

**University of Alberta**

A Hermeneutic Inquiry into the Conflicts of  
Native English Speaking Teachers

by

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## **Dedication**

To my mother, Hyang-Ki Kim who has always prayed for me,  
to my wife, Jeong-Hee, for her patience and support, and  
to my daughters, Kejin and Yoonjin, for their encouragement.

## **Preface**

When I was quite young, my mother had frequently told me that I looked like a teacher. This might be her desire for my future and her words had long remained in my mindset. I planned to study Education when I worked for at the Korean Educational Development Institution as a researcher in 1983 but I gave up my plan because I had to join the army. Afterwards career path took a different track, when I chose to study and teach English linguistics. Finally, after long experience of teaching at the Korea Aerospace University, I determined my mind to study the teacher education at the University of Alberta, which is familiar to me. For I have known some people who graduated from this university and worked at the Korean Educational Development Institution.

Reflecting upon my subsequent study at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, I have encountered much unfamiliarity and differences from my previous teaching and scholarship in linguistics. I have had to work hard to become familiar with a new kind of interpretive scholarship and try to reduce differences between my earlier perspective and the research tradition in the University of Alberta and my understanding of research. Still, after nearly four years, I have not become completely familiar with these, nor eliminated these differences.

I still remember vividly meeting my future advisor, Terrance Carson at his office in 2007. He welcomed me and asked me about my research topic and my interest in understanding the experiences of native speakers of English in Korea. He advised me not to limit my thoughts and be open, and try to listen to the voices of these native English-speaking teachers. I ponder over this advice: What does he mean by “not limiting my thought,” “being open,” and “listening to the voices.” At that time I was stuck in the realm of the positivistic castle, and so I could not find my research path. How can I conduct my research without setting up hypotheses and without a method? I ask to myself repeatedly how I am going to conduct research. During attending courses such as Curriculum Foundations and Curriculum Inquiry, I had realized that the experiences of native English speaking

teaches cannot be objectivized or generalized, because they are unique human beings with individual experiences. I became to believe that it is difficult to make use of my former familiar manner (positivistic approach) with them.

During the third semester of my doctoral studies, I began an Independent Study with my advisor in order to better understand hermeneutics as a possible research foundation for my study. Dr. Carson attempted to guide me through the forest of hermeneutics to lead me out of a positivistic cage. He recommended that I read Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1989). This book includes such a rich content in the German human science to try to comprehend. Gadamer's book is translated from German into English. Although the individual words are not difficult, the messages included in it are so implicated in a German philosophical tradition to grasp them. As I met Dr. Carson every week, my understanding of hermeneutics expanded and deepened through. However, I have struggled to grasp the implications of the terms and phrases in hermeneutics throughout my research, and it still continues as I finished my dissertation.

As I continued to read his recent books such as *Reason in the age of science* (1992), *Gadamer in Conversation* (2001) and *Century of Philosophy* (2006), I noticed Gadamer's unlimited, distinguished insights about hermeneutics as practical philosophy. To put it more concretely, I might call his philosophy as hermeneutics as understanding and practical wisdom. However, regarding the Gadamer's central concept of "fusion of horizons," I do not still believe that the integration of horizons is possible to achieve with respect to my understanding of hermeneutic philosophy. The fusion of horizons may be the goal which we endeavor to establish but may also be an ideal space which may not be achieved. Especially, as an international student, I have undergone difficulties in shaping the fusion of horizons between the Gadamer (1989) and me. These may be caused by my misunderstanding of Gadamer's messages which is concerned with the differences between Gadamer's world of language and my world of language. Whatever I try to understand the Gadamer's language, I inevitably or unconsciously seem to understand or translate it from my own imagination based on the Korean language. Especially, the verbatim translation of English into

Korean does not seem to utterly make sense to me.

I have struggled to make sense of the implications of Gadamer's terms by way of translating them into Korean. This interpretation may not catch their nuance, and may be my understanding of Gadamer's words in terms of the implications embedded in the Korean language. This is the limit of my understanding of Gadamer's discourse both because English does not share ground with my past experience and because Korean is the basis of my understanding and experience as meaningful.

In this present work, therefore, I accept that my interpretations may be different from those of other people and this may cause some confusion, for which I admit any necessary responsibility. But let me hope that you, the reader, share my understanding of the native English speaking teachers who were part of this study, and that this work may contribute to the broader conversation about the place of English in global times.

## **Abstract**

Globalization has made English a pivotal language for global communication. This has increasingly made a great number of native English speakers move to Korea and teach English at all levels of education from kindergarten to university year after year. Most of them have not only little or no training as language instructors, but also little or no teaching experience. Many may wonder how they teach students with little understanding about teaching in a foreign country. At the same time, they may also surmise that they would endure many difficulties in their profession. As a faculty member working with them for over fifteen years, I have also had such questions. Especially, I was curious what conflicts they bear in their minds and how they respond to differences between Canadian and Korean culture and pedagogy.

This study is grounded on the hermeneutic tradition which ultimately pursues humane lives. This hermeneutic tradition leads me to the conflicts that native English speaking teachers have experienced, to the implications embedded in the Korean and English language, and to the differences between Canadian and Korean ways of thought. While following the hermeneutic tradition, I am aware that there was little or no communication between the Canadian and Korean teaching staff, which resulted in their alienated lives and in living in a world of exclusion from their schools, disregard about their profession, and indifference from their students. The hermeneutic tradition guides me in a path toward restoring the deteriorated humane aspects of their lives as teachers.

As a ground for understanding them, I attempt to define the notion of the in-between on the basis of equality and respect which are rooted in the concept of the Korean language for the in-between. This conceptual elaboration enables me to conceive that differences are not objects to exclude, to disregard, or to be indifferent, but motives to perceive the necessity to reform and to change the inequality and injustices. In this light, I propose that educational institutions allow them to participate in decision making, open a special in-service teacher training program for them, and provide them with a support system.

## **Acknowledgments**

The dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of numerous people to whom I would like to express my extreme gratitude.

It is a great fortune and honor for me to meet such great scholars as my supervisory committee. First of all, I wish to offer my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Terrance Carson, my supervisor, for the thoughtful guidance and constant encouragement, and patience throughout my program. From the beginning, he has genuinely guided me to the world of hermeneutics and helped me in finalizing this long academic journey. Without the conversation with him, it may not have been possible to accomplish this study.

I am very grateful to Dr. David Smith for his guidance about this study during his courses and supervision. His encouraging, insightful comments have always contributed to refining my study. I am also appreciative to Dr. Claudia Eppert who read carefully my thesis draft with great insight and support. Her considerate, careful and supportive comments made me elaborate my thought.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Dr. Anna Kirova, the external examiner from the Department of Elementary Education, for her assistance and thoughtful comments. And I extend my thanks to Dr. James Field, the external examiner from the University of Calgary, for his thoughtful and intellectually challenging comments and discussion.

I extend my thanks to the Canadian research participants for providing me with their precious experience in Korea. And many thanks to my former teachers, Professor Hyun-Jae Kim, Professor Hyun-Gyu Shin, Professor Bo-Up Hong, and to my Korean and Canadian friends and colleagues, Dr. Young-Gwang Jin, Dr. Bong-Young Choi, Dr. Seung-Chul Moon, Dr. Sukjin Kang, Dr. Young-Suk Hong, and Laurence Abbot. They have always supported me in developing my thought about the thesis. Their friendship has been a great help in completing this study.

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## **Chapter 1 Encountering and Situating Conflicts of Native English Speaking Teachers**

### **1.1 Encountering Native English Speaking Teachers**

In 1996, I met an English Native Speaking teacher, Peter, who was a Canadian and one of the applicants seeking a teaching position at Korean Aerospace. He majored in Historical Linguistics in Canada (BA) and in the United States (MA). I thought he was well-qualified because I knew that there were quite few native English speaking teachers who majored in Language or Education in Korean universities. When I first met him, he looked very composed and decent. Although my colleague and I had an interview, it was just a process to meet the regulation of recruitment.

This encounter was a beginning to accept foreign instructors and as well to imbue my school with western cultures. Students were satisfied with Peter's teaching and wanted to open additional courses to study from native English speaking teachers. Thus, my university put an advertisement to recruit a native English speaking teacher in newspapers and on the internet in 1998, and invited Howard, an American, who got a B.A. degree in Business and Management as a new staff member.

Around a year after Howard started to teach at my school, I heard from other staff several times that he had made a complaint about the school administration and about something wanting in teaching conditions. One day, I met him at my office and I asked him if he felt there were any inadequacies in the school system.

Contrary to my expectation, he answered me that he did not have any dissatisfaction with the conditions. I again said to him that, “I do want to hear from you what you had in your mind about the teaching in my university.” Then, he poured out complaints and insufficiencies to me that he held in his mind. I explained to him that some of them were not easy to change because they were based on Korean school culture, and agreed to some of his indications because he clearly pinpointed some inadequacies. In addition, I advised him that if he had anything to improve or change, he should not hesitate to tell them to any staff as well as to me. I added that we would gladly hear and try to help him.

Unfortunately, I learnt that he still had made a complaint. I wondered what made him complain about his new setting even though I explained the reality of Korean and the school culture to him. One day, when I met Peter, I asked him if he had any concerns about teaching at the school, he pointed out some to me. Then, I asked Peter if Howard might not be satisfied with the school. He said to me that I must have misunderstood Howard. I then asked him why Howard had frequently made complaints. Peter clearly made me understand him by explaining to me Howard’s stereotypical ethnic characteristics.

My colleagues unanimously told me that Peter is a special person in that he is always eager to help students improve their English communicative competence. He divides his class into small groups and spends more time in meeting and teaching students. One day, he showed me a course supplement about phonetics which was arranged and written by him in order to practice and correct students’ pronunciation. I had not expected native English speaking teachers to work more

time than is specified in the contract of employment. This work is in accordance with the teacher's responsibility in Korea which extends far beyond the classroom.

When comparing the two native English speaking teachers there are differences in terms of their majors and perspectives of pedagogy as well as cultural backgrounds. Peter had studied a language-related major, but Howard, a business-related one. Peter's educational perspective is similar to a Korean teacher. But Howard reveals that teaching ends when the bell rings. It is my understanding in Korean culture that dedication to the teaching profession doesn't end when the bell rings.

## **1.2 Situating the Research**

As described in the above section, there are differences between native English speaking teachers with respect to pedagogy and environment, and others. Koreans seem to have the simplified stereotypical images about the native English speaking teachers. They may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The native English teachers are temporary teachers. As such, they will leave for their home country within one or two years.
- (b) The native English speaking teachers are teachers for speaking English. Without relation to their potentials or competence, they are regarded as only English speaking teachers.
- (c) The native English speaking teachers may not be interested in administration and policy-making. Rather, they are intensely interested in making money and enjoying their life in the alien culture. Along with this prejudice and their lack of competence in the Korean language, Korean administrators or staff alienate them from those administrative jobs.



- (d) The native English speaking teachers may not be aware of the administrative hierarchy because they have lived in a society of equality and freedom. Koreans do not care much about their ignorance about the hierarchy. They are used to not situating the foreigners in the hierarchy and used to allowing their violation of the hierarchy.
- (e) The native English speaking teachers are civil and would not complain about other people or the institution in which they serve. Koreans have an imagination of the Western civility and economic development, which means that the Westerners came from the civilized and economic-developed north-American and European countries.

The realities seem to be contrary to these Korean biased common sense or stereotypes of the native English speaking teacher. In the case of these two teachers, the participants are not temporal sojourners. They have lived over three years and one of them has married a Korean woman. Next, they do not simply take a role of teaching and practicing conversation to students. The participants gave writing assignments to students every week as well as taught conversation classes. One of them has taught the subject of phonetics for his class because he felt that it is necessary to train the students in their pronunciation.

With respect to their interests in administration, the participants desire to participate in the policy-making about English language teaching. They believe that the Korean decision-making may be ineffective in improving the students' competence of English. Then, the participants are aware of the authority arising from the hierarchy of the administration and seem to act in accordance to a higher authority.

Finally, Korean staff believes that the native English speaking teachers may have little discontent about their working conditions because they are allowed to

do their job without any interference. The participants reveal the conflicts which come from their discontent about people and settings in the educational institutions. This last stereotype, conflicts, is the phenomenon of the above-described realities. In other words, the realities about the Korean stereotypes are revealed in the expressions of the participants' complaints or conflicts. In order to understand the native English speaking teachers without falling into biases, it is necessary to explore the conflicts which they have experienced in the educational and social settings in Korea.

### **1.3 Research Problem of the Study**

Given my conversation with Peter I believed that he might be satisfied with teaching and living in the university where we work. I have never heard any complaints from him about the institution in more than ten years. Before I started to study in the University of Alberta, I told him about my research interest and asked him to write his autobiography. When I read his autobiography, I got to know that he also has dissatisfaction with his setting.

Foreigner instructors are perhaps the most "marginal of all". There is no way for us to have any influence on the basic direction and orientation of the institution that we work for, even in the specific areas that most concern us. Outside of one's own classroom, all too often one has to be a "decision-taker" in the sense of being a "price-taker": we simply have to accept decisions that have been made above us by people who have no idea – and who seem not to care – how some initiative will be implemented. (Peter's autobiography)

Contrary to my expectation, Peter critically unveils who native English speaking teachers are in Korea. That is, he criticized the disregard of their roles by pointing out that they are regarded as marginal teachers and decision-takers. He also criticizes the managers and policy makers about native English speaking teachers and their teaching as those who have no idea and no concern about language teaching and its implementation.

Implicit in the quotation is that Peter is not satisfied with his present situation. However, he seems to like and be satisfied with the job of teaching students. According to Verity (2000), job satisfaction can be met by “teaching well” or “the pleasure inherent in the activity itself” rather than “external issues of social status, monetary compensation, and job security” (p. 181). In the light of Verity’s claim, I believe Peter would be satisfied with his profession because he exerted himself how to effectively teach his students on one hand and was rewarded by the students’ satisfaction with his teaching on the other hand.

Nevertheless, Peter reveals his dissatisfaction about his profession when I take the words such as marginal, decision-taker, and price-taker into consideration. I began to wonder what led him to be dissatisfied with his profession. I thought that I have kept a close relationship with him over 10 years, and that I have tried to understand his position as an expatriate teacher and to help him in working and living in Korea as well as his workplace. When I first established the regulations regarding the employment of native English speaking teachers, I introduced a yearly-based-increasing salary policy into it, which is distinguished from other universities’ salary system.

More importantly, I do not stipulate the limit of working period in the regulation in order for them to secure job security. In many universities, native English speaking teachers made a yearly-based, fixed-salary contract with their institution and can renew their contract three or four times. In other words, they had to find another teaching position every three or four years. However, in my school, they earn more salary than that of the previous year every year. These two lead to the effect that they are encouraged to work longer.

Together with good conditions, Peter's endeavor to students has made me think that he would be satisfied with his job. I have judged him in terms of the intrinsic property of teaching, not considering the extrinsic factors which are concerned with job satisfaction. I am again wondering what made him regard himself as "most marginal," "decision-taker," and "price-taker." It occurs to me that central to this issue is the problem of conflicts of native English speaking teachers which have been formed and originated from the Korean biases and culture of institutions. As discussed above, Koreans may falsely believe that they would soon leave and as such they may not be interested in learning the Korean culture and in developing the pedagogical settings. They also believe that the foreign teachers came to Korea to make money. In this connection, Korean staff may show indication of such biases to him. Peter places the foreign teachers as the most "marginal" of all in that they are not included in the Korean context and as the "decision taker" in that they have no power enough to change the pedagogical system which, they may think, is ineffective and distorted. These two terms, "marginal" and "decision taker", are closely concerned more with the conflicts

between Korean and the foreigners' culture than between an individual Korean and an individual foreigner.

Therefore, I would inevitably like to focus attention on the conflicts of native English speaking teachers with respect to their and Korean cultures in order to explore the possibilities to transform them from just a "pay-taker" worker to a teacher of students. I would broadly address the question "In what respects do native English speaking teachers have conflicts in living and teaching in the Korean context, and in what ways do we understand them in the culture?" In an attempt to explore these questions, this study is conducted on the basis of the following sub questions:

- (1) What understanding about the Korean culture of education do the native English speaking teachers possess?
- (2) What are the native English speaking teachers' felt conflicts in Korean culture?
- (3) What is the historical awareness implied in the cultures of Korean and the native English speaking teachers?
- (4) How can both the Korean and the native English speaking teachers encounter one another and understand the differences between the Korean culture and their home culture?

This study ultimately attempts to explore the understanding of the conflicts of the research participants in the discussion of the sub-questions (1) to (4). Chapter

4 will explore the understanding of Korean educational culture and the conflicts which they had, which is related with questions (1) and (2). Then the question (3) will be discussed in chapter 5, which involve the messages and ideologies hidden in the history of the Korean and English language. This discussion assumes that language is a medium of traditions of a culture and a mirror of historical consciousness of the native English speaking teachers. It is also assumed that the conflicts are explored not on an individual level but on a holistic level. The next question (4) is concerned with how we understand one another in the in-between. This heart-embracing discourse is in line with the hermeneutical fusion of horizon and a true path of hermeneutical research.

#### **1.4 Backgrounds of the Study**

This inquiry is grounded in two important ways. First, it illuminates the difficulties and agonies that the expatriate westerners have had in a Confucianism-driven society in the age of globalization. The American-led globalization is different from the British and other Western-led forms of colonialism. Accordingly, the discourse for this study is in some ways different from the perspectives of postcolonial discourses. Postcolonial discourses are originally investigated by scholars from the former Western-led colonized countries such as Said, Bhabha and Spivak (Schneider, 2007; Gandhi, 1998). It has its foundation in literary criticism. This perspective on the Western culture may not be applied to the Far-eastern Asian countries such as Korea, Japan and China because they do not resist the Western culture but welcome it as well as the English language.

As for Korea, this is related with its voluntary shift from the land of “Morning Calm” to that of “Morning Busy.” Korea held two world-wide sports games, the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988 and the 2002 World Cup, which brought about a large influx of foreigners highlighting the need for communicative competence in English. More importantly, Korea has tried to sell many commodities made in Korea to world markets in an attempt to develop its economic conditions.

The society’s demand has changed English education in schools and thus invited a large number of native English speaking teachers from English speaking countries such as England, the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In terms of the economic side, it is also more cost-effective for Korea to invite the native English speaking teachers than to send Korean students to the English-speaking countries to study English. This change is based on the myth that they can teach English better than Korean English teachers because of their communicative proficiency. In these veins, private and public educational institutes have been avid to hire the native English speaking teachers. It is natural for the foreigners to find a job easily. This is one of the reasons why the foreigners choose a job in Korea<sup>1</sup>.

In particular, since the 1990s nearly all universities have accelerated recruitment of native English speaking teachers from native English speaking countries. The large demands of native English speaking teachers inevitably cause some problems from the perspective of education. It is understood and admitted that the large demand for them results in the limit of recruiting well-qualified

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<sup>1</sup> Among others, living expense and easy recruitment are important factors to attract the foreigner to Korea. For instance, Breckenridge (2010) writes that she chose Seoul because it is less expensive for living expense and easier to find a job in than Japan.

native English speaking teachers. Then, it is urgent for us to help them to be teachers as well as language teachers in Korea, contributing to cultivating students' abilities as well as English language proficiency.<sup>2</sup> In order to complement this, this study will be a great contribution to the Korean educational circle with respect to the understanding of them.

Another background of this study is attributed to Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Although many articles in English education in Korea are directly concerned with students and teachers, it is ironically much less common to conduct qualitative research in the areas of applied linguistics and English education in Korea.<sup>3</sup> Founded on the Cartesian scientific reasoning the quantitative methodology does not lead to the true understanding of human beings because it ignores individual character and values each respective human being. As this study broadly attempts to understand the native English speaking teachers, hermeneutics is the most congenial in the sense that it searches for the understanding between them and Korean people as well as respects their individual differences.

With respect to the differences, Gadamer postulates historical effected consciousness which is underlain in the prejudices of people and a language as a medium of containing culture and traditions. These two concepts are put together and reveal the meanings hidden in the language. For instance, the Korean

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<sup>2</sup> In Korea it is believed that teachers should cultivate humble and noble character in students. This is the character of teachers in Korea. In addition, foreign language teachers should strive to develop his or her students' linguistic competence.

<sup>3</sup> Reviewing articles in *English Teaching* published in Korea and in *TESOL Quarterly* published in America, Kim (2004) claims that "*English Teaching* employs more quantitative and less qualitative methodology, in particular, less ethnography and narrative research, while *TESOL Quarterly* employs more qualitative methodology than quantitative methodology" (p. 45).



language involves the honorific system in every utterance and sentence which establishes the hierarchical relationships among people. This relationship then produces the power relation among people.

However, English seems to imply egalitarian relationships among people in that it involves very few honorifics in language. English had been spread in accordance with the British-led colonialism and has been so together with the American-led economic imperialism. These historical legacies may imbue the foreign teachers with the superiority or power over the host people because they think of themselves as models of civilization as well as of the English language. This discussion again is possible on the ground of Gadamer's perspectives of historical effected consciousness and languages.

Most importantly, Gadamer's hermeneutics is a foundation of this study from the perspective of understanding. Gadamer (1989) postulates the space of the in-between in which understanding takes place. This notion is important because it enables people to make connections with one another and to interact back and forth among themselves, and reach an understanding, that is, a fusion of horizon in their mind. It is also important in that it is possible to challenge the Western distinctive legacy of Self and Other.

Admitting the limit and relativity of understanding, it is inevitable that I shape my understanding of the Gadamer's in-between in terms of the Korean translation of the notion. The Korean understanding of the in-between is that people and things participating are situated in the same position and status. In this light, the native English speaking teacher is not in a marginal position but in the same

position.

As described in the research questions and background, this study explores the understanding of native English speaking teachers with a focus on their conflicts. The following two chapters will be a review of the previous research about the research topic in chapter two, and on the inquiry mode of hermeneutics in chapter three in which two traditions of hermeneutics, philosophical and educational traditions, will be reviewed from the perspective of philosophers and educational scholars, respectively. Chapter four will describe and interpret conflicts of the native English speaking teachers based on the scripts which I recorded and transcribed and interpreted through recurrent sub-themes of the conflicts. Chapter five will discuss the historical and cultural backgrounds implied in the Korean and English languages. This will be discussed with respect to the themes of the hierarchical mode of thinking of Koreans and the authoritative mode of thinking of the native English speaking teachers. Then, the above-mentioned conflicts will be discussed with relation to the historical traditions of the two languages. And, finally, chapter six will discuss the theme of encountering the traditions of the Korean and English languages in the space of the in-between. This space is the most important notion of the understanding among people. Accordingly, this final chapter will proceed with the in-between as the center.

## **Chapter 2. Reviews on Native Speakers of English as Teachers**

### **2.1 Introduction**

I first met a native speaker of English in the classroom in 1977 when I was a junior at university. He was in his twenties and taught us English conversation. I remembered that I really enjoyed attending his class and talking in English with a foreigner. I, also, remembered we did not use any textbooks and talked about some topics such as self-introduction, greeting, weather, family, and others. He was an American volunteer who came to Korea as a member of the Peace Corps.

Although teaching English by native English speakers began to spread to secondary schools and universities from the early 1960s with the dispatch of the Peace Corps from the United States, English education by native speakers of English dates back to 1886, in which three American missionaries, Gilmore, Bunker, and Hulbert, taught sons of the nobility in Korea (McArthur, 2002).

From the historical perspective of English language, the spread of English has its origin in the fifth century AD. from northern Europe to the British Isles (Crystal, 2003). It spread out of Britain at the end of the sixteenth century (Brumfit, 2001, Crystal, 2003). The numbers of English speakers grew from between 5 and 7 million in 1603 to 250 million in 1952 (Crystal, 2003) and to around 380 million in 1992 who are using English as a mother tongue in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Kachuru, cited in Jenkins, 2003).

Since the demise of the Berlin Wall and of the Soviet Union, American-led

globalization has changed its focus from political ideologies to business (Smith, 2006). Globalization has exerted an influence on the adoption of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, as well as business (Sinagatullin, 2006). English has now been used worldwide as a vehicle to communicate for the economic and technological expansion of nations. Koreans also view English as a vital force for keeping pace with expanding economic development and trading with foreign countries. Together with the economic development the Korean government first set up a plan for internationalization of education which led to hire native English speakers in 1994 (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2007).

The plan is to promote the communicative ability in English of students and teachers who have little opportunity to experience English directly with native English speakers. The native English speakers have some advantages over Non-native English speaking teachers like Koreans with regard to teaching conversation classes, serving as perfect models of imitation, and getting their learners to speak (Benke *et al.*, 2005). These factors cause some Asian countries such as Korea, Japan, and China to competitively invite native English speakers. As a result of great demand for the native English speaking teachers the hosting institutions inevitably disregard their qualification as a teacher such as a teaching certificate or teaching experience. Any native English speakers can be an English language teacher if they are only a BA (Bachelor of Arts) holder regardless of whether or not they hold a teaching certificate or have teaching experience. This is revealed in the recruiting advertisements: “No experience necessary? Teach

English in Japan in 2006. Only have to be native-speakers of English with a bachelor's degree in any field" (Foley, 2007, p.8). These are not advertisements which appeared in British newspapers, but in the Korean, Chinese, Thai press (Foley, 2007). The prospective teachers do not require teaching experience and teaching-related academic majors. They are considered qualified only if they are a native English speaker with a bachelor's degree.

The question is raised about "native English speakers," the only qualification for being native English speaking teachers. What is the meaning of "native English speakers", which is the required qualification? What is the meaning of this term in pedagogical contexts?

## **2.2 The Linguistic Perspective of Native Speakers**

It is not simple to define the meaning of native speakers of a language because it involves a lot of implications (Jenkins, 2000, 2003). It thus is hard to define with a simple term (Gupta, 2006). They are related to the linguistic and socio-cultural meanings. This section will begin to review the implications of the term from the definition of a dictionary.

According to Sinclair's study (2001), a native speaker is defined in terms of a native speaker of a language, "someone who speaks that language as their first language rather than having learned it as a foreign language" (p. 1022). In this definition, native speakers of a language are endowed with an innate linguistic competence, which means that they are born in the family and society in which the language is used. It also implies that they are proficient and accurate users of

that language.

These features of native speakers imply two viewpoints: a native speaker is someone who acquires the language in childhood (the genetic perspective) and gains linguistic competence of the language (the functional perspective). From the genetic perspective, native speakers naturally acquire the linguistic competence because of the innateness of their mother tongue in which the innateness is related with the competence of language use (Chomsky, 1967; Krashen, 1981). Against this innate viewpoint, some critical researchers believe that the nativists set a norm which is impossible to achieve (Jenkins, 2000; Gupta, 2006). They attempt to undermine the genetic viewpoint and play up the native-like competence of the language. The genetic view of native speakers is supported by Quirk (1990) and Widdowson (2002) who put an emphasis on the central stability of a language. This genetic perspective is criticized by postcolonial and anti-linguistic scholars such as Kachru (1992), Phillipson (1992, 2009), Kramsch (1998), Schneider (2007) and Paikeday (1985).

A second viewpoint is concerned with (applied) linguistics. From the applied linguistic perspective the concept of “native speaker” puts emphasis on linguistic competence rather than the innateness of the native English speakers. Davies (2003) characterizes the native speaker as someone who acquires the language in childhood, has intuitions about the standard language grammar, produces fluent spontaneous discourse, uses the language creatively, and has a control of translation or interpretation into the language. He characterizes the native speakers as follows:

- (1) The native speaker acquires the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker in childhood.
- (2) The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his/her Grammar 1.
- (3) The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the Grammar 2 which are distinct from his/her Grammar 1.
- (4) The native speaker has a unique capacity to produce fluent spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries (the 'one clause at a time' facility) and which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of complete lexical items (Pawley & Syder, 1983). In both production and comprehension the native speaker exhibits a wide range of communicative competence.
- (5) The native speaker has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels).
- (6) The native speaker has a unique capacity to interpret and translate into the LI of which s/he is a native speaker. Disagreements about an individual's capacity are likely to stem from a dispute about the Standard or (standard) Language. (Davies, 2003, pp. 210-11).

According to Davies (2003), the native speakers are again characterized in terms of childhood acquisition, intuition about grammar of a language, communicative competence which involves discourse and pragmatic control, creative performance in a language use, and the capacity of interpreting and translating into the language. Among the characteristics, the most important characteristics are concerned with intuitions about a second language grammar as well as that of the first language and with the capacity of interpreting a second language and translating into the first language. These imply that a second language learner can be a native speaker of the language that he or she learns.

Furthermore, the native speaker of a language is not a person, but is used as a

point of reference for evaluating linguistic competence. Applied linguist Kramsch (1993) contends that “it has been customary to view the linguistic development of a learner on an interlanguage continuum whose endpoint is a construct called the “native speaker”” (p.9)<sup>4</sup>. A more accomplished user of a language is the one end of an interlanguage continuum and is marked as native speaker or as one with native competence. But this ideal sense of native speaking norm is impossible to achieve in that it is difficult to set a normative standard language (Cook, 1999). In other words, as there is no target to aim at, it is impossible to steer for it.

This idealization of native speakers of a language is the fundamental assumption of linguistics. Chomsky (1967) wrote: “Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly...”(p. 3). From this passage, he may postulate an ideal speaker and listener as a native speaker of a language. But I wonder if there is any ideal speaker and listener in this world. In order to meet the conditions, there must exist both a completely homogeneous speech-community and someone who knows his or her language perfectly. As there is no one who meets the conditions, there is no ideal speaker and listener. This is a result of the disrespect of social realities. To sum up, linguistic perspectives reveal that the notion of native speakers is an ideal one which disregards the social realities.

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<sup>4</sup> The notion of “interlanguage” was originally introduced by Selinker (1972). It is based on the assumption that second or foreign language learners use a hybrid language which is mixed with their mother tongue and the target language.



### 2.3 Sociopolitical Perspectives of Native Speakers of English

Removed from the social realities, linguistic perspective of native speakers of English is prevalent in non-native English speaking as well as native English speaking countries. Accordingly, the native English speakers go to teach in the non-native English speaking countries. The native English speaking countries are the place where the non-native English speakers go to learn English. The experts of the native English speaking countries originate and write the theories and methods of teaching English as a second or foreign language. These approaches are the foundation of much literature on English language teaching. They, furthermore, remotely control the local publications and periodicals (Jenkins, 2007)<sup>5</sup>.

Against the hegemonic power of native English speakers and native English speaking society, there is some literature which uncovers the hidden power and oppression of the dominant ideology. Literature against the dominance of native speakers of English addresses such issues as authenticity of English (Kramsch, 1998; Seidhofer, 1999), linguistic expertise (Widdowson, 2002; Rampton, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 2006), monolingualism (Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Phillipson, 1992), power (Cook, 2006), colonial legacy (Vandrick, 2002; Phillipson, 1992, 2009) and racism (Macedo, 2003). These discussions may be summarized as follows:

- (a) Authenticity: Non-native English speakers are allowed to use the local varieties

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<sup>5</sup> Jenkins (2007) reviewed many local periodicals such as BRAZ-TESOL in Brazil, KATE in Korea, TESOL-Greece in Greece, TESOL-Italy in Italy and the like.

of English in the countries such as India and Singapore, to name some.

- (b) Linguistic expertise: Due to their uncritical acceptance of the native speaker's dominance of teaching English as an expert, non-native teachers legitimize their own marginalization in the teaching profession and accept the native speaker as the arbiter of English.
- (c) Monolingualism: Native speakers of English intuitively know that English has already become a major tool of interaction in the world. They believe that they do not need to learn other languages, so they do not like bilingual or multilingual policies in their countries.
- (d) Power: It is believed by non-native speakers of English that the native speakers of English have the linguistic norm by nature so that they can exert their power in the English teaching profession. This assumes that native English speakers can be the best teachers. Due to this, they are not required to have deep knowledge of the local educational system and the same level of teacher training.
- (e) Colonial legacy: This is a hidden aspect of teaching English as a second and foreign language. It can involve the superiority of West to East, of English to other languages so that teaching English is a way to get the people out of the primitive situation.
- (f) Racism: Linguistic racism abounds in countries in which there are asymmetrical power relations in terms of accents, vocabulary, politeness which may be marks of race, ethnicity and class. This linguistic racism is represented as alienating, bullying in schools and as an indication of unsuitability for marriage, in which language serves as a membership of a group.

These issues of inequality are the result of the resistance to the dominance of native speakerism, "characterized by the belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (Holliday, 2006, p.385). Holliday (2006) discloses the sources of the power of the native speakers of English as arising from the Western culture which is based on the dichotomy of notions between Self and Other, Western and non-Western, civilized and

uncivilized, and developed and primitive. These descriptions hide the westerners' bias of good Self and problematic Other.

This Western-centered imaginative ideology is then applied to the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers of English. The native speakers of English are Self, civilized and developed, but the non-native speakers of English are problematic Other. Furthermore, this simplified culture-stereotypical perspective can be applied to language learners and pedagogy. The native speakers of English seem to believe that their pedagogy is based on collaborative, learner-centered and active teaching techniques and that the non-native English speakers are accustomed to collectivistic, teacher-centered and hierarchical pedagogical techniques.

As Holliday (2006) describes, when the native speakers of English have difficulties in practicing specific types of the above-mentioned pedagogical practices such collaborative, learner-centered and active teaching-learning practices, they may negatively label the non-native English speaking students as “collectivistic,” “dependent or teacher-centered,” and “passive.”

More importantly, as a non-native English speaking teacher, I believe that many of them, not all, are collaborative with the students, learner-centered and try to encourage the students to actively participate in the class. The pedagogical practices seem not to be dependent on the simplified, generalized perspective on the ground of the dichotomy of Self and Other, but on the teacher's individual attitudes about their pedagogy.

## 2.4 Ethnic Stereotypes of Native English Speakers

Together with the social-political orientations of native speakers of English, there is an ethnic bias to them among the non-native speakers of English. Native speakers of English are believed to share common cultural backgrounds which would serve to allow their membership. In other words, they have shared common membership which identifies them as a member of that society, which may be defined as native-speakerhood (Rajagopalan, 2007). This feature is concerned with an innate, biological or genetic view (Gupta, 2006; Cook, 2006; Rampton, 1996) which would bring about ethnic discrimination (Macedo, 2003; Arva & Medges, 2000; Pennycook, 1998) and nationality (Johnson, 1999, 2003). The English language had its roots in Western culture and white racial grouping. These two essentials are imbued in the non-native speakers' images about the native speakers of English. Their relation with ethnic discrimination can be found in the origin of the word *native*.

Etymologically, the *native* refers to “one born in a particular place” (Onions, 1966, p. 603). The opposite of the word native is barbarian (Gr. Barbaric) which refers to “uncivilized,” “rude,” “not Greek or Roman,” and “foreign” (Onions, 1966, p. 74). From this it is inferred that the natives were people who lived in the Greek or the Roman Empire who were civilized and gentle while the other people were believed to be uncivilized and rude. Moreover, the word “barbarian” is etymologically related with “foreign languages” which are “unintelligent speech” (Onions, 1966, p.74). This distinction between native and barbarian extends to

mark the native speakers of English as civilized, gentle and intelligent, but the non-native speakers of English as uncivilized, rude and unintelligent. The distinction provides the ground for discriminating Self from Other. This also brings about the sense of inclusiveness among the Self and of exclusiveness to the Other. In this light “native” is connected with the role of membership of a group.

More recently, tracing the origin of native language from the Middle Ages (at least 16c) McArthur (1992) associates native with *inherited* and *birth* (p. 682). These meanings are associated with the sense of *transmitting* and carrying, which also implies the exclusion of other because only a native inherits “being native,” in other words, transmitting and carrying the native’s identity.

The native’s identity is shared among themselves to the exclusion of others, who are situated on the margin. The native is situated inside, at the center, whereas the other is positioned in the periphery. Furthermore, the native do not permit others to gain their identities because they are only transmitted among themselves. This membership sense of native gives them pride that they are in the center and others are affiliated. This sense of the native’s identity is, furthermore, “closely associated with the power that being a native speaker gives” (Davies, 2004, p. 439).

More importantly, the non-native speakers seem to have a propensity for a racial bias. In reality, although a person is born in the country of the language and is proficient in using the language, she or he may not be regarded as a native speaker of the language. Kramsch (1998) takes an example of children of Turkish parents:

For example, children of Turkish parents and bearing a Turkish surname, but born, raised, and educated in Germany may have some difficulty being perceived as native speakers of German when applying for a language teaching job abroad,... (p. 80).

This example reveals that native speakers of a language have a connotative meaning in light of not only linguistic features, but stereotypical racial appearance.

Choe (2007) reports that Korean EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers believe “native English speakers” to be Caucasian people who were born and have lived in North America, Britain, or Australia. The Korean EFL teachers associate the term of “native English speakers” with respect to ethnicity and nationality, not in terms of language proficiency and culture. Ironically, a person who learns English as a foreign language may easily get a teaching job if he or she is a Caucasian. A Russian woman told her experience of seeking a teaching job: “Anyway, I told the owner of the kindergarten I was Russian but that I could speak English and that I was qualified, with a teaching degree from a teacher’s college in Russia, trained to teach English and German. The only question the owner had for me, though, was “Are you white?”” (Harris, 2004, p. 273). The Korean owner thinks of whiteness as a more important qualification than the nativeness as an English teacher in Korea. This reveals the ethnic bias about the native speakers of English in the Korean imagination

In Korean teaching jobs, there is a severe propensity about the racial bias. Few native English speaking teachers are people of color in Korea with the exception

of Korean-Americans or Korean-Canadians in Korea. According to statistics issued by Korea's Ministry of Education and Human Resources in April 2006, native English speaking teachers came from Canada (737 persons), the United States (684 persons), New Zealand (140 persons), Australia (133 persons), Britain (131 persons), Ireland (34 persons), and South Africa (32 persons). These statistics disclose that Korean EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers associate "native English speakers" in light of their nationalities which hide the ethnic bias. For instance, even if a Singaporean is bilingual, they cannot be a teacher. Even if a Philippino's mother tongue (first language) is English, the Korean teacher would not admit them as native English speaking teachers.

