teaching responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching responsibilities</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Elementary school</th>
<th>Middle school</th>
<th>High school</th>
<th>Total collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To write lesson plans</td>
<td>NET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NNET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To review lesson plans</td>
<td>NET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NNET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare teaching materials</td>
<td>NNET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NNET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To manage the class atmosphere</td>
<td>NET</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in instruction</td>
<td>NNET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To assess students’ performance</td>
<td>NNET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do follow-up work</td>
<td>NNET</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NET = native English teacher, NNET = non-native English teacher

It is noticeable that data analysis showed quite different features in the classroom practice of teachers’ team work, according to the school level; especially in terms of three stages such as in the pre-class, during class, and follow-up work. In the pre-class planning, for example, both the native and non-native teacher in elementary school designed the lesson plans together along with a detailed discussion about a variety of classroom activities including games, quizzes, and songs. In secondary schools, however, the native teachers were in charge of constructing and reviewing the lesson plans as well as preparing the relevant teaching materials. The non-native teachers didn’t participate in the...
preparation stage of collaborative team work, with the exception of accepting the native teachers’ occasional asking for help, such as copying worksheets and carrying the teaching materials.

With regard to the common feature of in-class instruction, all of the non-native teachers, regardless of the school levels, were responsible for managing the class atmosphere, and therefore they encouraged students to be quiet, to pay attention to the native teachers, and to remind students of their previous learning. For the instructional activities, on the other hand, there existed some different classroom practices according to the non-native teachers’ perceived English proficiency. In the elementary school classroom, for example, the non-native teacher showed a great confidence in communicating with his native counterpart in the classroom. Thus, both the native and non-native teacher shared the instructional responsibilities based on their equal status. While the native teacher was instructing, the non-native teacher would intervene to give an additional explanation, translate for the native teacher, reinforce the students’ attention, and check their understanding. The following is an excerpt from observation field notes of a sixth grade classroom in the elementary school.

The native teacher greeted the students and started today’s class. The goal of the lesson was to introduce the difference between ‘how’ and ‘what’. She explained the difference using some sentences, body language, facial expression, yet students remained puzzled….. The non-native teacher translated what the native teacher had just said in easy English and Korean, and drew some pictures or characters on the board in order to help students understand much more easily…. While the native teacher was explaining repeatedly, the non-native teacher helped students who didn’t understand….. When playing the game related to the sentence patterns that students were supposed to learn, the students looked motivated, but soon they made noises and became distracted…. When the classroom atmosphere was boring, both the native and non-native teacher collaborated with each other, introducing another game or searching for effective strategies to help the students focus on learning…. The non-native teacher had excellent English proficiency and a great confidence in communicating with his native counterpart in classroom activities.

(Observation field notes: September 23, October 28, 2009)

In the secondary school classrooms, the native teachers took most of the instructional activities, serving as the main instructor, whereas the non-native teachers stood in the back of the classroom or walked around to handle discipline, make individual students be quiet, and answer students’ questions during small group work. Specifically, the non-native teachers worked as simple assistants, translating difficult vocabulary into Korean or
helping students understand grammatical structures when they felt it necessary or the native teachers asked for. The following is an excerpt from observation field notes of a third grade classroom in the middle school.

The native teacher started the class by reviewing the weather and what the students learned last week. Before introducing the goal of the lesson, the teacher asked the meaning of some expressions the students had already learned. But the class was noisy and the students were not focused. The non-native teacher was standing in the back of the classroom, just watching and listening to his native counterpart’s teaching procedures. After reading the story, the native teacher asked the students questions about the key expressions in the story, explaining them in easy English. When the students didn’t understand the meaning of some difficult words, the native teacher asked the non-native teacher to translate them into Korean language. The native teacher handed over some paper to the students, divided the class into several groups, and explained the activity. During class, except for walking around to ensure students were not playing, the non-native teacher spent most of the time in waiting for students to come and ask him questions. The non-native teacher was reluctant to use the target language in the classroom, largely because of his perceived English inability.

