We are English Professors: Identity Construction of Native English Speaker Teachers at a Korean University[*]

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As emphasis has increased on English as an international language and on the globalized image of universities, the number of native English speaker teachers (NETs) has also increased in Korean universities. From the poststructuralist view, teacher identity is constructed through participation in valued activities of the community of practice, and it is not fixed but constantly negotiated through the interaction of the context (Wenger, 1998). While previous studies focused on nonnative English speaker teachers' identity construction, little attention has been paid to NETs in the EFL context. Considering the need to explore teacher identity from recent theoretical perspectives, the present study investigates how NETs negotiate conflicting identities and construct their teacher identities in the Korean university context. The findings show the NETs constructed multiple identities of an English educator, a collaborative volunteer, a non-tenured instructor, and a cultural and linguistic outsider, and they legitimize their professor identity through their participation in the present and imagined community of competent teachers. The findings support the claim that teacher identity is embedded in the sociocultural context that interacts with the individual agency in making sense of who they are. Implications and suggestions of the study are addressed based on the findings.

Key words: NETs, teacher identity, community of practice, agency

1. INTRODUCTION

What teachers do in the classroom cannot be separated from what they believe about teaching and how they define themselves as teachers. With the influence of the social turn

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in second language research (Block, 2007), teacher identity has been noted as an important construct that represents how sociocultural contexts shape teachers' sense of who they are and what they do in class. This notion is well captured in the poststructuralist perspective of identity, and teacher identity has been viewed as a flexible but not fixed, multiple but not unique category (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). From this perspective, identity construction is a dynamic, constantly changing process. Hence, how teacher identity is constructed, maintained, and reconstructed in different teaching contexts is the major issue of the research. Teachers are not neutral players in the classroom, and their positioning themselves in relation to both immediate and broader contexts should be a vital concern in identity research (Kim, 2016). This concern has been reflected in recent studies on teacher identity, and the importance of teacher agency and contextual influence in teacher identity construction has been highlighted (Tsui, 2007).

Earlier studies on teacher identity focused on the distinction between native and non-native English speaker teachers and how such a distinction played out in non-native teachers' identity formation (Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Tsui, 2007). These studies argued that teacher competence should be considered in terms of their professional expertise, not purely from racial and linguistic background, encouraging non-native teachers to claim their professional identities. While earlier studies on non-native English speaker teachers focused on their being nonnativeness and their effort in establishing themselves as competent teachers, they did not fully investigate how their identity formation was influenced or shaped by the sociocultural context in which they were located in. On the other hand, the studies on NETs reported that teachers' connections with students (Duff & Uchida, 1997) and their limited participation and socialization in and outside the class (S. Kim, 2011, 2012) played a critical role in NETs' identity formation. These studies indicated that the NETs' participation or non-participation was influenced by institutional structures and social expectations, and suggested the need to further investigate the contextual influence in the process of teacher identity construction.

With the emphasis on the internationalization of the university, the number of international faculty, especially English-speaking faculty, has increased in Korean universities. The exact status and job descriptions of these faculty members vary depending on their qualifications, but the international faculty can be generally divided into two categories: those who belong to an individual department and teach content-based courses, and those who belong to a general education program and teach communication English courses. Those in a Communication English (CE hereafter) program generally lack a doctoral degree and do not involve in research-related activities. Those CE teachers are titled as professors but their roles are limited to that of instructors, which provides a source of conflicts between how they perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. It is thus worth investigating NETs at a university setting to observe how their teacher

identity is constructed by individual agency and contextual influence. While studies on NETs in the Korean context tended to focus on describing their classroom teaching experience and the effects or perception of team teaching experience (Kim, 2009; Kim, 2010; Kim & Kwak, 2002) the study takes a broader perspective in accounting how their engagement in teaching and other university practices contribute to their identity construction. For this purpose, the study adopts Wenger's (1998) notion of community of participation as a theoretical framework as it provides a useful tool to capture the relationship between individual agency and contextual constraints in identity construction. Despite the increasing number of studies on teacher identity in the ESL context, teacher identity of NETs in the Korean university contexts has not been closely examined except few (S. Kim, 2011, 2012). Hence the purpose of the study is to describe how the NETs position themselves as a professor and how they negotiate conflicts among multiple identities in the Korean university context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Teacher Identity

Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) characterized teachers' professional identities as an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation of the individuals' experiences. Emphasizing the role of agency in forming teacher identity, they contended that teachers have to be active in professional development since teachers' professional identity is "not something teachers have but something they use in order to make sense of themselves as teachers" (p. 123). They emphasized that a teacher's identity cannot be separated from the context in which he or she is located. Though an individual teacher's agency is critical in constructing her identity, it is constrained by the context. Recognizing the interplay of the agency and contextual influence in identity construction, Tsui (2007) pointed out that the multidimensionality or multifaceted nature of professional identity and the relationships between these dimensions is the key issue in teacher identity research. The multidimensional or multifaceted sub-identities could be "harmonized" and "well balanced" (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004, p. 122) or a "continuing site of struggle" between conflicting identities (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2003). In addition to the multiplicity of teacher identity, the dynamic nature of the identity construction process is also emphasized in the poststructuralist perspective of identity. From this perspective, teacher identity is not a fixed category but it is a process of becoming part of community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Thus concepts of identity defined in recent studies on teacher identity can be summarized as follows (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, &

Johnson, 2005, pp. 22-23):

1) Identity is not a fixed, stable, unitary, and internally coherent phenomenon but is multiple, shifting, and in conflict.
2) The primacy of agency in identity formation: away from a structurally deterministic view of the fashioning of individuals to understanding individuals as intentional beings.
3) Identity is not context-free, but it is crucially related to social, cultural, and political context – interlocutors, institutional settings, and so on.

These poststructuralist notions of identity is well captured in Wenger's (1998) communities of practice, which will be described in the subsequent section.