Furthermore, the ethnic bias may operate in the native English speaking countries. Brutt-Griffler *et al.* (2001) report that one of their participants, Paul, is a perfect user of English and believes himself to be a native English speaker, but his friend doesn't because he does not "look like" a native English speaker.

From the literature review in this section, it is assumed that the native speaker is characterized as someone not simply with language expertise, language affiliation, and language inheritance but also with socio-political and ethnically constructed characteristics. This socially constructed notion has provided them with a privilege for teaching English in non-native English speaking countries. As teachers, the native speakers of English are discussed in the next section.

## **2.5 Native English Speakers as Teachers**

In the previous sections, native speakers of English are seen from the

linguistic, socio-political and ethnic perspectives. These reviews have fundamentally been concerned with the teaching profession these days because the term was not used in the mother tongue English countries but in the countries teaching English as a second or foreign language in which they have served as English language teachers. In this section, literature will be reviewed in terms of native speakers of English as teachers. As teachers of English, the native speakers have been discussed with respect to stereotypes (Choe, 2007; Kumaravadivelu, 2006), cultures (Jones, 2005; Ahn, *et. al.*, 2000), pedagogical practices (Barratt, *et. al.*, 2000; Roh, 2006), and teacher qualifications (Kim, 2006; Smith, 1998; Han, 2005).

Regarding stereotypes there are two sides: those from Koreans and from native English speaking teachers. As mentioned in the previous section, Choe (2007) explores the Korean teachers' stereotypical perceptions of native English speakers and English varieties. His study was conducted at a Seoul-based Korean university with four non-native English speaking teachers participating in the study. They indicate that Caucasian people in North America, British and Australia are native English speakers for teaching English in Korea and that the United States version of pronunciation is a model version of pronunciation to acquire for the Korean students rather than the British version. These stereotypes reveal that Korean teachers of English have a bias about ethnicity and nationality for judging native English speaking teachers. On the other hand, from the native speaker's perspective, the common stereotypes about students from Asia are that they are "obedient to authority, lack critical thinking skills, and do not participate



in classroom interaction” (Kumaravadivelu, 2002, p. 710). Kumaravadivelu (2002), however, indicates that these stereotypes are common in all cultures and dependent upon individual character. He also states that the three characteristics seem to be based on the discrimination of native and non-native speakers and the “the predominance of Western perspectives to the teaching of culture” (Kumaravadivelu, 2002). Therefore, it is needed to understand the complex nature of culture, to open and find alternative meaning, and reshape the stereotypes of the Other.

Next, cultures are discussed on the ground of differences, multiplicity, communication, and encountering a culture. Ahn *et. al.* (2000) investigated the communication between Korean and native English speaking faculty in the department of English in Korean universities. They indicate that the communications are affected more by personality or general attitudes of the faculty than by the cultural differences. Their study was conducted by survey and does not address what the cultural differences are and which conditions are hidden in the differences. Jones (2005) indicates that native English speaking teachers are less aware of the host culture. He then states that the foreign teachers make more efforts to provide the students with a learning environment which is based on the student’s culture. In order to do this, furthermore, he indicates that the teachers understand and respect the student’s culture.

Then, the research on pedagogical method is reviewed through Barratt *et. al.* (2000) and Roh (2006). Barratt *et al.* (2000) surveyed evaluative comments about native English speaking teachers from their students and host colleagues in

Hungary and China. They uncovered that the native English speaking teachers receive positive comments with respect to teaching methods. Among Hungarian teachers, native English speaking teachers' methodological insights are valued while Hungarian and Chinese students underline that the native English speaking teachers play games as a teaching activity and try to encourage them to participate in activities. However, the teachers receive negative evaluation in terms of professional knowledge and institutional cultures. Among the most frequent negative categories, in Hungary and China, both teachers and students pinpoint native English speaking teachers' lack of professional preparation, insight into students' typical language problems, and familiarity with the host educational system.

The survey unveils that native English speaking teachers carry out their instruction in terms of student-centered curriculum, which may be lacking in the host teachers' classes. The comments were in connection with the native English speaking teachers' lack of educational and cultural backgrounds. This implies that a pre- and in-service orientation for them should stress both EFL teaching disciplines and the host country's cultures.

Roh (2006) surveyed globally the effects of the pedagogy taught by the native English speaking teachers. The study indicates that their pedagogy is effective in the learning of Western culture and the English language. He further suggests that they need to organize their pedagogical practices in classes, to provide various instructional activities to students and to integrate culture into English language learning during class, and to encourage activities that enable students to compare

and contrast the two cultures. These recommendations are concerned with teaching practices in class and cultural understanding. From these, it is implied that the pedagogical practices of the foreign teacher lack variety and are somewhat boring, and centered on language rather than cultures. This encourages the native English speaking teachers to train themselves in their teaching practices and understand the host culture, and develop their pedagogical practices based on their own and the host cultures.

Finally, some literature addresses the issue of the qualification of good native English speaking teachers. Lack of understanding of host cultures seems to be a cause of the criticism against the native English speaking teachers in Korea. Han (2005) reports students' views about them as follows:

Typically, the learners felt that, compared with Korean EFL teachers, NSTEs(Native Speaking Teachers of English) lacked an understanding of Korean culture, language, educational context and learners' needs, interests and preferences. From the learners' perspective, NSTEs appeared unable or unwilling to develop interpersonal relationships with learners, and lacked the qualities of a good teacher, including sincerity, enthusiasm and responsibility. Some learners' comments illustrate NSTEs' insensitivity to Korean culture, educational context and learners (p. 206).

This research discovers that the dullness of cultural understanding seems to be one characteristic of some native English speaking teachers. It even provides an implication that the disregard is concerned with lack of the qualities of teachers in the host country. Reflecting on my ten years of experience with native English speaking teachers, I don't agree with Han's (2005) result because I have sensed

native English speaking teachers are equipped with such values as sincerity, enthusiasm and responsibility which are required to Korean teachers. But, some Korean teachers have indicated to me that a few native English speaking teachers are insincere and irresponsible. Therefore, it is my conjecture that the lack of qualities for being a teacher differs from person to person.

Smith (1998) suggested the attributes of the best teachers of English in Korea, include proficiency in English, formal education in teacher training, real life experience using English across cultures, sincere desire to teach Korean students, and nationality. Furthermore, Chin (2002) claims that in order to increase the interest level of students, it was important to present oneself as someone that they would like to talk to outside of the classroom. Students are more likely to open up and talk in the classroom after they have talked to the teacher outside of the classroom.

As for a Singaporean case, Goh (1995) argues that the best English teachers (for Singaporean students) are Singaporean teachers who understand their students and their peculiar use of English in the context of a multilingual and multicultural society. He also indicates that although the native English speaking teachers are valued associates in the teaching profession, they cannot provide the only language model for their students.

## **2.6 Training Programs for Native English Speaking Teachers**

Until now, I have addressed the literature about native speakers of English and native English speaking teachers. Among them, some literature addresses the

necessity of teacher training for the native English speaking teachers. Some Asian countries have already enforced a teacher training system. For instance, the Korean Ministry of Education, Science and Technology founded the English Program in Korea (EPIK) in 1995 with an effort to improve the spoken competence of English for students and teachers in Korea. There is also a training program for the native English speaking teachers called the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) in Japan. It was started in 1987 with the purpose of increasing mutual understanding between the people of Japan and the people of the other nations. In this section, some literature on these two programs will be reviewed.

Choi (2001) investigates the problems and effectiveness of the English Program In Korea (EPIK) through surveys. The study points out the inefficiency of the EPIK in the sense that a 2-week training program is not sufficient for the less qualified native English speakers to adapt to Korean culture and institutions. There are 4 class hours of Korean culture and 4 class hours of Korean, Hangeul. Especially, there is nothing about the culture of schools and Korean students, or life in Korea in the program. Thus, although they have taken the EPIK program, they have difficulty in adjusting to a new life as native English speaking teachers in Korea.

However, Oishi (2006) maintains that the Japan Exchange and Teaching program (JET) is efficient in native English speaking teachers' adaptation to Japanese culture. Oishi (2006) furthermore claims that the JET experience influenced the native English speaking teachers' perspectives on the world in

terms of their values and beliefs and that it encouraged them to understand the fundamental features of the Japanese culture. Oishi (2006) reports that the program is successful in term of pedagogy, citizenship formation and international understanding.

On the other hand, McConnell (2000) explored the problems of the Japan Exchanging and Teaching program (JET) in detail and put forth somewhat different perspectives from Oishi's (2006). That study is designed to discover whether the participants of the JET program are satisfied with it. McConnell (2000) comments on this: "the core question is "Are you happy?" Conspicuously absent from most of this survey is any attempt to objectively measure the effect of the program" (p. 271). McConnell (2000) indicated that the JET program appears to be fragmented, loosely structured, marked by competing goals and communication breakdown.

More seriously, he points out that there is a great gap between the national-level objectives and the local realities. He observed that the national-level object is to internationalize the schools and local administrations as well as the students but the local realities are very Japanese ways rather than globalized ones. The reality is that "what the Japanese have done is to meet the guests at the door with a great display of hospitality. Assured that they are only short-term guests, the hosts then focus not on whether the foreigners are integrated into Japanese society but on whether they are treated hospitably and enjoy their stay" (McConnell, 2000, p. 272). Under this claim are the separation of cultural and professional domains between the native English speaking teachers and the Japanese teachers.

McConnell (2000) appears to interpret this phenomenon as attempts to resist assimilating the Japanese groups into a larger internationalized whole.

## **2.7 Summary**

The literature review on native English speaking teachers has been dominated by a focus on the dichotomy of non-native and native English speaking teachers (Seidlhofer, 1999; Ryu et al., 2005; Davis-Wiley et al., 2001) and the hosters' perspectives on native English speaking teachers (Barratt et al, 2000; Han, 2005). And much has been written about the qualities of being good native English speaking teachers (Smith, 1998; Chin, 2002; Goh, 1995; Medgyes, 1996; Youngs et al., 2001). A few are dedicated to the pre-/ in-service program of the host countries for the native English speaking teachers (Choi, 2001; Oishi, 2006; Smith, 1998).

These studies indicate that the native English speaking teachers are in sharp contrast with their host colleagues and students in terms of the cultural and institutional tradition of the host country. The two parties alike perceive that they appear to have difficulties in teaching students due to the lack of the cultural understanding one another, but their details are quite different because they understand teaching culture from their own viewpoints.

Another marked difference resides in the professional preparation of the native English speaking teachers. Although the host colleagues maintain that they lack in professional knowledge, the native English speaking teachers believe that they have enough of professional knowledge. The host appears to believe that their

privilege of nativeness is a better quality for the teaching profession than the institutional teacher training.

These conflicting perspectives are concerned with misunderstandings between cultures and wisdom traditions. They even cause native English speaking teachers to return to their home countries or to find other teaching positions, which bring about the host's mistrust of the native English speaking teachers. In order to avoid this situation Medgyes (1996) suggests how the two sides may meet each other:

The ideal native English speaking teachers and the ideal non-native English speaking teachers arrive from different directions but eventually stand quite close each other. Contrary to contemporary views, however, I contend that they will never become indistinguishable. Nor would it be desirable, either! Both groups of teachers serve equally useful purposes in their own terms. In an ideal school, there should be a good balance of native English speaking teachers and non-native English speaking teachers, who complement each other in their strengths and weaknesses. (p. 42)

Medgyes (1996)'s claim reminds me of Aoki's (1996/2005) which impressed me with his balanced perspectives of understanding of West and East. Aoki proposes an ambivalent space which is brought about by an integration of West and East, and where newness can flow between the two cultures. This is the place where my research topic starts and where my participants are dwelling because they are westerners but dwell in the Eastern culture.

Most importantly, as reviewed in this chapter, no literature holistically has addressed my research topic, the conflicts of the native English speaking teachers in Korea from their departure from their countries as a native English speaker to



their settlement as an EFL teacher with respect to their lived experience.

## Chapter 3 Hermeneutics as Guide of the Research

### 3.1 Walking into Hermeneutic Forests

Hermeneutics serves as a teacher as it makes me awaken to human dignity and the values of living together. It is also the lighthouse of the research as it serves as a guide for where I go and how I go. Prasad (2005) divides hermeneutics into a weak and strong sense of hermeneutics.<sup>6</sup> Between these, a weak sense refers to the use of hermeneutics as an interpretative mode of qualitative inquiries.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it requires the research to be mainly concerned with how it is conducted. This is not hermeneutics in that Gadamer (1989) does refrain himself from using “method,” which is related with how to go.<sup>8</sup> But Gadamer suggests some clues associated with how to go. He recommends that we go by way of dialectical interactions (repeated searching for an answer to a question) and looking backward and forward, and “working in the middle of things” (Smith, 1999, p. 45) which demands actively engaging in the human experience of the world.

Hermeneutics is chiefly concerned with where to go with what we have. It

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<sup>6</sup> I do not admit the division of hermeneutics in Prasad (2005) because it is not a methodological orientation, as such the weak sense of hermeneutics is less concerned with hermeneutics.

<sup>7</sup> In order to identify the misunderstanding of hermeneutics, I discuss only the weak sense of hermeneutics.

<sup>8</sup> Gadamer (1989) puts forth his intention about his book: “The hermeneutics developed here is not, therefore, a methodology of the human science, but an attempt to understand what the human sciences truly are...” (p. xxii)

cherishes traditions, but does not intend to maintain them in themselves but to look into them and look through the present, looking forward to the future. By conducting this work, hermeneutics paves the road to go on. As time changes every moment, hermeneutic work is always changing and created anew onward.

In this view, hermeneutics has something to do with Education (L., *educare*, literally to lead out, bring forth). Education provides students or children with a space to look into knowledge or experience about the world (interaction with traditions) and to think newly for the future world (creating anew). For instance, the present world is a globalized world. Finding its hidden or overt meaning by investigation its tradition and its present phenomena, and looking for its prospects is the task both of education and of hermeneutics.

The research here is immediately related with hermeneutics. It addresses the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers have in Korea. The conflicts arise from their human experience, which is the key concern of hermeneutics. Next, if the purpose of the research is only to identify their conflicts in a foreign country, the research is meaningless. Hermeneutics makes me ask myself where and how the research can be “transferable to the whole of human living and human culture,” and to search for an answer repeatedly (Gadamer, 1992, p. 105). More importantly, the research is directly indebted to hermeneutics. I adopt the notions of language that language is human thought and a world view, a particular orientation and relationship to the world (Gadamer, 1989). These notions fundamentally underlie in the research and enable me to rethink or reconceptualize the key concept of the in-between space.

In this chapter, I do not attempt to expound or criticize the tenets of any hermeneutic work even though there are varieties of theoretical disputes.<sup>9</sup> Rather, I use various orientations and concepts from the work of philosophical or educational researchers in order to “go beyond mere reconstruction” of texts, which will engender the possibilities of creative hermeneutic imaginations (Gadamer, 1989, p. 367).

To better understand the practical application of hermeneutic traditions for the research, I divide the remainder of this chapter into four sections. The first section reviews the typologies of hermeneutic work with respect to hermeneutic philosophers. As I do not intend to argue for or against the work of the authors, I briefly review the typology of philosophical hermeneutics from the perspective of educational researchers.

Next, hermeneutic orientations address those major issues such as texts, understanding and language which will be foundations of my research. Then, the application of hermeneutics to education will address Gadamer’s perspective of education, which can be summarized as self-education through conversation, and will concentrate on Terry Carson and David Smith from the University of Alberta and David Jardine in the University of Calgary because they have taken the lead in hermeneutic study in education on the basis of Gadamer’s philosophy. The final part of this chapter is to concentrate on the application of Gadamer’s hermeneutics in my research with respect to the mode of inquiry.

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<sup>9</sup> Ormiston et.al, (1990) cover the disputes between Gadamer and Habermas and Michelfelder et.al., (1989) include the disputes between Gadamer and Derrida.

### 3.2 Typology of Hermeneutics

The typologies of modern hermeneutics cover the traditional modern hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and wrap up with the postmodern (especially poststructural) hermeneutics of Caputo with respect to their hermeneutic characteristics, respectively.<sup>10</sup>

Hermeneutics has a long history in the sense that its origin dates back to the Greek messenger god, Hermes (Gadamer, 1976) who played the role of mediator between God and human beings. Hermeneutics implies transference, explanation, interpretation and understanding of messages or the meanings of messages. Based on these meanings, hermeneutics traditionally played a key role in interpreting the Bible and the law not in a scholarly study, but in a practical way.

Another significance of Hermes is his eternal youth. Hermes was depicted as “a young god always” (Stapleton, cited in Smith, 1999, p.28). In order to be “a young god always,” he had and has and will have the elixir plant which the Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huang (259-210 BC) searched for. In fact, the emperor did not find the plant and died. There is no report until now that anyone has found or invented an elixir plant. It is an imaginary plant. Likewise, what is implied in the phrase “a young god always” is that hermeneutics symbolizes this:

The hermeneutic imagination works from a commitment to being generativity and rejuvenation and to the question of how we can go together

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<sup>10</sup> I use “traditional modern hermeneutics” instead of “traditional hermeneutics” because there were many hermeneutic works before Schleiermacher such as “a school of hermeneutics in Alexandria,” Aristotle’s “*Peri Hermeneia*,” etc. (Smith, 2006, p.106), and because the world history is often divided into three periods: Ancient, Middle, Modern Ages.

in the midst of constraints and difficulties that constantly threaten to foreclose on the future.” (Smith, 1999, p.29)

David Smith (1999) concisely indicates the meaning of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics can be characterized as the discipline related to creative understanding of living together in which it is possible to restore the relationships between the past, the present and the future in this difficult human world. He also assumes that current phenomena such as neoliberalism and globalization may fundamentally challenge and threaten living humanely, and he worries about the dim future which may expel or ignore human rights.

In order for the research not to create a rupture from the hermeneutic tradition, I will review the features of hermeneutic work by using its typology. Then, I will attempt to position the research in the flow for the future. The characteristics of hermeneutic creativity and generativity have produced a variety of hermeneutic approaches. Terrance Carson (1984) classifies hermeneutics into epistemological, philosophical and critical hermeneutics. Shaun Gallagher (1992), then, divides hermeneutics into conservative, critical and radical hermeneutics, and George Richardson (1998) divides it into conservative, moderate and radical hermeneutics. Patrick Slattery (2006) describes hermeneutics in six types: traditional theological hermeneutics, conservative philosophical hermeneutics, contextual hermeneutics, reflective hermeneutics, poststructural hermeneutics, and critical hermeneutics.

These researchers classify hermeneutic scholars in their own viewpoints. The same scholar fits into a different category depending on the classifying frame. For instance, Gadamer’s hermeneutics is placed under the philosophical hermeneutics

(Carson), conservative hermeneutics (Gallagher), within the moderate hermeneutics (Richardson), and under the contextual hermeneutics (Slattery).

From these inconsistencies the classifications may be seen as arbitrary, but what is revealed in these typologies is that hermeneutic scholarship attempts to cover the variety of hermeneutics which has expanded its meanings and the range of its application since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, Terrance Carson's (1984) classification develops into that of Shaun Gallagher (1992) which includes the radical hermeneutics. Terrance Carson's research starts on the basis of three types of hermeneutics (Carson, 1984), but later covers radical hermeneutics (Carson, 1996).

These different perspectives on hermeneutics imply that there have been complicated, theoretical disputes among hermeneutic scholars. The disputes can also be seen as the development of hermeneutics. In this view, hermeneutics has expanded its concerns or the objects researched from two layers of texts (Schleiermacher), human experience (Dilthey), being (Heidegger), human artifacts and traditions, and the totality of human experience in the world (Gadamer), linguistically communicable meaning (Habermas), to suspicion or unveiling the reality by deconstruction (Ricoeur, Rorty, Derrida). Among them, Gadamer has constantly developed hermeneutics through interacting with thinkers from Aristotle to Derrida. Richard Rorty briefly characterizes Gadamer's endeavors as attempts to find out "what human sciences truly are" and "what connects human sciences with the totality of our experience of the world." (Rorty, 1981, p. 358) Seen from these trends, hermeneutics is now deepening and

widening its inquiry about human experiences in relation with the world events.

As Smith (1999) has already warned, the recent world events such as 9/11 in 2001 do not seem to herald a bright future for human life. Rather, the disaster may caution us that our human world may experience a dark period in the future. In order to prevent this possibility, it is necessary to identify what the constraints and difficulties in our experience are and to find a way to live together. This is the main theme of the research. I will attempt to identify the difficulties and conflicts which native English speaking teachers are undergoing and try to find a possibility of living together by understanding their agonies in the in-between space and by restoring our life (meaning the life of the Korean students, teachers, and the native English speaking teachers) as meaningful, which will provide our future with the possibilities of hope.

From the next section, various hermeneutic traditions dissolve and form hermeneutic orientations, attitudes, applications, and processes in sequence, which will be the foundation of my research orientations.



### 3.3 Hermeneutic Orientations

#### 3.3.1 Text as an iceberg

The picture named “*Napoleon Crossing the Alps*” painted by Jacques Louis David (1748-1825), a highly influential French painter, is one of the impressive pictures in a history textbook I saw, which depicted the imperialist, Napoleon, crossing the Alps in order to subjugate the Austrian army in Italy in 1800. Interestingly, in this famous picture, there are no soldiers and officers except for Napoleon. Nobody believes that only Napoleon crossed the Alps on a horse. This may be the history in which only the center is described while hiding other laypersons. The problem in this picture is that we don’t have any way to see the other participants, to sense the totality. If we claim that history is the story of a center, it is too narrow and escapes from the totality. If we want to hear the voices of the totality, we may try to hear the hidden voices as well as explicit ones such that everything becomes discourse.

As in the picture, “*Napoleon Crossing the Alps*,” texts also hide a variety of discourses in them. I liken this to icebergs in the sea. The iceberg reveals only one-ninth of its volume above the sea level and a large portion of them below the sea level. It is a detached form of a glacier which is formed by the accumulation and thickening of snow over several centuries. The iceberg is shown to us while hiding its underlying volume which includes its history over centuries. From this I would like to discuss the huge volume of hidden iceberg under the sea level and

the accumulation of snow over thousands of years which have included the changes of the weather in the world with regard to the hermeneutic perspective.

Like an iceberg, texts are also open to us but they covertly imply many discourses which are related with the texts. This perspective has been grasped by hermeneutic scholars. They have been interested in the underlying texts as well as the overt texts in interpretation. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) distinguished psychological/divinatory interpretation from grammatical one. (Schleiermacher, cited in Ormiston, et. al., 1990) Husserl attempts to explicate the psychological intentionality of beings in order to unravel hidden meaning in a text. Heidegger admits the forestructure of understanding such as fore-having, fore-sight and for-concept. (Heidegger, 1996) And Gadamer put an emphasis on the privilege of prejudices as foundations of understanding texts. (Gadamer, 1989) Later, Gadamer (2007) names the overt text as “pretexts” which is a form of countertexts.<sup>11</sup> He points out they hide the meaning of texts: “what they (pretexts) apparently mean is merely a pretense, and excuse, behind which is concealed the hidden “meaning” [*Sinn*].” (my insertion, Gadamer, 2007, p. 177) In this light, texts are composed of the observable and hidden texts and the latter (hidden texts) are more significant than the former because the observable ones are “pretenses” and meaning is hidden in them.

Another issue is the accumulation of snow which forms glaciers and icebergs.

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<sup>11</sup> Gadamer (2007) points out three forms of countertexts which are not considered to be texts in the sense that language should have “compression, resonance and power. ... These three forms of text are antithetical to genuine texts as such. He (Gadamer) labels them “antitexts,” “pseudotexts,” and “pretexts.” (p. 156) Gadamer labels *antitexts* for “jokes,” *pseudotexts* for the pure pragmatic and ritual functions of exchange through speaking without real content. Last, “I (Gadamer) call communicative expressions *pretexts* when one’s understanding is not complete when one grasps their overt meaning.” (Gadamer, 2007, p. 177)

The bottom of the iceberg was composed of the first, oldest snow and the peak of the last, latest snow. And the observable portion of an iceberg is formed on the basis of the hidden portion of the iceberg below the sea level which includes the past history of the iceberg. In this light, texts are composed of observable texts and hidden texts which are both a basis and a past history of the underlying discourses of the observable texts.

This perspective of texts is in contrast with the positivistic, scientific approaches without the ground of presuppositions. This presuppositionless ground, that is, distanciation, causes us to destroy our relations with the primordial belonging to prior understanding and historical traditions of things or human experience. It would also block hermeneutic experience because hermeneutic experience is based on that of belonging and a relation with the prior history and tradition, and world. The distanciation is a kind of temporal gap between the past and the present, such that Gadamer adopts the term “timelessness” which would connect the past with the present. This concept offers a ground of historical effected consciousness which would enable us to connect our present experience with our past tradition or history. In this connection, Gadamer takes the same position as Heidegger with respect that he admits a prior structure of understanding.

Regarding the understanding of tradition, Gadamer stipulates that prejudices are the foundations of a prior understanding and effective history which involves horizons and dialectic relations, and the openness of traditions. In other words, prejudices contribute to identify the prior structure of understanding which is

one's thoughts before making a judgment and, in turn, the world of one's prejudices which involve his or her experience. The prejudices can be divided into those which enable people to understand each other and those which give misunderstanding to them. In order to distinguish the true prejudices from the biased ones, Gadamer suggests effective history which enables us to interpret the text with reference to the present conditions, that is, to grasp meanings of the text by connecting the past horizon with the present one, such that it expands our horizon.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, in order to unveil the hidden or unrepresented voices, certain postmodernists' discourses use such strategies as deconstruction and emphasis on local narratives (Carson, 1996). Revealing local narratives causes us to deconstruct meta narratives. In this light, deconstruction is a fundamental strategy for searching for the indeterminate meaning of texts. This deconstruction is, thus, keenly concerned with hermeneutics. Specifically, Davis, et al. (2006) state that "deconstruction refers to an interpretative approach to textual representations through which one attempts to flag the multitude of diverse and of conflicting "voices" that are speaking in a text" (p. 161).

Following Derrida's perspective, Caputo (1987, 2000) develops the radical hermeneutics with an aim of revealing the unrepresented voices. Caputo (1987) suspects that texts are covered with meta-narratives that suppress local narratives. He seeks to uncover the local voices. This effort to unveil every voice including hidden voices and to destroy the center or origin is radical or revolutionary in that

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<sup>12</sup> Horizon is defined as the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point (Gadamer, 1989).

this kind of hermeneutics is “an attempt to stick with the original difficulty of life” (Caputo, 1987, p. 1) and denies the interpretation of human beings in traditions and as transmitters of traditions. This is in contrast to the fundamental vein of Gadamer (1989). Caputo (1987) succinctly evaluates Gadamer’s hermeneutics:

At a crucial point, he backs off from the deeper and more radical side of Heidegger’s thought. In the end, I think, Gadamer remains attached to the tradition as the bearer of eternal truths, which in a way does nothing more than modify Plato and Hegel from a Heideggerian standpoint. Gadamer’s hermeneutics is traditionalism and the philosophy of eternal truth pushed to its historical limits. (p. 111)

Although he allows the historical, contextual flexibility of interpretation, Gadamer strongly sticks to the continuity of the tradition, and thus does not question the ruptures within traditional approaches and is not concerned with the different voices. Rewriting this passage by way of hermeneutic suspicion leads to Caputo’s base of understanding, which engages in the deeper and more radical side of Heidegger’s thought by detaching from the tradition, not admitting the eternal truths, and delimiting the historical horizon. The denial of eternal truth inevitably leads to the shaky or changeable ground of meta-narratives and to the ruptures of tradition, bringing about questioning the ground. By keeping on questioning the ground we are unable to make a decision. This undecidability “keeps us in motion, ..., does not permit us to climb through the window (metaphysics)” (Caputo, 1987, p. 188). Then, by disrupting tradition, there arise multiple voices, not one unified voice.

Although there are conflicting perspectives between Gadamer and Caputo, the discussions are significant in developing my research. From the metaphor of texts as icebergs, it is discussed that hermeneutic scholars admit the hidden meanings of texts and that the texts are based on their prior or historical discourses (Heidegger and Gadamer). Disapproving the metadiscourses such as historical or traditional discourse, on the other hand, poststructuralists, Caputo, attempt to “seek out the undecidable oppositions built into interpretations” and thus to “proliferate the possible interpretations.” (Hoy, 1985, p. 53)

These conflicting perspectives are included in my research. Texts are not simple but complex products of authors whose culture and traditions permeate them. These cultures and traditions, then, become the conditions of the texts. In order to interpret the texts, the interpreters have to clarify the conditions of texts, that is, the culture and traditions related with the texts. During this process the culture and traditions may vary due to the differences of individual discourses or may be shared in common among individuals. In my research, I have sought recurring themes which are revealed in the transcribed texts based on interviews with the research participants and attempted to trace the conditions such as culture and traditions related with the themes. Incidentally, the conflicts which the research participants had are similar in the sense that they are rooted on the cultural differences between their and Korean culture and traditions. By sticking to the cultural and traditional differences, the conflicts of the research participants kept and keep and will keep on in future. This will not then make life *meaningful, worthwhile life*. In order to reduce the agonies which are brought about by the

conflicts, it is necessary to place emphasis on local narratives rather than meta narratives (Carson, 1996) and on deconstruction rather than sticking to the culture and traditions. I adopt deconstruction as a strategy to build alternative conditions which enable us to make “life Living.” (Smith, 2006, p.105).

### **3.3.2 Understanding as a Sisyphean task**

In the previous section, I have discussed mainly two layers of the texts and arguments for the hermeneutic tradition and culture which are one of the tasks of hermeneutic scholars. Smith (2006) illuminates the tasks of hermeneutic scholars: “the scholar oriented by the hermeneutic imagination is not so much interested in pondering the texts and arguments of the hermeneutic tradition as in engaging Life hermeneutically, which means trying to understand ever more profoundly what makes life Life, what makes living a living.” (p. 105) In this phrase, there are two tasks which hermeneutic scholars attempt to seek. The one is concerned with the reflections of the texts and their traditions and the other addresses the making of the human life “lively,” and “worthwhile,” “meaningful,” “peaceful,” and even “honorable.” This task requires the scholars to profoundly understand Other and messages of the texts in which Other speaks. This task is not a simple one but a complex one and not a finite one but an infinite one.

Understanding is the ultimate goal to achieve in pursuing hermeneutic inquiry. It has three implications. One is concerned with grasping the state of events, which is the nature of human beings. This ability is the primordial potentiality of

being (Heidegger, 1996). The second perspective places an emphasis on the interplay of understanding between traditions and interpreters. (Gadamer, 1989) This dialectic operation enables the interpreter participating in an event of tradition to reconstruct his or her historical horizon and thus reach a fusion of horizons. The third implication is concerned with “imagining something ethically” as well as “admitting something.” Smith (2006) clearly differentiates hermeneutic inquiry from phenomenological and other inquiries with respect to engaging in forming worthwhile life and world. Ultimately, these three implications of understanding may be differentiated in terms of subjective understanding (Heidegger), intersubjective understanding (Gadamer), and social value-laden understanding (Smith).

Among these, I prefer to Smith’s understanding rather than Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s understanding. Heidegger’s perspective of understanding is more phenomenologically-oriented rather than hermeneutic in that he puts a focus on the grasping of the state of events and the potentiality of being. Gadamer’s understanding is too ideal to pursue in the world. Ted Aoki (1996/2005)’s anecdote illuminates the difficulty of Gadamer’s understanding, the fusion of horizons. When he attended at a government-sponsored committee, there was a controversy about entitling a new course.

At the committee meeting the time came for entitling the new course. Came the first suggestion through the mouth of the chair: “Western and non-Western civilizations.” The silence that followed suggested approval. I teasingly broke in and offered “Eastern and non-Eastern Civilizations.” There was a shuffling



of words and bodies indicating concern for the disappearance of the word “West.” Next day, the committee compromised and settled for: “Western and Eastern Civilizations.”(p.313)

In this anecdote, the committee members except Aoki seem to admit “Western and non-Western Civilizations” as the course title but not to admit “Eastern and non-Eastern Civilizations.” The members, except Aoki, do not have balanced but rather one-sided imaginations about the world. They have the imagery that Western civilizations are “Self” or “Center” and Eastern civilizations are “Other” or “Peripheral.” Therefore, they may not imagine the figure of Eastern and non-Eastern division in which “Self” is removed or “Center” is deleted. They may even believe that Aoki has an one-sided viewpoint. In these controversial imaginations, there is no fusion of horizons but only a hybrid of horizons such as “Western and Eastern Civilizations.” They may prefer “Western and Eastern” rather than “World,” “Global,” or “International” whose concept matches with a fusion of “Western and Eastern,” because they did not want the word “West,” that is, “Self” and “Center,” to disappear. This anecdote reveals how difficult it is to reach a fusion of horizons.

The lack of fusion of horizons may happen in the encounter between native and non-native English speaking teachers in the Eastern world as well as in the Western one. When native English speaking teachers come to Asian countries, they may experience the disappearance of the Western culture which will result in frustrations and conflicts in their minds. As understanding is the inherent nature of human beings, they will attempt to understand Other, that is, form a fusion of

horizons. Like the wise Sisyphus, the native English speaking teachers may prefer this to futile sufferings in the foreign settings.<sup>13</sup> The ceaseless effort of forming fusion of horizons reminds me of Sisyphus who teaches us that “the struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart.” (Camus, 2000, p. 111) This Sisyphean task is carried out by conversations between texts and interpreters and between interlocutors through language.

### **3.3.3 Language as the orientations of world**

Gadamer (1989) brings language into focus as mediums of engagement between conversational partners and as the horizon of hermeneutic experience. Reviving conceptions of Plato’s dialogue, Gadamer develops the term “dialogue” in synchronic and diachronic ways. The synchronic conversation refers to conversation between interpreters and the present conditions of the world. The other is concerned with diachronic conversation which involves the conversation with history and traditions. Taking these together, Gadamer seems to put an emphasis on dialectic conversation between the present context, and history and prejudices.

This dialectic engagement of language is in contrast with the semiotic approach of language which regards language as an instrument for communication as well as a sign. Gadamer’s non-instrumental nature of language is mainly concerned with the language’s relatedness with world: language

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<sup>13</sup> Homer described Sisyphus as “the wisest and most prudent of mortals.” (Camus, 2000, p. 107)

includes a world and thus language view is interchangeable with world view. There is a strong correlation between language and the world such that “language has no independent life apart from the world that comes to language within in it” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 440). In other words, language is the world in which human beings experience and thus has a world-horizon between human beings. Language is not a symbol of meaning but is the meaning of human experience. World is not the environment of human beings but the space open to interlocutors. Understanding a language is the understanding of the world of the language between interlocutors. The fundamental assumption is that they should share a language with which they can grasp and communicate each other. This condition forms a foundation to share a world between interlocutors.

Gadamer (1989)’s discussion of language mainly assumes that the interlocutors use a common language. As my research addresses the situation that native English speaking teachers live in a world in which the English language rarely used, I discuss what will happen in using different languages between interlocutors. If they use different languages such that they cannot grasp each other’s language, then they cannot provide a common ground to understand each other. To overcome this situation, they need to learn the other’s language, i.e., foreign language. According to Gadamer (1989), to learn a foreign language is to acquire the world of the language. For instance, learning English enables non-native English speakers to grasp the world of native English speakers, which can provide a world of understanding between native English speakers and native speakers of other languages. On the other hand, if native English speakers do not

try to learn the foreign language of the place in which they live, they would not grasp the world which the local language has formed. They will not provide the foundation to share with the local people who do not use English. In this case, native English speakers have different world views from the local people. These differences form their prejudices of the traditions of the local people. There are inevitably ruptures between the native English speakers and non-native English speakers with regards to their respective prejudices and traditions. This ruptures will prevent them from understanding each other reciprocally because they cannot overcome the prejudices and traditions of their respective, previous experience in the world.

Another implication about language as an orientation of a world is that language is characterized by “what the language has transmitted to us historically” (Palmer, 1969, p.204). In this vein, language cannot be separated from thought and orientations toward the world (Gadamer, 1989). Looking into a language can show the orientation of the worlds of the language which influences people using the language. These views are the foundation of why I address the implications of the Korean and English language. As I will discuss in chapter five, the honorific system of the Korean language exerts influences Korean ways of thoughts. Koreans are accustomed to establishing human relationships in a hierarchical way. However, the English language has quite little use of honorifics, such that the people who use the English language are much less accustomed to hierarchical interrelationships among people. This linguistic difference unveils that language is, in nature, a way of thinking and behavior as well as a medium which includes

thought.

### **3.4 Hermeneutic attitudes**

#### **3.4.1 The attitude of being open**

According to Gadamer, hermeneutics is defined as “the art of reaching an understanding of something or with somebody” (Gadamer, 2001, p. 79). When we cannot open our mindsets, we cannot approach, hear and understand what somebody is saying. As such, in order to reach an understanding of something or with somebody, it is necessary for us to open their mindsets to something and somebody, that is, the experience of the others.

The attitude of openness is important for hermeneutic scholars when they encounter others. Without this, they are unable to approach and recognize otherness or the unfamiliarity of others. Hermeneutic openness does not mean the state of “opening our mindsets” but the positive attitudes which include engaging in others’ historical consciousness, overcoming our prejudices, and reaching intersubjectivity.

According to Gadamer (1989) what we know and recognize is the openness to traditions which are characteristic of historically effected consciousness. This becomes the effective historical consciousness which enables us to understand otherness or others as well as ourselves. In this process we are able to overcome our prejudices towards others which takes place within temporal horizons. Openness to the other also includes recognizing that the self, I, must accept something, the other, that is against the self. This relation can be described as one

of intersubjectivity, which refers to the mutual interpenetration and influence between subjects. Concerned with the mutually affecting characteristics of human relations, Smith (2006) points out that “everything I do has an effect on someone else, whether I am aware of it or not. In turn, so am I affected by what others do” (p. 109).

These positive functions of open attitudes are founded on the creative imagination which is called “hermeneutic imagination” (Smith, 1999, p.47). Based on this imagination, an interpreter knows and recognizes the otherness of the others. In other words, the interpreter projects her or himself imaginatively into the world of others (Gadamer, 1989; Gree et.al., 2006). He or she can go beyond the boundaries of what he or she knew and reach an understanding of something or with somebody.