(Observation field notes: September 17, October 13, 2009)

In assessing students’ performance, interview data analysis revealed that the native teachers in all of the three classroom settings had difficulty in confirming students’ understanding of learning contents and procedures, largely because of a large number of students. This suggests that native teacher-centered instruction has some pedagogical limitations in terms of positive feedback, based on students’ performance. Follow-up work, which includes marking students’ worksheets or written papers, was largely the responsibility of the three native teachers. When asked about the reason for not sharing the task of the follow-up work, the non-native teachers commonly mentioned their heavy workload and busy schedule.

An overview of the three teams based on data analysis results mentioned above revealed that each team had different co-teaching styles. That is, while the elementary school team followed the team teaching style based on the non-native teacher’s communicative ability and a close professional relationship between the two, the secondary school teams showed a typical framework of the supportive teaching style, which represents ‘one teach, one assist’. This finding provides some insights into the application of co-teaching styles in relation to one of the research results, in which the four major co-teaching styles including supportive teaching, alternative teaching, station teaching, and team teaching should be
implemented sequentially in order to help native English teachers gradually build up their skills and experience in co-teaching of the EFL context (Liwei Liu, 2008).

2. The Teachers’ Interactions and Professional Relationships

As the second step for exploring the nature of co-teaching practice, the focus of data analysis result turns to the personal aspects of co-teaching, especially interactions and professional relationships between native and non-native teachers. In a case study of co-teaching experiences between native and non-native teachers in the Taiwanese EFL context, Jui-min Tsai (2007) constructed an analysis framework for team teachers’ interactions based on Halliday’s (1978) register theory, which contains an analytical structure used to describe how language use and semiotic features occur in different situational context. Adapting Jui-min Tsai’s analysis framework, a chart to analyze teachers’ interactions in and outside of the classroom was developed. The chart included four analytical categories such as timing, role relationship, channels of communication, and purposes and content. Specifically, while timing refers to when the interaction occurs, role relationship deals with the roles the teachers played in their communications such as a conversation initiator or a response maker, which are marked by the use of arrows indicating the directions of communicative actions. Channels of communication were divided into two channels including oral conversation and written notes. Purposes and content refer to what the teachers in the context of co-teaching are actually engaged in doing. Table 4 displays the analytical results of teachers’ interactions in the elementary school English classroom.

**TABLE 4**

| Data Analysis of Teachers’ Interactions in the Elementary School English Classroom |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|
| **Timing** | **Role relationship** | **Communicative channels** | **Purposes and content** |
| Pre-class planning | NET→NNET | oral / written | to review the lesson plans |
| | NET→NNET | oral / written | to discuss teaching strategies |
| | NET→NNET | oral / written | to share ideas or opinions about teaching procedures |
| During instruction | NNET→NET | oral / written | to remind students of the previous learning content |
| | NET→NNET | (eye contact, nodding, smiles) | to suggest an explanation about learning activities |
| | NET→NNET | oral / written | to share opinions about students’ performance |
| | NNET→NET | oral / written | to request translation or explanation in Korean |
| | NNET→NET | to inform of the completion of explanation |
| Class/lunch break | NET→NNET | oral / written | to have casual discussions about the school events |
| | NET→NNET | oral / written | to discuss vocabularies and language structures |
| | NET→NNET | oral / written | to discuss students’ disciplinary problems |
| After school | NET→NNET | oral | to talk about personal lives or travel experiences |
| | NET→NNET | oral | to discuss cross-cultural differences |
Exploring the Co-teaching Practice of Native and Non-native English Teachers in Korea

Note: NET=native English teacher, NNET=non-native English teacher

The direction of the arrows refers to directions of communicative actions.

A→B means that A initiated the conversations and B was the one who responded.
A←B means that A and B were both initiators and receivers of an act of communications.

In the elementary school team, the interactions between the native and non-native teacher maintained a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in and outside of the classroom. The two teachers, for example, discussed the preparation of their team work sincerely and complemented each other to satisfy students’ needs and various pedagogical purposes, especially based on mutual respect and trust. During instruction, the professional relationships between the two were formed by two-way communicative actions rather than one-way communication, thereby switching their roles freely as both a main instructor and an assistant in the classroom. Most of their communicative channels consisted of oral conversations or written notes, sharing the ideas or opinions about teaching materials, techniques, learning activities, disciplinary problems, school events, and personal lives. In addition to the oral and written channels of communication, the two teachers sometimes used the body language such as eye contact, nodding, and smiling, especially in order to make transition among teaching activities, to provide response, and to express thanks or agreement. This suggests that the way they interact was based on a professional partnership, and therefore both of them had some positive attitudes and perceptions towards the co-teaching practice in a classroom setting. The following is an excerpt from the interview data of the two teachers in the elementary school.