2.2. Communities of Practice

Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice suggest that one's identity lies not only in the way one talks or thinks about oneself, or in the way others talk or think about one, but in how one's identity is lived day-to-day. Wenger proposes that identities are formed amid the "tension between our investment in the various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those contexts" (p. 188). He proposes three modes of belonging as the sources of identification: engagement, imagination, and alignment. Engagement in practice is a powerful source of identification in that it involves investing ourselves in what we do and in our relations with other community members. Through relating ourselves to other people, we get a sense of who we are; through engaging in practice, we find out how we can participate in activities and the competence required. Imagination is a process of relating ourselves to the world beyond the community of practice in which we are engaged and seeing our experience as located in the broader context and as reflective of the broader connections. Imagination is "the production of images of the self and images of the world that transcend engagement" (Wenger, 1998, p. 177). Alignment is a process in which participants in a community become connected by bringing their actions and practices in line with a broader enterprise. Through alignment, the identity of a large group such as an institution becomes the identity of its participants. Teachers may construct their identity by participating in the valued practices of the community and gaining recognition of their competence.

Wenger (1998) distinguishes between peripherality and marginality according to the trajectory of participation: Individuals need to first gain entry to a community of practice by means of legitimate peripheral participation, through exposure to "mutual engagement with other members, to their actions and their negotiation of the enterprise, and to their

repertoire in use" (Wenger, 1998, p. 100). Wenger's notion of the community of practice emphasizes one's agency in identity construction but also recognizes that identity construction is a social process of gaining a membership in the community.

2.3. Empirical Studies on Teacher Identity Construction

Studies on teacher identity have been interested in non-native English speaker teachers' struggles to become qualified EFL teachers and their negotiation of the predominant idea of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2003)[1]. These studies showed that the non-native teachers' English proficiency was the main cause of conflicts between their self-imposed and socially-imposed marginalized identities, and the teachers positioned themselves as having professional knowledge and legitimate English proficiency (Morita, 2004). Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) further argued that successful teaching depends on the teacher's knowledge, skills, training, experience, and personality, emphasizing the need of focus on "the multi-dimentionality and expertise rather than on nativeness or authenticity" (p. 142). In a similar vein, H. Kim (2011) reported the non-native English teachers were found to have low professional self-esteem due to the mismatches between their expectations and experiences, and lack of native-like language competence. Despite the negative impact of native-speakerism, studies also noted the teachers' agency in identity formation process. Golombek and Jordan (2005) illustrated how two pre-service Taiwanese teachers resisted the native-speaker-defined intelligibility in teaching pronunciation and established new identities by using the linguistic construct from the pronunciation pedagogy course. In the EFL context, Tsui's (2007) case study with Minfang, an English teacher in Chinese secondary school, best described how an individual teacher's agency contributed to identity formation; how it was constrained by the social, institutional structure; and how he resisted social appropriation. Studies on non-native English teachers generally criticized the socio-politically defined notion of competence of native speakers and argued for the need to empower non-native speaker teachers in the field.

Compared to the studies on non-native teachers, relatively little research has been conducted on NETs, and most of it included pre-service teachers or beginner teachers at secondary schools in the ESL context. Among those studies, Kanno and Stuart (2011) noted that beginning teachers gradually separated themselves from their learner identity, which generated more distance from their students. The teacher's relationship with students

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[1] Native-speakerism is a term coined by Holliday (2003) to refer to an ideology that native speakers of English are better language teachers who embody a superior Western teaching methodology than non-native speakers of English. The terms of "native" and "non-native" have been criticized due to the embedded connotation of superiority. But for lack of a better term, the term non-native speaker teacher is used in the study to differentiate those teachers whose first language is English.

was found to be an important factor in forming teacher identity. Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) found that the beginning teachers perceived themselves as fully responsible for students' learning and their self-efficacy greatly depended on their students' progress. However, the constraints of their institutions made these teachers focus more on themselves rather than on students. The study showed that the gap between the teachers' imagined identities and their actual identities was created due to the structure of the institution. While most studies on NETs focused on novice teachers, Farrell (2011) examined how experienced teachers perceived themselves and found the teachers' perceptions of their multiple roles to be as managers, acculturators, and professional collaborators, highlighting the multifaceted nature of teachers' identities.

Among the studies in the EFL context, Duff and Uchida (1997) explored how the participants negotiated the curriculum in terms of its cultural context, and reconciled their own perspectives of who they are in their ethnographic case study with four NETs at a Japanese university. They found that creating connections with students was critical in constructing teachers' identities. The teachers' pedagogical beliefs and actual teaching, their roles as national versus expatriate teachers, and their membership in the wider Japanese community played an important role in identity construction. Studies of NETs in the EFL context showed that they were not necessarily recognized as teaching experts but marginalized as less competent teachers. The NETs in Simon-Maeda (2004) identified themselves as "second-class citizen[s]" in Japan, though their instructor positions helped them settle down as respected members of the society. Instead of being considered second language experts, these NETs felt they were "parrots, walking tape-recorders" (p. 420). Trent (2012) also observed the marginalization of native NETs. The NETs in a Hong Kong secondary school positioned themselves as a "real teacher," but they were marginalized as "just another teacher" whose teaching method was considered just "rubbish" by Hong Kong teachers. In order to persuade others of their teaching expertise, the NETs noted that a close relationship with the school authorities was crucial in establishing themselves as competent teachers.

Only limited studies have been carried out on teacher identity in the Korean context. In a case study with a female NET, S. Kim (2011) showed that she resisted the prevalent discourse that NETs are entertainers, and emphasized her role as a facilitator who helps students enjoy their learning process. She found the title professor was only formulaic without granting any power, but a positive relationship with students allowed her to build confidence. Kim (2012) included four NETs at a university. They identified themselves as "respected but separated, welcomed but not belonged outsider." The students' recognition and NETs' non-participation in a decision-making process were critical in identity formation. The NETs' limited participation in the practices of the university and the local community defined them as visitors but not as full members.