This is also concerned with questions in that asking a question means bringing it into the openness in which the answer is not settled and undetermined. The openness of a question is not boundless, but limited by the horizon of the question (Gadamer, 1989). In this light, understanding the sense of a text is achieved by acquiring the horizon of the question.

In addition, the concept of openness is concerned with the proper nature of understanding. Smith (2006) maintains that the work of understanding can never be fully completed because there is always something new to be uncovered. Like the openness of a question, the understanding is characterized as being incomplete or being boundless. This requires me to be open to the world of native English speaking teachers and the otherness of their experience in order to iteratively

understand something new and reach an understanding between them and me.

### **3.4.2 The attitude of being dialectic**

Although there is no particular inquiry mode in hermeneutic traditions, hermeneutic research is conducted in terms of conversational analysis (Carson, 1986; Vogels, 2007). Carson (1986) stresses conversation as a bridge of narrowing between hermeneutic theory and practice. Etymologically, conversation (*L. conversātiō*) refers to “frequent use or abode” (Onions, 1966) which implies “familiarity” and “mode of living.” In other words, conversation is characterized as “becoming familiar” or “knowing” in life. Hermeneutically, conversation is a mode of becoming familiar with somebody or something, that is, a mode of getting to know somebody or something. Becoming familiar with somebody or something requires us to frequently interact with somebody or something. The verb form of conversation, converse (*L. conversarē*; turn round), is associated with “being dialectic.” In this vein, conversation provides a space for dialectic interactions which pave “the path to knowledge” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 358). This dialectic interaction is the backbone of conversation which is again the basis of hermeneutic understanding. The dialectic interactions are also a process in which human lived experiences are represented and where a dialectic circle of conceived questions and answers operates, and in which interlocutors can interpret the language of conversation and have knowledge. In addition, they provides the researcher with a rich opportunity to collect authentic research texts of native



English speaking teachers' lived experiences which are "a trace of culture in life" (Brandist, 2002). In this section, I will briefly review the structure and characteristics of the dialectic interactions, and the hermeneutic circle.

The dialectic interaction is composed of exchanges of questions and answers between the interpreter and texts and between the interpreter and the traditions of the texts. In this process, making questions is essential in sustaining conversations. Questions enable conversation to continue by bringing about consequent questions in response to the answers. Hermeneutic questions are an important path to acquire knowledge. Gadamer (1989) stresses the priority of the question in knowledge as a starting point and as a method of learning. "All questioning and desire to know presuppose a knowledge that one does not know. That is, a particular lack of knowledge leads to a particular question" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 359).

Next, the dialectic interactions are characterized as "being iterative," "being expandable," "being creative," "being indeterminate," and "being reflective." The dialectic interactions have the iterative feature because they include the repetitive, consequent structure of questions and answers. This iterative process causes an interpreter to expand his or her horizons and to acquire or know something new (creativity). The dialectic interactions also require the interpreter to be reflective in doing the interactions.

Above all, the interactive interactions have the characteristic of "being indeterminate," which is associated with hermeneutic questions. The hermeneutic questions have the main features of "openness" and "indeterminacy" (Carson,

1986) because there are not any fixed answers to the questions based on prejudices or opinion which “suppress questions” (Gadamer, 1989). The characteristics of “openness” and “indeterminacy” encourage a researcher and participant to sustain dialectal interactions between an interpreter and texts, and between an interpreter and traditions implied in the texts. These processes of interactions are iterative, thus broadening and deepening horizons of the interpreter.

Most importantly, the dialectic interactions are the basis of a hermeneutic circle which is a fundamental conception which plays a pivotal role in interpreting texts. The main idea can be characterized as the iterative, interactive transactions between parts and a whole, between an interpreter and contexts, traditions, or cultures, and between parts of texts and the whole cultural context, “working back and forth until a coherent interpretation emerges” (Gree et.al., 2006, p.15). This iterative interaction enables us to increasingly understand and interpret texts and to spirally expand our horizon, “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point,” (Gadamer, 1989, p.301) through the fusion of horizons between parts and the whole and through the dialectic of viewpoints between the self and the other. Gadamer’s (1989) understanding is more concerned with the meaning of a text to us rather than with meaning of a text in that the circle of understanding causes us to communicate with traditions, cultures and contexts and thus to form meaning in those settings. The hermeneutic circle is important in my research because this principle enables me, as a researcher, to interact with the native English speaking teachers iteratively, to

understand them, to interpret their experience, and to expand our horizons.

### 3.4.3 The attitude of solidarity

As a Korean, understanding reminds me of two meanings: one is to comprehend something and the other is to be compassionate (*L., compati*; fellow-feeling in adverse, feel pity) with somebody. Between these two meanings, the latter one resonates in my mind because, in reality, many Koreans frequently use a separate word for the former meaning.

Ironically, the term “compassion” is difficult to find in the Western philosophical books such as Gadamer’s (1989, 2001), Rorty’s (1989), and Ricoeur’s (1994) but it can be found in Education such as in Carson (2001) and Pinar (2007). I suppose that “compassion” is associated with one of Buddhist paths, which may be unfamiliar with the Western philosophers. The Western hermeneutic scholars (Rorty, 1981; Gadamer, 2001) prefer to use “solidarity” which literally refers to “fellowship, or community of feelings or purposes” Rather than “compassion.” I will review the term “solidarity” in terms of Rorty (1981, 1989) because this section addresses the hermeneutics, the Western philosophy.

Unlike Gadamer (1989)<sup>14</sup>, Rorty does not admit the common goals or grounds for the agreement and puts an emphasis on the societal community by saying: “hermeneutics views them (conversation partners) as united in what he calls a

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<sup>14</sup> Unlike Gadamer (1989), Gadamer (2001) uses “solidarity” as an equivalent of “fusion of horizons.”

*societas* – persons whose paths through life have fallen together, united by civility rather than by a common goal, much less by a common ground” (Rorty, 1981, p. 318; my parenthesis). The phrase “united by civility” constitutes two important concepts: solidarity and edification. According to Rorty, solidarity is not simply the integration of a society, group or people but “the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers” (Rorty, 1989, p. xvi).

Rorty (1989) sees solidarity as the humane feeling to embrace unfamiliar, painful or humiliated people as one’s followers. It is also associated with hermeneutics in that the task of hermeneutics is to make connections among participants and to make them feel familiar and being respected. If we embrace the unfamiliar and suffering other people as our neighbors or followers or family, our relationship is comfortable and familiar and brings about a hope of agreement between us.

In this vein, solidarity seems to me to be the eventual aim of our society. For solidarity enables us “to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation” (Rorty, 1989, p. 192) and to include Others in Us. In this domain of Us, there is no exclusion and alienation but a fellow feeling and the intersubjective obligations of joint pursuits. As such, there is “We want ...” instead of “I want ...” Although he does not attempt to consent to common goals, Rorty strives for joint efforts to “create more and more cosmopolitan, more and more democratic political institutions” by keeping solidarity (Rorty, 1989, p. 196). From the point of view of solidarity as “fellow-

feeling,” solidarity can be replaced by “compassion.” Carson (2001) points out when I need “being compassionate”: “faced with this suffering, it is the obligation of the teacher to notice this and to respond compassionately.” (p. 264) In my research, native English speaking teachers reveals their conflicts and even sufferings. I believe it is my duty to be compassionate with them in order to help them get out of their conflicts and sufferings. Such effort is to pursue my research hermeneutically.

### 3.5 Application of Hermeneutics to Education

Hermeneutics has influenced education as well as theology, law, and social sciences. It has contributed to the reconceptualization of curriculum studies. Pinar, *et.al.* (1995) introduce hermeneutics as an approach to understand the meaning of a text, and as such they discuss hermeneutics on the basis of Ricoeur's *Hermeneutics and the Human Science* (1981). Together with postmodernism, Gadamer's (1989) philosophical hermeneutics has influenced on the sphere of education (Jardine, 1992, 1997, 1998, 2006, 2008; Carson, 1991, 1992, 1996, 1997, 2005, 2007; Smith, 1991, 1999, 2006; Slattery, 2006). Jardine (1992, 1997, 1998, 2006, 2008) addresses the ecological hermeneutic research with a focus on the restoration of life in education. Jardine (1998, 2006, 2008) takes the position of Gadamer's hermeneutics from the ecological perspective. On the other hand, Carson (1991, 1992, 1996, 1997, 2007) mainly addresses reflective action research and sees reflective action research as radical hermeneutics of practice. In particular, Smith (1991, 1999, 2006) issues influential papers which show how Gadamerian researchers can conduct their research. Together with these, he attempts to unearth the agonies of human beings under the modernity. Slattery (2006) briefly introduces the radical hermeneutics as poststructural hermeneutics.

As with the orientations of education, Gadamer places an emphasis on cultivation (*bildung*) of human capacities through self-education, in which "one perceives one's shortcomings, one strengthens one's own resources" (Gadamer, 2001a, p. 535). That is, students develop their capacity to overcome their

weakness with their own initiative. This ability is cultivated through one's interactions with others within the curriculum and extracurricular activities in which he or she tries to avoid taking any risk. In doing these student-initiative activities, he or she has to cultivate humane capabilities to respect the values of others and to become at home with them in the world.

Another implication is concerned with curriculum in educational contexts. First of all, Gadamer (2001a) states that "it is very dangerous if one sees a formal course of study as binding" (p. 533). In this, he is critical of the binding power of designated courses and curriculum because they may hinder students from cultivating their capacity to formulate their own questions and to freely make their own questions which they are interested in. Gadamer (2001a) is very critical of teaching methodologies as strategy and tactics. He stresses the reciprocal character of pedagogy through conversation which is the main center of self-education. This characteristic would provide that the classroom activity is mainly conducted by questioning and answering, that is, reciprocal interactions between participants in class.

From these reflections of Gadamer's education, there arise some implications about pedagogy. First, pedagogy is not to achieve an objective but cultivate humane capacity to live together in the world because the other person is important for our living in this world. Second, conversation is the center theme of all spheres of education including classroom pedagogy because it aims to build self-awareness with judgment and initiative not by instruction, but by oneself. Therefore, dialogic interactions are preferred to strategy or tactics. Third,

education is fundamentally to understand the other person in a well-disposed way because mannered conduct makes persons feel comfortable with each other. Fourth, education should put an emphasis on autonomy and reciprocity among participants, without which conversation arises freely and thus cultivation of humane capacity would be hindered.

Pinar, et. al. (1995) point out that “much of this (phenomenological curriculum) research has occurred at the University of Alberta, the center for phenomenological studies in education in the Western hemisphere” (p. 409). However, much of hermeneutic curriculum research has also been conducted in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. The hermeneutic scholarly leadership lies in the research of Terrence Carson, David Smith, to name two, in the department. Although they attempt to apply hermeneutics to their research, they are different in their interests: Terrence Carson is interested in peace and multicultural education, and David Smith in globalization and the transmodern discourse. Another important scholar is David Jardine who concentrates on the hermeneutics study of schooling from the angle of the ecological perspective. Let me briefly shed light on these three important researchers who developed the Gadamerian hermeneutics in the sphere of education.

First, David Jardine has turned his inquiry orientations from radical hermeneutics to ecological perspectives. Jardine (1992) starts with the property of education, “the “bringing forth” (*educare*) of human life” (p. 116), which is implicitly concerned with hermeneutic inquiry in that it seeks to “bring forth the



presuppositions in which we already live” (p. 116). This disclosure of life’s presuppositions is then in line with Caputo (1987)’s “restoring of life to its original difficulty” (p. 1). Jardine (1992) argues that the original difficulty of life is hidden under the technical-scientific discourses with an aim to objectively reveal human life and is concerned with the risk, ambiguity and difficulty of human life. These characteristics assume that the ground of human life is very shaky and ambiguous. Recently, Jardine (2006, 2008) seems to return to Gadamer’s (1989) understanding rather than the radical hermeneutics. He attempts to link the severances which are characterized as disintegration, isolation, fragmentation and disconnection by establishing the ecopedagogical relation (Jardine, 2006). Jardine (2008) furthermore suggests that we return to “the basics” which involve “whiling” and “thinking the world together” from the current efficiency-driven pedagogical movement (p. 242).

Next, as a curriculum scholar, Terrance Carson pays more attention to practice with a focus on “identity and otherness” rather than theory. In the article, “Remembering forward: Reflections on Educating for Peace” (Carson, 1992), Carson conducts a critical action research about carrying out peace education in the classroom with his participants. His research aims to better understand and develop peace education, and provide a place for attending to human rights and for resolving conflicts in the class (Carson, 1992). Carson (1992) also argues that “the difficulty we encountered in implementing peace education should be seen not as an irritation but as a positive experience awakening us to meaning and to the complexity of life” (pp. 113-114). In order to bring in peace in the classroom,

Carson stresses on the improvement of “our abilities to hear others” (1992, p. 114), which requires openness to others. Related with teacher education, Carson (1996) deals with the issue of ethics which adopts Caputo (1993)’s obligation instead of “principle ethics” as an interpretative mode. His experience with other teacher educators reveals that there is a moment of violating the ethical principle, for instance, “teachers should not criticize one another” (p. 17), which breaks down collaboration among them. At this time, there is not an ethics to rely on, but “an obligation to the other” (p. 17). Carson (1996) states that “obligation happens when others fall victim to disaster, not the infinite other in Levinas term, but the actual other who has a name” (p. 17). In the complex issues at work, teacher education requires much collaboration among teacher educators and between teacher educators and the student teachers. We cannot solely rely on ethics to agreeably collaborate each other. We need to “to open up ethics to the inevitable difficulties of life” (p. 18). Carson’s concerns of diversity education and teacher education urge teacher educators to turn their endeavor to the hidden and unrevealed voices of others.

Finally, David Smith may be rated as a transmodern thinker as well as a hermeneutic scholar. He points out “the self-enclosed” characteristics, and “the blindness to the Other” of Eurocentric operation paradigm (Smith, 2004, p. 644). This enables us to understand that Eurocentricism is the Totality, and that the Other is the outsiders who are living outside the dominant operating paradigm. He also endeavors to hear the hidden and ignored voices resonated in the underside of the dominant contemporary discourses such as globalization, neoliberalization and

postcolonialism, and the like (Smith, 2006). In order to escape from the alienation of the suffering Other from their oppression, he attempts to replace “anti-Eurocentricism” and “anti-(US) imperialism” by “trans-Eurocentricism” and “trans-(US) imperialism,” respectively. David Smith thus suggests that transmodernism resonates with oriental-wisdom traditions such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism (Smith, 2004, 2006), which is “another” in that human history has been a conflict between “self” (Judeo-Christianism) and “other” (Islamism). This “another” is related to the “forms of insight from ‘outside’ of ‘history’” (Smith, 2004, p. 645).

As a hermeneutic scholar, David Smith dialogically interacts with the traditions and history, and cultures surrounding him. This dialogic communication is carried out diachronically and synchronically alike. By reflecting diachronically, David Smith states that he “sees more clearly the hermeneutic failure at work in the colonial period” (Smith, 2006, p. 114). Synchronically, observing the installment of vending machines and the supporting funds sponsored by corporates in schools, he interprets it as in: “educational institutions have become propaganda sites for marketing purposes” and “this exploitation of children to serve the insatiable appetites of the market must be described as a human development that is nothing short of diabolical” (Smith, 2006, p. 114). In order to avoid hermeneutic failure, David Smith (2006) suggests, as a mission of a hermeneutic scholar, the intersubjective understanding of human knowing and openness to constantly interact with texts. These hermeneutic responsibilities are also important for teachers in that they understand the human life surrounding

them with relation to meta-narratives such as globalization and neoliberalization, and teach students what to do presently and in the future.

Under the modern scientific and technological society, education seems to be more concentrated on competitiveness and result rather than on being-together-in-the-world and process, which results in the world of agony. Hermeneutic educators perceive this problem in our world and attempt to unravel it. The three scholars of educational hermeneutics have a firm grasp of the real difficulties in classrooms and educational contexts and seek ways to recover the life in education on the basis of ecological perspective (David Jardine), multicultural (dialogic) perspective (Terrence Carson), and transmodern perspective (David Smith), respectively. Although they are different in their perspectives, they are in common in the sense that they are fundamentally based on the reciprocal understanding of Gadamer's hermeneutics. Their message of hearing the voices of the oppressed and suffering others is the basis of conducting my research.

### **3.6 Engaging in Hermeneutic process**

#### **3.6.1 Inquiry orientation**

Based on the Gadamer's hermeneutics, hermeneutic research is mainly concentrated on how we live together in classrooms and educational contexts, and human life. In this vein, hermeneutics attempts to understand rather than interpret human life. However, hermeneutics is a pervasive mode of qualitative research because it is "often being used interchangeably with that of interpretation" (Prasad, 2005, p. 30). Prasad (2005) describes this distinctive understanding of hermeneutics as the strong and weak senses of hermeneutics. According to Prasad (2005), hermeneutics is understood in a weak sense when the research attempts to use it as textual interpretation. This is a long tradition of philology in which classics are interpreted, and of theology in which difficult passages in the Bible are explained by interpretation, and of jurisprudence, in which the interpretation of laws or canons is used.

Hermeneutics also has a strong sense in that the researchers engage in the interpreting text and are informed in the text, and broaden and deepen their understanding about the text. This is not the verbatim interpretation of a text but the reinterpretation and the identification of the text's meaning, and reflection on the meaning. This sense of hermeneutics can be found in the Protestant scholars' reinterpretation of the Bible in the Reformation, in Gadamer's criticism of the Enlightenment, and in Derrida's reconceptualization of writing, in which

hermeneutic thinkers attempt to examine and reinterpret the authoritative discourses.

As with the curriculum thinkers reviewed in the previous section, they are all concerned with the strong sense of hermeneutics. David Jardine is critical of the culture of scarcity or violence within the curriculum. Terrence Carson prefers multicultural (diversity) teacher education rather than the monocultural one which is prevalent in the Western educational context. For instance, American culture is that of immigrants, but has been oriented toward the culture of the melting pot which ignores the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups. Finally, David Smith examines the difficulty and asymmetrical relations of human beings under modernization and globalization, and attempts to unshackle the fetters of truth.

As my research is concerned with the conflicts that native English speakers experience, it is not adequate to simply interpret them because interpreting a text attempts to make the unfamiliar the familiar to us. In this vein, Gadamer (2001a) indicates that interpretation should “become at home in the world” (p.537). Therefore, my research involves not simply the identification of the conditions of their conflicts but has to find ways for them to become comfortable in the world. My research is in line with the so-called strong sense of hermeneutics. My participants may play roles in linguistic imperialism under the globalization or as guest teachers to help Koreans learn English as a lingua franca. The latter is concerned with their effects on pedagogy, and the former with their identities. My research is not the native English speakers’ effects on pedagogy, but their conflicts which come out in the contact of the identities between Korean and the foreign

teacher, between Korean and Western culture, or between Korean and English language, such that their conflicts will be examined and identified in terms of their diachronic and synchronic conditions.

### **3.6.2 The researcher**

Gadamer (2001) briefly defines hermeneutics as “the art of reaching an understanding of something or with someone” (p. 79). This implies that “reaching an understanding” requires us to comprehend not simply something or someone’s experience but its situations. If we interpret something, we have to interpret it and about it. Gadamer (2007) also adds “to have appreciation for something” (p. 158). To put these together, understanding is a three-fold job: to comprehend something, to comprehend about it, and to have appreciation for it. This is the center of practical hermeneutic inquiries. If we pursue the hermeneutic path, we have to understand something with respect to semiotic meaning, its context or situation, and self-awareness. In this light, let me enunciate my viewpoints about what I have to look at. They will be discussed in two parts: what constitutes a text and what a researcher searches for.

Regarding the composition of a text, it is conceived that the wording of the text is not all of the text but only part of the text. Thus the understanding of the text is to “reach beyond the merely codified meaning-content of what is said” (Gadamer, 2007, p. 171). For understanding of the text is dependent on the context in which a reader or an interpreter resides or is engaged. This context is

the conditions of the text and the base of the meaning of it, which interacts with the text and makes its meaning. Thus, in order to understand the meaning of a text, we have to understand the conditions or situation of it as well as its manifested meaning. In this light, a text is composed of two layers: the manifested or wording text and the surrounding text which involves the conditions or situation of it. These two layers interact with each other and reveal the meaning of the text through a medium of language. And the surrounding text involves historical and contemporary conditions or situations. Then, the manifested text results in interacting with the historical and contemporary conditions or situations.

In order for people to understand a text, they have to perceive what conditions or situations are concerned with the text and comprehend and appreciate it. Thus, the hermeneutic researcher tries to identify the conditions or situations of the text. And he or she has to make a connection of them with the text in order that people comprehend and appreciate the text, that is, that they understand it. This would be the hermeneutic experience and would form the commonness of understanding. In this phase, there occurs a fusion of horizons between the research and the text or between the reader and the text.

A further issue of hermeneutic inquiries is concerned with how the researcher addresses the manifested and surrounding text. As hermeneutics is based on movement or interaction, and connection, the researcher has an interest in something of the text and tries to investigate the meaning of the text by iteratively making questions and getting answers. By this process, the text unfamiliar to us becomes the familiar one and the misunderstanding of the text in turn becomes the



understanding of it.

Finally, the researcher has the competence of discerning insights and imaginations for creating meanings (Smith, 1999). We have discussed that a text is not a simple manifestation of meaning. Rather it is a metaphor of language so that it involves hidden and latent messages in it. The hermeneutic researcher should discern the hidden or latent messages in the manifested text connecting with the surrounding one and making a creation of its meaning by his or her imaginations.

In addition, as the conditions or situations are not fixed, that is, they are variant depending on people, place, time, and the forth, understanding cannot be determinate and finished, and is always going on. The researcher has to admit the limitation of the hermeneutic inquiry.

### **3.6.3 Conducting the research**

As reviewed in the previous section, there is no specific research path in conducting hermeneutic research. Rather, this offers a possibility that there are many inquiry paths on the condition that it complies with hermeneutics. In this section, I will enunciate how I conduct my inquiry based on hermeneutics. Fundamentally, I attempt to trace my interest: how do the native English speaking teachers feel comfortable in living and teaching in the Korean context. This interest is the first and most important issue in pursuing my research. Gadamer (1992) points out the importance of a personal interest as follows: in hermeneutic

inquiries it is “more important to trace the interests guiding us with respect to a given subject matter than simply to interpret the evidence content of a statement” (p. 106).

This interest made me determined to carry out research about native English speaking teachers before I came to Edmonton to study. I talked to two native English speaking teachers in my university about my intention to conduct some research about them and asked them to write their life stories, respectively. This was the first research text from which I could start to understand them.

During reading the texts, I can understand why they left Canada, their home country. One of them left his country as a way to get out of his personal agony. He was filled with missing his mother who had been his life-support. The other teacher wanted to work and live at a crowded and busy city. Both of them had had economic troubles. From their life stories I cannot perceive what they were thinking about pedagogy, cultures, and so forth.

As I comprehend and understand hermeneutics, I came to understand that my research is to understand the lived experience of native English speaking teachers in a foreign culture and aims to figure out the good relationship with which they work with Korean teachers and students in a cooperative and well-disposed manner and an avenue to live together in the Korean culture.

Ironically, in order for them to live in an amicable relationship, I thought I have to identify their difficulties and the conflicts they underwent in their life in the educational institutions in the foreign culture. For I believe that the agonies that they got may be the explicit expressions of rupture in connecting them with

Korean teachers and students and the probable causes to overcome in the hermeneutic approach.

The interest guides me to have three broad questions: What conflicts do they have in the Korean educational context; To what factors are the conflicts attributed; How do we reach the agree-upon understanding. Bearing these questions in mind I have interviews with my participants.

My interviews can be characterized as follows: First, it is an inductive modus because I do not have any hypotheses or presuppositions, but have only questions to get answers; Second, it is also a natural modus in that, although I excogitate questions, I did not adhere to the questions and I did not interrupt talking about other issues beside the questions during an interview; Third, it is an exchange modus in that my research data are collected through interactions between participants and me; Finally, it is an open modus in that I did not attempt to draw determinate answers during interviews and search for a determinate or complete understanding.

Before having interviews, I sent an email which described the outline of my research and the codes of research ethics, and asked for their help in it. After I received emails of consent from them, I set up schedules to have interviews with the participants. When I had interviews with the participants, I was cautious of understanding them by listening to them attentively. I was also aware that “both the participants and researcher are interpreters” in carrying out interviews (Herda, 1999, p. 64).

The interviews were spirally be conducted in three phases: In the first phase, I

made preliminary questions about their lived experiences with respect to daily personal life, teaching, culture of schools and society, their motive to leave for Korea, their desire both as a teacher and as a foreigner, and others. This phase is an introductory interview with an aim of a general understanding of them and for making more detailed questions by adding supplementary questions which arise from their answers in the second phase. While conversing with them, I recorded their voice and take a note of extra linguistic expressions such as gestures, facial expressions, atmospheres, tones and others which I sense.

While conducting the second interviews with participants, I started with the previous talks and continue to have interviews in more detail, and proceed to free conversation by raising supplementary questions which follow from their answers. This dialectic enabled me and participants to share a common ground to understand each other and to overcome the fore-grounded prejudices which we have.

After I reviewed the first and second interviews, I had the last interview with the participants. I used this opportunity as a supplementary and in-depth dialogue. I had usually listened again what I had recorded in the interviews. I got some content I could not understand. They were clearly confirmed during the third interview. If I misunderstood them, I had an opportunity to correct them. This may be an agreed-upon understanding, which is a kind of hermeneutic understanding. This is achieved by the dialectic relationship between interviewer and interviewee, and between people and their community (Carson, 1986). Then, this relationship causes us to gain access to the meaning or truth found in culture and tradition

through a circle of interpretation and, in turn, enables us to spirally and transformationally improve our knowledge and horizon.

During the three interviews, I recorded all of the conversations and wrote field notes which involve tones and impressions of the participants, and the office environment. After I finished all the interviews with the participants, I transcribed all the voices recorded. The transcription and field notes are the text which provides me the opportunity to comprehend their conflicts about teaching, school cultures and Korean society.

Reading the text several times, I have reflected on conflicts which the participants face. While reading and reflecting on it, I am aware of the themes connected with conflicts. These repetitive procedures of reading, keeping memos and reflection gave me opportunities to perceive and re-perceive the unfolding nature of their difficulties and conflicts, and to connect the themes arising in the text.

I put together similar themes and categorized them, and then reflected on them. I wrote my reflections under the category per participant. The reflections consist of two types of messages, the manifested and the latent message. These two are entangled in the sense that the later is embedded in the former. In particular, as “the object of interpretation is tradition in the form of language” (Weinsheimer, 1985, p. 221), I put much effort to interpret the tradition of the themes. This is a creative process of interpretation (Gadamer, 1989).

I also attempt to reveal the meaning of the hidden message in the text in terms of power relation, wisdom tradition on education, imperialism and globalization,

and pedagogy. More importantly, I interpret texts in terms of traditions or history of languages, Korean and English. That is, I attempt to link their conflicting experience to the tradition of English and the Korean language. Most importantly and finally, I attempt to figure out a new relationship between the participants and Korean people or culture in which these groups live and work together, cooperate.

#### **3.6.4 Ethical considerations**

As my research is based on the lived experiences of the native English speaking teachers, this requires a close relationship between me and my participants. This relationship is, I believe, formulated by mutual trust and respect, and “commitment” (Carson, 1986; Weber, 1986; Smith, 2006). It is my belief that I am not in a position to judge or evaluate them in terms of their professional knowledge but in sharing with their experiences and understanding them and further broadening my horizon as well as their’s during conversation (Gadamer, 1989).

I informed in full my participants about the nature of my research and their rights to withdraw from participating in this research at any time, and asked them to sign an agreement indicating their voluntary participation in this research. I protected them by using a pseudonym instead of their name with their permission. I will respect “confidentiality” by not telling or discussing with anyone the details of our conversation (Glesne, 2005, p. 138).

I have participated in recruiting native English speaking teachers in the school

over 15 years and thus they might feel somewhat burdensome in participating in my research. I informed them that I would guarantee that the information obtained during the study would not be available to others. I also made every endeavor to respect their free will during conducting my research.

Finally, I adhere to the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education of the University of Alberta.

## **Chapter 4 Conversations with Native English Speaking Teachers: Reflections on Conflicts**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Because this research explores the conflicts that native English speaking teachers may have undergone, it was necessary to obtain an understanding of the conflicts they faced. In order to do this, I contacted some native English speaking teachers with whom I intended to have an interview in a university in person. I also phoned a Korean professor to get email addresses of the native English speaking teachers of another university. Then I sent an email to twenty three persons which asked if they were interested in participating in the research. The email also included a brief description of the research and an information letter about how to proceed with consent forms, and an informed consent form which was approved by the Faculties of Education, Extension and Augustana Research Ethics Board.

Six out of twenty three teachers sent me emails in which they indicated their interest in my research. The six included five men and one woman, two in their 50's and four in their 30's, and two with more than fifteen years of teaching experience, two with more than six years, and two with more than three years of experience.

After I got consent emails, I scheduled interviews with them through emails or phone calls, or face-to-face contacts, respectively. I set up an interview schedule over a period between October and December, 2008. As they were in a fall semester, I made appointments on the dates when they did not have classes. I had



interviews with them in their offices.

I took several steps to engage the participants in my research. They were experienced teachers more than novice teachers, working from their lived experience rather than their indirect experience. My research participants had served at Hakwons (private institutions) and have now been working at universities. They are teaching English at the schools in two big cities. My participants might have lacked understanding of my research and research methodology, so I explained my research to them. In particular, I stressed that “conversation” is a dialectic activity and a way of sharing understanding by encountering the horizons between me and them. This sharing would enable me to understand them and, in turn, them to understand me.

By engaging in conversation, I endeavored to cross the horizon of my culture and that of the native English speaking teachers to reach a space open to reciprocal understanding. Simultaneously, they were able to go beyond their horizon and share a communal place with me. This may refer to inculturation, which acts to achieve “true communication” with neighbors beyond our own culture (McLean et. al., 2003).

## **4.2 Peter**

### **4.2.1 Backgrounds**

Peter has been in Korea for over 14 years. Like other native English speaking teachers he started to teach young to adult students at a private English academy. After 15 months, he applied for a teaching position at a university. He has been a very important person in his university. He was the first native English speaking teacher in the school and has taken a pivotal part in establishing English programs, and he has helped other native English speakers in settling down and setting about their teaching jobs. Regarding teaching qualifications, Peter had a Master of Arts (MA) in Linguistics and attended two doctoral programs in the United States and Korea. Being influenced by his mother, who had taught young students in Eastern Canada for 45 years, he had long been brought up seeing what teachers do. He described his child life as: “I grew up with a teacher who was always sitting and getting ready for classes. And just then my personality was the personality of teacher” (Peter, Oct. 27, 2008). Peter’s rooms were surrounded with books especially about geography and cultures of the world such as books about native cultures, Africa and South America and so forth. Peter believed teachers like reading books and preparing for classes. This is one of the teacher identities which Peter understood from his mother.

Before he came to Korea in September of 1994, he had had a difficult time in Canada. He had left graduate school in the United States without having finished

his Ph.D in the beginning of that year and spent half a year without doing a regular job. To make matters worse, his mother died in June of that year. This might mean that he lost his mentor and his meaning in his home country.

#### **4.2.2 Canada seems to be strange and Korea is certainly something uncomfortable**

Peter seems to like travelling abroad and enjoy living in foreign culture. After three years of teaching at his university, Peter travelled to 9 Asian countries - China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey - for 5 months. Recently, Peter regularly visited his family's lake in Ontario every summer or travelled abroad. The return visits to the lake seem to enable him to continue a personal and family pattern. Peter depicts his feelings about the regular visit:

I could basically go back and forth between Canada and Korea. I always go to Canada for a long break of summer at least a month. And that really helps me come back and have a lot of energy. Everything is fresh. Actually that long term residency in Korea, one of the real things they can do is to get out of Korea and go traveling some places. In my case I've gone traveling different times. I have a regular trip and back to Canada. Then I can do things I am familiar with from the past and comfortable. Again, it refreshes me. (Peter, Oct. 27, 2008)

Peter's home country constitutes the site for attaching himself to the past and for restoring his relations of continuity and belongingness to his past, thereby gaining comfort and refreshment. This represents that his lake in Canada plays a

role as a source of energy which imbues him with will and enables him to live and do his job in a foreign culture. His travels have a similar function.

After spending around a month in Canada, on his return to Korea, he felt familiarity and comfort again from the Korean language which Koreans used on the airplane. If Peter were fully anchored in the displaced space, Korea, in his identity, he might not feel discomfort due to the cultural differences between Canada and Korea, and not visit his home country regularly. On the other hand, Peter cannot attach his identity to Canada because he has to live and work in a foreign country. He cannot put himself in one culture, and lives instead in the in-between space between Korean and Canadian society. In other words, Peter's identity is not anchored in a space and floats between his old home and the adopted place. He mentions that "Canada seems to be so strange to me these days" and that "Korea is certainly still something uncomfortable" for him (Peter, Oct. 24, 2008). He believes that neither of these two countries is entirely his home.

#### **4.2.3 I still live in a Western culture.**

Peter's life is a little different from other foreigners in that he does not have much association with other foreigners or Westerners. He usually lives alone and exercises at a gym near his place, and teaches students at his school. He said: "I stayed to myself and always have, and basically I still do much of time. I find it's less stressful to be myself, to be doing things by myself" (Peter, Oct. 24, 2008). He seems to live in an environment where he is detached from other people. This seclusion enables him to keep his own western style of life by saying: "a lot of

things I do in an ordinary day are actually quite Western” (Peter, Oct. 24, 2008). In other words, he maintains his standard of his home mindset by avoiding physical contact with other people.

Moreover, I have never seen him use Korean for over 10 years although I surmise he understands much colloquial Korean language because he understands most of what I said in Korean. He even says he has no trouble going around and getting and buying things he needs because “there are a lot of people who use English to some degree among Koreans” (Peter, Oct. 24, 2008). Seoul is a place where people can speak and understand survival English, and foreigners may live without great difficulties. Because of this he may not need to learn Korean. However, taking into account his long stay of over 14 years in Korea, he implies that he would not like to learn Korean language and to use it in social life. This reveals that English is a major and pivotal language and that Korean is a minor and less useful one even in Korea.

Inside his classrooms, his English-only-communication classroom is one of the ways to provide students more opportunities to use English. This is an advantage for students who are learning English. However, his English-only-communication outside classrooms brings about inequality in communication among him and other Koreans. Peter is free to express what he intends to tell, but it is very inconvenient for others to say things because of their poor English. On the other hand, Peter would also feel frustrated when Koreans did not understand what he said. Although he does not intend to leave Korea, this implies that he is living and wants to be treated as a foreigner. It also implies that he wants to keep

his identity as a native English speaker.

#### **4.2.4 I had conflicts in class**

After the death of his mother, Peter inherited his mother's life-long job, teacher, in Korea, not in Canada. He came to be a language teacher as soon as he arrived in Korea. He recalled that time: "I was picked up at Seoul's Kimpo Airport by the institute's owner late one afternoon, and he drove me to Suwon. We went to the institute right away and within an hour or so I was in the class with some students" (Peter's autobiography, 2007). There was no training and no chances to observe a class because he was the first foreign teacher in that institute. He had no idea how to teach students English. He tried one thing and failed, and then tried another, repeatedly. Peter describes this process as "[learning to teach] has been something like "crash and burn" repeated in an endless iteration" (Peter's autobiography, 2007). The lack of training or guidance caused him to have difficulty in doing his job.

In addition, he indicates three frustrating things which he experienced: students' tiredness, passive attitude, and the profit-centered management of an education institute. Korean students spent more time in class and after-class work than westerners imagine. In particular, secondary school students started their class early in the morning at school and went to private institutes after school, and went back home late at night. They may thus be sleepy or doze off in their classes at school or at a private institute. Peter got frustrated at the students' weariness in his class.

The second frustration has to do with students' attitude at their class. Peter depicts the students as being passive and shy. He attempted to encourage them to actively participate in his class, but some students would not do anything. He indicates that "all too often students are passive in the classroom. ... many of these 'active'" activities will fail from the lack of preparation and motivation among students" (Peter's autobiography, 2007). Peter noticed that Korean students are inactive and passive in their class. Foreign teachers may have a stereotype that Korean students do not actively participate in their class because they have a passive or shy personality. However, Korean students are very active in their classes taught by Korean teachers in elementary and secondary schools. When I gave students group work, I noticed that they sometimes worked hard and at other times did not in doing their project. I did not consider students to be passive and shy. Taking into account the limit of their English ability, they had more difficulties in expressing their opinion. It might be partly because they may not have prepared for their class in advance and partly because the given activities are so high that they cannot perform them or find them too tedious, or that they are too low an intellectual level.

More importantly, a third frustration has to do with the contemporary economically driven system of education institutions. Peter believes that the Korean educational system is managed by economic profit-oriented minds in the private English language institutions and universities. The classes are overcrowded with students. He told he had taught around 60 students in one class in 1997. Considering the time allocation for students, they are allowed to talk for

less than one minute per student in the one hour (50 minutes) of an English conversation class. His mother also underwent the same condition: “My mother complained a lot about large classes even in Montreal” (Peter, Oct. 27, 2008). Unlike the intention of educational administrators and policy makers, Peter wants to keep his classes small-sized. He believes small-sized classes to provide more opportunities to interact between teachers and their students and provides students with more teacher attention and care, giving more satisfaction to teachers after classes. Peter even teaches students after classes for free in order to get happiness from his classes. He explains: “You were happy when your classes go well and you’re not happy with your classes when they don’t go well. It’s not a question of having more money or less money” (Peter, Oct. 27, 2008). Peter believes that schools should give priority to teaching conditions rather than to economic profits, which would be a commitment to students. This further implies that education should attempt to seek for quality rather than for quantity. This unbalanced priority is always kept in his mind and brings conflicts in his mind.