As a native teacher, I understand that not every Korean English teacher has the same level of training and education in English....One of the most important aspects of successful team work in the English classroom is an effective communication between the native and his or her non-native partner..... I’m so happy to work with my partner. He is very kind, helps me and has a good command of English....We have no problem in discussing various teaching procedures in and outside of the classroom.

She (native teacher) is a very organized teacher. Before the class starts, she prepares all of the teaching materials she needs..... When I look at her lesson plans, I pay attention to how she structured the whole lesson, and try to do my best in helping her in the classroom... I appreciate her devotion to the class and learn a lot from her.

(Interview notes: November 14, 2009)

Unlike the active and dynamical interactions in the elementary school context, data analysis results revealed poor and limited interaction in the secondary school context. As
mentioned in the previous section on their co-teaching styles and role distribution, the
native teachers in the secondary English classroom were in charge of most of the teaching
responsibilities from the pre-class planning to the follow-up work. The non-native teachers
participated in the team work as passive assistants only to make responses, thereby
forming a one-way direction of communication. Data analysis results showed that their
limited role relationships were rooted in the non-native teachers’ prejudiced assumptions
about co-teaching practice. That is, the non-native teachers believed that the native
teachers should take the lead in the classroom in order to provide students with an
English-friendly environment, and that all they have to do is help their partners, the native
teachers, perform the task. For the communicative channels, they rarely used body
language or facial expressions, which are naturally accompanied by the communicative
process to establish the emotional connections between the two. In addition to poor
interaction in the classroom, the native and non-native teacher had little opportunity to
have contact between classes or lunch breaks, largely because of their perceived heavy
workload and busy schedules. The only occasions when they met after school were related
to the major school events including sports day, festivals, and extracurricular activities in
which they were involved. Table 5 shows the analytical results of teachers’ interactions in
the secondary school English classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Role relationship</th>
<th>Communicative channels</th>
<th>Purposes and content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-class planning</td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td>oral</td>
<td>to request copying students’ worksheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td></td>
<td>to carry teaching aids or equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During instruction</td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td>oral / written</td>
<td>to request translation or explanation in Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td></td>
<td>to ask for help with students during small group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class/lunch break</td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td>oral</td>
<td>to have a casual talk about the weather or school events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td></td>
<td>to discuss vocabularies and language structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td></td>
<td>to discuss students’ disciplinary problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school</td>
<td>NET→NNET</td>
<td>oral</td>
<td>to talk about personal lives or travel experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NET = native English teacher, NNET = non-native English teacher

The direction of the arrows refers to directions of communicative actions.
A→B means that A initiated the conversations and B was the one who responded.
A↔B means that A and B were both initiators and receivers of an act of communications.

With regard to factors influencing teachers’ interactions and relationships in and outside
of the classroom, data analysis results of teachers’ interview included the teachers’
attitudes towards the co-teaching practice, workload and scheduling, non-native teachers’ communicative abilities, mutual understanding, school administrative support, and cultural differences. The following is an excerpt from the interview data of the two teachers in the high school.

As a native speaker, I found there were always some students who didn’t understand my instructions or class exercises, and who couldn’t participate in the classroom activity. More surprisingly, I was shocked to see that my partner (non-native teacher) was extremely upset about communicating with me, especially talking to me in English..... But now I realize that most Korean English teachers lack the needed level of English language skills, and therefore they have some fear of making mistakes in English-only classes.... My partner is no exception. She is not used to the communicative style of teaching and learning. She hides in the back of the class, and seems to try to save face.

As a non-native teacher, I believe that my duty is to help my partner in the classroom. Because she is a native teacher of English, it is so natural that she takes the leading role in classroom activities in English-only classes..... Actually I feel I have much more responsibilities in helping students to raise their English test grades than in implementing a successful English co-teaching practice.