In summary, previous studies usually included the teachers in secondary schools or language programs and found that their teaching competence or relationship with students was vital in identity construction. While earlier studies on teacher identity addressed the issues of discriminative practices against non-native speaker teachers, they did not pay proper attention to the contextual factors that may be equally important in teacher identity construction. Moreover, most previous studies included pre-service teachers or beginning-level teachers but did not have experienced teachers, especially those at a university level. Considering the recent theoretical development in teacher identity research and the need to explore NETs' unique institutional and social context, the present study aims to explore NETs' identity formation process in a Korean university context and describe the conflicts and negotiation among conflicting identities of being a professor at a Korean university.

3. METHOD

3.1. The Research Context

NETs were selected from a 4-year private university in a metropolitan city. They were first hired as visiting professors who taught the first-year conversation course in the CE program. The conversation course was mandatory for all first-year students, and the NETs were assigned a combination of different levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced), and different majors of students. The NETs in the CE program previously were hired as visiting professors on one-year, renewable contracts. When the university needed to increase the number of international faculty, an assistant professor position was created with a two-year contract, and those with a relevant degree and experience were promoted to this rank. Though it is still a non-tenure position, the new position creates an opportunity for promotion and greater job security among the NETs. Regardless of their position, their load was the same for all the teachers in the CE program, and they were required to use the same textbook.

3.2. The Participants

After gaining permission from the director of the program, I sent an email to all the NETs in the CE program to invite them to participate in the study. Four male teachers (three American, one Canadian) responded and agreed to participate in the study. Among the participants, Daniel was the newest member, who had been teaching only for 1.5 years

as a visiting professor. [2] The other three had master's degrees and had taught for six years apiece at the current university, and they were promoted to assistant professor at the time of the study. Three of them (Bob, Charles, and Daniel) had married to Korean wives and had children. The participants' profiles are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Participant Profiles

Participant	Nationality	Sex	Age	Degree	Teaching Experience (yrs)	Job Title
Alex	USA	M	37	MA (Religious Studies)	6	Assistant professor
Bob	USA	M	43	MA (TESOL)	6	Assistant professor
Charles	USA	M	44	MA (English Literature)	6	Assistant professor
Daniel	Canada	M	36	Master in progress (TESOL)	1.5	Visiting professor

After teaching in Africa as a member of the Peace Corps for one year, Alex came to Korea with an intention to stay for a short period. He was now a head teacher of the program and was responsible for making the teachers' schedule. Bob chose to come to Korea following his friend's advice and started teaching at a hagwon (private institute). While teaching in the CE program, he completed his master's degree and was promoted to assistant professor. He had been involved in in-service teacher training programs at the university. Charles came to Korea through online job-hunting sites. He taught at a hagwon for a year and went back home to obtain a master's degree. After completing the master's program, he came back and taught at a middle school for a year before he joined the current university. Daniel taught at a hagwon for three years and at a two-year college for four years before he started teaching at the current university. He came to Korea to experience a different culture and explore teaching. He was pursuing a master's degree in TESOL through a British university's distance program at the time of the study.

None of the participants intended to stay long in Korea. They first started teaching English to gain cultural and teaching experience. Daniel described his teaching career in Korea as "a growing experience as a person and as teacher." Moving from a hagwon to a four-year university, his cultural curiosity had become a serious career choice. Growing up in a family of teachers and professors, Charles "always wanted to become a professor." His coming to Korea was a "hit and miss" choice as there was no fitting job in his home country. His current job provided him a stepping stone to realizing his wish. Though

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[2] All names in the study are pseudonyms.

interested in learning a foreign language, Bob did not intend to become an English teacher. He expressed a strong desire to have a position in the department to secure his life in Korea. Alex differentiated himself from hagwon instructors, and his involvement in administrative work provided him a status of a head teacher. The participants' experiences can be summarized as a transit from curious travelers to professional teachers. They began as novice teachers with no formal pedagogical training and no definite plan to be teachers; they wanted to teach for experience and "picked up" teaching skills through teaching.

Prior to the study, I did not have any contact with the participating teachers except Bob. Bob was one of the students in my graduate program. As there was no officially imposed hierarchical relation between me and the participants, little pressure was imposed on their participation. The participating teachers were assured that their information would be confidential and their participation in the study would not affect their work or contract at the university.

3.3. Data Collection

To gather participants' narratives, interviews were conducted in 2015 and 2016. Three or four interviews were conducted with each participant and a total of 14 interviews were collected. I originally planned to interview participants at the beginning and the end of each semester for three consecutive semesters, but had to adjust this plan due to difficulty in scheduling.

I e-mailed participants a background survey questionnaire before the first interview. The questionnaire included questions about their educational background and teaching experience, and how they came to Korea and started teaching. At the first interview, I asked each participant to elaborate on their stories of coming to Korea, and their teaching experiences at their current university. In subsequent interviews, I started with questions about their semester and tried to remind them of the problems or tasks that they had previously mentioned. Though I had a list of questions (see Appendix for interview questions), I let the participants talk about their stories as much as possible and redirected them only when their stories were not relevant to the research.

While interviewing, I tried to maintain a position as a colleague who was familiar with the CE program and had worked with international faculty in other programs. I also tried to be an empathic listener who had shared the experience of living abroad. Each interview took 60–90 minutes and it was recorded with the participant's permission. I had the interview data transcribed by a professional transcriber and checked the transcripts for accuracy.