#### **4.2.5 Teacher as a conversant**

It is a general tendency that any native English speaker holding a Bachelor of Arts in any subject can be an English teacher in Asian countries such as Korea, Japan and China. This is a different qualification from Korean teachers because they have to complete required courses for teacher education at a faculty of education. Native English speaking teachers, however, are hired regardless of a certificate and courses, and subjects or disciplines. This is based on the ideology



that a language is well acquired through interaction with the native speaker of the language and that academic or professional training is less important for becoming a teacher of English as a foreign language (EFL). Peter also maintains this: “As a general rule, the level of somebody’s degree or educational background is less important for English teachers than ordinary faculty. Having a Ph.D. is not really a sign of a good English teacher in all subjects or disciplines.” This implication is that, among native English speaking teachers, factors other than academic training are relatively more important than they are for faculty positions in Korea, where teaching and writing are required. In other words, Peter assumes that experience substitutes for the academic training to a large degree. This also supports the view that native English speakers are professional teachers of English in the EFL countries.

Contrary to Peter’s belief, many Korean universities have changed their qualification from any B.A. holders to the B.A. holders with a TESOL certificate or M.A. holders. Furthermore, Korean professors believe that they are treated differently from the native English speaking teachers because they hold a Ph.D. In fact, most universities hire native English speaking teachers with lecturer status. They are not allowed to have a chance of promotion and must renew their contract every year. They are treated differently due to the difference of academic degrees. This is only an ostensible reason. Even if there is anyone who holds a Ph.D., the university would not treat him or her as a regular faculty staff. Peter knows this discrimination and points out cynically: “you know you are not buying the native speaker’s brain, you’re buying his tongue, and facility with the spoken language”

(Peter, Oct. 27, 2008).

NESTs are taking courses concerned with English conversation which mainly requires native competence in the English spoken language. They assume their roles are as promoters to encourage students to speak and as responders to deliver a counter response to them. This job only requires NESTs to be fluent speakers of English, and does not demand any qualifications such as TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or Other Language) training and a Master of Arts (MA) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Language Teaching or Applied Linguistics. Peter also agrees that this kind of job qualification is consistent with being a good teacher: “What I would look for among prospective English teachers is general intelligence, and, second of all, energy” (Peter, Oc. 27, 2008). In addition to these two factors, he adds “sympathy or concern for students” as a third one (Peter, Nov. 3, 2008). For Peter, the teacher might not be different from a common worker in that he or she might not need any training related with education. The teacher has to interact with students not as a teacher but as a conversant. In order to respond and to motivate many students to do activities, he or she needs a lot of energy and deep care for students. This work may be so simple a job that “more highly educated, more experienced teachers are actually disadvantaged in enacting English education” (Oct. 27, 2008). Peter defines teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) as just conversing with students. The job does not require experience and academic training and research. In this vein, there are no experts and no professionals.

#### **4.2.6 I have no power**

Despite the lack of teacher qualification as a professional, Peter believed himself to be professional. For him, to be professional means to have autonomy and responsibility for students (Peter, Oct. 27, 2008). In particular, he put an emphasis on autonomy in doing his job. He has wanted to “do things very differently” since he came to Korea (Peter, Oct. 24, 2008). Peter made his own curriculum for his class. I observed he made booklets, such as practicing pronunciation and idioms for conversation. Although he taught the same subject, English conversation, he has taught different content to students.

In order to secure this autonomy for making his syllabi, he needs to meet at least two requirements. First, he has an ability to make his booklets and curriculum. As he had majored in Linguistics at a graduate school, he has taken courses such as phonetics and phonology. And he believes himself to be a user of “an example of English language, in other words, [an] authentic part of interaction” (Peter, Nov. 3, 2008). He also believes that English is used in more idiomatic constructions rather than in the grammatical combination. In this line, he made a booklet about idioms for conversation. And, he did not want to be interrupted by other faculty, including also other native English speaking instructors and the education institution in which he worked. If there were any coworkers who asked for a unified syllabus in the conversation course, he might not be able to make his own syllabus and use his own booklets.

In addition to these requirements, he reveals a cause why he has pursued his autonomy for making his own curriculum. Peter thought that the education system

in Korea is unconstructive or inappropriate and wanted to affect the institution and to change it (Peter, Nov. 3, 2008). In other words, he firmly believed that his perspective of education is constructive and appropriate in terms of education. He also wanted to have power to innovate the education system of Korea or the institution. But, he indicated, “I really don’t have any power to affect what other people around me do” (Peter, Nov. 3, 2008). In reality, he had no power to pursue what he intended to because he has no means or avenues to make any suggestions coined with his innovative mind.

He understood that his powerlessness is due to his status at his school. He has the status of foreign instructor and not of professor. It is a reality that foreign instructors are situated below professors. He knows that there are certain limits to what power foreign instructors have because they are assumed to be located below Korean professors. As for this hierarchical ways of doing things, Peter supports the superiority of his culture:

Canadians didn’t want one person to be deciding what another person would do as much as possible. So in some ways the decision making process in that kind of institution is slower but the end results are something much better and it doesn’t change as much later on. So there is certainly a great deal of stability. (Peter, Oct. 25, 2008)

Peter assumed that hierarchical management is carried out by the top decision-makers and the lower level workers have to follow the decisions. He implied that foreign instructors were below the Korean professors and have to follow their directions. In fact, there are few directions or official documents to deliver to

foreign instructors. They are not asked or required to attend meetings and committees. Even if there is something that could use the foreign instructor's help, Korean professors ask if he or she is available. There is no enforcement. But the point is that they may lack opportunities to have input into decisions made in Korean institutions.

The foreign staff is not in a hierarchical system but out of the hierarchical structure of their school, so he or she can enjoy his or her autonomous way of doing things. In other words, he or she is situated in a separate space although the foreign staff works at the same school as their Korean coworkers. This means that the foreign staffs are detached and excluded from the Korean staff.

In contrast, Peter distinguishes his way of acting from Korean instructors and believes himself to be authentic example of English-speaking culture which would influence his students. If we consider teachers' role transforming students, Peter would be not just a conveyor but a transformer of culture, like a proselytizer. He mentioned his potential and limits like:

I would very much like curriculum to be different for our department in the university. But this is something really beyond what I can do or what I should get involved in. This is a consistent frustration because if I was a professional in a university, even in Canada. I am sure that I would feel like I had more impact on the overall picture. Here I have almost no impact on the overall picture. (Peter, Oct. 27, 2008)

This excerpt clearly uncovers what made him feel conflict. He wants to reform or innovate the education system of his school, but fails to do that because he does

not have the power. However, it is a fact that the native English speaking teacher has an impact on Korea, at least on English education by teaching all freshmen at universities. This impact is not restricted to teaching students but spreads to the educational institution. Students are influenced by the native English speaking teachers in terms of understanding the teachers' home culture along with their language. In this view, it is important to reach a consensus between the school administrators and the native English speaking teachers. In the areas that involve English education, the native English speaking teachers are not usually included in the consensus-reaching process. Bt being excluded, they also feel that the value of consensus and their own value is being disparaged.

### **4.3 Nick**

#### **4.3.1 Background**

Nick has teaching experience in Canada and Korea since he received a teacher's certificate from a university in Canada. He began teaching social studies and history at a secondary school in Canada. He then moved to another secondary school and taught English, social studies and physical education for one year. Since he came to Korea in 2002, he started to teach English to students from kindergarten to middle school at a private institute. He has then taught English at a university for five years.

Together with teaching jobs, he continued to study at a graduate school in Korea and received a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Korean Studies. He has developed his academic background with a focus on international history at a graduate school. He assumed a position of assistant director of the international student exchange program at the university in which he worked with the Office of Planning to arrange working agreements with overseas universities. He also worked as a writing clinic assistant whose job is to work with faculty members and graduate students to prepare articles and theses for publication.

He is not only a professional instructor, but a researcher whose interests are in international relations and history. He has over seven years of teaching experience in Canada and Korea.

#### **4.3.2 Becoming a teacher in Korea is a lot easy**

When I first met him at a job interview, I was impressed with his job experience. He had completed teacher education courses and had received a certificate for teaching at secondary schools in Canada. He had also had two years of teaching experience at two secondary schools in his home country. He always helped me and other faculty members whenever we asked him to do things such as editing articles and teaching evening classes offered by the continuing education center in my university. He even helped me by writing his autobiography for my research.

When I read his autobiography I began to clearly understand what made him decide to leave Canada and settle down in Korea. He decided to leave his home country because he became disinterested in his job and had accumulated stress owing to economic matters. He describes his situation at the time of his departure as follows:

In the summer of 2002, I wanted to leave my home country, Canada. Why? My job was tedious and uninspiring. I was enrolled in a graduate program in a subject that I soon found to be utterly boring. The cost of living in Vancouver, the city I was living in, was threatening to send me into debt. I was having relationship troubles. My car was broken and I couldn't afford to fix it. The list goes on and on. (Nick's Autobiography)

Before leaving Canada, Nick had been utterly besieged with personal agonies due to an irksome life in his job and studies, lack of living expenses, and



relationship troubles. His suffering caused him to seek paths to escape from the drugery of life. He tried a new space where he could escape from a “tedious”, “uninspiring”, “boring,” “threatening” place, from “having relational troubles,” and from being unable to afford to fix a car. He tried to find a place whereby he could make money and enjoy a busy life. As the environmental, economic torments were serious to him, he really did not care where he ended up (Nick’s Autobiography). He also knew he could make money by teaching English. Among Asian countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, China, Japan and Korea, he chose to settle in Korea because it “was a lot easier to get into because there were no job interviews involved” and as a result of “a couple of quick calculations regarding costs of living and job salaries” (Nick’ Autobiography). He finally found a country in which he might achieve his practical wants of escaping his mental and economical torments.

Unfortunately, among his motives to leave, teaching English or encouraging Korean students to learn English were not among them. He chose Korea with the dual purpose of finding a place to make money and to escape his mental agonies. Because of his quick decision, he did not prepare for teaching English in the culture of English as a foreign language.

#### **4.3.3 I was pretty much thrown directly into the fire**

Nick came to Korea and started to teach young students from kindergarten to middle school at a private English academy. When he entered the academy, the outgoing teacher just showed him a few things to teach students such as a

textbook, the class size and class schedule. He started to teach students after a half-day introduction about teaching students. Regarding his first day of teaching, he described the disorderly classroom: "When Monday morning came around, I was pretty much thrown directly into the fire. There were kids running around screaming. The youngest ones had no idea what I was trying to say because of the obvious language barrier. It was absolute chaos" (Nick's autobiography). He may have been looking forward to meeting Korean students who were docile and obedient. He superficially knew that Korea was a Confucianism-driven country where students were very disciplined and respected their teachers. Unexpectedly, he was not in an ordered classroom but in a chaotic place. This is a common classroom in the private institutions and the elementary schools. Young students are extremely overeager and impetuous, which would be nearly impossible for the foreign teacher to control.

Like other native English speaking teachers, Nick might have arrived at a new country with little knowledge about it. He might have read a guide book about travelling in Korea, in which Korea was described as being conservative and Koreans as being passive and Korean students as being quite disciplined. Even though he had been a high school teacher in Canada, he again became a novice teacher in a new culture.

As for Nick, he had already been trained as a secondary teacher at a university. Among the teacher training courses, he considered the practicum to be the most beneficial course for being a teacher (Nick, Oct. 29, 2008). He indicated that there should be partner teaching for at least one week for the new native English

speaking teachers. This preparatory period would be a minimum requirement because he had already completed the teacher training program and had two years of teaching experience. It would be much longer than Nick suggested for native English speakers without a background of teaching. However, it is very common that native English speaking teachers come to Korea and start to teach students with little or no introductory training.

Little or no in-service training would not be good for both the new foreign teacher and students. Both of them would be very frustrated with each other because they did not know each other and because the new teacher did not have any experience of teaching students who had quite limited or no ability of using English. In particular, the foreign teacher would have difficulties in addressing students because of the language barrier and perhaps only a superficial background of who these students were.

Although some owners of the private institute were experts in pedagogy, some were not and they did not care about new foreign teachers. They did not intend to put the teacher into a predicament. But, he might naively believe that the native English speaker would be capable of teaching English to young students and that the students would like the foreign teacher more than the Korean teachers. In my university, when we hire a new native English speaker, he or she is expected to teach students from the first day of a semester with little orientation. The new staff has to prepare for and begin his or her classes without assistance from others. It is commonly assumed that a university graduate is capable of teaching their mother tongue without any professional training.

Behind this belief is that language competence is more important than pedagogy in a foreign language class and that a person with language competence is qualified for teaching the language. It is also assumed that the Korean manager is not concerned with how the new teacher does in his or her class and that he is only concerned with hiring the foreign teacher. This is a mere show without reality because he does not intend to look into and review the reality and even because the manager believes him or herself unable to evaluate the foreign teacher. This also enables him to secure his own way of teaching which is different from the teaching traditions of Korean teachers.

#### **4.3.4 I am in a culture-free space**

Although he has lived in Korea for over 6 years, Nick can keep his own identity and do things according to his own way in his social life. He remembered his mistakes in meeting people in terms of social practices. He sometimes did not use honorific language to elder people and did not use both hands when he offered elder people a drink. He sometimes did not follow the moral codes of Korean culture, but he was accepted because he was a foreigner. And he knows some Korean practices, but Koreans assumed that he would not. For instance, when he goes to a restaurant, even if he can use chopsticks, the waitress might give him a fork and a knife (Nick, Oct. 26, 2008). This comes from hospitality to the foreigner and reveals a stereotype that foreigners are not used to chopsticks. He even discovered that he could break the law without any legal punishment. He once crossed the street in an illegal place and was caught by the policeman (Nick,

Oct. 29, 2008). Instead of writing him a ticket, the officer let him go. He is now tempted to cross in illegal places because there is no punishment. He may take advantage of such liberties as a foreigner.

In fact, this nonconformity is accepted in Korean society for some reasons. For most Koreans, speaking English is not comfortable. The policeman might have let him go because he was uncomfortable at the possibility of speaking English. Another reason is concerned with the belief of most foreigners that Korean society is hospitable and generous to foreigners. Korean people assume that foreigners may not know how to use chop sticks and not know how to cross the street. Korean people might try to understand, consider and respect the foreigner's condition.

In a way, this attitude is involved in the Koreans' belief of respecting others and humbling themselves. It is well represented in the abundance of honorific expressions in the Korean language. Koreans are accustomed to using honorific expressions to people whom they do not know. This implies both respecting others and humbling oneself. These attitudes also have their roots in the operating boundaries of Confucian ethics. The human relations of Confucian values are the specific relations between parent and child, lord and subjects, husband and wife, elder people and younger people, and friends in a specific community. These relationships are operated with psychological ties among members in a closed community (Keum, 2000). The closeness implies that the value systems are applied to only the members of the society and not operated to the outsiders of the society. If foreigners make a mistake which goes against the

Confucian order or ethics, it is accepted because they are outside the society in which the values operate. In this vein, foreigners are situated in a culture-free space.

In order for a culture-free space to exist, there also is a culture-operating space and a boundary between culture-free and culture-operating spaces. The people in the culture-operating space may not care about what those in the culture-free space think and behave. This has two sides: it is easy for foreigners to keep their identities. At the same time, it is not easy for them to cross the boundary. Thus, Nick indicates that “I can keep my own Western beliefs” (Nick, Oct. 26, 2008), and that “I am discriminated from administration” (Nick, Nov. 5, 2008). As Nick stays in a culture-free space, he has few people who ask him to change his beliefs and simultaneously who require him to attend faculty meetings and participate in special committees in his work place. He is also excluded from the decision-making about native English speaking teachers. So, the words “culture-free” implies both sides of a coin, good and bad, in that it includes not merely autonomy but also exclusion. These also are connected in that exclusion from managers enables the foreign teacher to enjoy autonomy as well as to keep his identity.

#### **4.3.5 I am powerless**

This exclusion has soaked through the educational institutions in Korea. In universities, the foreign staff is not invited to participate in faculty meetings and special committees. The foreigners believe that their work is not respected by

Korean administrators. For instance, Nick's university opened a special program called "Writing Clinic," in which professors submitted their articles for revision by foreigners. The university paid for the job only for 3 hours even though the proofreading took much longer than 3 hours. The administrator took into consideration the amount of hours which the proofreader would need and set a new regulation that the university would pay for 3 hours of work and the professor who requested the job would pay for the rest of hours that the foreign staff invested. Regarding this, Nick commented, "the big problem with this is that no one had considered that such work was illegal because our particular work visa states we can only make money from this university" (Nick, Oct. 26, 2008). This means that the educational institution encourages the foreign staff to do illegal work. The university took its financial interests into consideration and did not consider the legal problems.

In addition, he indicated that private language institutions were often more concerned with making money than with education for students (Nick, Oct 26, 2008). The owners were mostly concerned with the number of students enrolled. They tried to make sure the students were happy regardless of whatever else went on because that would make the parents happy and accordingly pay for the classes. From these two instances, it is conjectured that the educational institutions are managed in accordance with business purposes. Unfortunately, the foreign staff has little or no power to remedy the business-driven education. This powerlessness makes the foreign teachers resign themselves, and simply do the best they can in their classroom to help students learn.

The foreign staff found the flawed pedagogic practices of some Korean professors. They usually stand in front of the classroom and speak to students, and students are expected to take notes. There is little or no interaction between professors and students. The classes are more teacher-centered, less creative. Nick tried to make his classes more student-centered and creative by “encouraging students to find the answers themselves” (Nick, Nov. 5, 2008). He strongly believes that he cannot remedy this authoritative, closed pedagogic practice because he does not have any power to change it.

#### **4.3.6 I came to be open**

Due to this exclusion and hospitality of Korean people, Nick can keep his Western view of teaching, but has changed his teaching style in the process of professional improvement. He changed his teaching methods and procedures by “seeing what works in the classroom and what does not work” (Nick, Nov. 5, 2008). It is natural for teachers to make an attempt to find the best way to help students learn. This reveals that there is something changeable in accordance with one’s contact with others. Although Nick can keep his identity, it may be changed and accustomed to a new culture.

Regarding cultural adaptation, he first felt it was rude when he called out to a waitress at a restaurant or a pub, but now does not feel it is rude. It has become natural for him to call out to a waitress at a restaurant or a pub. Nick has become accustomed to some Korean culture or practices, even though his core identity does not change.



Nick shows that a person can build multiple identities in that he or she keeps his own identity in one place and ignores or hides other aspects of his or her own identity in other places, and naturally pursues a new identity and acquires it. This is a natural process of adapting to a new culture. In this process, he opened his mind in order to admit a new way of teaching, and tried to go easy on it. In this vein, he believed that good teachers should be adaptable, flexible and open-minded (Nick, Nov. 5, 2008).

Together with the teacher's openness, he believed that students have to change their attitudes from communal thinking enclosed in Korean culture to being open to global culture. Then, both can contribute to encourage students to learn.

As a foreigner, Nick has felt a list of problems about Korean society and the educational environment. He believed that Korean teachers got students to be moral and ethical creatures in that they pay careful attention to students' acts, future plans and job-seeking as well as their studies. Nick stated his view as a Western teacher that "I'm not a baby sitter and they (students) are adults" (Nick, Oct. 26, 2008). Considering his generous attitude toward students, Nick may feel that the students should be responsible for themselves once they are adults in universities. He also may believe that one of the teacher's responsibilities is to encourage the autonomy of the students.

He also indicated the falsely excessive educational fervor in Korea, communal thinking enclosed in Korean culture, and teacher-centeredness and less focus on creativity in pedagogy (Nick, Oct. 29 & Nov. 5, 2008). He believed that Korean ways of pedagogy might be encased in mechanical, closed ways of teaching and

learning, and overprotective of students.

In order to pull them out of their boundaries, Nick tried to “open their minds to different possibilities” (Nick, Oct. 26, 2008). He suggested that students learn English not by memorizing grammar and words, but by cultural associations that go with English. He then tried to encourage students to find the answers to questions themselves and to teach students strategies of analyzing, and synthesizing material. These techniques enable students to acquire new ways of looking at things.

## **4.4 Simon**

### **4.4.1 Backgrounds**

After graduating from a university in Canada, Simon worked at a regular part time job for around 5 months. He wanted to work at a regular job, but it was not easy for him to find one because there were not enough positions to work at in the middle of the 1990's. Simon, thus, was determined to find a job overseas. He considered working in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea. He took into account teacher qualification and salary, and living expenses. As he majored in Business Administration and did not have a teaching certificate, he had two options, Taiwan and Korea, because Japan required the foreign teacher to have a teaching certificate. He had, then, met a lot of Chinese in Toronto, and thus he wanted to meet other ethnic groups. He chose Korea in the process of eliminating countries in terms of working conditions and unfamiliarity.

Simon came to Korea in 1998, worked at a private language institute for one year, and then moved to a university in September 1999. As he started to teach English in his mid-twenties, Simon had over ten years of teaching experience in Korea at the time of the interview. He seemed to me to be the most proficient speaker of Korean language among my participants and has a good command of computer software programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and Adobe Acrobat and Photoshop. He has a TESL/TEFL certificate which he received from a college in Canada. From these abilities and certificates, he may be one of the excellent

qualified native English speaking teachers.

He agreed to participate in my research and I met him three times at his office. As he did not have any classes Tuesday afternoon, I met him on Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> (Simon, Oct. 28, 2008), Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> (Simon, Nov. 4, 2008), and Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> (Simon, Nov. 11, 2008). We usually talked about subjects which I sent him before I met him for over one hour at every meeting. We began to talk about his teaching and living experience in his first year in Korea and about changes of teaching after the second year, and his feeling about his working environment. We continued to talk about the working environment in the second conversation and about the education culture of Korea, and about the broad meaning of native English speaking teachers in Korea. In the final meeting, we kept on talking about his meaning in his classes and about the policy of English education of the university where he worked and of Korea.

#### **4.4.2 Three phases of adapting to a new culture**

Simon's case shows how a foreigner is changing his attitude towards a new culture. He roughly recalled his life in Korea in terms of three phases. The first is a phase of curiosity for the first six months of his stay. Although he had a lot of questions and frustrations about the new culture, he says, "I loved and I really appreciated everything. There wasn't anything to bother me" (Conversation 1 with Simon). However, in the next six months, Simon had stresses due to the cultural differences between his home and host country. In the third phase, he determined to work here for a long time and started to find ways to better understand the host

culture and consoled himself that stress was part of a process of adjusting to a new culture. He recalled,

and [for] the second six months that I was in Korea, I hated um everything bothered me, it was like I try to find things that bother me, in order to make myself feel better, so give comfort to myself that I was right and Korea was wrong, but that changed for me. After living in Korea for such a long time, I really feel many ways that I adjusted and adapted to Korean culture very well. When I was go home to Canada, for example, to visit my family there are times that I feel that I don't match well Canadian culture anymore or more comfortable with the things done in Korea. (Simon, Oct. 28, 2008)

Simon's account illustrates how his self-identity, thinking and acting can be changed by a contact with another culture. It is composed of cultural curiosity and interests (the first phase), cultural stress and conflicts (the second phase), and cultural adaptation (the third phase). Among these, in the second six-month of stay in a foreign culture, in particular, he expressed his feelings of estrangement and hostility.<sup>15</sup> Simon sought out solace by distinguishing his culture from the local culture in terms of a value-laden dichotomy. His culture was "right" but the host culture was "wrong". This implies that his culture was superior to and more civilized than Korean culture. Simon thought of himself as a civilized, enlightened gentleman and of Koreans, *Other*, as less civilized or less enlightened people. However, Koreans, *Other*, think of themselves as 'civilized,' and 'developed' persons in that they had had a good westernized training through education and

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<sup>15</sup> This may be referred to types of culture shock which is "phenomena ranging from mild irritation to deep psychological panic and crisis. ... Culture shock is associated with feelings of estrangement, anger, hostility, indecision, frustration, unhappiness, sadness, loneliness, homesickness, and even physical illness" (Brown, 2000, p. 183).

because Korea has economically been developed in the past decades. The disguised innate supremacy imbedded in the White Canadian was not admitted by the *Other*, which might have caused him to feel conflicts in his mind and bother him.

As he decided to live here for a long time, he has gradually become more empathetic with the local customs and culture. This is a process of assimilation and adaptation to a new culture, thereby shaping a new mixed identity by admitting the differences among cultures. This accustomed hybrid identity might bring about another disruption. When returning to his home culture, he becomes disrupted by another feeling of estrangement from his home culture, which may be called a reverse cultural conflict.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, he is now living in a state of difference and conflicts as well as of balance and compromise.

His long stay has changed him a lot and he adopted a lot from Korean culture, but there is always a part of him from Canada. His remarks reveal how his thought is different from Korean teachers and what he feels about Korean education and culture.

#### **4.4.3 English is the only language in classrooms.**

Many Koreans believe that they are not fluent in using English because they did not have enough opportunity to talk in English. Educational administrators expect native English speaking teachers to offer much chance for students to use English in their classrooms. Simon also believes that English classes should be

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<sup>16</sup> By “reverse culture conflict”, I mean a cultural conflict which occurs in one’s home country after staying or living long outside one’s country or culture.

taught by the English-Only environment method. He tried to impress on his students that the only acceptable language in the classroom is English. In order to do this, he needs to forbid students' use of Korean in the classroom. Simon seems to believe in immersion.

Aside from his belief in language learning, let me focus on what Simon uses words in his classes. He always prescribed to the students what language they use from the very first class: "Don't speak a different language. ... I do not allow non-English languages in the classroom" (Simon, Oct. 28, 2008). He did not say "don't speak Korean," rather preferred "don't speak a different language or non-English language." There are two language groups in his classroom; English for the teacher and Korean for the students. Although Korean is the mother tongue of his students, Simon mentioned that Korean is a different language, one of the non-English languages. Implied in these words is that there are some values at play. Although he does not make explicit his political view, his students may accept that English is a center language and Korean is a peripheral one. In this light, Simon's classroom may not seem to be simply learning of English.

That he regards Korean as a different language hides his view that English is a center language and Korean is a peripheral language. English is believed to achieve dominance over Korean and others, which brings the inequity among languages and culture. At worst, it may reject the student's experience which is acquired through his or her mother tongue, thereby imposing them "a single lens on the world" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 189). This inequity and monolingual perspective goes against the unprejudiced and unbiased worldview which is one

of the fundamental concepts of globalization. Ironically, native English speaking teachers are invited as part of an effort to globalize students.

This English-privileged power reduced Korean English teachers' contribution to their classrooms. In the Elementary and Secondary Schools in Korea, as native English speaking teachers expand their roles in teaching students in classrooms, Korean English teachers have lost part of their position and even been degraded to the assistant teacher of the native English speaking teacher. On the other hand, in universities, Korean professors have usually divided the course into two sections in terms of receptive language skills and productive language skills. In other words, Korean teachers take a part of teaching reading and listening, and foreign staff of teaching speaking and writing. This policy is criticized by Simon;

For the freshmen English program two parts, writing and speaking, is taught by foreign staff, and reading and listening is handled by Korean staff. Actually, I don't necessarily agree with the division of skills like that. I think speaking and listening should go together. And I think reading and writing go together. ... This is a kind of distinction that I think can be really destructive. (Simon, Nov. 11, 2008)

We cannot hear unless someone talks in daily life. Most writing books include reading material in it. This characteristic of language use gives Simon's claim legitimacy in terms of the relationships of discourse types. Korean professors' preference of splitting discourse types assumes that they are less or lack of proficiency of the language use in terms of accuracy and fluency. One native Russian speaker makes an estimation of Korean professors of the Russian language in Korea as in "their pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary – everything is



bad” (Svetlana, 2004, p. 275). In the university where Simon works, there is a writing clinic in which Korean professors turn to native English speakers to confirm whether they are grammatically accurate. Simon knew well this reality of Korean professors in terms of English proficiency. He also understands why they differentiate English class in terms of language skills. He believes that they are less proficient in speaking and writing accurately.

Simon seems to believe that foreign language can ideally be learned in the natural settings. Young children learn their mother tongue through talking and listening to parents, siblings, and their friends and through reading and writing in their classes. However, the settings of English as a foreign language are different from that of mother tongue in that learners have few chances to interact with their parents, siblings and friends through English. They have to bear in mind words and expressions through attending classes because they do not have enough stock of words and their use in their mind. As for Korean university students, there are great gaps of language competence between receptive and productive skills. Reading skills are excellent but writing skills are poor. Listening skills are better than speaking skills. This unbalanced ability of skills of students caused teachers to divide English class into two domains.

More importantly, such comment implies that English is taught by a native English speaking teacher because he or she is very well qualified to use perfectly the four skills. This may assume that a native English speaking teacher is an owner of the English teaching profession as well as an owner of English language. This combination of language education and language is a pretext for the

hegemony of the English in foreign language education. As this ideology spread and the hegemony operates, these days, the Korean teachers are degenerated into assistant teachers in elementary and secondary schools, and more native English speaking teachers are in need.

In particular, Simon supports the President of Korea's policy that all public schools will teach in English. This policy may pursue the bilingual approach, as in Singapore. Although, he guesses, the plan would take a long time, its intention is a good one and the policy will provide students equal opportunity of education in terms of English education (Simon, Nov. 11, 2008). However, this policy overlooks that English will be substituted for Korean as a means of a teaching language. This might be to a degree a process of linguistic imperialism. Presently, some leading universities take English as a teaching language. Both sides revealed their difficulties in using English in the classroom. This would be possible only if Korean teachers could teach their subjects in English and if Korean students could learn their subjects in English without any difficulties or frustration.

#### **4.4.4 North-American pedagogic culture is a typical example to be modeled.**

Culture is really different from country to country and from one ethnic group to another group. There are inevitable discrepancies in the culture of education among different cultures because they have their own traditions about teaching and learning. Korean teachers are rooted in *sonbi*, Confucian literati, who are the men of virtue and intelligence. They are respected by people because they are not

supposed to seek secular power and higher social titles in terms of virtue, but to put all energies into studying in terms of intelligence. This imagination of teachers produces students' respect for teachers. This may produce a more straight distinction between teachers and students in Korea than in Canada.

Simon talks about Canadian professors that “our professors were really great” because they were very approachable to students in that they were interactive with students in class (Simon, Oct. 28, 2008). On the other hand, Korean professors, he thinks, are “not very approachable. I don’t know, but that still sounds really bad, anyway” (Simon, Oct. 28, 2008). In other words, he believes that the Korean teachers’ way of teaching is teacher-directed, hierarchical and authoritative, and that they do not provide for space in which students can play a role in their class. These may be related to the pedagogic culture of classrooms in terms of the relationships between professors and students. In this vein, such difference is due to cultural heritage of education. However, Simon seems to judge the phenomenon in terms of ethical values rather than of difference of pedagogic culture. North-American pedagogic culture is great but the Korean one is bad. If there are any bad pedagogic practices, they should be expelled. Reflecting on the teaching of my colleagues and myself, there have been great changes in the relationships between students and professors. Professors give more opportunities for students to present their thoughts in their classes and conduct their classes on the seminar basis. However, Simon may believe that Korean professors are much more authoritarian and less interactive with students than North-American professors because of cultural differences.

This discriminative interpretation about cultural differences is fundamentally related with ethnocentrism which is judging another culture by the standards of his or her own culture. Because of the standards, ethnocentrism inevitably connotes concepts such as superior against inferior culture, which tempt to produce an attitude of disregard or disapproval of the inferior culture. Interestingly, such an attitude is revealed in Simon's remarks that he doesn't follow the Korean policies and strategies of education: "The Korean culture education um I'll be honest with you I don't follow too many things about the Korean education system, the changes, and the experiences" (Simon, Nov. 4, 2008). This disregard may then be a step toward the implanting the North-American-European culture to his class. Simon places an emphasis on "embracing culture or being aware of the culture" in learning a foreign language (Simon, Nov. 4, 2008).

In the process of spreading a new culture, there might be resistance to adaptation to it. Simon showed an example of how he exercised power to infuse a new culture into his students. Unlike other nations, Koreans have usually been accustomed to using a Korean-based word processing program named as 'Hangeul' instead of using the MS Word processing program. In fact, they do not need to learn how to use the MS Word program because they do not have many chances to use Word in everyday life and work places. However, Simon requires the students to use it.

I expect my students to use MS Word. You know there is Korean word processing program, Hangeul. I don't allow them to use that. Some of students [*sic*] are very frustrated by that because they don't want to use it and

are not comfortable with it. ... I am teaching them how to use English in word processor [*sic*]. I am forcing them to learn that. I mean this is a skill. That goes well beyond the boundaries of my class. ... When they are complaining about me, I deduct points. (Simon, Nov. 4, 2008)

Simon might attempt to teach students a new skill which is a global standard word program and will be valuable for them to use in future. However, “Hangeul,” the Korean word processing program, is very powerful in its uses and applications. It can open a file which is stored in the MS word program. It can also make a file which is opened by the other word processor. Although they are not accustomed to using it and very frustrated, the students inevitably learn how to use it in order to get high points.

Simon might be intending to teach English through an English-based word processing program in terms of the task-based approach. However, this is not an application of a teaching method but a process of spreading an American-led globalized culture. Simon tried to remove a domestic practice and implant into a far or near peripheral area a practice of a dominating center, North American-European center. This enables the center to rule over the distant territory from a cultural angle. In other words, this is an act of cultural imperialism.

#### **4.4. 5 I am excluded from the institution**

Globalization fundamentally brings about “the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world” and thus breaks down “artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and (to a lesser extent) people

across borders” (Stiglitz, 2003, p. 9). Native English speakers ostensibly seem to play a role in globalization. Simon came to Korea and made the Koreans be intimate with him and his culture, and spread his knowledge, language and culture inside Korean society. However, this does not mean the collapse of barriers between him and Koreans. His role is restricted to a degree and determined by the institutions and members of his place of work. Simon discloses this limit as in:

I don't believe that any teacher would not be renewed and fired because of the students' evaluation about their teaching. ... Administrators are happy with my performance as long as the students don't complain. You know students evaluate our teaching at the end of a semester. ... I feel like administration office is satisfied with my performance if they don't hear negative comments. ... I mean the administration offices in this university don't have interest in what I have been doing in my class and they have their job and I have my job. (Simon, Nov. 11, 2008)

Simon thinks that his role is teaching English to students and that his duty is accomplished if only there are no complaints about his teaching from them. On condition that these two are achieved, there is no interference between them. On one side, this enables Simon to enjoy his autonomy in teaching in the school. On the other hand, the administrators don't care about his promotion and don't know their extra work or endeavors to improve the students' linguistic competence due to lack of communication between them. In fact, although he has worked for over 8 years, Simon has stayed at the same status as that of his first contract. He worked, works and will work as a lecturer, the lowest rank in teaching position, because of the contract of employment. This is the sectorization or regionalization

in a society which may differentiate and discriminate one group from the others. This barrier furthermore makes him be in a state of despair and hopelessness and causes him to get into conflicts.

According to his contract with the school, he has not been eligible to apply for a sabbatical and school-supported research grants, and has not participated in a committee in the school. The regulation elucidates a limited responsibility for foreign staff such as teaching hours. They do not have any responsibility for research. Thus, he thinks that this closes his opportunities and prevents his motivation for doing research.

Simon thinks there are different types of native speakers who come to Korea. He points out that “I think some native speakers are generally serious and some are not serious about what they are doing” (Simon, Nov. 4, 2008). He is sure he is serious about his job. During his working at the university, Simon studied further on-line at a graduate school in Australia and got an M.A. degree in Applied Linguistics.

His postgraduate study helped change his teaching methods. He told me that he was using a task-based approach in his class. He showed me a discussion board on his computer for his classes, which he developed by himself, in other words, without any support from the school. He has put a lot of time and energy on his efforts to improve teaching his classes, but does not have any rewards. This discourages him from improving himself and developing teaching aids, and turns his attention to his health: “I am trying to limit the amount of work I do. Also, I started playing squash” (Simon, Nov. 4, 2008).

The school administrators seem indifferent to the concerns of the native English speaking teachers due to a lack of dialogues between them and administrators. This disconnection makes the native English speaking teachers live in the margin or even outside the scope of the school administration. This marginalizing or exclusion is based on the *laissez faire* policy of the school for the foreign teachers due to the limited range of their responsibilities. The foreign teachers do not want this policy and the exclusion but want to participate in the school committees and meetings. They even want to be evaluated individually, not collectively, and they expect the administrators to recognize their efforts to develop their students' ability. Simon remarks that "I wish there were some kind of recognition for the extra hard work from those people who are above me" (Simon, Nov. 11, 2008).

However, the administrators do not give their attention to the foreign staff's voices. The foreign instructors seem to live outside their administration. As such, there is an incredible amount of autonomy given to the foreign staff in the university. In fact, the administrator looks at the student's evaluations and if those are suitable, the teachers are believed to be good teachers. Furthermore, the administrators may not care about the student's evaluations. If there are not serious complaints or faults about the foreign staff, the administrators are satisfied with their job and renew their contracts. They do not care about what the foreign instructor is doing in his or her classes. As for Simon, he made considerable efforts for his students, and wanted to win the recognition for what he did. It is frustrating for him to know that he receives the same amount of benefit as other



teachers who are not serious about what they are doing.

## 4.5 Grace

### 4.5.1 Background

Grace is the only woman teacher among my research participants.<sup>17</sup> She is one of the well-qualified native English speaking teachers (NESTs) in that she gained 90 credits in an English major at a college and graduated from a university with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. After she graduated from a university in Vancouver, Grace worked as a tour guide for 19 months, and then came to Korea.

She started her teaching at a private language institution (Hagwon) where she had served for 2 years and 3 months. She taught kindergarten and elementary students English at the private institution. Then, she moved to a university near Seoul and has taught university students English conversation for 3 years.

During an interview, I got to know that she came to Korea partly because her husband found a job in Korea and partly because she was very interested in foreign cultures and languages since her high school days. Now, she works with her husband at the same university.

I was very pleased to have conversations with her because I wanted to have female perspectives as well as male ones. Unlike some other native English speaking teachers, Grace had taught students in Canada, and thus I can look into

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<sup>17</sup> In Korea, there are more male foreigners than female ones. According to the statistics issued by Ministry of Education, Sciences and Technologies, there are 1604 female native English speaking teachers among 4332 native English speaking teachers in 2008. Grace is the only one female native English speaking teacher who was willing to participate in my research.