(Interview notes: November 7, 2009)

Specifically, one of the biggest issues in implementing the effective co-teaching was the concern of preserving its original rationale and keeping its classroom practice dynamic. Yet it has been undermined by the overheated atmosphere of students’ competition in the college entrance exam system. Under the heavy stress of exam preparation, native teachers are placed in an awkward position because the teaching and learning activities of their English class still need to be geared toward helping students pass exam. In short, the compulsion of the college entrance exam forces native teachers to feel isolated from the entire teaching faculty of the school, because they have no power or authority in the wake of a heavily exam-oriented teaching schedule. This finding is in a similar vein with other research which addressed such factors as different attitudes to the co-teaching programs, communication styles, language ability, and socio-economic concerns in the Asian EFL context (Boyle, 1997; Carless, 2006b; Hiramatsu, 2005).
3. Co-teaching and Teachers’ Professional Development

In this section, how and what the two, the native and non-native teacher, learned from each other through their co-teaching experiences is discussed. In order to understand the aspects of contribution that co-teaching makes to the teachers’ professional development, the researcher constructed the four major analysis categories including language knowledge, teaching skills, collaborative partnerships, and cultural understanding. They were chosen upon the theoretical ground of situational perspective of learning, in which learning is a process constructed by learners’ sociocultural experience and is achieved on the basis of the learners’ social contexts (Borko & Putnam, 2000). They are also substantially related to the original goal of co-teaching program sponsored by the Korean government, which has pursued the improvement of Korean EFL learners’ English communicative abilities through an English-friendly learning environment, especially in a classroom setting. Table 6 shows four investigation categories for analyzing connections between teacher development and the contextual environment where they work.

**TABLE 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories for Analyzing Teachers’ Professional Development in Co-teaching Context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative partnership</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural understanding</td>
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</table>

First of all, the participating teachers in the co-teaching context, regardless of school levels, provided an actual assistance each other to solve language problems. At elementary school level, for example, the non-native teacher frequently asked for help largely regarding classroom expressions in English and often practiced them in the classroom. Non-native teachers in the secondary school level chiefly inquired into the correct usage of vocabulary and sentence structures, and therefore they were naturally exposed to the English-friendly environment by using English as the primary medium of communication. In turn, native teachers sometimes asked the appropriate Korean expressions for things that they experienced in their daily lives as well as at their school lives. This finding lies in a very similar vein with other research results in Japan and China, in which foreign and local
English teachers benefited from practicing their language skills through team teaching (Jui-min Tsai, 2007; Gorsuch, 2002; Tajino & Walker, 1998). The non-native teacher’s remark in the following explicitly shows the perception about promoting language abilities through his co-teaching experience.

While implementing co-teaching with my partner (native teacher), I sometimes feel my English speaking is getting better, but sometimes I don’t... I still make lots of mistakes and feel tongue-tied. But I have less fear about my mistakes than before, because he understands and corrects me... Anyway I appreciate his help.

(Interview notes: December 16, 2009)

In relation to teaching skills and co-teaching experience, the teachers, performing instructional activities together, shared both direct and indirect teaching skills ranging from the general methodologies through specific teaching techniques. For example, native teachers responded that they learned a lot from non-native teachers in terms of dealing with managing the classroom atmosphere and assessing students’ performance, whereas non-native teachers answered that they had the learning opportunities with regard to commanding classroom directions and writing the lesson plans in English. In other words, non-native teachers agreed that team work experiences contributed to providing them with some motivation and confidence in using more English in the classroom as well as constructing and reviewing lesson plans. Native teachers also responded that they got some insights into the teaching techniques to cope with disciplinary problems in an EFL classroom setting. This finding is in the same vein as many previous research results about co-teaching and teachers’ learning in the EFL context (Bailey, Dale, & Squire, 1992; Becker, 2001; Richards, 2005; Sawyer, 2002). The following is one non-native teachers’ description about his co-teaching partner’s class preparation and instructional technique.

Unlike Korean teachers, she prepares a lot...based on different topics of lessons, she makes lots of teaching aids...activity cards, PowerPoint materials, candies for prize winners... She always tries to make students feel comfortable, patiently waits until they come up with their own ideas or answers in a problem solving lesson.