I also observed each participant's class after the second interview. I had originally planned one class visit per semester, but the participants felt uncomfortable about having

an observer in their class. I sat in the corner of the classroom as a non-participating observer, taking notes on the class activities for discussion in later interviews. Right after the class, I talked briefly with the teacher about their feelings about the class. My observation notes were used to triangulate the interview data.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed to answer the general question of "what does it mean to be an English professor at a Korean university?" Using the constant comparison method in the grounded theory (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I tried to find the patterns and themes that "emerged" from the data without having any pre-fixed codes or categories. While following the rigorous step-by-step procedure of the grounded theory, I did not exactly follow the paradigmatic model suggested in Strauss and Corbin (1998), as teacher identity may not fit into the model based on properties and attributes.

Before coding the data, I read the each script and boldfaced seemingly important phrases and sentences to figure out the topics and issues the participants mentioned. In the following open-coding stage, I added codes next to those highlighted parts. Instead of applying a line-by-line coding, which had been criticized as generating too many unnecessary codes (Glaser, 1992), I grouped the sentences that represent the same idea as a basic unit of the coding. Each participant's interview data was coded, and the codes were grouped into broader categories: beliefs about teaching, classroom teaching, extra teaching, teacher development activities, activities outside the university, and future plans. To find common themes and patterns, each participant's code was collated. The collated codes were organized, and they were further examined to find the relationship among the codes. This is the stage where the axis can provide a framework of teachers' stories to construct a main storyline based on core categories. I analyzed the data while collecting the data, as qualitative data analysis is not a linear process but iterative (Dörnyei, 2007). My preliminary codes generated questions for the following interviews. While coding the data, I wrote analytical memos, which contain "explorations or ideas, hunches, and thought about the codes" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 254). These "working ideas" (Lynch, 2003, p. 138, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 254) helped me to make connections among the codes during the axial- and selective-level coding.

After the preliminary analysis, peer debriefing was conducted with two doctoral students who had experience in coding interview data. I organized the list of codes during the open- and axial-coding stages in a gird format in which codes and participants were arranged in time order. I asked the coders to check if the codes and categories matched the data. Disputable codes and categories were marked for recoding. Through this process, the codes were checked and verified. The exact inter-coder reliability was not calculated as we coded

the data manually without using a computer-assisted qualitative analysis program. Initial disagreements were resolved through discussion, and my interpretation of the data was validated.

4. FINDINGS

In describing how NETs construct and reconstruct their teacher identities, Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice and three modes of participation provide an analytical framework. How the NETs form their teacher identity and how they legitimize their identity in the Korean university context will be described in the following section.

4.1. Engagement

4.1.1. An English educator

A professor position requires an identity shift from being a curious traveler to being a professional, demonstrably competent teacher. Participants appreciated the freedom and flexibility their positions gave them to design their lessons. Though they were still teaching skill-based courses without tenure track contracts, the participants expected more stability and opportunities to exhibit their competence. The most prominent role that the NETs ascribed themselves to was a communication facilitator who provides comfortable space and emotional support for students to overcome the fear of mistakes in speaking English. The NETs shared a common goal of making students talk in English, and the biggest obstacle was students' lack of motivation. The NETs noted that students' past English learning experience was characterized by lectures and exams in a mainly teacher-fronted class. Thus, student-initiated participation and active meaning negotiation were not possible as the communicative language teaching (CLT hereafter) approach advocates. In order to have a minimum level of interaction, the NETs had to create a safe environment in which students felt comfortable in making mistakes. Daniel and Charles stated the importance of creating a comfortable atmosphere as follows:

> Excerpt 1
> I would like to call it a safe environment. I think for like risk taking, many students are just too shy to make mistakes or sound stupid or whatever and/ and (.) it's about comfort and if they feel comfort, if they feel safe, then, they're more willing to take risks and experiment with the language and/ and

use it. (Daniel, 3rd interview)[3]

Excerpt 2
So, I tried to do that now (.) to make them as comfortable as possible. It's okay to make some mistakes. Most important at the beginning is to talk, and (.) "I'll help you and (.) give you some advice, but (.) being comfortable speaking is more important." In my (.) From my point of view, uh, just to get them started. (Charles, 1st interview)

Both teachers found that without a safe atmosphere, students were "too shy to make mistakes" and that their primary task was to make students feel comfortable enough to make mistakes. The NETs acknowledged students' fear of mistakes and stressed their role in helping them overcome it. They found that a comfortable atmosphere is also important in establishing rapport between the teacher and the students. Alex illustrated the importance of emotional connection with students before teaching English as follows:

Excerpt 3
That's basically (.) addressing their emotional needs more than it is their English needs because a lot of people have been scared, um, or had it like beaten into them or they're a little emotionally traumatized to some extend that/ that they're gonna make mistakes. So, before I can even teach them English, I'm addressing their emotions (.) and there're a lot of different ways that I do that. Um, so, one of the (.) first exercises I do on the second day of class is I make (.) everybody ask me a question and I ask everybody else a question (.) and, no matter what they ask me – unless it's completely unintelligible ... I'm creating an environment that/ from the very first moment that this is okay to make mistakes and you don't have to worry about it and I'm going to like their answer, no matter what it is. (Alex, 2nd interview)

Recognizing students' trauma in making mistakes, Alex felt he had to "address their emotions" first before teaching English. His activity to make all students ask a question was a way to assure students that everybody makes a mistake and that making mistakes is part of learning. Though different in specific strategies and classroom activities, the NETs agreed that gaining students' trust was a prerequisite to a successful class. They took an empathic attitude toward students' low motivation and silence in class and viewed their

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[3] Transcription conventions were used to deliver the interviewees' original message. They include the followings: (.) short pause, (...) noticeable pause, :: lengthening words, / repetition of the same word or phrase.

friendly and non-authoritative attitude as contributing to facilitating classroom interactions. The NET's perception of themselves as a communication facilitator and emotional supporter was an important role in establishing themselves as qualified English educators as shown in previous studies (Duff & Uchida, 1997; S. Kim, 2011, 2012).