Korean teaching from the perspective of a Canadian teacher. We mainly talked about the teaching culture in Korea and Canada. During our conversations, I got to know that Grace was different from the other participants with respect to understanding teaching and students. She was sharply aware of the differences of educational environments between Canada and Korea. In this section, our conversations are discussed in the order of her experiences at a private institution and a university, and her colleagues, native English speaking teachers.

#### **4.5.2 There are so many private institutions, Hagwon.**

Grace was shocked to see that there were so many private institutions (Hagwon) in Korea for all kinds of subjects: Korean, Mathematics, Sciences, Arts as well as English (Grace, Oct. 22, 2008). The private institutions are not confined to urban areas. They are spread all around the Korean areas. Everywhere, students study late at night and on weekends. They go to private institutions to learn more about their subjects after school. Parents pay for tuition for their children's study at a private institution. The economic burdens are very great for them. According to a news report, Korean households spent around 500 US dollars per child every month which accounts for around 30 percent of household income.

Grace thought that education should be the charge of the government, not of parents. She had never thought that education could be a business because she had never paid for her tuition in her elementary and secondary school days in Canada. She also believes that teaching at Canadian public schools provide students with sufficient information, knowledge and skills. Both parents and students do not feel

any need to have the students attend a private institution in order to learn more than their school gives to them in Canada.

While the Korean parents invested very heavily in the educational tuition of their children, they believe that it is their duty. They think that they have to bring up their children enough to get ahead in the competitive society. This intense competitiveness is driven by the university entrance examination. In Korea, universities are ranked by the populace, and entrance to some higher preferred university is very competitive. It is believed that the graduates of such universities deserve to be among the well-schooled elite who will work in preferred occupations. Passing the university entrance examination is believed to be the chief qualification for membership in the ruling or leading class in the society. Therefore, parents make enormous material and mental sacrifices for their children in order to aid their children in preparing for the entrance examination of higher levels of schooling.

One remote reason resides in the hidden meaning of globalization. Koreans generally believe that the globalized world refers to the age of limitless competition. It is taken for granted that good firms require their workers to be qualified for competing with workforces in rival firms in the world in which we have to face an unavoidable Darwinian struggle. Moreover, the populace believes that globalization is characterized as “globalmania” which refers to an agent to destroy and swallow weakened, less qualified personnel, firms and organization in terms of competitive forces (Sinagatullin, 2006, p. 15). This logic and menace has gotten into persons involved in education such as teachers, students and parents.

In this context, parents try to take all means to aid their children in getting ahead in schooling. Students study from early in the morning to late at night seven days a week. They are always tired and may sleep in their classes in the daytime.

#### **4.5.3 Education seems to be treated like a business.**

Grace remembered that she was shocked to know that the owners of a private institution think of education as a business model (Grace, Oct. 22, 2008). She indicates that they are less interested in the upbringing of students than in making money by way of students. They were more concerned with the numbers of students who enrolled than the courses offered in their institution. They are less concerned with improving the quality of education by reducing the number of students in a class. Rather, they are attempting to get more students in a classroom in order to get more profits.

And, they give more serious attention to the product of teaching rather than the process of learning. In other words, they lay emphasis on improving students' school record and on getting a high score in a test or examination. Good results of students give satisfaction to their parents and make students take a class at the private institution.

By contrast, Grace points out that Canadian education is more concerned with process, students' interests and motivating students to learn rather than products, students' needs and pushing students into learning. Trained in the Canadian environment, Grace states the problems of the business model as in:

The teacher just transmits knowledge and students should just memorize. So, there were no creative avenues to get students to learn. ... My boss was not concerned about that. Just as long as there was money coming in, that is the most important thing. I thought that the children I was teaching were losing out. They were not being pushed in a right direction and that education system in that sense was not fair to the students. (Grace, Oct. 22, 2008)

Grace's comments are true for the private institution in Korea. This business model of education has been built on the basis of the mix of modern capitalism which pursues profits and Korean traditional culture. From the perspective of capitalism, the private institution pursues good results within the shortest period of time as possible. In order to reduce the time of acquiring knowledge, teachers process the teaching material and produce a carefully organized knowledge and offer it to students. Students have no occasion to think how it is organized. All they need to do is to make sense of it and rote-memorize it. There is no need to find or create information which students are interested in. For instance, they don't need to find unknown English words or phrases because there are supplementary textbooks with detailed explanation about the textbooks. And teachers give students a detailed explanation about the textbooks. This helps students reduce the time they spend in finding, thinking and making the needed information, but it prevents them from thinking their own ways. The pursuit for efficiency of learning results in weakening in cultivation of students' creativity.

Korean culture also serves to curb creative imagination and creativity. Koreans' value system is rooted in Confucianism in which people have to live in harmony with the lives of people in communities with an emphasis on hierarchy

among them. This authoritarian culture of Korea requires students to conform to follow their teachers' teaching or directions and forbids them to go against their teacher. Thus, students are accustomed to obeying their teacher and have rarely been trained to produce their own opinions. It is customary that teachers transmit knowledge to students and students memorize it as a way of learning. In order to suit the customs of students' learning, teachers need to present arranged knowledge to them.

However, public schools have changed their teaching methods from rote-memorization methods to process oriented methods. This shift has made parents dissatisfied with the pedagogy of public schools and turn to the private institutions. This institution is thoroughly operated by the logic of the market economy: A classroom is a sort of a factory. Knowledge is the source of a product to sell at a market. Teaching is a manufacturing process of knowledge in which products will be sold to students in return for their parents' payment. Workers, teachers, involved in this factory are concerned with products which they produce. Buyers, students and parents, are also keenly concerned with the products and effectiveness of the teaching. Students are trained in order to gain knowledge from teachers. In other words, they are pushed and filled with ready-made knowledge through rote-memorization processes in order to gain expected results in the factory. All operations in it are product-oriented.

As implied in Grace's comments, the private educational institution is like a knowledge factory may not cultivate the creativity of students but sacrifice it in collusion with the Korean traditional culture of education. In particular, the

Confucian culture of submission, authority, and harmony exerts influence over all Korean society. Clark comments on this: “as any Westerner would note, a feature of the entire system is the limits that it places on the individual’s freedom of action and rights to make decisions for oneself” (Clark, 2000, p.34). But this is a sort of stereotypical perception of Westerners. Although conforming and submission is an overall force of the society, university students are the leading group which has driven and settled democracy in this country by overthrowing the dictatorship. The students are very critical of authoritarian governments. And students’ creativity depends more on individual talents and less on cultures. In this light, Grace views Korean pedagogies in terms of her native culture of pedagogy. She does not understand the differences between the two cultures, so she misses the point that students are uncomfortable and awkward just because of the unfamiliar ways of teaching.

#### **4.5. 4 Do not ask and do not answer**

Grace moved to a university as her profession after two years of teaching at a private institute. Because she felt something lacking in her communications with students in the institute, she looked forward to vivid communication with her students at the university. In other words, she expected much interaction in her classes, but she found that her students did not ask her question and did not respond to the questions she asked. She asked her students to volunteer to answer her questions, but no one did.

In particular, when she asked her students to do group work, they did not



participate in the job actively. Some students did not even converse with each other and just sat and listened to other students. Grace believes that language learning is acquired on the basis of students' interaction with a teacher or the other students and by asking and answering processes. She also believes that teaching is composed of asking and answering, dialogues and group works whose basis is the interaction among participants in a class, all based on her experience in a high school and a university she had attended.

She thought that the students were not accustomed to that kind of a new teaching model. She felt that they were passive and used to taking notes of what their teachers deliver to them, and practicing and memorizing it. Students' mute practice of learning was frustrating to Grace and to some degrees a culture shock to her. In order for students to actively participate in her class, she began her first class each semester by orienting her students to her style of teaching.

This guidance of a class may not be enough for students to be actively involved in her class. She may think that this insincere attitude is attributed to the Confucian tradition of Korean students towards their teachers such as submission, conforming, and being docile. Unlike kindergarteners and elementary school students, university students take different attitudes to the foreign teachers than to the Korean ones. I have seen that students are by far more likely to approach the foreign teachers and that Korean professors are more authoritative to students than native English speaking teachers. Therefore, it is less plausible that students' mute responses are due to the Korean culture of education.

One day, one of my students came to me and talked about a foreign teacher; "I

don't have any feeling of learning in his class. He has usually given us a topic to discuss and roamed around groups of students during the class." Students may participate in the discussion, but they are sure to learn nothing from their teacher. They may feel that they just talk to each other. As the same style of teaching was continued repeatedly in every class, students have reduced their interest in the class and not had anything to ask. This means that teaching English for foreigners is not just to talk to students or to give as many opportunities to students to speak as possible. It requires an awareness of how to motivate students and how to negotiate the teachers' beliefs with the students' customs of learning.

Like Simon, Grace understands that their students do not ask her and do not answer her question. As a Korean professor, I have had such experience in my class when I ask students a vague question. Although I said any response or answer is welcomed, students did not try to have an adventure. This is not because they are shy or passive but because they are not confident in their responses. In order to avoid this situation, the teachers have to carefully choose teaching material for their class which fits the students' needs, comprehensibility, and interests.

#### **4.5.5 Open-mindedness and self-identity shaping**

People are believed to be under the influence of a culture with respect to way of life and self-identity. When they encounter a new culture, they respond to it differently. Some are thrilled by unfamiliar and fascinating environments and others respond with different reactions such as awe and discomfort, and both. In

the case of Grace, she recalled that at first she was culturally shocked because there was quite a cultural difference between Korea and Canada. And she came to Korea without much knowledge about this country. She says that she only knew “Korea is close to Japan” (Grace, Oct. 22, 2008).

She has been open-minded and aware of Korean culture, thereby accepting the differences and replacing some of her culture with Korea’s. In this context, open-mindedness is literally to open one’s mind, which makes a willingness to accept other cultures, to repress one’s own culture, and to mix one’s own culture with the other’s. This process of admission, repression and mixing lessens one’s stereotypes and prestige in accordance with the hegemonic cultures of a society.

Simultaneously, open-mindedness enables one to bring a kind of process of learning and adopting a new culture which shapes one’s new cultural identity. This is a mature sense of oneself. Understanding the pedagogic meanings of open-mindedness, Grace put an emphasis on it as in:

Experiencing different countries just does change you. And open your mind to different perspectives and different ways of life. I mean all the things would change you. I still think my self-identity really changed drastically. What I mean your experience shapes what you are. Whatever experiences you have sure will shape you and help grow you as a person. (Grace, Nov. 5, 2008)

Experiencing different cultures exerts an influence on her self-identity by way of opening her mind, which contributes to her getting a mature mind. However, due to being aware of and accepting some of the different cultures, she may lose to some degree her own identities. This is an attempt to trade off her culture

against her host culture. This is a process of being aware of the cultural differences together with reducing and discarding the cultural discrimination between cultures.

## **4.6 Mickey**

### **4.6.1 Background**

Mickey graduated from a university in Canada majoring in Business Administration and came to Korea to get a teaching job with no teaching experience. After graduating from his university, Mickey had been a project manager responsible for managing the working processes concerned with contracts from their conception till completion. He carried out bidding, hiring and managing his team in projects such as dismantling railways. His working schedule was quite different from ordinary people. For instance, he often worked 10 days without holidays and then had 4 days off. This irregular lifestyle made it difficult for him to maintain his social life. He also felt that his job would not offer him any prospects for the future.

After 3 years of experience as a project manager, Mickey decided to leave and hoped to live in an exciting place. He had a friend in Korea who told him about life in Korea, and Mickey thus decided to come to Korea. He found a job after some phone interviews in Canada.

At that time when he first came to Korea, he planned to stay here for one year. But, in a few months, he met a few important friends who he would be with for the rest of his life. He enjoyed mountain biking and liked the healthy life style, thereby determining to stay longer. In his 2<sup>nd</sup> year in Korea, he started to learn Korean language at a language institute in Seoul, in which he broadened his

understanding of Korean people and culture as well as the language.

#### **4.6.2 I came to be a neophyte teacher**

Three days after his arrival in Korea, Mickey started to teach young children at a private institute near Seoul. He had never taught students at any educational institutions in Canada. In fact, he had no idea how to teach in classes, but he met his first day of teaching in a different culture in which English is not publicly used. He explains his first class:

My first class was a single student. The student was five or six years old. So the first thought I had I remember very clearly was “OK, Please don’t cry.” “Please don’t cry.” You are new to this and I am new to this. Let’s try to cooperate, have fun. And so the first week was really hard because I wasn’t used to anything. (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008)

This was the experience of his first day. He had never taught students or been trained how to teach students in Canada. He was thrown into a class to teach with a textbook in his hand. He might not have had any idea how to teach. He might only have wanted to finish his class without any trouble.

Suppose that a young Korean child meets an adult Canadian at a strange place. She or he may be afraid of the westerner. When a young student meets a teacher in a classroom, she or he will not be afraid of her or his teacher. This means that Mickey did not think of himself as a teacher in his class, but as an adult foreigner who is quite different from his students.

He also thought that cooperation was very essential in order to perform his

duty. And he wanted to have fun in his class in order to continue his job without stops or hesitation. This reveals what the instinctive teaching looks like and what the origin of teaching is. Regardless of transmitting and transforming perspectives of teaching, teaching is originally rooted in cooperation, interaction, and communication. This cooperation is embodied in ways of physical, affective interaction and communication among teachers and students.<sup>18</sup> Without cooperation among teachers and students there is no teaching or learning in classes. In other words, teaching and learning are not unilateral activities but bilateral and multilateral activities of interaction and communication.

His lack of teaching skill and managing his class gave him difficulties in his teaching job. This caused him to buy a lot of books about teaching methodology and actually a couple of well-written books on teaching English in Korea. He also downloaded lesson plans on a TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or Other Language) internet site. He studied them and applied his understanding about teaching skills to his class, and improved his teaching ability. This is a process of becoming a self-made teacher which is one of Britzman's (2003) cultural myths of teaching.<sup>19</sup> In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year he thought of himself as a teacher after training himself as a language teacher through studying and application.

#### **4.6.3 I found a better position**

Like other native English speaking teachers, Mickey pointed out the

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<sup>18</sup> What I mean by "physical, affective interaction and communication" is the non-verbal component of oral communication (eye contacts, facial expressions, etc.).

<sup>19</sup> As for the identity of the teacher, Britzman (2003) points out three myths such as "everything depends upon the teacher," "the teacher is the expert," and "teachers as self-made."

managerial problem at private institutes. Especially, he talked about the indirect expressions of the contract between the foreign teacher and the owner. The contract he signed at a private institute said, “You may have to work on weekends” (Mickey, Oct. 31, 2008). There was a controversy about interpreting “may” between Mickey and the owner. While the owner thought that the expression meant “you work every weekend,” Mickey thought that he might work once every two months. Moreover, there was no negotiation between the two sides and only threats. Mickey remarks,

He (the owner of a private institute) said do it this way or you’ll be fired. ... if you break contracts early you’ll probably lose a lot of money. But if you complete the contract, you’ll probably get an extra bonus at the end. (Mickey, Oct. 31, 2008)

There were no options and negotiations, only accepting his interpretation of the contract. Under the threatening interpretation, Mickey had no power at all and felt trapped. The contract only allowed him to leave after completing his term of work.

He found a teaching position at a university and remarked, “it’s much clearer and I think it’s much more win-win. It’s a much fairer contract” (Mickey, Oct. 31, 2008). He is satisfied with his new working condition. He may be paid less than at the private institute because he teaches fewer classes than at the institute. He may think his salary is less than in other universities. But he believes his present working environment is one of the best places to teach. He told a prospective teacher being interviewed, “... very honestly I think it’s fantastic. Don’t work here



for money. I work here because I have really enjoyed the working environment. Perfect” (Mickey, Oct. 31, 2008).

Although he does not seem to be satisfied with his salary, Mickey seems to be content with his present working conditions. He mentions that one of the reasons he likes his present job is the flexibility of his scheduling, which allows him to improve himself. He has applied for three companies in Korea and has now studied Business Management at a graduate school in Seoul. Studying this discipline instead of Education is due to his desire to work in a business field in Korea. For Mickey, teaching is not his final goal as a job but a temporary one for his objective. He is not regarded as a full-time teacher but as a temporary teacher because he may leave teaching in case he finds a job at a company.

#### **4.6.4 I am a professional teacher**

Mickey introduced the environment of his university, in which his colleagues are different from other universities’. His coworkers are very motivated and helpful in shaping his teaching identity. He attributes nearly 60% of his teaching identity to his coworkers (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008). He expresses his thought about his coworkers’ tip: “Wow, fantastic. This is exactly what I need” (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008). His teacher identity is characterized as being a motivator and a facilitator as well as an educator. He tried to make a motivated environment in his classes and assumed a facilitating role in a high level business classes. These efforts reveal that he is more concerned with caring about his job and, by far, more than being a pay-taker.

Mickey attributes the formation of his teacher identities to his coworkers, students and articles and books which are related with language teaching and learning. He does not mention Korean colleagues as a source for forming his identity. It seems that Mickey does not regard Korean colleagues as facilitators or mentors even though some of them are more experienced than his foreign coworkers in teaching students and know students and the teaching environment more than his colleagues. This is concerned with his consciousness about teaching English in Korea. Although he had never been trained teacher education, he said, “I’ve always been a professional” (Mickey, Nov. 7, 2008). He even referred to this applying to all Canadian teachers as in: “I’ve never seen Canadian teachers act in an unprofessional manner” (Mickey, Nov. 7, 2008). This means that, as he believes himself to be professional, he does not need to consult Korean colleagues. Then another question comes out: Why has he attributed his teacher identity to his coworkers and students?

This question is closely related with the word “being professional.” Compared with Korean colleagues, Mickey is by far more excellent than Korean teachers in terms of proficiency of English language. In this context, that he is a professional refers to being a proficient user of English. This belief uncovers some fundamental consciousness which Mickey holds. A language teacher should be a proficient user of the language. This is the reason why Mickey was hired at an institute. This also covers linguisticism, which refers to “ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between

groups which are defined on the basis of language” (Phillipson, 2009, p. 23). He believes that he holds more “power and resources (both material and immaterial)” than Korean teachers. He even thinks that “Korean teachers are not qualified” (Mickey, Nov. 7, 2008). So, he does not need to depend on or consult Korean teachers in teaching English in Korea. This results in ignoring the inherent culture in a country and no need for the qualification of English teachers in the educational profession outside native English speaking countries. He believes that “he doesn’t need a technical background in conversation” (Mickey, Nov. 7, 2008). Although he puts stress on teaching experience, it means only native English speakers’ experience, not Korean teachers’.

#### **4.6.5 I live in pedagogic conflicts between two cultures**

Korea is a mix of its own traditions and culture and the Western traditions of scientific and economic development. Perceiving these two, Mickey points out that Korean society is “very one-sided” and “so tightly together” with respect to the attitudes and behavior of Korean people. He also indicates that the country put emphasis on “tangible value achievement” in terms of every effort of education, research, product development and the others, which is related with the aspirations for economic development in Korea. These ethnic characteristics have an important bearing on the overall environment of pedagogy. This intertwined characteristic of people refers to the closeness of a society and may make foreigners feel alienated from the staff of their affiliated organization.

In line with this cultural estrangement, Mickey was displeased with the

pedagogic environment that teaching should be valued in terms of tangible achievement such as grades and score on tests. For instance, nearly all companies require job seekers to submit their TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) score sheet. University students are trying to get a high score on the test and want to take courses which meet their needs. So, Korean professors attempt to adjust their courses to those needs and wants, which inevitably results in a standardized form of materials and syllabi that conform to the standardized test. In order to grasp the content of the standardized material and teaching within a short period, students don't need to be interested in other materials but only in memorizing the standardized form of knowledge. So, they are very accustomed to memorizing it.

This standard-centeredness is foreign to Mickey as he was familiar with Canadian educational practices. Moreover, as a native speaker of English, foreign teachers don't need to take a test of English communication such as TOEIC (Test of English as an International Communication). Because he has not been trained in teacher education, he might have been saturated with his acquisition of his mother tongue and with his learning of a second language in his youth. So, he even likened English language institutes in Korea as "English factories" in which the factory workers, teachers, worked for manufacturing a good quality of students. They got out of the factory with high scores of the TOEIC test (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008).

As an alternative to the factory metaphor, Mickey suggested an English school in which all subjects are "completely taught in English" (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008).

Chemistry and Biology as well as English are taught in English as in the Immersion program in Canada. He indicates that there is no such standardized test and that students don't need to memorize the standardized form of knowledge. He is sure to be displeased with the inflexible, standardized forms of educational culture in Korea.

However, it is clear that he may believe his experience of learning in Canada to be a desirable pedagogic model. He indicated that a good model for teaching a foreign language is an immersion program. The Canadian pedagogic environment is good for practicing the immersion program because the country has implemented a bilingual policy and has enough qualified teachers who are proficient in using both languages. However, there is no such bilingual policy and not enough qualified teachers who can teach their subjects in English in Korea. Considering these circumstantial conditions, Mickey's suggestion is not feasible or may come true far into the future.

Contemplating Mickey's thought reveals that he believes the Korean pedagogic tradition is not just different from the Canadian one, but worse than his culture. Mickey also indicates that the Korean pedagogic tradition has to change by emulating and adapting the pedagogic tradition of his home country. Thus, the Canadian pedagogic tradition is a standard to model after.

From a student's point of view, there are two standards which they have to observe. On the one hand, students have to prepare to get high scores on the standardized tests. On the other hand, they have to try to meet the native speakers' norms which Mickey suggests. For them, getting a high score in the test takes

precedence over meeting the native speakers' norms because the former meets a dire need for them to get a job after graduation. This gap makes Mickey feel that students were "demotivated in his mandatory class" and that they were "not interested in their homework" which Mickey assigned (Mickey, Oct. 31, 2008). Another disjunction between Mickey and the students is caused by the students' unfamiliarity with the foreign staff's teaching method based on the acquisition of a mother tongue. They are familiar with pattern practices and have rare chances to spontaneously respond to the other's talk. This learning practice makes students less confident and comfortable in using English. So, Mickey indicated that Korean students need to be "more confident and comfortable in English".

In conclusion, Mickey knew the Korean way of pedagogic practices, but he believed his own pedagogic practice was better than the Korean one. Although he knew what students need and expect him to do, Mickey did not care about it because he believed his pedagogy is better. He did not admit the value of Korean practice and pursued his belief. He also did not care for the students' learning practice. Mickey may expect students to discard their accustomed modes of learning and adopt his mode of teaching.

#### **4.6.6 I have to be open-minded and patient**

Mickey maintains that he has two identities in his mind: one is a teacher and the other is an ambassador. He refers to the identity of ambassador as "being responsible for his actions, and mature adult manner" (Mickey, Nov. 7, 2008). He

indicates that he behaves well as a person who came from a cultured and advanced country. As he lives long, there are some changes of his attitude from less objective to more objective. He first felt that “this is wrong, this is bad” about some cultures and practices of Koreans (Oct. 24, 2008). As he lived longer, he has been changed, “this is not wrong, this is not bad, but this is different” (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008). The shift in attitude has been applied to the formation of teacher identity. He presented attitudinal conditions for good native English speaking teachers. They have to be “open-minded, patient, and have willingness to improve their teaching methods” (Mickey, Nov. 7, 2008).

Among these, being open-minded and patient has something to do with his identity of ambassador. In order to keep a mannered behavior, he indicates that he has to be open-minded and patient about foreign cultures and practices though he does not accept and admit them. The two features have also contributed to shifting his perspective of understanding of foreign cultures and practices. When he first arrived in Korea six years ago, he saw many kinds of behavior among Koreans that were different from his people. He cited an extremely strange and illegal example he observed. One day he saw a motorbike on a sidewalk, and at first he thought this is wrong (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008). Although he could not understand it, he could not change it. In other words, there is no choice but tolerating and admitting the practice. He tried to have positive arguments: “What’s wrong with that? Because that saves time. What’s wrong with that? The sidewalk’s not full. It doesn’t cause any problem” (Mickey, Oct. 24, 2008). In this way, he has tried to admit the illogical, unreasonable practices of some Koreans. In order to admit

such strange matters, he had to be open-minded and patient about them. He has changed his perspectives from “less objective” to “more objective” and from “negative arguments” to “positive arguments.”

However, it is evident that there is not a fundamental, underlying change in his mind from the perspective of Koreans. It is customary that, when Koreans ask a waiter or waitress to do for them, they yell at him or her at a restaurant. As it is rude to yell in Canada, he feels it is wrong to yell. So he still cannot yell in a restaurant and just tries to make eye-contact with a waiter or a waitress when he wants to order (Mickey, Nov. 7, 2008). In this light, it is highly probable that he does not accept different custom and practices in a foreign country, but accepts them. This is a strategy of avoiding mental conflict and seeking mental composure because resisting them will not solve or change anything. Thus he hides his internal convictions under his gentle face.



## **4.7 Harry**

### **4.7.1 Background**

Harry has been working at a university near Seoul for eight years. Before teaching at the university, he had taught young students and adults at several different private English academies near Seoul for 4 years. This is different from the other participants in terms of years of employment. He worked longer than the other participants at private educational institutes and then moved to a university.

Harry had some different experiences from the other participants in Canada. He was very autonomous and independent in his youth. When he was 16, he ran away from home without completing his high school course. He had several different jobs in construction and factories in Canada and Germany. When he got older he decided to go to university and continue studying. He entered a university in western Canada at the age of 35 and graduated from the university at the age of 40. He had two Bachelors degrees, one in History and another in Education, and also has a teaching certificate for elementary school. Although he had a teaching certificate, he had difficulties in finding a teaching job in Canada. Therefore, he decided to find a job abroad and came to Korea right after he graduated from the university in 1996.

When he first came to Korea, he had a good friend who taught him about Korea and how to understand Korean ways of life. He remembered him and ascribed his long stay in Korea to his help: “The reason I lived in Korea so long is

my first tricky teaching from my friend” (Nov. 6, 2008). His start in life here was very good because he received help from a Korean. As he has worked at private institutions and a university, he has had a lot experience at schools and in social life. He felt a sense of conflict due to the differences between his beliefs and reality at his workplace and society. He believes that he is a professional and a reasonable person. However, the Korean staff does not regard him as a professional.

#### **4.7.2 I am a professional teacher**

Being different from the other participants, Harry critically points out the qualities of native English speaking teachers as being “very young, lacking of courage, first travel experience and not knowing how to teach” (Harry, Oct. 30, 2008). He regards them as just native English speakers, not teachers. He indicates that they are not professionals and are less qualified for doing their job. Harry also noted that native English speaking teachers were not treated as professionals because most of them have been less qualified in terms of educational backgrounds and experience. He conceded “they (Korean administrators) are right, and we aren’t qualified and not professional” (Harry, Nov. 6, 2008, my parenthesis).

However, Harry believes that he is different from other native English speaking teachers with respect to teaching experience and teaching qualification. He believed that he was well qualified and professional in three respects: a postgraduate degree in teaching English, teaching experience, and being a native

English speaker. He completed an MA (Master of Arts) program in Applied Linguistics four years ago while serving at the school. And he has taught students at private language institutes and a university over 12 years in Korea. He explicitly mentioned that “English is owned by me” (Harry, Nov. 6, 2008). In other words, he played a role of a gatekeeper of keeping standard forms of English in the light of what he said, “Konglish (an English variety used in Korea) is terrible” (Harry, Nov. 6, 2008).

However, he felt that they did not treat him as a professional and as a real teacher. He drew an instance in his school: “This university opens the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) program, but they didn’t come to us to develop the program. They had Korean teachers develop the program” (Harry, Nov. 6, 2008). As he indicates, Korean professors believe that the foreign teachers are not qualified to teach graduate-level students because they did not take professional courses required for an English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) professional. Korean faculty generally does not believe that a man or a woman holding a master degree is a professional in academia. If any professor has a Ph.D. degree in TESOL, he or she may be believed to have an ability to draw up a curriculum of TESOL program. In his school, there are two Korean professors who held Ph. D degrees in TESOL and Applied Linguistics. They may not need to ask for advice from him because they believe that they can develop a TESOL program.

It is generally conceded that most native English speaking teachers held a bachelor degree and a few had a master degree, but nearly all Korean faculty

members hold a doctoral degree. In spite of this academic degree gap between Korean and foreign teaching staff, Harry believed himself to be a professional in the sphere of teaching English. Korean staff, however, believed that master degrees are not professional or technical and are simply an intermediate step for a doctoral degree.

More importantly, native English speaking teachers believe themselves to be professional in teaching English because they are the innate owners of the English language. However, they might not think of themselves as a linguistic expert or a professional in their home country, Canada, just because they are native speakers. Harry implies that the innate linguistic competence is more of a significant factor than an academic degree in judging expertise in Korea. He mainly places more emphasis on knowledge than teacher training. However, this neglected component is also as important as linguistic knowledge. The course of attaining a postgraduate degree offers to develop fundamental understanding of curriculum and pedagogy by reading articles and books concerned.

Another important component is attitude toward students. The teacher should have tolerance which enables him or her to embrace students' negative responses as well as positive ones. When they speak to foreign teachers, Korean students are extremely tense, nervous and intimidated because of their poor ability of using English.

However, Harry tried to put his tolerance and acceptance of students behind him. He states: "I am not the reason why they (students) don't work hard in my class. I'm not the reason English is boring or they're tired of their studying

English. So I mean I don't allow myself to get frustrated" (Harry, Oct 30, 2008; my parenthesis). It is not easy to sit with this because all faults are attributed to students not teachers. This attitude of buck-passing is not believed to be a professional teacher because "the professional educator strives to create a learning environment that nurtures to fulfillment the potential of all students" (AAE Code of Ethics for Educators).

In addition, Harry notes that most native English speaking teachers are lacking in qualifications as a teacher due to their irrelevant majors and for lack of postgraduate studies, and little teaching experience. He understands the qualifications of teachers are composed of skills and experience. This indicates that being a native English speaker does not mean being a good English teacher and that he or she needs to be trained how to teach. However, being a good English teacher is more than being a native English speaker who owns the knowledge of the language and holding an education-related postgraduate degree. Care for students is one of the fundamental conditions for being a good teacher. In order to keep this personality, he or she has to understand the educational culture of students.

#### **4.7.3 I am a privileged teacher.**

In Korean culture, teachers are people who receive respect from their students and are "as important as the king and the father" (Weidman et. al., 2000, p.19). In particular, they attained an almost sacred status because "it was the school and the teacher that served as the principal source of ethical counsel" in the Chosun period

(1392-1910) (Seth, 2002, p. 13). This duplet of erudite-teacher ideology has been extended into the current Korean society. Korean teachers, thus, are assumed to be moral and ethical counselors as teachers. It is quite common that students call their teacher when they have some questions and call him or her out of office hours when they have urgent problems such as sudden absence and illness. This is a kind of politeness in order to avoid absence without leave, which are bad manners. When they have some private troubles, they may even consult their teacher. These conventions seem to be a shock to Harry. When he had dinner with a woman teacher, she received a phone call from one of her students. Harry remembered that time,

“I was shocked. I mean you know in Canada we would never give a student our private phone number. ... They don't know we have husbands, wives, children you know. ... And Korean teachers are very open to students. ... We aren't still perfect now. If I get involved in students' private life and I give them advice, what if the advice is wrong, what if the student gets hurt because of my private advice. (Harry, Nov. 6, 2008)

Harry had a grasp of the roles of Korean teachers which include advising the students as well helping them to learn in their classes. He conceives that it is deemed as an intrusion in the area of students' privacy. He believed that this is an irrational attitude of both the teacher and students. He even might consider that they are less civilized and have to remedy this practice.

However, Korean teachers think that advising students is one of their jobs and may even be more important than teaching them in their classroom. Thus, teaching

does not end in the classroom but continues outside the classroom in Korea. There is a conceptual difference of “teachers” between Harry and Korean teachers. For Koreans, “teachers” mean those who have highly moral and behavioral qualifications to model after as well as those who teach students. Due to this concept of teachers, it is generally accepted that students may ask for advice from their teachers.

From this respect, there are differences between the Korean and Canadian conception of the qualification of being a teacher. Korean teachers are open to students and let them know their personal phone number, but Canadian teachers keep their privacy very tightly. And Korean teachers advise their students about their personal life as well as school life, but Canadian teachers avoid such situations because they may feel they are interfering.

These differences assume that Korean teachers believe themselves to be qualified enough to consult their students on the basis of their experience, knowledge and personality, and moral sense, but Canadian teachers are reasonable and cautious in that human beings are fallible and do not have perfect personality. These differences reflect the difference in the common sense views of teachers between two cultures. Korean teachers are believed to be equipped with sufficient knowledge, and good personality and character, but the Canadian teachers are equipped with professional knowledge and reasonable thought.

Upon this understanding of teachers’ responsibility, he does not care about the personal life of students, but mainly cares about transmitting knowledge. “I mean I have a responsibility as a teacher. I have to give grades. I have to give assignments.

(Harry, Nov. 6, 2008)” From this, we understand that Harry is mainly concerned with teaching and evaluating students. He seems to be highly directive and authoritative in that he plays a role of a “giver” such as giving a lecture, grades and assignment. He is in a position of supervisor or invigilator.

Harry also uses grading as a tool to enforce his power on students who have to be obedient to him. The students may not have any power but submit to the threats. This may be a common thing in that all faculty, staff including Korean professors, use grades to enforce obedience.

However, as for the foreign staff’s class, there is another cause of students’ negligence. This seems to be caused by the students’ lack of English proficiency. They might believe that English proficiency is too big an object to achieve. And thus they are always discouraged and frustrated at the English class. In order to help them learn English, the foreign instructor needs to encourage them to do it and give them confidence in using English. Instead, the foreign teacher does not take their stress into consideration, and enforces obedience on them by using grades. This also looks like white colonizers imposing their knowledge on the colonized people without their interests and motives, and conditions. Harry seems to be in a position of privilege because he inherited Western culture as well as English language.

This privileged consciousness may bring about another conflict with Korean professors and the institution. Harry set forth his views of the Korean version of English:

Konglish is terrible. There are so many people who learn English and create



their own English. For example, ‘eye shopping’ it doesn’t mean ‘window shopping.’ When I teach my students they say things in Korean English. Two people communicate even though the two varieties are quite different but teaching is different. I teach them to be perfect. English is owned by me. I think they feel that way. (Harry, Nov 6, 2008)

As English has been spread around the world, there are many varieties of English such as Australian English, Indian English, Singaporean English, etc. Harry is very nervous about the varieties of English such Korean English (named as Konglish). He stresses that teachers have to teach students perfect English. This assumes that Harry is a perfect English speaker and that Korean teachers may not be perfect. This, further, implies that Koreans do not teach English. In addition, he claims that native English speaking teachers like him are perfect speakers because they own English. As an owner of English, he functions as a gate keeper of English.

#### **4.7.4 We are discriminated against**

Although he has lived Korea over 12 years, he still thinks of himself as a person who is alienated from Korean society. He claims that this is due to the exclusion of Koreans and Korean culture. He describes: “Korea can be a really difficult culture because I am a foreigner and they [Koreans] tend to not include me in them” (Harry, Oct. 30, 2008).

In particular, Harry realized keenly this exclusion in the university he worked. He points out that native English speaking teachers are excluded from the university administration and decision-making. They are not given opportunities

to attend the university committees and meetings. They are excluded in the decision-making which is keenly concerned with their specialties.

Harry's university requires native English speaking teachers to get a TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or Other Language) certificate. If they do not have the certificate, they are recommended to attend the TESOL program provided by the university. As for this, Harry provokes controversies on their participation: "they are regarded as a professional and functioned as a "window dressing" role in the classroom" (Harry, Nov. 6, 2008). Harry indicated that the "show-off" intention of the institution is camouflaged under the justification of improving the quality of the foreign teachers. The university might show off that the foreigners are attending the program. This might be an inducement to potential Korean teachers who planned to enroll in the program.

This "show-off" strategy reveals that the university opens and operates a program on the ground of the economic benefits. Also, Korean staff put the foreign staff in the lower position than they have. This also assumes that the Korean faculty conceives native English speaking teachers as unprofessional. However, Harry conceives native English speakers as more "professional" than Korean professors who hold a Ph.D. in TESOL. And the Korean staff did not give him an opportunity to participate in the program as an instructor. Thus, the discriminatory situation makes him get frustrated.

Harry gives another example of the exclusion even in their specialties. He points out that there is a strange name of a building on campus: "The building is called *high-tech center*. *High-tech center* is a terrible name. It sounds like an

electronic store. It sounds like a *high-mart*. The name should be *advanced technology center*” (Harry, Oct. 30, 2008). There are around 40 native English speaking instructors in Harry’s university. Although the university decided to name the new building with an English name, they did not ask the native English speaking staff about the name. He did not intend to criticize the strange name of the building. But, he was very frustrated partly because the Korean administrators did not appreciate or respect the foreign staff’s value and partly because they did not recognize their existence.

Through these examples, it can be asserted that the foreign instructors are situated in a powerless position or in a position of receiving directions. This may be correct in a way. It is generally believed that Koreans conceive native English speakers as temporary staff, and they may leave schools at any time whenever they want. This belief is common in Korean society. Harry knows this quite well and makes a joke: “I sometimes make a joke in my classroom. When I walk on a street, some say to me *Welcome to Korea*. I have lived here for 12 years. So, they don’t really understand that foreigners live among them. To them, all are visitors” (Harry, Oct 30, 2008). The administrators may regard the foreign instructors as guest teaching staff rather than regular faculty staff.

Also, the school administrators even think that they are less qualified to do the administrative jobs partly because of the language barrier between them and Korean staff and partly because they have less experience with administrative jobs. They may believe that the foreign staff is less qualified as experts because most of them are only Bachelor-degree holders. This also reveals that the Korean

professors hold doctoral degrees and thus are regarded as experts, and positions the foreign staff as laymen. This makes him keenly frustrated because he has confidence that he is a professional English teacher and the owner of the English language.

Furthermore, Koreans seem to him to be exclusive and closed to outsiders, and do not tend to include foreigners in their culture. This may be associated with mono-ethnic and monolingual (Korean) centeredness. But this is not similar to racism, which discriminates one race from others. Compared with North American and European countries, Koreans have much less chance to meet not merely Westerners but other ethnic groups. Thus the people seem to believe that foreigners are guests or short-term sojourners.