(Interview notes: December 16, 2009)

With regard to collaborative partnerships which serve as the engine of implementing co-teaching successfully, all of the participating teachers confirmed the importance of interpersonal communication. However, the way they actually communicate with each other was quite different, according to their perceived relationships in and outside of school. In the following two descriptions, for example, one native teacher working in the
elementary school showed a deep gratitude to his co-teaching partner and introduced an example of coping with difficulties he faced at school, whereas the other native teacher working at high school expressed her complaints about her team work partner.

At the beginning, I met some difficulties.... poor housing, lack of communication, large classes, and so on. But I changed my attitude to see my co-teaching partner’s effort to help me in every respect. Despite the heavy workload and busy schedules, she did her best to improve her English language ability.... We became friends with mutual support.

(Interview notes: November 14, 2009)

I know she has busy schedules, but there are too many things for me to take all of the teaching responsibilities. ...Sometimes I feel I teach students alone, not with my partner.

(Interview notes: November 7, 2009)

Finally, the teachers, having different cultural backgrounds, learned knowledge about their respective cultures from each other, based on exchanges of cultural information in and outside of classroom. Actually the native teachers’ immersion in Korean culture made them more familiar with the unique aspects of Korean culture such as Confucianism, traditional Korean values, heated debate of English education policy, and parents’ extremely high interests in the education of their children. As an extreme example of students’ manner towards their teachers, when asked her opinion about students’ attitudes, one native teacher expressed a great surprise regarding a quite different school culture from theirs, as the following;

When I first began teaching English in the middle school in Korea, I was shocked to see the way students show their respect towards teachers in and outside of the classroom. Every lesson they greeted the teachers in a same manner with a same voice. They never seem to feel awkward about this behavior.....and more than that, all of the teachers seemed to think it is so natural...Later I understood that they had been educated since childhood.

(Interview notes: September 17, 2009)

In summary, the analysis results of teacher interviews showed that there exists a close link between co-teaching experience and teachers’ professional development, according to the intimacy of their partnership. In addition, it is noticeable that the elementary school team teachers had much more opportunity to improve their language knowledge and
cultural understanding than their secondary school counterparts, especially thanks to the frequent interaction and the close professional relationship between the two.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This survey investigated three pairs of co-teaching practices between native and non-native English teachers, the aspects of their interactions, and their professional development in the Korean elementary and secondary English classroom setting.

First, the findings of observational and interview data analysis revealed that the co-teaching styles and role distributions in the co-teaching process were different according to the non-native teachers’ English proficiency and the professional relationships between native and non-native teachers. At elementary school level, for example, team teachers cooperated closely during both pre-class planning, during class, and in the follow-up work, in spite of their perceived heavy workload and busy scheduling. Specifically, the non-native teacher had a high level of English proficiency, and therefore he had no problem in communicating with his native counterpart both in and out of the classroom. Thus, their co-teaching framework followed team teaching style and the engine of their collaborative team work was based on having the opportunities of frequent contact outside of the classroom on a daily basis, thereby creating a closer relationship based on the accumulation of mutual understanding and trust. At secondary school level, in contrast, while the native teachers served as the main instructors by taking a leading role in the classroom, the non-native teachers worked only as assistants. The non-native teachers didn’t switch roles in the classroom and didn’t perform in-depth discussions on specific teaching topics or activities before and after classes. One of the reasons they felt a deficiency of free contact and communication between the two was due to their perceived English inabilities. In short, the co-teaching framework in the secondary school level was a supportive teaching style and the major reasons for the lack of the engine for their collaborating team work were an extremely large gap between native and non-native teachers’ perceptions towards the co-teaching practice, the heavy stress of exam-oriented preparation, and the non-native teachers’ perceived communicative inabilities.

Secondly, with regard to teachers’ interactions and relationships in co-teaching practice, the data analysis results revealed that the successful implementation of collaborative team work was deeply related to the participating teachers’ willingness to cooperate and conceptions created by the dynamics of collaboration and interactions between the two teachers in and outside of the classroom. This finding confirmed the importance of a close relationship based on mutual respect and understanding, which was considered as the most critical element in the collaborative teaching literature (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001;
Bailey, Dale, & Squire, 1992; Murata, 2002; Richards, 2005). Data analysis results of factors influencing teachers' interactions and relationships showed that mutual respect and trust, among various factors, play a key role in dealing with the instructional problems in the process of teamwork, largely caused by the heavy workload, the lack of communication, and cultural conflicts.