The NETs also exhibited their strong beliefs that the teacher should adjust to students' different levels and needs. Instead of imposing theory-driven principles and techniques, or following the textbook, they stressed the need to modify and supplement the course book to accommodate students' immediate needs. Bob addressed the gap between the theory-driven practices and students' actual level in Excerpt 4:

> Excerpt 4
> Well, you know, we have (.) this uh, wanted to start in the direct method and so we want the students to try to speak only English. But uh, students don't come in their background. You know, they had target language in their High School classes and the rest was in Korean ... Uh, because (.) they/ they need more basic things like uh, what they call uh, pattern drills, and things like that, that aren't in our books. Or we/ we would have to/ we teachers would have to radically alter what we do in those classes. That would take a lot of time. We'd have to, basically, print (.) all new worksheets and uh/ and tasks. (Bob, 2nd interview)

In recognizing students' lack of experience in English-only class, Bob had to modify the meaning-negotiation activities of the textbook. Though he wanted to apply communication-oriented activities in class, he recognized that students simply did not have basic language to use English for communication. His class focused on providing students the basic language skills through controlled activities. Though meaning-negotiation was not actively taking place in his class, Bob believed that his students were taking a step in using English for communication purposes. The NETs pointed out the need to understand students' past learning experiences and provide basic help. Alex described the teachers' responsibility as follows:

> Excerpt 5
> It's part of the job, right? Obviously, I feel like, "Oh, I'm a professor. I shouldn't have to tell my students to get out their pencil or their book," (.) but I do. (.) And if I'm not gonna do it, who's gonna do it? I mean, if they haven't learned this skill by now, (.) *it's still part of my job. I'm an educator* (.) and they/ if they haven't learned that skill, then I'm going back to that elementary school, middle school level to try to get them working on that skill and, um (.)

I/ I really don't like it, I mean, that's not my style at all... And I can't really
blame them (.) because, at some point, the system has failed them, too, you
know? It was/ it was, uh, I mean, yes, they should have learned it, but other
people should have made sure that they learned those most simple basic skills.
And *I'm part of that system that has failed them and if I ignored it, then I'm
still allowing the system to fail them. So, I go back and cover it*. (Alex, 2nd
interview, italics added)

Alex did not approve of the students' passive learning style and did not think that it is
the professor's job to teach the basic learning skills. However, positioning himself as an
educator, he felt the responsibility to address the students' failure in learning proper
learning skills. He viewed himself as a part of the education system that did not effectively
prepare students to learn. When facing students' lack of motivation and lack of discipline in
learning, the NETs envisaged their role not as simply teaching English but as helping
students be more active in their learning process. They identified themselves as an educator
who took the responsibility to make sure students learn. Along the same line, the NETs
further stated the need to adjust the required curriculum to meet the students' needs. By
describing other teachers in the CE program as "continue doing what they are doing"
(Charles, 2nd interview) and "use the textbook as a safe net" (Daniel, 2nd interview), they
positioned themselves as "a few people who try new things" (Charles, 2nd interview).
They differentiated themselves from the other NETs who adhered to the teacher-centered
class and only focused on the designated textbook. Excerpt 6 shows how Charles reacted to
the textbook.

Excerpt 6
So:: u::m (.) for the level three students, I will probably not use the book (.)
u::m other than to say, "If you wanna review some vocabulary, look in unit
four." U::m, but I will do (.) pretty much what I've done in the past, for level
three classes. Level two:: cla::sses, I will use some of the book and some of
the projects. (Charles, 4th interview)

He chose not to use the textbook for the advanced level and only part of the textbook
with intermediate-level classes. The other teachers also opted not to use the textbook or
used only some parts of it. They viewed their ability to get away from the textbook as
showing their professional competence. Their effort to be different and more effective was
observed in their references to their classroom activities, such as Charles's restaurant
review project and Daniel' charity foundation project, which show their focus on real-life
tasks. Alex and Bob had a different focus in class and spent more time practicing basic

sentence structures that students needed for communication.

The NETs' conviction that they had to keep challenging themselves was also linked to their participation in a teaching workshop. It was a voluntarily organized gathering among the NETs in the CE program. The NETs participated in the workshop and "talked about ideas" and shared their concerns. They found it a good opportunity to exchange ideas to improve their teaching and felt more involved in the program. The NETs in the study used participation in the CLT practices and the teaching workshop as an indicator by which they are serious educators who are genuinely interested in improving students and themselves.

4.1.2. A collaborative volunteer

In addition to the NET's claimed identity as an English educator, they also portrayed themselves as collaborative volunteers at the university. The NETs welcomed the opportunity to teach extra classes in other departments as opportunities to develop more content-based English classes. Bob, for example, participated in in-service teacher training programs where he could experiment with task-based instruction. Charles and Daniel also taught content-based courses in other departments. They described the extra teaching as follows:

> Excerpt 7
> ... So, a couple slides, uh, a group discussion about that, uh, some project like that. And, um, I've been trying to apply the experiential learning model (.), um, in my classes. So, for example, the CBT, um, first, (.) um, I taught a CBT lesson, (.) and then the next hour was deconstructing what I did (.) (Bob, 3rd interview)

> Excerpt 8
> Yeah, it/ I guess it's sort of diversifying or (.) *giving me (.) some/ a new tool in the tool box*, maybe. Um, and networking a little bit too, because (.) *I would like to (.) be known (.) a little more by other departments, um, for work opportunity* or (.) for/ yeah, mostly, work opportunity. Yeah, but the ESP like teaching business English is/ *it is a breath of fresh air, really*. It's/ it's change. It's something different. It's a challenge because I haven't done/ I haven't done it and so, thinking differently and, different approach. (Daniel, 3rd interview, italics added)