#### **4.7.5 I am living in an in-between space.**

Despite the latent consciousness, Korea has been changed as the country has been globalized and as foreigners have come into and lived in it. Historically, Korea had met many foreign soldiers in the Korean War in 1950-1953 and many foreign athletes and tourists in 1988. From then on, Koreans have seen foreigners increasingly year by year. As their population is increasing, the social systems are changing for foreigners slowly. Koreans' rare experience of meeting foreigners has made foreigners feel uncomfortable in their life in Korea.

Small numbers of foreigners have little effect on the society and the life of Koreans, who are strongly communal and mainly composed of mono-ethnicity. These complicatedly conspire to bring the dichotomy between Koreans and

foreigners in Korean minds which would cause foreigners to feel exclusion and discomfort in this society. In fact, Koreans tend to distinguish foreigners from Koreans without consideration of their countries and expect that the foreigners are put outside the boundary of their culture.

Harry is definitely one of those foreigners, that is, an outsider in Korean culture. Harry knew this reality and so he said, “It’s true I am not a Korean” (Harry, Oct. 30, 2008). He has long lived in Korea but he does not affiliate his identity with the country because of the closeness of Korean culture stemming from communal and mono-ethnic culture. This cultural characteristic is different from the multicultural society in Canada. This cultural distance is a crucial factor which determines Harry’s identity. So far distant are the two cultures of Korea and Canada that it prevents Harry from gaining a new identity.

Simultaneously, Harry also said, “[and] I am not a Canadian. I have been away from Canada for a long time”(Harry, Oct. 30, 2008). He has been away from his home country for 12 years. He had been to Canada only three times since coming to Korea. Harry reveals his conflicting identity in double dimensions: space and culture. Regarding space, he considers himself not to be a Canadian because he has not lived in the country. Furthermore, when he came back his home country, he got some cultural differences caused by a long stay away from Canada. The physical factor exerted an influence on his identity and made him deny his national identity.

Due to spatial and cultural distance, Harry describes his identity as neither “a Canadian” nor “a Korean.” In other words, he does not anchor his identity in one

culture but floats his identity on both cultures. He finds that this fluidity is due to the conflicts between the two cultures. He mentions their differences: “Korea has a very close culture. Korea is very different from the West. I don’t think it’s foreigners’ fault, or Koreans’ fault. But those two things next together [*sic*] make a terrible combination” (Harry, Oct. 30, 2008). From this, it is revealed that he is living in the state of the combination of two cultures which are opposite to each other in terms of their individualistic and communal grounds of thoughts. It is also probable that he reveals a strong animosity to the two cultures partly because he cannot become implanted in the Korean society and partly because he is floating between two cultures.

## **4.8 Summary**

In this chapter, I have categorized the scripts which I had recorded with respect to the themes which the native English speaking teachers talk about. They talk about their feelings and beliefs which they have formed during their stay in Korea. In this section, I briefly summarize the feelings and beliefs about their living and working conditions.

### **Peter**

Peter seems to live between Canadian and Korean culture, which implies that he does not settle down into any one culture. Although he has lived Korean for over fifteen years, he still feels comfortable and lives in his place without interruption from the Korean culture. When he met Koreans at the school in which he works, he may have conflicts in class depending on the students' responses about his teaching. At the same time, he also believes himself to be only a language service provider. Although he wants to contribute to the pedagogy by suggesting his own opinions about school practices, he has not had such opportunities due to a lack of participation in decision-making committees. As such, he has no power to carry out his intentions except for in the class.

### **Nick**

Like Peter, Nick also feels that he is powerless in the school administration.

He points out the significance of teacher education for native English speaking teachers. He mentions that it is very easy to become an English teacher in Korea. The requirements are that the applicants are a Bachelor degree holder and have a willingness to teach in Korean educational institutions. Before hiring them, there may be a brief phone call which attempts to confirm the requirements. As described in the guide brochure issued by English Teaching in Korea (EPIK), “most schools out there have neither the staff nor the resources to train their teachers properly before they step into the classroom.”<sup>20</sup> Nick likens this lack of introduction of teaching in class to the baptism by fire (Britzman, 2003), “I was pretty much thrown directly into the fire.” Over the years, he has learned how to live in Korea. He has become open toward Korean pedagogical and socio-cultural practices. At the same time, he seems to live outside Korean culture because Koreans tolerate his misbehavior within the perspective of Korean culture which is based on social hierarchy.

### **Simon**

Interestingly, Simon describes acculturation in three stages. In the first place, native English speaking teachers are interested in Korean culture and practices which are different from theirs. Next, they are hostile to Korean culture and practices during which Simon may find sources of criticism about every practice and event which he experiences. After passing this period, he reduces the criticisms and negotiates the controversies which he feels. This stage is still an on-

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<sup>20</sup> See [www.EnglishTeachingKorea.com](http://www.EnglishTeachingKorea.com)



going process because the stage of full acculturation is only an ideal goal which cannot be reached. He always has some Canadian ways of thought behaviors. Simon, especially, puts an emphasis on the implanting of his own pedagogical culture into his class. He urges his students to use the Microsoft Word program and criticizes the Korean pedagogical culture such as focusing on the explanation of textbooks, memorization of knowledge and test scores. He also believes that teacher education is necessary for the native English speaking teachers to have a good foundation to teach conversational English.

### **Grace**

Grace seems to be surprised at the reality of educational culture and practices in Korea, particular because nearly all elementary and secondary-school students go to Hakwons (private educational institutions) after school. This phenomenon is quite contradictory to her perception of education. She believes that education is conducted on a public undertaking, not by private corporations. In other words, she contends that education should not be treated like a business. Her comment has great implications for Korean pedagogical culture. Korean educational institutions “act like a profit-making business rather than a public or philanthropic trust.” (Ohmann cited in Giroux, 2007, p. 103) The university or other educational institutions prefer cost-effective rather than educational-effective terms. Hakwons put more emphasis on attracting students than on teaching them in good educational conditions. Universities prefer to hire part-time lecturers rather than

full-time faculty staff in order to cut costs and to gain profit. Nearly all educational institutions seem to be obsessed with getting high scores in the standardized tests of their students. Another difference is concerned with students. Grace seems to have frustration about her students' silence in her class. They attended her class, but they show little response about her teaching by not asking and responding to it. Ironically, this indicates that her conversation class has to be conducted with little interaction. She believes that the students do not open their mind to her teaching and culture. Therefore, she places an emphasis on the open-mindedness of the students.

### **Mickey**

Mickey compares the educational conditions between Hakwon and the university in which he works. He asserts that Hakwons are a business which is not interested with the quality of education. In such a situation, he believes himself not to be a teacher but an entertainer. For instance, before the enrolling period every month in the Hakwon where Mickey once worked, he was asked by the boss to entertain the students and to induce them to enroll in another course. On the other hand, the university allows him to use his own teaching styles and to have more time to prepare for his class. As a typical teacher without educational academic backgrounds, he is sure to have many difficulties in conducting his class. But, there was no staff who could assume teacher training. Accordingly, he has inevitably developed his teaching skills or know-how by depending directly on his

experience and indirectly on his colleagues'. Compared with the other participants, Mickey seems to sincerely attempt to understand the cultural or customary differences between Korean and Canadian societies. He even tries to understand such illegal or unacceptable behaviors as scooter-driving on the sidewalks in terms of a cultural difference. In this vein, he seems to make every effort to avoid his internal conflicts by being open-minded and patient of the differences. He also seems to repress his thought instead of erupting his opinions in terms of social justice.

### **Harry**

Having lived over fifteen years in Korea, Harry's comments are to some degree suggestive of how the native English speaking teachers have lived. He believes that he has been discriminated and disregarded from the university in which he serves. He believes himself to be a professional teacher, but the Korean faculty and administrative staff do not regard him as a professional one. Unlike many foreign teachers, he has completed the MA (Master of Arts) course in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) while working at the university which supports his claim that he is a professional teacher. From the perspective of the Korean staff, the MA degree is not sufficient qualification for being accepted as a professional in any discipline. Harry also feels that the university exploits him to show off without paying any attention to his professionalism. He believes himself to be a window dressing for the benefit of

the university. He strongly believes that he is discriminated against in his work place. In this light, his saying, “I am living in an in-between space,” may refer to him living outside the space in which he lives.

To sum up, the native English speaking teachers live with feelings of exclusion, being disregarded, and discriminated against. At the same time, they may have attempted to accept such unequal conditions by bearing exclusion, disregard, and discrimination against the Korean people and culture in their minds. They believe that they are professional language teachers and that the Korean pedagogical practices need to be modeled after Western ones.

But the reality is that they are living in Korea and that they have to admit the professional inequality. What matters with this is that the Korean people and staff are not aware of the real voices which the native English speaking teachers bear in their minds due to little or no communication between the two parties. Due to little or no interaction, the native English speaking teachers may live in the other world outside the real Korean society in which they live. To a great degree, they may enjoy their freedom outside the domain of the society, but they may not be allowed to enter it as a member of the group.

To make matters worse, the Korean staff may even think of their real voices as their complaints against the Korean pedagogical practices or the values of Korean culture. They do not pay any attention to their voices and the conflicts which they have. Yet, the latent voices have come out. Some native English speaking teachers organized the Association for Teachers of English in Korea (ATEK) in 2009. Its

president, Tom Rainey-Smith, spoke about their interests at a press conference in Seoul: “We need information that helps us understand, protect our rights and gives us better access to services, improves our teaching, and makes living and working in Korea more convenient.” (cited in Korea Times, Nov., 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009) The association (ATEK) raises awareness of the conditions of native English speaking teachers in Korea which are mainly concerned with exclusion from accessing information, and levels of salaries and welfare. It speaks for the voices born in the minds of its members and starts to demand the rectification of the unequal conditions of their living and working places. In order to rectify the social injustices which the native English speaking teachers bear in their minds, it is necessary to find out their causes with respect to the diachronic and synchronic conditions with which they are concerned with. In the next chapter, I am going to discuss the fundamental conditions which are related with the conflicts from the perspective of linguistic traditions.

## Chapter 5 Encountering Languages and Cultures

### 5.1 Introduction

When one of my participants told me that the mix of Korean and Canadian cultures is “terrible”, I was shocked and started to reflect on his comment. I had a besetting idea that the native English speakers might feel frustration because there is a conflict between their home and their host culture. In other words, they might not have any conflicts with Koreans, but their culture may conflict with Korean culture. This mismatched encountering would cause the native English speaking teachers to frustrate both the foreign staff and Koreans who they meet. It is not easy to compare the differences between cultures because so many factors and areas<sup>21</sup> are concerned with the cultures. Among them, I am going to narrow my focus on the comparison of English and Korean languages. I do this because language is not only a device to communicate among human beings. It is also a mode of human existence Heidegger refers to language as a “house of human existence” (Heidegger, cited in Smith, 2006). Second, language encompasses human traditions (Gadamer, 1989) and has traces of human tradition. My research is conducted on the basis of conversations with the participants. In this chapter, I am going to investigate the characteristics of Korean culture in terms of Korean

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<sup>21</sup> The elements concerned with culture involve language, artifacts, social organization, authority and decision-making arrangements, underlying spiritual or religious beliefs and structures, forms of welfare arrangements, art and music, forms of property ownership or usage and a means of educating the young to assure perpetuation of the system (Durkheim, cited in Harrison et. al., 2004).

language and attempt to interpret the recurring themes with my participants. I am also going to investigate the foreign staff's perspectives in terms of their linguisticism<sup>22</sup> and cultural traditions. The historical consciousness enables us to “know about the otherness of the other, about the past in its otherness” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 354). That is, the historical consciousness about the English and Korean language provides us with discerning the otherness of Koreans and native English speaking teachers, respectively.

## **5.2 Discourse of Cultural Contacts**

### **5.2.1 Cultural Contacts**

There are many discourses which help to understand the lived experience of native English speaking teachers. They came from Canada. It is conceived that they saw their surrounding phenomena from the perspective of a Western culture. However, they are living in an Eastern culture which may be quite different from their own. Their distinctive perspectives are named as “Orientalism” by Said (1979)<sup>23</sup>. This difference seems to be exaggerated by the Westerners in the sense that “the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European” (Cromer in Said, 1979, p. 39). Further, Said indicated the Westerner's biased ideas about the Orient: “its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness” (Said,

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<sup>22</sup> Linguicism refers to “ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (Phillipson, 2009, p. 23).

<sup>23</sup> In the book “Orientalism” Said almost never refers to East Asia. He is primarily speaking about the Middle East. Although Said was not speaking about Korea or East Asia per se, his message can certainly be applied because many native English speakers originally came from Europe and are believed to inherit its traditions.

1979, p. 205). These biases are not only founded on differences between cultures but on discrimination of one culture over another. In comparison with the Easterners, the Westerners may hold a hegemonic idea that the Europeans are superior to the Easterners in nearly all spheres. Besieged with the hegemonic idea, the Westerners used to prefer the word “non-Westerners” rather than “Easterners” which reflects their situatedness in the central position. This belief is revealed in Aoki’s (1996/2005) anecdote in entitling a new course which intends to broaden students’ vision of the world at a ministerial committee. The chair of the committee put forth “Western and non-Western Civilizations” as the course title and “the silence that followed suggested approval. I teasingly broke in and offered “Eastern and non-Eastern Civilizations”. There was a shuffling of words and bodies indicating for the disappearance of the word “West”” (p. 313). This ethnocentric and superior imaginary position of the Westerners based on geopolitical, cultural, ethnic perspectives is so pervasive in their minds that Said (1979) asserts that “it is therefore correct that every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric” (p. 204).

Recognizing this discriminative view, some distinguished philosophers tried to attend to the Others<sup>24</sup> by caring for them (Heidegger, 1996) and by respecting the exteriority of the Other (Levinas, 1999), and the bind of the autonomy of the self and the solicitude for one’s neighbor (Ricoeur, 1994). According to Heidegger (1996), the self has abilities to care for the Other and needs the Other for keeping

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<sup>24</sup> I coined the word “Other” from Levinas (1969, trans. by Lingis). The capital letter “O” in “Other” is used to refer to all other beings including the personal other, but “the other” using the small letter “o” refers to the you or the personal other.



his or her autonomy. However, Levinas put an emphasis on heterocentricity by respecting the alterity whose characteristic is to admit the other's absolute differences. This claim also assumes that Western truth by and large has been based on ego-centricity or self-centricity.

In contrast, there is other research which attempts to recover the self-centricity. When various cultures coexist in one space, there occurs a hybridity of cultures in the space. Homi Bhabha (1994) named this space as the "third space" in which a newness arises. By using this concept, Aoki (1996/2005) invents both "and" and "not-and" spaces. For instance, if a Korean meets a Canadian, a new space arises between them. This space would not be a space of either Korean or Canadian culture. Then it would be the sharing space of both Korean and Canadian culture. To put it more concretely, it would be the mix of respective Korean and respective Canadian cultures or the mix of both Korean and Canadian, or the mix of non-Korean and non-Canadian cultures. Suppose a Canadian got married with a Korean. The couple has a baby. In such a case, there is a mix of two cultures in the family. And the baby would show both "and" and "not-and" characteristics between the two cultures. This is an ideal case of cultural contact.

### **5.2.2 Reflection on Cultural Contacts**

To reflect on my experience in Edmonton, it is inconceivable that there was a third space between a Canadian student and myself in which we formed a space of both "and" and "not-and" between Canadian and Korean cultures. When I wanted to meet a professor, I always sent an email to him or her in order to make a

schedule to meet. In Korea, students rarely sent an email to me to make an appointment and visited me with a knock on the door. But, I felt a distance between Canadian professors and myself because a visit always had to be preceded by an e-mail request. I felt that the professors treated me in a businesslike manner. It seems to me that I was thrown into the foreign culture and that there was no other way but to obey it. On the other hand, I kept my own identity as a student in Korean ways. I did not call professors by their first name but put Dr. to their surname. When I first met my supervisor, I asked him how I should call him either the first or the last name. He said to me that I might call him by his first name. But I could not call him by his first name because it seemed to me like a lack of courtesy. This is a Korean way of thought about his or her teacher. To sum up, I have no options but to follow the Canadian culture and to show my courtesy in terms of my culture.

Conversely, there are nine foreign instructors in my department. Among them, six staff came from Canada, two from the United States and one from the Britain. When I read emails from them, they always started with Dear Professor Lee. When I met them in the corridor, I said to them “Hi,” and they responded to me “Hello.” These words are not concerned with formality of language but with courtesy out of cultures. Like as I was in Canada, they showed that they could follow Korean customs. They admitted me as their high-ranking personnel and showed their respect in terms of Korean traditions. But they showed their courtesy by using English words. They might believe that they had to observe Korean ways of thought and they might try not to offend me by using language and manner in

their ways.

To return to my experience in Edmonton, I lived in a different custom in that I could not contact professors without notice. This is not the Korean way of living in schools and universities. At the same time, I lived in a Korean culture like using appellation which might be awkward to Canadian professors. As for Canadians in Korea, they seemed unfamiliar in using appellation but put the title Professor before my surname whenever they called me. This would create a distance between them and me. They were not living in a Canadian way but in a Korean way. But, I noticed that they got together and shared information about school policies, and enjoyed their hobbies such as ice hockey. They formed a Canadian community in the university where they worked and kept their culture.

From these cases, it is suggested that expatriates tried to observe and respect the culture of the host country. They may feel awkward and a psychological distance, but respect the host culture. This suggests that the host culture is powerful and the expatriates are powerless. They are under a repression of the cultural power of the host country. Privately, the expatriates kept and lived in their home culture like an island in a host society. In other words, expatriates are living officially in their host culture but privately in their home country. Their space seems to be both Korean and Canadian culture and non-Korean and non-Canadian culture.

### 5.3 Language and Culture

It is traditionally believed that language has its essential functions of communication and representation. Linguists have placed more importance on communication than on representation as linguistic functions. They are more concerned with investigating the relationships between signs and referents than with what language represents. Against this view, Gadamer (1989) argues that language fails to only function as the instrumental medium and is deprived of its powers as human existence. Unlike instrumentalists, Gadamer (1989) sees language as the nature of human beings in the world because language has a “direct relationship to the infinity of human beings” in this world (p. 449). Thus it involves human world views, living acts and human orientations to the world, forming “a human horizon”. As it had a long history, it has traditions of human beings. Simultaneously, essence of tradition is to exist in the medium of language (Gadamer, 1989, 391). In this light, human beings have been living in the world of language which is included in a culture and involves traditions. These make language a space of tradition and living experience, and the human horizon which includes the traditions of a culture he or she inherited and his or her current living experience.

Moreover, he stresses the intimate relations between language and thought. The combination of language and thought enables me to investigate language as seeing how people think in a culture. As the language is a place of traditions of a culture, it also enables me to see the relations between human thoughts and

traditions. In the language, there are texts which reveal the present context but conceal the tradition concerned with the context. For it is embedded in the author or writer, or a speaker, and forms his or her horizon as a preconception, and plays on texts as a background. In order to understand a text, we have to interpret its concealed parts as well as its representations on the surface. The covered parts are embedded in the text by way of language and in language in the text.

To return to my research, the participants use English as a mother tongue, but live with Koreans using Korean. The foreign staff may live in dual worlds of languages: the worlds of Korean and of English. If they harmonize the two worlds which are formed by the two languages, they may not experience difficulty and conflict. However, if they do not harmonize the two worlds, they may experience frustration and conflict because of differences, discrimination and conflict between the two worlds. Before addressing these problems, I am going to identify the inherent traditions submerged in the Korean and English languages.

### **5.3.1 Ideology of Korean Language: Honorifics**

All languages presumably have some titles and kinship terms which connote respect (Irvine, 1992). These are called honorifics, which refer to a deictic form of speech and written forms signaling social deference and which are conventionalized in the society. In some languages, the deferring lexical and morphological forms are widely used in the society. Such languages like Javanese, Zulu, ChiBemba, Japanese, and Koreans use an honorific lexicon and morphology

in their everyday conversations.<sup>25</sup>

Korean language is greatly different from English language with respect to word order and honorifics. English is generally ordered as subject, verb and object or complement in sequence, but Korean is ordered differently with a subject, object or complement, and verb in sequence. Although the word order is closely connected with syntactic differences without recourse to culture and thought, honorifics have something to do with how Koreans look at others and how they behave in their society.<sup>26</sup> Concerned with this, Choi (2005, pp. 136-137) introduces an instance in which Chinese students showed different attitudes in accordance with the language that they learn. In a university of foreign language studies in China, a story is told of the attitudinal differences among students according to their majors. Although there is no difference among the first year students, second and third year students are so different in their attitudes that it is remarkably noticed what they are majoring in. It is told that female students majoring in English language seem to look cheerful, active and confident, but those majoring in Korean language seem to look tender, shy and intimidated. It is conceivable that, although the students are using Chinese as their mother tongue, their apparent demeanor differences seem to be influenced by the language that

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<sup>25</sup> Irvine (1992) cites Javanese, Zulu and Chi Bemba as languages with having honorifics. I add Korean and Japanese, and Thai in a limited form to Irwin's examples.

<sup>26</sup> English language is categorized as an SVO language and Korean is an SOV language. English sentences are ordered as subject, verb and object or complement. On the other hand, Korean language is in order of subject, object or complement and verb. This difference is concerned with syntactic or morphological changes. In the Old English period (449-1100), word order was not fixed and in particular, "declarative sentences might have a pronoun object before the verb instead of after it" (Pyles et. al., 1993, p. 130). Due to the reduction of inflections and others, English presumably had a fixed word order from the Middle English period (1100-1500). As for Korean, there is much use of inflections and particles and thus it has flexible word orders. Therefore this word order difference has something to do with the linguistic difference among languages

they learn. Let me focus first on the honorifics of Korean language and then discuss what they imply by tracing their origin.

### 5.3.1.1 Honorific Linguistic Structure<sup>27</sup>

Korean language is composed of two modes of polite and plain forms with respect to words and grammar. Koreans always use honorific words and expressions to elders and persons of higher status, and unfamiliar persons in order to show deference to them. This characteristic is important in the study of Korean language. Levinson (1983, p. 94) comments on the differences of honorifics between English and Korean and others in terms of Sociolinguistics, “while the study of English may suffer no obvious penalties for such neglect (neglect of honorifics), there is scarcely a single sentence of, for example, Japanese, Javanese or Korean, that can be properly described from a strictly linguistic point of view without an analysis of social deixis<sup>28</sup>” (p. 94, my insertion).

In fact, Koreans are accustomed to using honorifics from their infancy. Korean children have been trained in the use of the honorific system through home disciplines. When they enter an elementary school, they are already proficient in using them. So, seven-year-old children call their teacher by putting the honorific marker, *nim*, to the noun, *seonsaeng* (meaning teacher). They never call their

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<sup>27</sup> Korean honorific expressions can be seen in terms such as names, kin terms, occupational role designators, and corresponding nouns as well as structures. However, honorific terms are universally possessed by all known languages (Cummings, 2010). I am going to address the honorific linguistic structures because they are different from those in other languages.

<sup>28</sup> The term “deixis” is coined from a Greek word which refers to pointing or indicating. I use this term because it can link language with context and because honorifics are linguistic expressions used in a context.

teacher *seonsaeng* without the honorific marker. They always call him or her *seonsangnim*.

There are many places in a sentence to put honorific markers on in Korean. Honorific markers are also put on verbs as well as nouns. If they see a teacher coming to a classroom, the children would say, “*Seonsaeng-nim osinda*” (meaning, the teacher is coming). This expression can be analyzed as follows:

(1)

*Seonsaeng nim o si n da*

Teacher HMT come HMTV progressive

HMT: honorific marker for title

HMTV: honorific marker for verbs

As seen in this example, honorific markers are used in verbs as well as nouns. Furthermore, if students talk about their teacher’s activities, they put an honorific postpositional particle on the title. Another example would be: If a mother asks her child who has corrected the misspelling, which was done by their teacher, the student would say as follows:

(2)

*Seonsaeng nim ggeseo ha si eoss eoyo*

Teacher HMT HMPP do HMVA past-tense HMTVL



HMT: honorific marker for title

HMPP: honorific marker for postpositional particle (case marker)

HMVA: honorific marker for verbs for agent

HMVA: honorific marker for verbs for listener

In this example, honorific markers are more complex than in the previous example. Postpositional particles are used for denoting the subject or object of a noun and involve two types of honorific registers: *neun*, *ga*, *yi* as a plain form and *ggeseo* as an honorific form. Verb forms are composed of two honorific types, such as honorific markers for agent (*si*) and for listener (*eoyo*). In this case, agent is the teacher and the listener is the student's mother.

The honorific system is operated in terms of the hierarchy of participants in a conversation. Thus, it is possible for us to determine the hierarchy of the participants in a conversation. In the example (1), the teacher is higher than the students in the social hierarchy, and only the teacher receives the honorific marker on the title. Example (2) is much more complex than (1). First, the case marker of agent is respected. And the verb includes two honorific markers: one for the agent (teacher) and another for the listener (mother). In terms of hierarchy, the student is in the lowest position and the teacher and mother are in higher positions than the student. It is possible for Koreans to distinguish the hierarchical order between teacher and mother in the example (2). Teacher is in a higher position than mother because there is an honorific marker for verbs for the agent. If the listener is in a

higher position than the agent, there would not be an honorific marker for verbs for the agent.

### **5.3.1.2 Use of Honorifics**

Although the honorific linguistic system is very complicated, Koreans acquire it early and are accustomed to it. The honorific system is accepted as the rules of manners in which the people should live. In order to use it properly, they should be keenly aware of the relations among people and of the functions of people in the social hierarchy. There are ideologies of hierarchy and familiarity embedded in Korean honorifics.

First, regarding hierarchy among people, Koreans are very conscious of the relations in terms of age, jobs, position or status. These factors exert an influence on the linguistic register, that is, whether they use honorific or plain expressions. If they meet a man or a woman who is senior to them, they always use honorific forms of language. On the other hand, when they meet a man or a woman who is junior to them and they are familiar with each other, they speak to him or her in plain forms.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, they evaluate the person whom they meet in terms of hierarchy and familiarity and choose a suitable form between honorific and plain expressions. In this light, it is highly plausible to state that “cultural ideologies of hierarchy and egalitarianism (or ‘power’ and ‘solidarity’) can be linked directly to patterns of language use” (Cummings, 2010, p. 198).

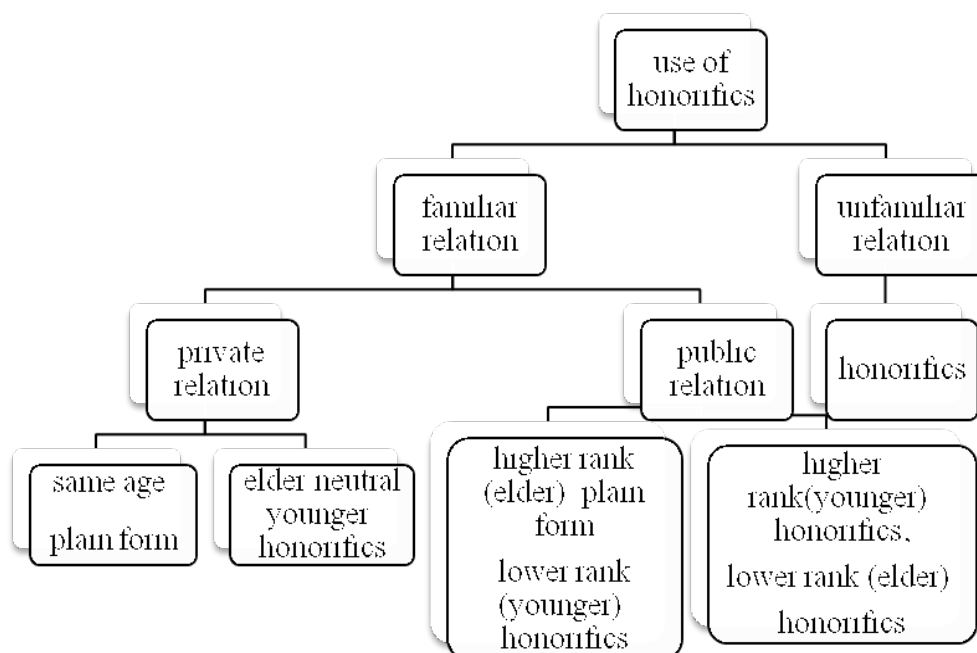
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<sup>29</sup> There are cases that when an adult meets a child for the first time, he or she say “Annyeong-haseyo” (honorific form) rather than “Anyeong” (plain form). Regarding this, honorifics are used in unfamiliar relations between people.

In addition to a hierarchy ideology, there is another ideology in Korean language. Koreans are used to using referential styles toward people whom they do not know or are not familiar with, or do not get close to. For instance, there are two men with the same age. When they are not close to each other, they usually speak in referential styles. However, when they are familiar with each other, they usually use plain styles, and do not use honorifics.

From these cases, Koreans show the patterns of language use in terms of honorific/plain styles as follows:

(3)



**Figure 5-1** Styles of Korean honorific uses

In this diagram, it is revealed that Korean honorific use is based on familiarity

and relations among people. Among varieties of relation among people, familiarity is a pivotal and influential factor in the use of honorifics. When two people are not familiar with each other, they speak in referential styles. This referential form indicates that they are equal and respect each other.

However, in case of familiar relations among people, the relation is again divided into two in terms of modes of relation. If the participants in a conversation are equal in terms of age and social status, they form an equal relationship and use plain styles of language. And, if they are not different from one another in terms of age, older people use plain styles and younger people use honorific styles. On the contrary, if there is a group of people who are in position of unequal relation in terms of age and social status, people who are in a older or higher position usually speak in plain styles of language and those in a position of younger or lower social status usually speak in referential styles<sup>30</sup>.

People seem to live by depending on a particular frame which they think (Roberts et. al., 1992). As language is a core frame of our thoughts, they live in the frame of the language which they use. In the following section, I investigate the Korean ways of thinking in terms of honorific systems of Korean language.

### **5.3.1.3 Ideologies of Honorifics**

These speech styles are indicative of some ideologies concerning how people enter into relation with others and think of others. First of all, there is a sharing

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<sup>30</sup> These days, some people who are in a higher social position sometimes speak to people in a lower rank in referential styles of language.

ideology. Honorific forms are determined by sharing attributes such as social commonness, social class, age, profession, etc. Those having little or no sharing attributes can be associated with unfamiliar relationships, in which participants in the interaction usually use the honorific style. Without sharing attributes, there may be little or no power hierarchy and solidarity<sup>31</sup>. Simultaneously, in unfamiliar relations between people, the participants seem to respect the others and are aware of another's face<sup>32</sup>. This respect or showing public self-image brings a social distance among participants in an interaction. As there is little or no hierarchy and solidarity, those sharing the same or similar social attributes attempt to exclude them from the members in the familiar relation.

The next ideology is related with age. It is an important factor to determine the forms of honorifics in the dimensions of private and public relations. Where there exist age differences among participants in conversation, younger members of a group speak to the elders in honorific forms. In this case, there exist power relationships between the two groups within a community sharing the same or similar attributes. Older groups have more power than younger ones. Younger people are assumed to be submissive. Honorific forms are a medium for respect towards the elders and a marker for obedience to them. The order of rank has, in particular, been established in Korean families. The first son of a family holds a memorial service for his ancestors including his parents. This indicates that everyone is ranked in terms of age even in a private sphere.

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<sup>31</sup> Power is defined as a vertical difference in terms of dominance, and solidarity refers to the bind of participants in terms of the horizontal relation. Unlike power, solidarity has little or no power relations.

<sup>32</sup> The term "face" means "the public self-image of a person" (Yule, 1996, p. 60).

Together with sharing and ages, social positions function as a medium to determine the rank of people. Higher ranked persons speak to lower rank ones with honorific or plain forms. When older higher ranked persons speak to younger lower ones, the former use plain forms but the lowers speak in honorific styles. On the other hand, when younger higher rank people speak to older lower rank ones, the former use the honorific forms and the latter also use the honorific forms. Social status is less an influential factor than age. According to the order of social ranks, the younger higher rankers can speak in the plain forms, but, in fact, this rarely happens in Korean society. As social ranks are public factors and age is a private one in determining honorifics, it is conceivable that private factors are more powerful factors than public ones. Thus, private compassion and sympathy, and attachment have an important bearing on the public sphere.

Hidden in the honorifics are significant ideologies such as discrimination and oppression which are embedded in Confucianism. According to Confucianism, it is admitted that people are discriminated against based on their given status and that lower ranked people are oppressed. These discriminations and oppressions were justified as a moral code which people should obey. These have held a place as social norms in Koreans' heart. The social norms have enforced the lower rankers to conform and be submissive to the higher ones without any resistance against them.

Accordingly, in indigenizing Confucianism, honorifics are a crucial medium for accepting the Confucian norms based on discrimination and oppression by internalizing the inequalities as the social norms because honorifics hold such

discriminative characteristics. These characteristics of honorifics are traced back to the original Korean and the culture of Proto-Koreans

#### **5.3.1.4 Proto-Korean Language and Their Ideologies**

Tracing back to the origin of Korean language, it might have had a relation with Tungus which was spoken by Tungusic people located in Eastern Siberia and Manchuria (Kim, 1983)<sup>33</sup>. The people spread around Eastern Russia, Northern China and Mongolia. Kim (1992) claimed that Korean ancestors were a complex of Mongolian and people of the Yin Dynasty (BC 1600 ~ BC 1046), who placed an extreme emphasis on ancestor worship and their filial duty. They believed their ancestors were spirits which determined their fortunes. Thus, they believed in the spirits of their ancestors and held memorial services for them. The spirits of ancestors brought their descendants good fortunes if their descendants devoutly respected them. This belief was applied to the world life as well as an afterlife. Sons and daughters should be good to their parents. They should obey their parents' wishes. Above all, these traditions of ancestor worship and filial piety also carry great importance in Korea in everyday life.

Moreover, this filial piety carries over into the public lives as well as private ones. There is a catchword, "getting along amicably like a family," in workplaces. This indicates that the workplace is regarded as a family and the hierarchy in the

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<sup>33</sup> The origin of Korean language is not clear because there is little literature about it. Kim (1983) claimed that it is highly probable that the Korean language has its origin from Tungus because there are some common place names and numbers. He also points out that there are similarities between Korean and Tungus in common words such as father, mother, stone, tree and so forth.

workplace is similar to that of the family. Then, the workers should obey their boss and rarely stand up to him or her. In particular, the army is famous in its strict order and hierarchy. There is a common catchphrase, relationships of one's flesh and blood, in the army. As soldiers take it for granted that they should obey orders, this relation unravels in that the filial piety may mean obedience to orders.

This kind of obedience has been seen in the school system. It is believed by Koreans that teachers are like parents and students should obey their teaching like their parents' orders. It is even said that out of reverence for their teacher, students should not even step on his or her shadow. Thus, students do not go before teachers, and they usually follow their teachers on a road. In classrooms, students rarely lead their classes, and follow the directions of their teacher. They are accustomed to going after their teachers' teaching and directions. So, if there are no directions, students may not think for themselves and may even be thrown into confusion because they are not trained to think independently, but rather encouraged to think passively.

Another important effect of filial piety is solidarity among an ethnic group. The Yin's traditions of worship to ancestors and filial piety resulted in the consolidation of the solidarity among family members. These traditions imply that the solidarity is limited within a small range of family.

Korean people believe themselves to be one ethnic family speaking one language. Based on this belief, the firm relation between the filial and ancestors bring about the closed mindset in them. This may be justified as a nationalistic mindset, but implies the exclusive mindset in them. They may love and be



altruistic to others within a certain limit, but may be short of broad-mindedness and exclude the others outside the limit. This lack of tolerance may cause them to be weak in mixing with the others.

The strong solidarity based on filial duty is associated with honorifics. The filial duty requires the obedience toward higher rankers, which can be clearly expressed by honorific expressions. Furthermore, if people are in relation of using plain or plain-honorific languages, there are in familiar relations such as friends, parents-children, teachers-students, etc. Then there may be solidarity among talkers. If they are in relation of using honorific-honorific languages, they are in less familiar relationship among participants. As for this case, there may be less of solidarity among them.

On the other hand, Koreans have much difficulty in setting up solidarity between foreigners and themselves because it is not easy to involve the foreigners within the social morals which are formed by the honorific system. They are in a situation of being unfamiliar with and being excluded from Koreans, thus permitting them to exempt from the sphere of influence of the honorific language system. Foreigners may feel much difficulty in getting mixed up with Koreans because of the strong solidarity arising from the honorific system. In particular, if they are positioned as their ages and social status, the foreigners may resist their relationship with Koreans.

To sum up, the honorific system of Korean language has formed the shaping of Korean thoughts of sharing, hierarchy and obedience among people. In this vein, it has contributed to forming and determining social standing of people,

which hid exclusion, discrimination and oppression towards other people.

### 5.3.2 Ideology of English: Authority of English

Unlike in Korean language, which includes honorific forms and markers in all expressions, English language does not involve honorific markers in all expressions, but has some honorific forms which are concerned with addressing people: *Sir, Doctor, Mr., Ms.*, Professor, and so forth. Long ago, more honorific forms were used and some had disappeared. For instance, the ancient distinctive use of “*you*” and “*thou*”, in which the singular form “*you*” was an honorific one, disappearing in 1600s and honorific vocatives such as “*sir*,” “*madame*,” and “*miss*” are not widely used in conversation these days (McArthur, 1992). From this contrast, it may be conceived that English language is less hierarchical than Korean language and, in reverse, more equalized than the latter in terms of the intra linguistic characteristics.

However, English is situated in a much higher or more powerful position than Korean language in that English language takes the monopolistic position in its world-wide use from the perspective of the inter-linguistic hierarchy grounded on socio-political power. This exclusive or monopolistic role is revealed in the authority of the English language. The term authority (Latin, *auctōritās*) is composed of three morphemes, *auct-* (meaning, originate, increase, or promote), *-ōr* (meaning agent or person), and *-itās*(-ity, meaning, attributes pertaining to) (Onions, 1996). Literally, authority refers to the attributes pertaining to somebody of originating, increasing, or promoting something. Applied to the authority of English, it refers to the capacity of the production, increase or promotion of English language which pertain to the English people. These inherent attributes

enable the English people to hold the monopolistic power of English. In addition to these, the term *authority* involves the meaning of *decreeing* and *judging* (McArthur, 1992)<sup>34</sup>. These meanings imply the juridical powers which enable a man or woman with authority to evaluate or judge the others and the others' actions. In this, he or she operates value-laden judgment over the others or the others' actions.