Finally, the analytical results of teacher interviews showed that both native and non-native teachers benefited from their co-teaching experiences in terms of language knowledge, teaching skills, cultural understanding, and collaborative partnerships. For example, all of the non-native teachers responded that they had the opportunities to learn a lot from the native teacher's performance such as classroom directions, teaching techniques, and explaining language structures. In turn, the native teachers answered that they acquired some insights from the non-native teachers regarding managing the class atmosphere and assessing students' performance as individuals or in small group settings, especially in a classroom with a large number of students. In addition, interview data analysis suggested that the teachers' professional development in co-teaching was influenced by the quality of their professional relationships, and therefore the teachers who had a better partnership reported better experiences in teamwork than did the teachers with a poor partnership. This result lies in a similar vein with the research findings in a case study about collaboration between foreign and Taiwanese English teachers (Jui-min Tsai, 2007).

Taken together, the research findings have several pedagogical implications for teachers and teacher educators involved in co-teaching programs in the Korean EFL elementary and secondary classroom context. First, given the assumption that each co-teaching style has its own strengths and weaknesses, co-teaching styles should be flexible to change according to classroom learning environments, thereby switching each style periodically rather than sticking to one particular co-teaching style. Second, a close and friendly professional relationship between native and non-native teachers should be established in order to implement the effective and successful co-teaching practice in a classroom setting. To achieve this goal, it is essential for co-teaching teachers to make a consistent effort to maintain a close partnership in both interpersonal and professional perspectives. More importantly, non-native teachers should improve their English proficiency and take a leading role in helping native teachers, most of whom are unfamiliar to Korean culture. If non-native teachers make up their mind to stop taking native teachers for granted and help them cope with the potential problems in co-teaching practice, native teachers will begin to do the same thing. Finally, in order to promote teachers’ professional development through co-teaching practice, practical in-depth teacher training programs need to be developed. Teacher training programs should include systematic co-teaching methodologies ranging from the general framework for implementing collaborative team work to specific
guidelines dealing with the obstacles that hinder teachers’ professional development.

REFERENCES


Florida, Orlando.


APPENDIX
Interview Questions for Participating Teachers in Co-teaching Practice

1st Interview: Teacher’s Educational Backgrounds
1. Could you describe your educational background regarding your major or certificates you hold?
2. Could you describe your experience of teaching English as a foreign language?
3. What has been your biggest challenge in teaching English in Korea?
4. What’s your general belief of teaching English?
5. What do you think is the most important factor to being a successful English teacher?

2nd Interview: Teacher’s Perceptions of Interaction and Relationships
6. Could you generally describe your experience in co-teaching with Korean (native) English teachers, especially in terms of taking roles and teaching responsibilities?
7. Could you explain the roles you take in the three different stages such as class preparation, during instruction, and follow-up work?
8. Are you satisfied with the relationship between you and your current co-teaching partner? Please describe the reasons why you are satisfied or not.
9. Please describe the interaction and relationship between you and your partner in and outside of school.
10. What do you think are the important factors to keep a good partnership?
11. Based on your co-teaching experience, what are the obstacles or difficulties you have while implementing collaborative team work in the classroom?
12. In your opinion, what kinds of things are required to furnish a desirable situation for the participating teachers of co-teaching practice?
13. Based on your co-teaching experience, do you think your students like to be taught using the co-teaching method?

3rd Interview: Teacher’s Perceptions about Professional Development
14. Do you believe co-teaching is a good source to improve your teaching practice? Please describe the reasons.
15. Do you give your teaching partner your opinions about his or her instruction?
16. In what situations and to what extent do you pay attention to your teaching partner?
17. In what situations do you think you learned most from your teaching partner?
18. To what extent do you think you learned from your teaching partner?
19. Compared to before you implemented co-teaching, do you think this co-teaching
experience affected your teaching practice?
20. Could you describe the experiences that you believe you valued most through your co-teaching experience?
21. Please describe things that you think are most necessary to promote successful co-teaching practice in English classrooms, based on your team work over the last semester.

Applicable levels: elementary and secondary education level
Key words: co-teaching practice, teachers’ interaction, professional development

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