As shown in excerpts, Bob was trying to balance a teacher-centered and a learner-centered class and experimenting with "the experiential learning model." He showed his familiarity

with Korean in-service teachers and recent theoretical approaches. Daniel found that teaching content classes gave him a new tool and described it as "a breath of fresh air" because it challenged him to think differently and use a different approach. By teaching the content classes, he wanted to increase his visibility to other departments. That is, the extra teaching provided the opportunity for the NETs to get connected to other parts of the university, and to better establish themselves as competent teachers. In Alex's case, his involvement in the CE program scheduling and interviewing process gave him a sense of belonging, though there was no official position or reward for being a head teacher. He described his administrative role as follows:

> Excerpt 9
>
> Yea::h, so:: very frustrated about that. I almost wished (.) I could just become the head of our department. (.) a::nd u::m u::h/ a::nd make all of these decisions for my department. (.) U::m, u::h because (.) I've almost taken over (.) all the (...) jobs of/ Traditionally, what the head of the department di::d was finalize hiring, (.) choose the book, (.) and make the schedules, (.) a::nd u::m a lot of othe::r, kinda, go to meetings and talk about things. But a lo::t of those (.) things have already been delegated to me (.) and I'm in charge of making sure that we do this, and this, and this. I just wished (.) sometimes, they would make it official (.) and I just become an official (.) department head or whatever. (Alex, 3rd interview)

Alex described his wish to make his administrative work official as important decision-making business was already delegated to him. By referring the program as "my department," he indicated his self-appointed leadership. He expressed his frustration with his unofficial role of a head teacher, and desired more involvement in a decision-making process. For him, the administrative work was a way to reify his competence and have more official power by which he would be recognized as a contributing member. The NETs' active participation in extra work exhibited their agentive efforts to construct themselves as serious teachers and reify their professional competence.

4.1.3. Not a professor but an instructor

Though the NETs' identities of an English educator and a collaborative volunteer help them envision their imagined community of innovative educators, their claimed identity was in conflict with the socially defined identity of a professor. Being a professor at a university requires a doctoral degree and research career in the relevant field. Alex described his uncomfortable feelings with the title 'professor' and admitted that he did not

consider himself as a professor in its exact sense in Excerpt 10:

Excerpt 10

So, uh, you know, I/ I feel/ I have mixed feelings (.) whenever uh people call me a Professor. Um, I do make my students call me Professor in the classroom (...) because I feel like I'm a face of K University and that's my official title. So, when I'm in the classroom I try to dress nicely and I tried to (.) act like a Professor. But um, if I talk to my family and my friends back home I don't ever introduce myself as an Assistant Professor... Yeah. (.) U::m, I think that (.) I have a hard time/and my title is professor (.) um and I have a (.) paid (…) check as a professor, (.) albeit as a non-tenured-track professor, but still as a professor. But I do/ *I still don't necessarily consider myself a professor. I consider myself as a lecturer*, (.) um as an instru-/ actu-/ Sorry, not as a lecturer, as an instructor, as a full-time instructor who does admin work. (.) U::m, uh but I don't do any research, I don't publish any papers, (.) and I think that (.) to really be considered a professor, (.) u::m I need to have a Ph.D., I need to be doing research, I need to be publishing. That being said, (.) *I don't know I wa-/ would wanna be a professor. I think I'm happier being a full-time instructor with admin work*. (Alex, 1st interview, italics added)

Despite his mixed feelings about the title "professor," Alex used it to define his role in the classroom. However, he acknowledged his actual role was equivalent to a full-time instructor because he did not do any research. The title denoted their membership in the university community but also generated conflicting feelings. He negotiated the conflicts between the professor title and the actual job by justifying his current status. By addressing themselves as professors, the NETs claimed that they were not hagwon teachers anymore and that they became part of a serious academic community. The NETs in the study negotiated the conflicts by reasoning that a doctoral degree was unnecessary to their work and that there might not be a tangible reward for a higher degree. Thus, they considered a non-tenure professor position in the individual departments most realistic and ideal as it provided more job security and more flexibility in teaching. The NETs identified their teaching competence as the primary concern in securing their job and justified their non-participation in research activities.

4.1.4. An outsider in an English island

The other conflict that challenges their professor identity was observed in their sense of being an outsider whose legitimate activities were limited to English-speaking community.

While the participants legitimized their professor identity through their active participation in teaching-related activities, they found themselves residing in "an English island" (Daniel, 2nd interview), feeling "always an outsider" (Charles, 4th interview). They had limited interactions with Koreans outside the program and lacked opportunities to get involved in any social occasions. Charles and Daniel descried their feelings of distance in the following excerpts:

> Excerpt 11
> Um, (..) I can't remember all the details, but u::h (..)/ but just that (..) um, the situation of them:: not feeling like a fu::ll member of/ (.) of the::/ the faculty that they felt that they were, (.) outsiders a bit, (.) u::m/ (..) So, (.) events like that are (.) im-/ important for that/ that/ the feeling of community. (.) U::m, and (.) the language barrier for people is a big barrier for feeling part of that community, (.) (Charles, 4th interview)

> Excerpt 12
> There is a gap there, for sure. Um, there's a communication issue ... I don't know (.) much about the University. I feel like I'm on an/ our own little communication English Island, really ... We [unintelligible] in their email for the/ the university email, which I've been checking (.) uh, but it's all in Korean. So, I just sort of read it what I know and, "okay, that's/ that's Art or Music: Delete". I know, but, yeah, I know, I don't (.) really know much (.) what's going on. (Daniel, 2nd interview)

Despite a long stay, the NETs did not feel like a full member. Charles attributed the language barrier to the lack of sense of a community. The same point was made by Daniel. As the medium of communication at the university was Korean, he had only limited knowledge of issues at the university. As shown in the excerpts, the NETs' limited Korean narrowed their social interactions and their access to information. The NETs were not expected to use Korean in class and their administrative participation was limited to the tasks that required little to no use of Korean. Even when interacting with Korean faculty and staff, they were not necessarily expected to use Korean. Koreans had to use English to communicate with them, and this limited the possible scope of people that the NET could interact with. As there was no official pressure for the NETs to improve their Korean and their basic Korean was sufficient to function as a professor, they did not have to strive to learn Korean. The NETs felt separated because of the language barrier and their limited interaction with members of the university outside the CE program.