According to the etymological meanings of authority, the authority of English needs to be reviewed with a focus on the establishment of the norms of English and its expansion. The norms of English are reviewed focusing on the historical establishment of Standard English and the expansion of English is discussed in relation with the spread of English. I am going to investigate the conditions of shaping the authority of English from the historical linguistic development and the ethnic and socio-political traditions of the English language. The historical linguistic approach enables us to look into how the norms of English shape what the essence of the norms is. Tracing the relationship of English with ethnicity gives us significant ethnic meanings of English which can reveal the values hidden in the English language. And, the socio-political approach would enable us to trace back the causes of the spread of the language in the world.

As language involves cultures in it, it has the ability to “inform and influence one’s professional identities” as well as personal identities (Premnath, 2007, p. 4), because the professional identities are influenced by the culture of a profession

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<sup>34</sup> McArthur (1992) defined the term *authority* (*L.*, *augēre*, increase) as the capacity to produce, invent, counsel, decree, judge etc. (p.98). He traced its use from Ancient Rome in which senators held the authority to produce, invent, or decree laws, and counsel, and judge people or acts.

which is formed by people in the profession. These people are then influenced by the culture of a society or a country, or an ethnic group in which they live. The close relationship between a language and its culture may make it possible to determine one's personal and professional lives by imposing on him or her the values embedded in the language. It is therefore necessary to investigate the roles of English in terms of value-laden meanings in the culture where English is used.

In particular, English as a global language needs to be discussed in terms of its contexts and implications in world history. Some scholars pointed out that the spread of English was intricately interconnected with empire: English has always been “a good travelling companion of empire” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 12) and spread through the world on the back of colonialism (Pennycook, 1998; Widdowson, 2002). Others have pointed out that the world-wide expansion of English hides the intention of getting economic profits by advocating the slogan of cultivation of the underdeveloped and developing countries (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Phillipson, 2009). In this vein, teachers of English as a second or a foreign language knowingly or unknowingly, play a role in the service of global corporations as well as imperial power. In this section, discussion will be centered on Standard English for investigating the norms of English, the three circles of English (Kachuru, 1992) for investigating the discriminative attitudes towards nations in which English is used, and the significances and implication of the global use of English for investigating the values hidden in the spread of English in the world.

### 5.3.2.1 Standard English

This widely used term, Standard English, opposes precise and consistent definition partly because of the many varieties of the standard form in a country (Asher, 1994; Gupta, 2006) and partly because of many centers as a yardstick for the language (McArthur, 1992)<sup>35</sup>. But it generally refers to “the variety of English use by the formally-educated people who are socially, economically, and politically dominant in English speaking countries” (Asher, 1994, p. 4338). From the sociolinguistic perspective, standard language is the linguistic form that is normally used in formal speaking and writing by speakers who have received the highest level of education. These definitions imply the inequality of classes among people in that Standard English is used by users who are educated, dominant or mainstream groups with respect to social status, wealth, and political power.

Another way of defining the term is identified by contrasting the Standard form against its varieties: standard vs. dialect, standard vs. non-standard, and standard vs. substandard. These binary contrasts reveal that Standard English is based on region, membership, and hierarchy. The dichotomy of Standard and dialect is built on the region, that of Standard and non-Standard is built on the membership of people whose variety of English belong to, and that of Standard and substandard is founded on the ideology of hierarchy among varieties of English. From the region, belongingness and status, Standard English is believed to function as a central variety on the premise that the other varieties are

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<sup>35</sup> As English has been spread around the world, there are many varieties of English such as American English, Canadian English, Australian English, etc. These varieties have their own center and norms (yardsticks) of the varieties, respectively.

peripheral, despised, and subjugated.

Standard English has been established in the areas of spelling and grammar. Regarding the spelling system of English, it was greatly diversified in the sixteenth century in Britain partly because “the Roman alphabet did not match the sound system of English” and partly because “the introduction of printing in the late fifteenth century had disrupted the centrally-controlled royal scribal system” (Howatt, 2004, p. 77). Due to loss of control of spellings, it was inevitable that there were demands of orthographical forms in order to avoid confusion. Orthographical reform was conducted by phoneticians who wrote books about how to speak and how to deal with the phonetic confusion of everyday life (Howatt, 2004)<sup>36</sup>.

Together with orthographical reforms, pedagogical grammar was an object of attention for establishing linguistic norms. William Bulkar (153-1609) wrote a grammar book, *Pamphlet for Grammar* (1586) (Howatt, 2004). With the advent of the grammar book, the concerns for Standard English placed an emphasis on correct grammar. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in particular, there was public interest in good speech such as polite conversation and public speaking which meant accurate expressions based on English grammar. This shifting attention to the norms of English has continued to the present use of English. Standard English is mostly used in public speech before an audience or on radio or television.

At that time, English grammar was fundamentally not different from Latin grammar because grammarians adopted the classifying references from Latin

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<sup>36</sup> Among the contributors, Sir Thomas Smith (1513-77) and William Bullokar (1531-1609) were famous for their writings such as *Dialogus* (Smith, 1568) and *Book at Large* (1586).

grammar. They ignored the differences of English from Latin in that they imposed inappropriate grammatical categories on English. For instance, English is greatly different from Latin in terms of inflection systems. This Latin-influenced grammar was used to teach young students at schools, which would result in “a damaging influence on the teaching of English” because it reflected an absence of the realities of English. (Howatt, 2004, p.80). However, the native English speaking teachers tend to emphasize the grammatical features of Standard English rather than its lexical features (Widdowson, 2002).

From the definition and the history of Standard English, it is not simply a means of communication but the embodiment of the inheritance of Western traditions, being prescriptive and discriminatory. First, English grammar had been set up in accordance with Latin grammar, and early English literature had been greatly influenced by Western traditions. For instance, Geoffrey Chaucer (1343 ~ 1400), the author of *The Canterbury Tales*, wrote his works based on his understanding of Latin bibliographic reference. Standard English was originally set up in order to avoid the instability of English forms forcing people to use the forms or norms. In this vein, Standard English functioned as the fixed point of reference of English usage which prescribed what forms they use. Lastly, Standard English was believed to be used by educated, middle class people in the area of London (Asher, 1994). Standard English seemed not to be a variety of English but to be a symbol of language which implied educated and affluent middle classes. The language variety granted the language users linguistic self-confidence and membership in the social classes which were associated with a



sense of superiority. Standard English, thus, seems to be hiding the discriminative features in terms of social status.

In spite of the discriminative implications, Standard English is accepted as the agreed-upon form in the world due to “the spread of identical material and nonmaterial culture” (Quirk, et.al., 1985, p. 19) with respect to grammar and vocabulary and due to the common linguistic frame of reference in global communication (Widdowson, 2003). Standard English is believed to be used by native English speakers whether they are from the middle classes, well-educated and from London, or not. That is, Standard English is the language of native English speakers, which produces the standard native English speakers’ language or the native English speakers’ linguistic norms. This shift allows native English speakers the authority to dictate the norms of English language. Non-native English speakers regard them as having the innate, authoritative norms of the English language.

This ability “is likely to contribute to an inequitable hierarchy” (Phillipson, 2009, p. 40). Thus, the dichotomy of the terms “native” and “non-native” implies hierarchy between the two, as such the non-native is likely to be subordinate to the native because the latter owns the norm of English. Regarding the English teaching profession, native English speakers dominate non-native English speakers (Jenkins, 2007). Native English speakers are the English language teachers of the non-native English speaking countries regardless of holding the teaching certificates or teaching experiences. Native English speaking countries, Britain, America, Canada, Australia, etc., are the places where non-native English

speakers go to learn English. Publishers are mainly placed in native English speaking countries because they are entitled to invent written materials related with the English language.

Unlike the imaginary uniforms of the language norms, the Standard language varies according to national Standards of English in the English-speaking countries,<sup>37</sup> and in this light, Standard English is to some degree less of a monolithic form. In the next section, the national varieties of English are investigated and their significance is expounded upon.

### 5.3.2.2 English of core countries

Authorship of English is built not only on intra-lingual sources (Standard English) but on inter-lingual factors. In this section, the inter-lingual factors will be investigated through reviewing the historical factors and their meanings. As Britain had become a maritime power in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and expanded its domination to America, Australia, South Asia and South Africa since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the English language had been recognized as an important language as well as French and Latin (Crystal, 2003; Braine, 2005; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Mesthrie, 2008). When England was a maritime power in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, English was accepted as a modern language in Europe like French, Dutch, Spanish and Italian.

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<sup>37</sup> National Standards of English is coined from Quirk, et. al. (1985). They assumed that Standard English is British English. They used national Standards of English for the English in America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa. For example, there are some variations in vocabulary such as *realise* and *realize*, and *judgement* and *judgment* between British and American English. In these cases, they believed that the word forms *realise* and *judgement* are Standard English and the other forms are American English.

On the other hand, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, English held independent colonial power and played the role of a language of domination. The British held different views of the learners of Europe and those of their colonial countries. Michael West, an educator working in Bengal in India, made a distinction between learning English as a foreign language in countries in Europe and as a second language in such countries as India and Sri Lanka at the Imperial Education conference of 1923. West stated that English as foreign language was “little more than an interesting option for schools in rich countries” whereas learning English as a second language was “a hard necessity in countries where the mother-tongue had failed to keep abreast of the demands for modern knowledge” (Howatt, 2004, p.236). West’s distinction of English learners was extremely biased because he assumed that the European languages are rich enough to meet the demands for modern knowledge, but the languages of India and Sri Lanka are not. Every language has its own vocabulary and grammar to express one’s thoughts and others’ knowledge through its own or loan words. West’s statement is fundamentally based on the disparagement over the Indian languages.

Related to West’s statement, two questions can be raised: First, is learning English as a foreign language an interesting option? Second, in countries learning English as a second language, do their mother tongues fail to satisfy the demands for modern knowledge? When West mentioned the countries of learning English as a foreign language, he kept European countries in his mind. It is my guess that West would not mention such countries as Korea, Japan and China as countries of learning English as a foreign language. At the time when West lived, the eastern

Asian countries were not rich, but these days, although these countries belong to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) which is composed of industrial countries in the world, the countries strive to improve the competence of using English. In fact, learning English is not an option, but compulsory in the area. Next, it is not plausible that the Bengalese cannot express modern knowledge. Any language users can express what they want using their mother tongue. When they need words for new equipment or goods, they would adopt the words as loan words. English also has a lot of loan words that originated from other languages in the world.

Implied in West's claim is that English is placed in the same status as European languages and the languages used by colonial people are inferior to English. And West assumed that modern knowledge can be learned through English, not Bengalese. In many countries, to name some, Korea, Japan and China, translation has played an active role in admitting modern knowledge which was formed and made in Western countries. As such, it is a highly probable false claim that "the mother-tongue had failed to keep abreast of the demands for modern knowledge" (Howatt, 2004, p.236). It is conceivable that West might have despised the Bengalese because it was not a language of Western countries.<sup>38</sup> This mindset may be reflected in the Western viewpoints of the dichotomy between West and East: civilized, rational, logical, superior West vs. uncivilized, illogical, inferior East. West clearly revealed the linguistic bias in which he hid the progressive West and the backward East.

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<sup>38</sup> However, the Bengali has a rich tradition of literature considering the case of Rabindranath Tagore (1861- 1941). Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1913.

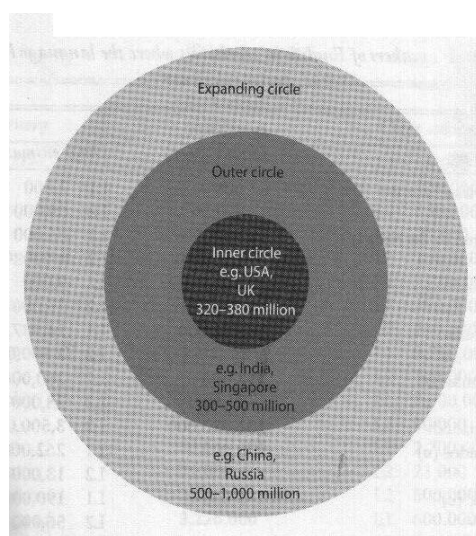
In addition to this bias, there was a debate about the spread and varieties of English between the British scholar, Quirk, and the Indian scholar, Braj Kachuru. The debates are concerned with the advocacy of Standard English for Quirk and the advocacy of the legitimacy of nonnative varieties for Kachuru. Quirk (1990/2003) strongly supports the defense of teaching Standard English domestically and internationally. In particular, he points out the limit of linguistic competence of non-native speakers by introducing the French scholar Coppieters's experiment<sup>39</sup>. He then expresses concerns about the varieties of English in term of ideological positions, confusion of types of linguistic varieties and in appropriate use of variety such as the institutionalized variety in former colonialized countries. Paradoxically, he welcomes the diffusion of English but worries about varieties of English.

In contrast, Kachuru (2003) indicates that there has not been international codification applied to all English users in the world and that Quirk's term 'deficit linguistics' may be a matter of difference grounded on socio-cultural realities in one society. He claims the expansion of Standard English to a national Standard of English. He proposed a model of three stratifications of international English in terms of "the types of spread, patterns of acquisition and the functional domain in which English is used across cultures and languages" (Kachuru, 2003, p. 9). He labeled the three concentric circles as the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. The inner circle refers to the base of English in which English is

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<sup>39</sup> Coppieters (1987, cited in Quirk, 2003) conducted a test for judging grammatical competence for native/ non-native French users: For instance, "in judging and exploring the semantics of paired sentences involving the imperfect tense and the passé compose, what we may call the 'failure' rate of the natives was 2%, that of the non-natives 41.5%" (p. 13-4).

used as a mother tongue such as the USA, the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The outer circle refers to countries and societies in which English is used as a second language and plays an important role in public life. The circle includes India, Ghana, Singapore, Malawi and over fifty other territories. The third circle, the expanding circle, involves those nations and territories in which English is learned as a foreign language because it is an important international language. It involves Korea, Japan, China, Greece, and Poland, to name some. This stratification of English can be shown briefly in Crystal (2003, p. 61).



**Figure 5-2** The three “circles” of English

This diagram contains some hidden assumptions. First, it shows the phases of the spread of English. The focal circle involves the nations which were built by the English people. The next circle includes the countries which were colonized by the Britain and adopted English as a second language along with

their mother tongues. The last circle is formed by the internalization or globalization of countries around the world after World War I and World War II (Tollefson, 1995). These countries adopted English as a major foreign language. But, English holds a special status compared with other foreign languages. For instance, the Korean Ministry of Education distinguishes English as the first foreign language and other languages such as Chinese and Japanese as second foreign languages.

Second, this model of stratification seems to be grounded in the concept of the dichotomy of center and periphery. Although there exist three circles, Quirk entitled English in the inner circle countries with the national Standard of English but did not allow the other countries in the outer and expanding circles to invent their own linguistic norms. Regarding the linguistic norm, Kachuru criticizes Quirk's rejection of the endocentric norms for English in the outer circle (Kachuru, 2003). Kachuru assumes that there is discrimination between the outer and expanding circles, and that English in the outer circle is admitted to be a variety of norms of English. From Quirk's point of view, the inner circle is the center and the outer and expanding circles are the periphery, and, from the perspective of Kachuru, the inner and outer circles are centers and the expanding circle is the periphery.

Next, the diagram of English stratification hides the hegemonic power of English. This hidden assumption causes teachers in the outer and expanding circles to use textbooks published in the inner circle. In fact, most textbooks used by Koreans are published by British and American publishers. They contain topics

and content which might be relevant to the teaching contexts. And, in the English teaching job market, people from the outer circle prefer to hire in the inner and expanding circles. Asian countries such as Korea, China, Japan, to name some, put advertisements on hiring native English speakers as their teacher regardless of holding teaching certificates. Moreover, teachers in the outer and expanding circle import the English language teaching methods without their socio-cultural realities. Recent teaching methods and approaches were formed in Britain and America: ‘the Natural Approach’ and ‘Total Physical Responses’ in America and ‘the Task-Based Approach’ in Britain (Richards, *et.al.*, 2001).

Finally, the diagram implies the ideology of ‘white supremacy’ in that the countries in the inner circle were established and have been ruled by white people. These people are guaranteed as inheritors of English. The others such as in the outer and some expanding circles are positioned on the fringe of linguistic power which judges the accuracy of English. People in the other circles recognize the power and privileges of the white people and ask for them to correct their English. In these situations, the people outside the inner circle feel a kind of suppression and “the experience of subordination” (Macedo, 2003, p.11).

As the diagram was invented by an Indian scholar and its intent is to secure and elevate the status of the outer circle to that of the inner circle, Kachuru’s model discusses less the expanding circle which is now expanding the number of people in the circle. Thus, the stratification of English is meaningful from the perspectives of the expanding circle.

As I review Kachuru’s circles, I believe that there is another asymmetric



relation between the outer and the expanding circle. Kachuru seemed to intend to secure the authorship of English in the outer circle and despise the linguistic rights in the expanding circle. Furthermore, the people in the outer circle may hide their intentions to secure their positions equivalent to those of the core circle in the world. They may also want to sell their textbooks to the expanding circle.

As people in the expanding circle, Koreans do not admit to Kachuru's three circles of English. Korean people do distinguish the people in the inner circle from those in the outer circle. And they do not distinguish the people in India, Singapore, and Hong Kong from the Dutch, and the Danish in which English is learned as a foreign language in terms of English competence. From these Korean perspectives, there are the native English speaking countries in which English is a mother tongue and the non-native English speaking countries in which English is learned as a second or a foreign language. And, Korean educational institutions hire native English speaking teachers mainly from America, Canada, Britain, Australia, and Ireland, not from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Singapore and Hong Kong. To sum up, Koreans admit the dichotomy of native and non-native English speaking society, not the three circles of English.

Koreans' preference for the term "native English speakers" involves some hidden assumptions. First, they do not accept the Standard English of Britain but a multi-standard English. Due to the Korean War, the Peace Corps and globalization, Koreans have learned American English rather than British English. When the educational institutions hire English teachers, they make little distinction among Americans, Canadians, British, Australians, and New Zealanders. This indicates

that Koreans put less emphasis on British-set Standard English than on multi-standard proficient English.

Second, Koreans reveal ethnic racism about native English speakers. Macedo and others (2003) point out that “linguistic racism abounds in the so-called democratic societies, which are marked by asymmetries of power relations along the lines of language, race, ethnicity and class” (Macedo, et. al., 2003, p.11). This ethnic racism exists in Japan and Korea. Jenkins (2007) cites an example of hiring native English speakers in Japan. He mentions that the native English speakers should be blond. Koreans also prefer the Caucasian when they hire native English speaking teachers. Some private institutes hired white Russians who were less proficient in using English rather than colored native English speaking teachers (Harris, 2004). I believe that native English speakers know the Koreans’ preference of ethnic group. When my school hired two native English speaking teachers in 2010, one black American woman was one of the strong competitors in the final interview. Before interviewing them, I met her and she told me that she really wanted to work at the school. But, I could not interview her because she left during others’ interviews. At that time, there were seven Caucasians as well as her in the waiting room. After I met her, I did not know what conversations they shared and what she felt, but she left and others participated in the interview. If she had an interview, it might be difficult to choose her, when I considered my experience that Korean staff had already refused hiring a Korean American because of her skin color.

Next, Koreans believe that native English speaking teachers are better than

Korean English teachers. In educational institutions from elementary schools to universities, native English speakers are welcomed as English teachers. In particular, in elementary and secondary schools, native English speaking teachers are entitled as assistant teachers and Korean teachers are named as regular teachers. However, the role seems to be reversed in classes: Korean teachers may function as assistant teachers and native English speaking teachers as main teachers. In many countries, native English speakers are invited to teach students regardless of teacher training. Cook (2006) points out the hiring specifications which do not mention the teacher training: “A trawl of the web immediately finds a school in Brazil that wants 'Native English speaker, bilingual, university degree', one in Italy that wants 'experienced, qualified professional native speaking English Language Teachers', one in Indonesia that needs 'native EFL teachers' and one in China looking for 'Enthusiastic Native English Teachers'” (p.54). This is reflected in the non-native English speakers’ belief that native English speakers are the best English teachers.

Finally, Koreans seem to place full confidence in the standardized test which was produced by the testing services in the native English speaking countries. Nearly all university students take the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) several times until they get a high score. This test is mainly carried out in Asian countries such as Korea, Japan and China, etc. In particular, Koreans are the top rank in the number of the examinees among the countries. According to the Institute for International Business Communication (IIBC), the number of Korean TOEIC takers reached 1.83 million in 2005, which is higher

than the 1.43 million in Japan (Donga, Dec. 06, 2005, Korea, the ‘TOEIC Kingdom’). The numbers of TOEIC takers in other Asian countries are quite a bit fewer than those top two countries. Taiwan is approximately 50,000 takers and Thailand, 46,000 takers, and China, 30,000 takers. In 2009, Korean TOEIC takers numbered 1.93 million (personal communication with Korea TOEIC Committee). This American-based test occupies 76 per cent and other Korean-based tests have 20 per cent of the Korean English test market share<sup>40</sup>. This reveals that Koreans have strong confidence in the authority of native English speaking countries, and the right to set up norms of English. These countries have a privileged authority to set up norms of correctness and as such to carry out English proficiency tests (Schneider, 2007).

It is obvious in Korea that the British initiative of Standard English has dispersed into five national standards of English: British, American, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand English. Regarding these countries, it is believed that they share two common grounds: the white ethnic group dominates the countries and they inherit the Western cultural traditions. As the Western cultural tradition is believed to have developed civilization and knowledge, the two grounds are mixed up with white supremacy. This hidden supremacy has its own power and governs the non-native English speaking countries in terms of language education. Therefore, non-native English speaking teachers have an inferiority complex due to a lack of the target language and feel insecure. Meanwhile, native English speaking teachers do not tend to learn the culture and values of the local

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<sup>40</sup> There are five government-approved English proficiency tests such as PELT, TESL, TEPS, ESPT, and MATE in Korea.

countries where they work. They even evaluate the educational environments from the perspective of Orientalism: Koreans are passive and less creative, etc.

### **5.3.2.3 English as a Global Language (Lingua Franca)**

These days, English is believed to be the indispensable medium for bringing in domestic economic development in countries because it is the most important medium for communications, interactions, and interchange in the globalized world. In order to understand English in these days, it is necessary to review globalization as a condition for the significance of English language and to investigate the hidden implications of English in the globalization.

#### **5.3.2.3.1 Synopsis of Globalization**

Historically, the essentials of globalization traced back to the “Protestant-inspired virtues of self-interest and wealth accumulation” (Smith, 2006, p. 23). The economic profit of individuals and nations was pursued in combination with a vision of empire (L., rule) within the Euro-American tradition (Smith, 2006). As the empire pursued the expansion of its domain, globalization involved the pursuit of self-interest and wealth accumulation by expanding and ruling more markets in the world. Because of the pursuits for economic profits by expanding and dominating territories or countries, there are threads of connections among globalization, imperialism and colonialism. In this vein, contemporary globalization is “an old phenomenon in a new sense of place and a new kind of

response to the world in that it has something to do with liberalism (free market) and imperialism or colonialism (domination).

Globalization is also understood as free world market, transnationalism or postnationalism, imperialism or neoliberalism. These appellations may be based on the recognition of the present age in which there exist an increasing global or transnational integration and interactions in economic, communications, security matters, etc. Behind these lies the asymmetric power relation between the Western Self and Others. Globalization must face Others (Smith, 2006). Suppose that there are the strong One and the weak Others. If the strong One asks the weak Others to sell One's stuff at the Others' market, they by instinct tend to protect their market and even prevent him or her from crossing their borders. In order to get rid of the barriers, the strong One tries to spread the justifications of his or her acts under the guise free interactions and communications. Free world market, transnationalism or postnationalism hide his or her will to dominate or subjugate the weak Others under either imperialism or neoliberalism. To sum up, the general beliefs about globalization involve social, economic, and political unequal space (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1998, 2001)

Furthermore, Suárez-Orozco (2007) includes Americanism, and the development of the world system theory in the appellations. As America takes the initiative of economic globalization, it is called Americanism. America has taken the lead in international order by military power since World War II and in economic order by international economic organizations such as the WTO (World Trade Organization) and IMF (International Monetary Fund). The American

global lead was “hypocritically” named as globalization because, in fact, all exchange oriented toward America. This phenomenon seems to be that all roads lead to imperial America instead of Rome. International trade has been centered on the country, and as such, the key currency has been the US dollars and the pivotal language has shifted from British to American English<sup>41</sup>. This America-led process has recently intensified the influence of English language over the world due to the emphasis on economic profits. This results in the rapid increase of the numbers learning and using English in many countries such as in China, Japan, Greece and Poland, as well as in Korea, approximately 500-1,000 million (Crystal, 2003, p. 61).

America’s initiative has, again, made the English language an indispensable resource for this globalization. English is so powerful in its influence on the economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals (Tollefson, 1995; Schneider, 2007) that deterioration of English language skills may negatively affect the economic growth of the country (Sinagatullin, 2006) and poor English language skills do not allow people to gain career opportunities. English proficiency is likely to be a threat to the country and its people around the world. In order to cope with these threats, English is learned by non-native English speakers who have “a strong desire for technological and material modernization and human resource capital investment for current and future successful participation in the new global economic order” (Lin, et.al., 2005, p.3).

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<sup>41</sup> Pivotal language is defined as the language which is used as a very important means of communications among nations.

### **5.3.2.3.2 Monolingualism: a Super Language**

English has been the single most important language for socioeconomic development by accessing advanced education and advanced technologies. In this vein, English serves as a sort of capital which enables a country to become wealthier and advanced. Thus, Singapore and Hong Kong have taken English as their official language, and Korea and Japan have invested much time, energy and money to improve the English communicative ability of their people. These market discourses arouse students' strong need and desires to develop their English communicative competence (Osborn, 2006). English has the preeminent status and is the international universal language (Tollefson, 1995).

As English became the pivotal language for international trade and communications, English has gained its super power over other languages. People around the world recognize the pivotal role of English in the international community and may tend to admit English as their medium in conversations when two people from different countries meet. This super power of English enables the people in the native English speaking countries to believe in the monolingualism of English. Many native English speakers seems to think that they should communicate with their own language in the world. Sinagatullin (2006) gives an example: "An average American teacher, planning to go to the Netherlands, might easily come to the following conclusion: 'Why should I strain myself and learn Dutch? I can speak English in this European country.'" (p. 105). In reality, when many Anglo-Americans go to Europe or Asia, they may believe it natural to communicate with others in English, not the local language. Therefore, they tend



not to learn the local language and prefer to use only English in the foreign countries although they have lived there for several years. It is prevalent in this globe that English functions as the only language which can be used anywhere in the world for communications. This is named as monolingualism in the sense that the world is approaching the condition of being able to speak only English in communications.<sup>42</sup>

### **5.3.2.3.3 Rethinking Monolingualism**

This monolingualism of English is generally admitted in teaching English in classrooms in the non-native English speaking countries such as Greece, Turkey, Japan and Korea, etc. Phillipson (1992, 2009) discusses the monolingualism fallacy in four aspects. It inculcates a colonial attitude to local languages, imposes a single lens on the world, interferes with the the psychological development of children, and is nearly impractical due to the shortage of native English speaking teachers. These fallacies seem to correspond with the Korean context. However, it seems that Koreans have been seized by America-led colonial imagination regardless of the existence of monolingualism. Let me start to address the fallacies of monolingualism and investigate the conditions for monolingualism in terms of the Korean context.

Phillipson's fallacies may somewhat be found in the Korean settings as well as classrooms. First, colonial consciousness seems to be widely inculcated in the

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<sup>42</sup> Monolingualism is used by Phillipson (1992) in the sense that English teaching is best conducted only in the medium of English. This term can extend to be used in communications of people from different language backgrounds in the sense that English is the best medium for them to communicate among themselves.

society. Corporations prefer to hire people who have trained in the English language in the core English countries, such that many students go to the countries to study English. Universities prefer to hire as full-time faculty staff scholars who have graduated from British or North-American universities. Second, Koreans, in particular, seem to have a single lens on the world from the perspective of America. High school students may tend not choose departments of European languages except English. Even when they study the European languages in universities, students try to transfer their major area to English. The third problem may not be applied to Koreans partly because there are a great number of differences between Korean and English and partly because English is not used in classrooms except in English classes. Finally, monolingualism in classes is nearly impossible because nearly all teachers are Koreans who are poor in using English. The current government tried to introduce monolingualism into classrooms, but soon realized that it is impossible due to the language ability of teachers.

Phillipson's indications are associated with hidden values of monolingualism such as colonial attitudes or imaginations and with its impracticality. He attempts to uncover the mask of monolingualism and urges us to get out the ideology. Phillipson's arguments are associated with linguistic nationalism (Wright, 2004). Those problems are the justifications to resist the super language in order to keep out colonial attitudes or imaginations, and because of its impracticality. This critical perspective is in a way agreed upon but in another way seems to be overly exaggerated and not to reflect the reality of some contemporary countries

including Korea.

In Korea, the reality is that monolingualism was unable to be applied to Korean education institutions as well as the society. It is therefore difficult to assert that there is monolingualism in Korea. In fact, the present Korean government tried to implement monolingualism into educational settings such as elementary and secondary schools, but did not because of its impracticality and the worries of losing Korean identities. Koreans strongly believe that Korean language is one of the best languages in the world, which may be associated with confidence in national pride.

But, they understand that they have to learn English for career opportunities and to promote their status in their workplace. They do not need English language in their everyday life and approach it instrumentally. They study and practice English language enough to get a good test score, which they require to apply for a job opportunity. The English requirements for a job opportunity have continuously changed as corporations have become more and more globalized. Productive skills have been more emphasized than receptive skills.<sup>43</sup> In particular, speaking skills are getting more emphasized due to the importance of the demands of global communications. Responding to this change, private academies have shifted their teaching subject from receptive to productive skills.

English language is believed to be one of the most valuable qualities available for international communication (Spolsky, 2004). Koreans believe that English is the super language to communicate with at least elites around the world as well as core English speaking countries. As they understand English practically as an

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<sup>43</sup> Productive skills include speaking and writing; receptive skills are listening and reading.

instrument for international communication, they are less concerned with the Standard English, and distinguish less among varieties of English.

There are the linguistic disputes of the center-periphery countries among scholars (Quirk, 2003; Kachuru, 2003 ; Phillipson, 1992, 2009; Jenkins, 2007; Holliday, 2005). But, Koreans do not seem to care about the distinctions and differences among those countries, such that they send their children to the Philippines, Singapore and South Africa as well as the five native English speaking countries to learn English. To put this more precisely, English is regarded as the most important auxiliary language in Korea.

Another reality is that there seems to be colonial attitudes and a single lens on the world in Korean society, as previously mentioned. This reveals that other factors played on the Koreans' mindsets. They are associated with socio-economic and cultural imagination about North American and European countries. These countries are recognized as the symbol of economic, technological, and political development and civilization, such that they are the model to follow, and English is the most valuable medium to accept those advancements. This created the relationship in which Koreans seem to be learners and Westerners teachers. Furthermore, this relationship is covertly immersed into native English speakers and English language because they have their ethnic roots in Anglo-Europe and English is their language. The combination of economic, political and cultural supremacies with English has made it possible to spread it around the world.

Embedding these supremacies, English exerts its power over people as well as other languages. First, the English language involves the inequity of power in

terms of not only language but people. Non-native English speakers seem to be disadvantaged, deficient, and weakened by appearing not to be native English speakers (Braine, 2006). This furthermore creates a negatively reduced image of the people who speak other languages as non-native speakers or teachers: powerless, inferior, marginalized, degenerating, to name some (Fairclough, 2001). These simplified images are related with lack of complexity, creativity and civilization (Fairclough, 2001). On the other hand, native English speakers are imagined as situated in the opposite status, such as power, supremacy, center, advancement.

These asymmetric powers also caused the native English speakers to believe themselves to be professional teachers in the expanded countries. They believe themselves automatically to be accorded high status as English teachers (Derwing, 2006). They ignore the comprehensive qualities of good language teachers such as formal education in teacher training, cultural understanding and sincere desire to teach the local non-native English speaking students (Smith, 1998).

More importantly, the native-speakerism may bring about the colonialized mindsets in non-native speakers. English indicates the educated and refined, and Korean implies commonness and being rustic. Many recent Korean pop songs use English in their titles and Korean singers use English names as their stage names. This may affect the indigenous Korean culture because they may be accustomed to unconsciously disregarding the Korean language<sup>44</sup>. Furthermore, Koreans have

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<sup>44</sup> This is a natural phenomenon when two languages contact and when one language is preferred and more powerful. But there are some worries about this because English has hastened the death of indigenous, local languages like in North America (Phillipson, 1992, 2009; Tollefson, 2000).

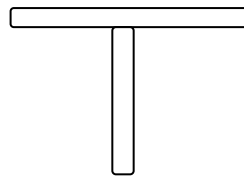
often said “Sorry” to native English speakers when they communicate with the foreigners. They express their uncomfortable consciousness to native English speakers as they may cause a trouble to them in understanding their own talking in English due to their poor use of English. They did not know that they were robbed of the rights to speak in their own language that they know best. They took for granted that they should use English and the foreigners do not need to use Korean.

## 5.4 Encountering Korean and English language

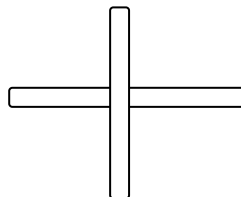
I have discussed the characteristics of Korean and English in terms of the socio-cultural values. Korean involves the honorific markers and affixes in every sentence. English includes quite few honorific words and embeds the linguistic power over global communications due to colonialism and American-led globalization. My main theme is not concerned with identifying the different perspectives of the two languages but with investigating what is implied when the two encounter each other. In this section, the issue will be reviewed and the relations identified with the causes of conflicts of native English speaking teachers

### 5.4.1 Encountering the two languages

As discussed in the previous sections, Korean can briefly be described as a language of hierarchy and English as a language of authority. If we personify the relations between the two languages, Korean tends to position English in its rank scale, but English tries to dominate Korean and to ask Koreans to follow its norms and models. If we draw a figure which shows the encounter of the two, these different references make the figures as follows:



**Figure 5-3** The Model that English Dominates Korean



**Figure 5-4** The Model that English Encounters Korean in Korea

Figure 5-3 describes the Anglo-American perspective that English is a core and supreme language, such that it is placed on top of other languages. Korean is one of the other languages and locates itself under the supreme language because English is the pivotal language in the globalized world. On the other hand, figure 5-4 describes the Korean perspective to other languages: English is an important language but has its place in the hierarchical scale. Korean won't permit English to locate itself on top of itself. In this light, English is believed to be the most important ancillary language among foreign languages. It is possible that there are the second and the third ancillary foreign languages such as Chinese and Japanese.

Another message of the figures is related with the exercise of linguistic power. Figure 5-3 shows the global status of English, in which it is the most powerful language of all. But, figure 5-4 reveals the reality of English in Korea. English is attached to a point in the rank scale and its power can be exerted on a spot where it contacts Korean. It is not easy that English exerts its power or influence over overall Korean.



Most importantly, the messages of the figures can interpret the conflicts of native English speaking teachers in Korea. People live and act in the frame which they think. Language is both an important container of the frame and the frame itself. In this light, native English speaking teachers may live and act, and think in the frame of English, and Koreans in Korean. This issue will be dealt with in the next sub-section.

### **5.4.2 Encountering languages and conflicts**

The research participants frequently seem to travel abroad or visit their home country in Canada. Peter has been to western Ontario in Canada and stayed there around a month every summer vacation. Grace, along with her husband and baby, often goes to Vancouver in the summers to visit family and friends. Nick, Mickey and Harry have travelled to many Southeast Asian countries. When they boarded on the airplane for Seoul and heard the Korean language, they told me that they felt comfortable, like coming home. However, they tell me that they are alienated from Korean culture, institutions and their colleagues. In this way, they experience the disruption between Korean and Canadian cultures.

This disruption seems to engender the conflicts that they bear in their minds. Conflicts may be believed to be perceived destructive and chaotic in nature. However, it is potentially both a constructive and destructive social phenomenon (Dayton, et.al, 2000). The conflict is a potential constructive phenomenon in that it may be a motive to change or develop an organization, a society or a nation. If it may erupt and struggles happen, it may be a potentially destructive phenomenon. In both cases, there is necessarily a split in thought, goals, etc. between people or between people and organizations. The native English speaking teachers voiced their own conflicts which are mostly associated with the differences of thought and goals among people, institutions, culture, self-understanding of themselves and others, etc.

As hermeneutic inquiry should endeavor to restore the relations between people and between people and institutions, it is necessary to search for the causes of the conflicts which disrupt the relations and to unveil their hidden meanings. These meanings are related both with Korean and Canadian cultures. In line with the discussion in this chapter which stresses the cultural differences by reviewing the Korean and English language, I am going to search for the meanings based on linguistic history as well as the situatedness of the native English speaking teachers.

According to Patrick Coy, *et. al.* (2000), conflicts may be engendered by such factors as “differences in culture (values and beliefs), power inequalities, resource distribution, and a lack of communication and a sense of collective identity.” (p. 2) These sources of conflicts may be the conditions for conflicts to happen in a society but may not be direct causes. They are prevalent among groups of people in a society. Generally speaking, any society has different groups of people who are characterized as having different values and beliefs, power inequality, asymmetric resource distribution and a lack of communication and a sense of collective identity. The conditions may not be the causes of conflicts if the groups reach a consensus about them or a tolerance of them. Suppose that there are differences of values or beliefs between people or groups and that there are power inequalities between people or groups. If the people or groups make a consensus about, or encourage a tolerance of, the differences and inequalities as a system, no conflicts may take place.