4.2. Imagination and Alignment

The NET's participation in CLT-oriented practices identified themselves as legitimate English educators helping them establish their professor position. Their engagement in practices valued in the university showed not only their current self-perception but also their imagined identity. Their emphasis on being an approachable, comfortable teacher shows their resistance of the conventional idea of being a professor. In a Korean university, the professor is considered an authoritative figure whose main responsibility is to contribute to theoretical development. While the NETs admitted that they were not professors in the term's exact sense, they claimed legitimacy by displaying their competence in meeting students' needs. The NET's friendly approach is a way to align them with the learner-centered approach and claim their competency in theoretically updated teaching method. The NETs' effort in getting students to talk can be viewed as their resistance to traditional learning that made students afraid of mistakes and passive in participation. They redefined their professor identity to refer to teaching-focused position and characterized themselves as friendly teachers who create a good rapport with students. They negotiated their role of a friendly educator to legitimize their professor position. The professor position was significant in defining them as a valuable member of the community and provided the grounds to resist to the assigned identity of being simple "add-ons" (Charles, 4th interview). By imagining themselves to be part of an ideal communicative teacher community, they aligned themselves with the principles advocated by recent language learning and teaching approaches.

In addition, the NETs claimed their legitimate participation in the imagined community through their strategy of othering. The participants felt they were othered as foreigners, but they also reproduced othering strategy when they differentiated themselves from the other CE teachers. The participants described the other CE teachers "not serious," just "come-and-go", and "temporary visitors teachers (Charles, 4th interview) while defining themselves as more "planted residents" (Daniel, 2nd interview). The following excerpt shows how the participants used the othering strategy in their references to other teachers.

> Excerpt 13
> Because I'm probably a little less (.) American //than most Americans. Me – a little less American than most Americans ... I'm/ I'm::/ yeah, I'm not that boisterous; Um::, I want the answer now; tell me, give me the details. I'm/ that's just not my personality. Yeah, I want information, but (.) I, if I really need information now, I will find a tactful way to do that... So, Americans are direct, but (.) there's still levels of respect that must be observed. So, um, in my position, I can't just say, hey, give me this information, (.) you know, it's,

"Oh, Professor, um::, do you think you could, u::h, tell me more about?"/
(Charles, 3rd interview)

As shown in the excerpt above, Charles defined himself less than most Americans with boisterous and direct attitudes. He also distanced himself from other Americans and claimed that such behaviors define him. By placing the distance from the other teachers, the NETs positioned themselves as cooperative and culturally more appropriate members who understand the cultural norm of communication in the Korean context. As Tajfel (1978) mentioned, an individual achieves a sense of self-identity in terms of 'we', and the NETs' distinction between 'we' and 'other teachers' defines who they are and who they are not. The NETs constructed their professor identity through othering their colleagues who they presumed less professional. Such othering was surfaced more clearly among the NETs in the CE program rather than between the NETs and Korean faculty members.

To sum up, unlike non-native speaker teachers who have to constantly prove their legitimate English teacher identities through their language competence (Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Tsui, 2007), the NETs did not need to prove their nativeness, as their teaching ability was often assumed because of their origin from the inner-circle countries. Being a native English speaker with years of teaching experience in Korea was sufficient to be considered an attractive candidate for the positions in private institutes. However, their teacher identity was challenged and had to be reconstructed by re-establishing their legitimacy at the university level. The findings show that the participants constructed multiple identities of an English educator, collaborative volunteer, an instructor, and a cultural and linguistic outsider. They had to negotiate the conflicts among these multiple identities to feel the sense of legitimacy in the community. It was also shown that the NETs' identities are shaped by what they do in the given context and how they make sense of who they are. The organizational structure, teaching requirements, interaction among faculty, staff, and students of the university consist of different practices of community, and the teachers had to negotiate between their self-imposed and other-imposed identities.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study explores how some NETs at a university constructed their teacher identities through their participation in the community, and it confirms the close relationship between teachers' perceptions of who they are and what they do. That is, their identities were constructed through the practices in which they participated, and their participation was shaped by who they were and imagined themselves to be. Though different in their individual paths to becoming teachers, the participants shared the experience of moving

from a private institute to a university setting, which changed their status from an instructor to a professor. Such a change requires redefining what they do and reconstructing who they are. The NETs constructed themselves as a competent teacher of the CLT practices who are willing to adjust to students' needs and institutional expectations. Through their engagement in the CLT practices, they imagined to belong to a professional teacher community and aligned themselves with the legitimate professor community. However, conflicts arose between their imagined teacher identity and the current status as a non-tenure track instructor position. The lack of a doctoral degree and research accomplishments positions the NET's as peripheral members within the university community. The participants negotiated their conflicting identities through their resistance to conventional lecture-based teaching and othering other CE teachers. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), one needs to have access to "a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities" (p. 101) to become a full member of a community of practice. The NETs' participation in extra work beyond their teaching conversation can be a doorstep to access more resources and opportunities, through which they position themselves as valuable community members. The NETs not only gained access to teaching more content-based courses but also legitimized their involvement as a way to develop their professional identities and increase their visibility in the university community. Hence, the NETs negotiated their lack of a doctoral degree and lack of research activities by redefining professor identity as a competent educator and collaborative volunteer in the community. The findings confirm that individual teachers' competence in valued practice and their access to practice are key factors in teacher identity construction.

The NETs' shared enterprise of teaching English for communication created a sense of "we" who invest in transforming students' way of learning. Their imagined identity of a caring educator is embedded in their practices of motivating students to learn what is considered important in the society. The participants employed othering strategy to differentiate who they are and who they are not. While projecting themselves as English educators who are genuinely interested in students' progress in learning and improving themselves as a teacher, they characterized other teachers less skillful in teaching, lacking dedicated effort in their professional growth. They also placed distance from the other CE teachers by defining them culturally inappropriate and disrespectful. The othering strategy was employed as a marker of distinction among the NETs and Hong Kong teachers in Trent (2012). While Trent (2012) observed othering between the NETs and Hong Kong teachers, this study found othering more salient among the NETs within the same program rather than between NETs and Korean members of the university. It may be because the limited interaction with the Korean members preempted the opportunity to identify themselves in relation to Koreans.

The findings show the importance of participation and agency in becoming recognized as a legitimate member of the community. The NETs viewed themselves as peripheral members whose limited participation does not necessarily prevent fuller participation (Wenger, 1998) but functions as a step to gain further access. The NETs' peripheral participation in implementing the current language teaching methods in their class and involvement in more content-based courses outside the program is their strategy to gain fuller membership. Their motivation to keep improving themselves as professional teachers "lie in a deeper sense of the value of participation to the community and becoming part of the community" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 111). Previous research (Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Trent, 2012, Tsui, 2007) emphasized that individual teachers' agency comes to play a critical role in their transition from being a peripheral to a fuller member of the community. The participants in the study also displayed their agentive efforts in forming their English professor identities and gaining a legitimate recognition through their involvement in communication-oriented, learner-centered practices.

However, their identity was not solely constructed at a personal level. Their English professor position was a product of the university's internationalization effort, which was fueled by globalization at a national level. Their personal investment in education was successfully matched with the social and institutional needs for English-speaking faculty. On the other hand, their non-tenure track contracts, lack of a doctoral degree, and lack of research placed contextual constraints on their access to wider practices of the community. The range of their personal network and the organizational structure of the CE program also affected their access to extra work opportunities. Their long stays in Korea made them as more planted residents, but they were not permanent residents. The NETs' desire to acquire department positions and stay in Korea depends on their personal and family situations at a micro level, and also on the university's international faculty employment policy, and economic situations in host and home countries at a macro level. The NETs in the study found it more realistic to live and work in Korea, but their temporary, uncertain job status made their stay less permanent. The uncertain job prospects in their home countries made it difficult for them to move back. These personal and social environments generated the feeling of being temporary residents despite their relatively well-established status in Korea.

The status of English also affected the NETs' motivation to improve their Korean and to interact with Koreans. Unlike other international faculty whose native language is not English, the NETs did not have to strive to learn Korean to function at the university. Their lack of Korean limited their connection with Koreans and confined them to the English-speaking community. The NETs' sense of being an English island is thus constructed by the Korean-predominant structure and also constructs their identities as speakers of English, a language of power. They were separated from the Korean-speaking community and they

separated themselves from the Korean-speaking community. The NETs also had the mixed feelings of being part of an English island and separating themselves from other English native speakers in the CE program. They showed the ambivalence between different language communities and such ambivalence featured conflicts among multifaceted identities and the dynamic nature of identity construction.

In conclusion, this study noted the lack of research on teacher identity by focusing on NETs in the EFL context and focused on NETs' identity construction process using the theoretical framework of the community of practice. The findings show that identity construction is a process of making sense of who they are and positioning themselves as valuable members of the community. The identity construction process is textured with individual agency and sociocultural contexts, showing that the NETs' engagement in practices indexes who they are and who they imagine themselves to be in the given context. Some pedagogical implications can be made in term of teacher education. As teacher identity may exert significant influence on teachers' classroom practices, their way of connecting with students and other teachers, it is important to help teachers create an imagined identity and an imagined community they wish to be associated with. Constructing a clear picture of who they want to be and which community they want to belong to provides a sense of professional membership. Thus teacher education programs need to address the issues related to teacher identity and help teachers establish a long-term career goal as a guiding light. As individual teachers' identity cannot be formed separately from their community, mutual engagement and joint enterprises in the community should be provided to create a common membership. Instead of making the distinction among different groups within the community, creating shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) can provide a basis of legitimate membership.

In terms of research methods, the study showed the possible use of narrative story-telling for teacher identity development. As a recent progress in narrative inquiry lends support for teacher identity research (Connelly & Clandinin. 1999), teacher narratives should be more actively adopted to widen the scope of teacher identity research. However, the study also has methodological limitations. As the interviews were conducted multiple times with each participant for a relatively long period, they provided consistent views of the NETs' perceptions of what they are doing and served as a source of reliability. However, the interview data could be coupled with other data sources, such as observations or teacher journals, for triangulation purposes. The study was conducted with only four teachers in one institution and did not attempt to generalize the findings to other research contexts. However, the issues mentioned in the study can be further explored by including participants with diverse backgrounds and in various teaching contexts to enrich the current findings. Analyzing teacher identity through different analytical lenses will also provide a different angle on the identity construction process. Considering the predominant

tendency in applying content analysis in teacher identity research, more discourse analytical approaches need to be applied in future research.

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APPENDIX
Interview Questions

- How did you come to Korea and start teaching?
- What was your first teaching experience like in Korea?
- How did you start teaching at the current university?
- How is teaching at the university different from your previous teaching?
- What is your typical lesson like? What do you emphasize most in your class?
- How have your teaching practices changed over time?
- When do you feel satisfied/frustrated/confident?
- What do you think your role as a native English speaker professor?
- Do you feel that you are a qualified teacher/professor?
- How do you feel about the title "professor"? Does it make you do anything differently?
- Did you have any tasks or assignments that you liked/disliked, how did you deal with them?
- What do you want to change about the present situation so that it will be more in line with your pedagogical ideas?
- How do you feel about your relationship with your colleagues/Korean faculty and staff?
- What institutional policies limit/widen the scope of your activities at the university?
- Do you have a social network outside the university? Any Korean friends or colleagues that you are close to?
- Where do you think you will be in the next 10 years? What is your long-term goal?

Applicable levels: Tertiary

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