Accordingly, disagreement and intolerance are important factors which determine the emergence of conflicts. Reviewing the discourses which are produced by the native English speaking teachers, I disagree with the views such as exclusion from the institution, disregard of their profession and students' indifference to their pedagogy. In other words, I believe that the native English speaking teachers are not excluded from their school and that they are regarded as English conversation teachers, and that students are fond of the foreign teachers' classes. Regarding these three phenomena, this lack of consensus may engender the conflicts among the foreign teachers.

### **(1) Exclusion from institutions**

Simon has worked as a faculty staff at a university for over seven years and knows much about the benefits for Korean faculty members such as sabbaticals and research funds. But he was not allowed to receive such benefits, although Korean staff can have a year of sabbatical in every six years of service. The native English speaking teachers are hired as lecturers by the articles of school regulations and are required to teach students as faculty members. They make a contract with their school every year. But Korean lecturers make a contract every two years. Although they are prescribed as lecturers, they are not asked to participate in the general faculty meetings.

Some administrators told me that they would not grasp the agenda of the meeting because they may not understand the Korean language. This seems to be

considerate for native English speaking teachers. However, they are excluded from such benefits as sabbaticals and research funds which do not require them to use the Korean language. Furthermore, the reality is that the administrators exclude them from any administrative jobs and treat them as just members affiliated to an ancillary institution.

These attitudes and policies of the institutions hide the strong and exclusive solidarity of the Korean staff which has been conditioned to defend their social and office system. From the perspective of Koreans, the native English speaking teachers are different from Korean teaching and managing staff in terms of language, culture, race, etc. The discrimination is based on the Korean perceptions of differences between the two parties. As discussed in this chapter, the Korean language has a complicated honorific linguistic system which contributes to forming strong solidarity among the groups of people.

Korean people are also accustomed to the tradition of filial piety which emphasizes the hierarchy among people in a group. A combination of the linguistic and cultural traditions causes them to act in a closed manner around the foreign staff who are so different from the Korean people in terms of language, race, culture, etc. As such, the Korean people cannot establish a hierarchical relationship with them, and believe that a better relationship can be kept by exclusion.

## **(2) Disregard of the professional**

When I interviewed Harry at his school, he took an example of the awkward

name of a new high-rise building named as “Techno Center” in his school. Harry mentioned that it is not English. He made a satire of the name by pinpointing that the name seems to him to associate with “Techno Mart” which sells technical products. Harry believes that this awkward name is created because the Korean administrators did not consult the native English speaking teachers about the English expression. In other words, they do not acknowledge the foreign staff as an arbiter of English use. In this light, they believe themselves to be professionals. I believe that the other research participants also assume that they are professional teachers.

Reviewing the debate on the native and nonnative English teachers reveals that native English speakers are “the best embodiments of the target and norm for learners” (Phillipson, 1992, p.194) and can serve as arbiters to determine the acceptability of any samples of English. Also, most nonnative English speaking teachers are trained as professionals who hold degrees related with ESL (English as a Second language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language), or Applied Linguistics, but fewer native English speaking teachers hold such degrees (Arva, et. al., 2000). This research is based on the conflicts of viewpoints about the notion of “professional.”

In the first place, Koreans seems to put emphasis on educational background in evaluating people’s professional standing, while the native English speaking teachers stress the arbiter of norms of English. Koreans’ thoughts toward the all-importance of educational background goes back to Confucianism which is prevalent in the way of thought in China, Japan and Korea. It stresses the value of

study highly: “What is more enjoyable than studying?” (Koo, et.al., 1997, p. 145) Together with this, education is believed to be the key to success in society because “education in South Korea has been used as a means of recruiting the elite into government bureaucracy, large corporations, and academic and research institutions” (Koo, et.al., 1997, p. 308). Higher degree holders tend to be believed to have more potential than lower degree holders. Considering the educational fervor in which the university or college enrollment was around 83% among high-school graduates in Korea in 2009, many Koreans do not regard university graduates as professionals. In this vein, many Koreans do not tend to believe bachelor-degree holders like most native English speaking teachers are professionals. Instead, they acknowledge that they act as the arbiters of the norms of English and as English conversation teachers.

If foreign teachers believe that experience is the most important factor in becoming a professional teacher, this may not be the case. For Mickey, who has been teaching for about 4 years, indicated that his teaching has still been shaped by consulting his colleagues. This implies the myth that “teachers are self-made” in which such teachers rely mainly on “a particular discourse of experience” and on their personality (Britzman, 2003, p. 231) and may be ignorant of pedagogy. This ignorance may result in the unawareness of classroom dynamics and then engender the teacher’s frustrations.<sup>45</sup> During conversations with Harry and Peter, I came to know that they had much stress in their class. It is also believed among Koreans that they are not concerned with motivating students to learn,

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<sup>45</sup> Britzman (2003, p. 232) points out social relationships and the context of school structure as the elements of classroom dynamics.

maintaining their interest, getting them involved in learning activities, and even being respected by them.<sup>46</sup>

Although they are lacking in pedagogy, what makes them claim that they are professional teachers? I am also wondering if Mickey, Harry and Peter can hold that they are professional teachers in Canada. If they are not admitted as professional teachers, what makes them believe themselves to be teachers? This is sure to relate with the authority of English which has been mentioned in the previous sections. Connected with Western culture and the history of the spread of English, the power of English gave native English speaking teachers confidence as professional teachers in the non-native English speaking countries. On the other hand, many Koreans do not believe them as professional teachers due to the deep-rooted way of thought which put emphasis on educational background.

### **(3) Students' indifference**

Grace may be a well-qualified teacher in that she had majored in Education at her home university. She has had difficulties in her classes because her students often do not ask her and answer her questions in her classes. In fact, many Korean professors may have the same responses from students as Grace. This reticent response is common in classes and is more serious in the classes of Korean professors.

There are differences about the students' taciturn responses between Korean

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<sup>46</sup> Getting respect from students is one of the important features of good teachers in Asian countries such as Korea, China and Japan, which is traced back to the Confucian tradition.



and Canadian staff. Korean staff may take it for granted and care less about it. But Canadian teachers may be embarrassed and reflect on their teaching method in order to find its causes. In particular, when asked to make inquiries about what they learned, students usually keep reticent and make teachers feel embarrassed.

This style of students' response is less related with teaching than to the cultural inclination of students which can trace its origin to Korean culture. Koreans are characterized as conforming to those of higher rank and their elders. This behavioral pattern is revealed together with honorific expressions, which suppress the younger or lower ranked people and restrains them from speaking to the elder or those of higher rank. On the other hand, making inquiries is concerned with morale: too many inquiries is regarded as impoliteness and harm, whereas reticence is regarded as politeness and virtue.

According to Confucianism, it is believed that teachers are regarded as functioning as or as important as students' parents. Yulkok Lee (1536-1584 AD), one of Korea's most distinguished scholars in the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910 AD) described ten different kinds of rules of conducts for scholars. Among them, he mentioned how students behave to their teachers: "a scholar should show respect to his teachers with complete sincerity, the teacher being as important as the king and the father" (Weidman, et. al., 2000, p. 19)<sup>47</sup>. This ethical code implies that there is only the teaching of teachers and the reception of students. In this pedagogical environment, students are accustomed to attending classes without

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<sup>47</sup> In the times when Yulkok Lee lived, a scholar was believed to be the one who was studying the teachings of Confucius at the private and public schools. Furthermore, as "scholar" is the translation of the Chinese, 學者, which means "person who is learning", the scholar in the quoted phrase can be paraphrased with the student or the learner.

giving responses. This is in a sharp contrast with the Western tradition of pedagogy that is based on the dialogues between the teacher and the students.

Accustomed to this environment, students are characterized as acting on instructions rather than stating their views. This passive behavior of students is sure to be unfamiliar to Grace who had been trained in a community that freely allows people to state their views.

### **5.4.3 Different interpretations about the life of a native English speaking teacher**

Peter provides a look at the life of native English speaking teachers. He has served over fifteen years in his school, and so he knows the educational problems more than any other participants. He believes that the education system in Korea is unconstructive and wants to change it. Peter wants to contribute to the development of education systems of Korea. Unfortunately, Peter also knows that he has no power to affect it and no avenue to suggest his innovative ideas, and he eventually has become frustrated. He believes that his powerlessness is due to his status in the hierarchy in his school. In fact, he may be situated outside the institutional hierarchy. Being aware of these realities, he has given up all his intents, and returns to his rest place in which he can enjoy his own style of life.

#### **(1) My interpretation**

From the sequences of his behaviors, it is my belief that Peter wanted to be not just a teacher but a civilizer or a developer in a less civilized or developed country. This seems to remind me of white supremacy which is based on Western Enlightenment. As it is “the invisible epistemological and ontological construct”, the ideology of Whiteness is not easy to identify (Berry, 2007, p. 21). The supremacy may not be allowed to him in any areas of education except for the sphere of teaching English in classes because he does not have any position to

exert his power outside the class. Then, it seems that he inevitably gets frustrated and finds another place to keep his hegemony. So, although he has lived in Korea for over 15 years, he still lives in Western culture.

## **(2) Peter's views**

When he read my interpretation of his somewhat western style of living, Peter pointed out: "I don't see much merit in your interpretation of the way I live. Also, 'supremacy' is loaded... Generally, again, I think the whole neo-colonial interpretation has to be applied with *extreme* caution to individual behavior. It is a much, much too powerful a theory, ironically." (personal communication)

## **(3) Reflection on Peter's view**

Peter may feel that my interpretation denounces him as a linguistic and cultural ruler. I realize that I may be in the circle of colonial imagination and mindsets. I may also think of others on the basis of group or the research. Any people have their wants and desires to control something in their working space but their ways of thought may to some degree be based on their culture. This may be a prejudice which is a start of hermeneutic interpretation. The more important comment is that "I don't see much merit in your interpretation of the way I live." He comments critically on what I have done in this chapter. I have exposed the hidden implications of the Korean and English language, by which I have been

too wrapped up in the differences between the native English speaking teachers and the Korean teaching and administrative staff to consider “living together humanely.” Living with him only with confirming a sense of “differences” will perpetuate his alienation from us, which may make him more frustrated, and, as a result, have a bad effect on his teaching job. Reducing the sense of “differences,” on the other hand, will enable both Peter and me to share a fellow feeling and to go forward with hope, and it could have a good effect on our teaching job. In order to reduce the gap of “differences,” I will discuss the issue in detail in the next chapter.

## 5.5 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the historical consciousness implied in English and Korean language and their relation with the conflicts of native English speaking teachers. This discussion indicates that the conflicts are not concerned with those of Koreans and the foreign teachers but with those of the traditions of the two languages, which enables us to link the conflicts the teachers have undergone with the implied ideologies of the language concerned. This may contribute to the basis for the hermeneutical understanding of the conflicts of the foreign English teachers. On the other hand, it may not discuss the fundamental implications of hermeneutical understanding. This section discusses the conflicts that the teachers express with respect to otherness and openness.

The native English speaking teachers' conflicts are grouped under the themes of exclusion, professionalism, and cultural differences. These topics are complicatedly concerned with otherness and openness. Discussion starts with the tenet of philosophical hermeneutics which does not "seek to assimilate the historical other within its own horizon, nor to become fully immersed in the other's "form of life" (Davey, 2006, p.7). Regarding exclusion from the Korean educational settings, the native English speaking teachers are not allowed to participate in the faculty committees. This may fit the tenet in that the Korean staff does not intend to assimilate the historical different others, the native English speaking teachers, into the Korean culture. This may be the openness of Koreans in that they do not attempt to force the foreign teachers to be integrated and in that the teachers are allowed to do what they want to.

However, this is not the hermeneutical openness, but “a liberal tolerance of different perspectives” (Davey, 2006, p. 225). This is a kind of the disguised will of Koreans to exercise power by preventing non-Korean teachers from participating in their administrative decisions. This, in turn, ignores the participatory nature of hermeneutical understanding by dissociating the two parties and by removing the opportunities to engage them in the decision.

From the perspective of the native English speaking teachers, they want the Western pedagogy to be accepted in classes. They believe that their pedagogy is more preferable than the others and that the others are modeled after their own. This is a kind of assimilation of pedagogy, which makes it impossible to have dialogues between the parties. For assimilation or immersion makes the two parties the one, as such the dialogue turns into the monologue. More seriously, the perspective implies the asymmetrical relation between the Western and Korean pedagogies and ignores the difference of the two. And this monologue does not bring about hermeneutical understanding.

In this vein, hermeneutic understanding should not attempt to deconstruct or remove the voices of the others but try to engage or involve their voices in dialogue. We have to create a space to relate the parties concerned in which hermeneutic exchanges can take place. In the next chapter, I will discuss the space in which hermeneutic understanding can take place.

## **Chapter 6. Conflicts in the In-Between**

### **6.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the prejudices embedded in the Korean and English language which are related with the conflicts revealed in native English speaking teachers' experiences. Their conflicts may be rooted in the ruptures caused by the differences between the two languages with respect to honorifics in the Korean language and the properties of linguistic imperialism of the English language. Hermeneutics does not so much prevent or aggravate the conflicts of human beings as seek a road to rescue them out of the conflicts that they have.

Hermeneutics employs effective historical consciousness to accomplish a horizon of fusions which enables us to unveil the hidden meanings of a text. It is composed of diachronic and synchronic consciousness. As I reviewed the diachronic historical consciousness immersed in the Korean and English language, I have to review the conflicts from the perspective of the synchronic consciousness.

In this chapter, I adopt a synchronic consciousness to unveil the meanings hidden in their conflicts. In other words, I will attempt to search for the conditions which cause the native English speaking teachers to have conflicts. This is carried out by identifying differences between the Korean teaching staff and the native English speaking teachers, and between the Korean and Canadian cultures with



respect to the factors and their relations associated with the conflicts in the current situation in which they live. Reviewing the differences in detail relevant with the conflicts unveils the hidden meanings of conflicts. This will uncover a new perspective of conflicts and reconceptualize them.

Then, I will discuss the “in-between” space which refers to the space between the interpreter and texts or between interlocutors (Gadamer, 1989). This space is a virtual one which enables us to perceive the relationships between the participants during conversation. As a Korean, I will elaborate the concept of the “in-between” space in terms of the Korean language and illuminate the relationships between persons in the space. This Korean perspective of the “in-between” is somewhat different from Gadamer’s, because human beings’ thoughts are related with the language they use. Lastly, I will accomplish the hermeneutic task which will reduce the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers have. This is very significant because reducing and healing the conflicts can form a possibility to prevent any recurrence of such tragic incidents as September 11, 2001.

## 6.2. Revisiting differences

As I reviewed in chapter 5, the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers may simply be attributed to differences between Korean culture and their culture, and the Korean teaching staff and them. The differences include a gap between two objects or thoughts. When the gap is not reduced or narrowed, human beings are aware of contradictions and feel conflicts. The process of the making of conflicts is so simple that it is not sufficient to discuss the conditions of the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers have.

It can be elaborated with respect to areas and factors in which the conflicts take place. The conflicts can be classified with respect to areas: the differences of cultures, the perspective of responsibilities and expertise of teachers, and teaching, and points of views between school authority and the native English speaking teachers. Also, the conflicts can also be divided into identity, values, ideas of justice, and expectation in terms of factors which are implied in the conflicts. These two criteria hang together or do not. Let me cite some examples which I presented in chapter four.

Areas of the conflicts which the native English speaking teachers have

### (1) Culture

- Peter still feels strange in living in Korea.

- Nick feels that Koreans believe he is clumsy in using chopsticks.
- Simon felt bothered about the cultural differences for the first six months.
- Harry thinks that Korea has a very closed culture which is mismatched with Canadian culture.

Among the research participants, Grace and Mickey mention the differences between the Korean and Canadian cultures, but do not seem to believe that they feel conflicted. Grace told me that she likes learning about cultures and is really fascinated (Oct. 22, 2008). As for Mickey, he has a very tolerant attitude towards different culture and accepts the differences. Although he has lived over five years, he still feels it is wrong to yell to call a waitress in a restaurant in order to order a meal (Nov. 7, 2008), which is a customary part of culture in a restaurant here. He believes that it is not a matter of moral values but a difference.

Cultural differences are associated with the identity of the native English speaking teachers. Peter and Harry have lived in Korea over fifteen years but they still feel a sense of difference which is incompatible in terms of national or cultural identities. Nick points out the Koreans' stereotypical belief towards him. This indicates that Koreans also have prejudices about the native English speaking teachers which may not change. As for Simon, he reveals that the first six months are the period of hostility against the host culture. After the period, this hostile feeling may be reduced as time passes.

Considering the period of stay in Korea, the longer stay may not indicate the

drastic reduction of conflicts caused by the cultural differences. Peter and Harry have stayed over fifteen years in Korea, but they imply that they still feel strangeness and inconsistency with the host culture, and are not affiliated with the Korean culture. Simultaneously, Peter mentions that he is uncomfortable in Canada. Harry told me that he is neither a Korean nor a Canadian partly because the Koreans do not try to include him and partly because he has stayed away from Canada for such a long time. These things mean that they have started to reject their own culture. Thus, the incapability of adapting to the new culture and loss of affiliation with their culture may make them experience *anomie* (Arnold, 1999, p.22). They have no strong supportive connections with either their own or the host culture. Their identity may be situated in the space between the two cultures, thus neither any longer belonging to part of the Canadian nor being affiliated to Korean cultures. This phenomenon of anomie sheds doubt on the fourth stage of acculturation, full recovery, in which assimilation and adaptation to the new culture take place. Brown (2000) thinks of acculturation in four stages: the stage of excitement to the new culture (stage one), the stage of culture shock due to cultural differences between somebody's and the new culture (stage two), the stage of culture stress which is a tentative move toward a recovery (stage three), and the stage of full recovery in which somebody becomes assimilated into the new culture (stage four). In spite of the long stay over fifteen years, Peter and Harry have not reach the full recovery but remain at the stage of stagnation which indicates a limited assimilation to the new culture.

## (2) Teaching and teacher

- Peter believes that he is different from Korean teaching staff in terms of being an authentic conveyor of the English language and culture, and of getting students to be actively speaking.
- Nick points out the lack of the introductory program for the new native English speaking teachers.
- Simon criticizes the English education in Korea in that it is based on receptive language skill rather than productive one, on grammar, and on inauthentic teaching material.
- Grace is embarrassed by the students' unresponsiveness.
- Mickey points out the students' excessive interest in test scores.
- Harry indicates that the Korean students are nervous about test scores.

The native English speaking teachers reveal their perspective of teaching by pointing out the negative aspects of the on-going pedagogy in Korea. The reverse points of views can reveal what they are doing and what perspectives they have. English language teaching is carried out through authentic English and its culture (Peter, Simon), using the productive language skills (Simon) and putting more concerns on the learning process rather than the test scores (Mickey, Harry), and the students' active participation in class (Grace). These perspectives of teaching indicate that they teach students through conversation and they are less concerned with the conditions surrounding the Korean education and with the students'

needs, and they do not have any responsibility to teach subjects which include professional knowledge.

Unlike the Korean teaching staff, the native English speaking teachers may get into conflict due to the passive students' responses which are the major feedback for their teaching. This may be attributed to the criteria of evaluation. Korean teaching staff is assessed in terms of teaching, research and public service. On the other hand, the native English speaking teachers are estimated only in terms of their teaching.

The native English speaking teachers show different attitudes about the students' passive or negative attitudes. Peter told me about his mood about teaching: "When I come out of a class and when I was very disappointed with that, I feel bad and I feel bad a long time sometimes. ... if I feel bad at the last class of the week, I feel bad all weekend." (Oct., 25, 2008) Harry mentioned of the students' negative responses: "I'm not the reason why they don't work hard in my class. I'm not the reason English is boring or they're tired of their studying English. So I mean I don't allow myself to get frustrated." (Harry, Oct. 30, 2008) They show different attitudes towards the students' negligence of their class. Peter gets seriously hurt in his mind by the students' responses, but Harry tries to comfort himself with the thought that he is not the contributor to the students' negligence. Both of them are sure to be frustrated by the students' responses.

However, they unveil that the native English speaking teachers are superior to the Korean English teachers in that they can convey the authentic English language and culture to the students. On this view, the native English speaking

teachers seem to believe themselves to be professional teachers (Peter, Mickey, Harry).<sup>48</sup> Applied linguists do not usually use the term, “professional teacher,” but they use “expert or experienced teachers.” (Johnstone, 2004; Pica, 2008; Baily, 2009; Randall et.al., 2001) In particular, Randall et. al, (2001) attempt to describe types of teachers at five different stages of their development: the novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert teachers. Among these, let me review the type of behavior exhibited by the expert teachers.

Expert: This stage is characterized by an intuitive grasp of situations. The teaching performance is now fluid and seemingly effortless. Planning is flexible. The expert is able to anticipate rather than merely react to classroom events, recognize global patterns and see how specific events are manifestations of these. (Randall et.al., 2001, p. 34)

I am not sure where the native English speaking teachers are situated in the development stages as a teacher. But, it is not easy to grasp intuitively the situation of their teaching place because they may misunderstand or may not comprehend their teaching situation due to the cultural differences between the students and them. Reviewing the research about expert or experienced teachers, Johnstone (2004) summarizes that “Some, though not all, inexperienced teachers display a wider and more imaginative repertoire of teaching than do their more experienced seniors.” (p. 666) Experienced teachers can choose suitable and

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<sup>48</sup> However, Nick, Simon and Grace do not describe themselves as professionals. Among them, Nick and Grace graduated from faculties of education in Canada and had teaching experiences at secondary schools in Canada. Simon graduated from a graduate school through on line, majoring Applied Linguistics. During interviews with Simon, he explained how he teaches his students through the discussion board on the web.

concrete (real) repertoire and process them in class in terms of their own ways which they construct. In this view, if the native English speaking teachers depend on the textbook, they may not be rated as an expert or experienced teacher.

A more important notion of professional teacher can be drawn from Carson (1997). He points out two key features to form professional identity as a teacher:

One is the provision of ample time for actual teaching experience so student teachers can test themselves in the classroom. A second is the provision of spaces for student teachers to negotiate the discourses of teaching with the help of teacher educators. (p. 86)

Although the native English speaking teachers started to teach the students without “ample time for actual teaching experience,” they have experienced teaching over from five to fifteen years. But, it is rare for them to have chances to consult about their practices with teacher educators because there is not any in-service training program in Korean universities or other organizations. The lack of the in-service training programs may be responsible for the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers have in class. This insufficiency of the supplementary training makes the Korean teaching staff not recognize them as a teacher with professional identity.

As for the differences of teaching and teachers, the conflicts is not so much rooted in the cultural values as in the differences of expectancy between the teachers and the students and between the teachers and the degrees of the professional (in-service) training. Although the differences between cultures cannot be resolved, these differences of viewpoints about teaching and teachers



can be resolved and thus the conflicts related with teaching and teachers can be reduced. If the native English speaking teachers grasp the students' needs and engender interest in class, they will have a good response and reduce their conflicts. Furthermore, if the universities or organizations establish the in-service training program for the native English speaking teachers, those who complete it may be officially rated as a teacher. Then, there may not be an argument whether the native English speaking teachers are professional or not.

### (3) School

- Peter believes that the university is not concerned about the quality of education.
- Nick believes that the university is operating on the basis of business priorities and that the native English speakers have the lowest place in the power hierarchy in the school.
- Simon believes that the native English speaking teachers are excluded from benefits and that the school is not concerned about their individual performance.
- Grace believes that the private educational institute (*Hakwon*) places too much emphasis on the product of teaching, the test scores of students.
- Mickey believes that the university prefers official certificates to teaching experience in hiring new teachers.
- Harry believes that the university does not allow native English teachers

to participate in the decision making which the native English speaking teacher could contribute to.

The native English speaking teachers are not satisfied with their working conditions in terms of the poor quality of class teaching due to the pursuit of profits (Peter and Grace), their powerless status in the decision-making (Nick, Simon and Harry) and the stress on forms (Mickey). Apparently, their dissatisfactions are different but converge on “commercialization of the education enterprise,” which results in the “fact/value separation.” (Smith, 2006, p.24) Let me follow the frame of Smith (2006) and argue how the conflicts about school of the native English speaking teachers are associated with the “commercialization of the education enterprise” and what “facts and values” are separately implied in the conflicts.

The commercialization of educational institutes exerts directly or indirectly its influence on a variety of educational activities or areas. It is directly associated with large class size (Peter) and emphasis on high test scores of the students (Grace). As the number of students enrolled is bigger in one classroom, so the number of classes are smaller and so the expense of teaching is smaller, and then more profits return to the educational institutes. Class size is a major factor which determines the quality of language education. Small class size enables the students to have more opportunities to interact with their teacher. And if the students enrolled in the private educational institute (*Hakwon*) achieve high score in their school exams, then more students will enroll in the educational institute

and more profits return to it. If the private educational institute lays its emphasis more on the process of pedagogy than on the product of pedagogy, the teacher can provide an open space to build up the students' creativity because he or she does not need to practice the patterns or skills to find correct answers. This skill-based pedagogy stifles both the teacher and the students by binding them within a frame of test scores.

The commercialization of educational institutes also has an indirect effect on the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers have. They have a strong sense of powerlessness and alienation from the decision making, and thus being disadvantaged (Nick, Simon and Harry). Although they are reported as faculty staff to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, they are not allowed to attend the faculty staff meetings and the special committees in the universities. They are situated in the position of being directed from the university authority. They do not have any official avenues to communicate with the university. They have a different salary system from the Korean teaching and management staff. They are paid on the basis of the annual pay system instead of the salary step system.

These discriminations against the native English speaking teachers are associated with the pursuit of profits. As they cannot attend the faculty staff and special committees, they cannot participate in the decision makings. As such, they cannot exert any power on the university's decisions. The managers of the universities are little concerned about the welfares and benefits of the native English speaking teachers. The duty of teaching hours per week is from twelve to

sixteen hours for the native English speaking teachers and from six to nine hours for the Korean teaching staff. The Korean staff has a year of a paid sabbatical every six years but the foreign staff does not. This negligence enables the university to reduce expenses which is one of the pursuits of the commercialization of educational institutes.

In hiring native English speaking teachers the university prefers to hire those who majored in TESOL (Teaching English as a Second or Other Language) or TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at a graduate school of education. This policy implies two faces: One is that those people are qualified for the teaching position and the other is that those people are a resource for advertising the universities. Harry, one of the research participants, calls it “window dressing.” (Oct., 30, 2008) He believes that the native English speaking teachers play a role of “white well-qualified people on the window” in order to show that the university is internationalized and is attempting to attract future students.

The differences between school and the foreign staff are based on the unequal relations, which hide the intentions of the reduction of expenses and the pursuit of profits. This commercialization of educational institutes is detrimental to education in that the quality of education is neglected due to large class size and excessive teaching loads, and engenders dehumanization in that the oppressor, the university, oppresses and exploits the oppressed, the native English speaking teachers, by virtue of its power (Freire, 1970/2000). Accordingly, these differences are associated with justice and humanization which human beings share.

I have discussed the three types of differences which are shown in the conflicts of the native English speaking teachers. They are categorized as differences of value, expectancy and sense of justice. The differences between languages and cultures are attributed to those of value, and those gaps are practically not easy to resolve. The next one is the differences of expectancy which are associated with the differences between the teachers and the students. These may be reduced by supplementary training. Lastly, the alienation of the native English speaking teachers is attributed to the lack of a sense of justice based on humanization, which requires us to recover their human rights from the oppressed status. It is the hermeneutic tasks that resolve or alleviate their conflicts by conversations or dialectic interactions. In order to get into hermeneutic conversation or dialectic interaction, the major condition is to identify the space between the interlocutors and the relationships between them within the space. I will discuss the space in the next section.

### 6.3 Reconceptualizing differences in the in-between space

This section addresses the differences within the space in which the native English speaking teachers live. The discussion will start with a review of the discourses about the interspace in terms of Gadamer's in-between space, followed by Homi Bhabha's Third space and Ted Aoki's true bridge. Then, Gadamer's in-between space will be redefined from the perspective of the Korean language. Finally, I will review the differences connected with the native English speaking teachers' conflicts with the respect to the newly defined concept of the in-between space.

#### 6.3.1 Some discourses about the interspace

Gadamer's hermeneutics is based on movement and relationships in the in-between in that "*the true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between*" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 295). The encountering in this space enables human beings to establish relationships and to move back and forth, resulting in understanding. Without relationships or moving back and forth, there is no understanding between participants. With relationships and moving back and forth, there arises conversation and fusion of horizons between the participants. According to Gadamer (1989), the figure of the in-between, then, seems to be the closed or limited virtual space which interlocutors form when they encounter each other, and in which the effective historical consciousness of the participants is operating

and dialectic interactions take place.

This figure depicts a natural image in conversation in schools. When the native English speaking teacher enters a classroom (sets up the relation of teaching), he or she meets the students (they encounter each other with their own prejudices and (historical consciousness) and starts to teach them (gets into a conversation). Gadamer assumes that the teacher and the students have conversations based on civility.

In reality, there is an asymmetrical relation between the two parties which is called that of the oppressor and the oppressed (Freire, 1970/2000). It is also conceived that there is an asymmetrical relation between the foreign and Korean teachers. The inside of the in-between is filled with Korean culture and the people who bear it. In other words, the space is dominated by Korean culture and people. Koreans are comfortable and familiar in the space because it is their own. Unlike the Korean people, the foreign teachers have more tension than the Korean teachers due to the surrounding alienated culture.

In particular, the dialogues between different cultures are believed to engender the discriminative notion of Self and Other. In an effort to replace this discriminatory discourse, alternative discourses are suggested by Homi Bhabha and Ted Aoki. They provide important notions to grasp the living space of the research participants. The research participants talked about their reverse culture shock when they return to their home country, Canada. Three of them told me that they felt comfortable when they got on the airplane and saw Koreans, and heard Korean on their way back to Korea. However, they all still feel uncomfortable

when they have meals in a Korean restaurant and when they buy things at a store. This ambivalence represents that they do not posit themselves in the “First Space,” Canada and not in the “Second Space,” Korea, but in the “Third Space” which does not include both spaces. (Aoki’s (1996/2005) “not-and”, Bhabha’s (1994) “incommensurable position”) or includes both space (Aoki’s (1996/2005) “and”, Bhabha’s (1994) “hybridity”).

Let me discuss the alternative model starting with Bhabha. Bhabha (1994) creates an in-between space called “Third Space” wherein two cultures coexist. Bhabha (1994) describes the Third Space as an interstice between two cultures, where it is very difficult to “fit together different forms of cultures” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 209). The space is, thus, an incommensurable one between different cultures. By opening to the ambivalent and dissembling meanings of the others, a hybrid takes place in the third space. As such, it is possible to displace the original structure of authority and to establish a new structure of authority, interpreting anew the same signifiers.

Founded on hybridity of meanings, the third space can be replaced with a space of hybrids which are new meanings as the result of cultural encounters. In fact, all encounters may bring about negotiations and form hybrids of cultures between participants in the process of encountering with respect to places, history and subject positions. In this way, the culture in the third space must be understood as complex intersections of places, historical temporalities and subject positions of the respective participants.

If we explain this intersection by giving a specific instance, it produces the



supplementary discourse. Bhabha (1995) illustrates the specific supplementary discourse about the conversion of Hindu peasants to Christians as follows:

They would say, for instance: We would be happy to convert so long as you convince us that these words of the Christian god do not come from the mouth of meat eaters. These words are very beautiful, but your priests are a non-vegetarian class. We cannot believe that anybody who eats meat can transmit the word of God. (Bhabha, 1995, p. 82)

This vegetarian Bible is the supplementary discourse which is composed of the Hindu's vegetarianism and the Christian Bible. This seems to negotiate the two sides but covers the resistance of the conversion to Christianity because Christians are meat-eaters. The hybrids seem to reveal the limit of and resistance against Western culture as a postcolonial discourse. This indicates that the third space is a site of struggles, resistance and negotiations. In this light, living in the third space, in migrated positions, the research participants have their conflicts due to the differences between their and the host culture.

The hybrid discourse may be criticized in two respects in terms of unrelatedness and unacceptable combination. In this intersection, supplementary discourse may miss the relatedness between participants which is the most crucial concept in Gadamer's hermeneutics. For the hybrids are composed of blends of different factors. There are incommensurability and separateness between contradictory discourses under the umbrella of hybrids. It is also a synthetic, supplementary discourse which may be unacceptable combinations in the sense that it is impossible for both parties to accept the discourse.

In chapter 5, I proposed two diagrams which represent the ideologies of the English and Korean languages. The English language is based on a horizontal mode of thought but the Korean language on a vertical or hierarchical mode of thought. If the two modes fit together in Bhabha's third space, there are three possibilities as follows:

- (1) *The ideology of English dominates that of Korean.* The situation may be accepted by native English speaking teachers, but would not be accepted by Korean people. This will be realistically impossible because the Korean language firmly dominates the overall Korean society.
- (2) *The ideology of English, the Western ideology, is subordinate to the ideology of Korean, a branch of the Eastern ideology.* This will be a great shock to the Westerners. It is impossible for them to accept that. The Korean people will have a similar reaction because they think of Western culture as their model to search for.
- (3) *The ideologies of the English and Korean languages meet each other.* This is the practical situation in which the participants live. As discussed in chapters four and five, conflicts take place in their experiences. They come out of the conflicts and tensions not between people but between two cultures. If the purpose of the understanding of the participants is to be free from or reduce the amounts of stress due to the conflicts, it is extremely difficult to do it because we have to attempt to transform the two cultures.

The encountering modes in the third space are conflicts and antagonistic

relations in the encounter between the English and Korean cultures. The discourse of the third space provides a foundation for resisting postcolonial societies, which enables subalterns to speak with their voices. However, the mismatching of culture, a type of hybridity, may take place and thus disrupts the relationships between cultures, resulting in breaking conversation. In the next section, I would like to suggest another mode of establishing relations between participants which can keep conversations going.

Regarding the positions of participants in the in-between, Aoki (1991/ 2005) postulates the “true bridge” which “are dwelling places for people” (p. 438). This true bridge is not a physical path for human beings and commercial stuff but a metaphorical space of human dwelling sites in “their longing to be together” (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 438). This true bridge is different from the third space in the sense that the bridge enables people to belong together but the third space is a hybrid of people and discourses. But if people do not want to belong together, the true bridge may be challenged and may not be formed among people.

In this vein, the metaphorical bridge is an ideal site for encounters between different cultures and for human dwelling. This notion may represent a connection and relatedness between people, things, cultures and the like. Aoki’s belong-togetherness is an important notion of hermeneutical understanding in that it is very much concerned with relatedness and connections between people. Without this cohesiveness and this intent desire, there may not be conversation. Thus no understanding may take place. In order to secure cohesiveness among people, there needs a representation of relatedness among them.

### 6.3.2 *Gawoundei*: The in-between

As language is a world view of a person, a different language implies a different world view of people who use the language. As a Korean, I am in a position to review the notion of the in-between space in terms of the Korean language. This approach may engender a new view or imagination of the notion of the in-between space.

The term, in-between, can be translated into *Gawoundei* in Korean. It involves four meanings in the dictionary which was published by *Hangeulhakhoe* (The Association of the Korean Language) in 1991: ① the middle, the center ② within a space between/among more than two ③ within a range of sets of people or things ④ in the course of.<sup>49</sup> Among these, Gadamer's in-between is associated with three definitions from ① to ③. Definition ① is applied to the situation when people encounter each other. Definition ② relates to the case when there is physical and psychological space between or among participants. And definition ③ can be associated with cultural or historical consciousness. If a person meets another one, this may mean that his or her culture meets the other's.

The Korean translation, *Gawoundei*, is etymologically divided into four parts: *ga* (noun, *rim*) or *gab* (noun, *fold in half*) + *wou* (directional suffix) + *n* (adjectival suffix) + *dei* (noun, *place* or *site*).<sup>50</sup> These stems and affixes combine to produce

<sup>49</sup> I briefly summarized the detailed meanings of *gawoundei* in the dictionary published by the Association of the Korean Language (1991).

<sup>50</sup> *Ga-wou-n-dei* had its origin of *ga(b)-a-n-dei* in 16<sup>th</sup> century. Among these parts, *a* is a directional suffix. Thus, I name *wou* as a directional suffix.

the meaning of a place or a site where people or things come from a rim or an edge. This meaning involves directionality because of the directional suffix, *wou*. Thus, a thing or a person in the *gawoundei* is situated on the rim (*ga*) and moves inside the rim due to the directional suffix *wou*.

The compositional meaning of the Korean translation of the in-between helps to understand the position of people and culture and the relationship of people with others. It indicates where people or culture are situated in the space when they encounter people. According to the compositional meaning of the *gawoundei*, every participant is situated on the rim of the in-between space. In this mode of situating participants, there is no discrimination between or among them. For they are situated on the rim of the in-between, that is, in the same position. There are no notions of Self and Other, whose discourses depend on the Self's discrimination of the Other. They are all Other as well as Self. Moreover, they are related between or among themselves. For the rim is the border of the shared interest, relationship, etc. of the participants in which they are placed.

The compositional meaning of *gawoundei* would also be helpful in understanding the encountering of people in the in-between. Among *ga+wou+n+dei*, the directional suffix, *wou*, enables them to meet among themselves. The beings move toward the center within the circle and meet one another. As they start to move from the rim to the center, that is, the same status, they can meet having the same status without any hierarchies among them. Thus the interactions would help them to understand one another without influence on or disregarding the differences between or among themselves as well as without

trying to assimilate Other into Self.

Etymologically, the word “*gawoundei*” involves the same distance between two participants in a space. As mentioned, “*Gawoundei*” originates from “*ga*” (edge) or “*gab*” (fold in half) which indicates that the participants are situated on the edge or at two opposite ends in which they remain at the same distance from the center. This etymological meaning also provides the participants with equal status, in which there are no discriminatory concepts such as Self and Other. They are all both Self and Other.

Aoki (1981/ 2006) addresses the reciprocity of perspectives when two strangers meet. He continues to point out that such occasions result in the bridging of the two worlds and the establishment of contact with each other. These can be formed on the edge of the circle of *gawoundei*. In order to understand each other, he also cites the conditions for mutual understanding from a paper written by Robert G. Hanvey: “There must be a readiness to respect and accept and a capacity to participate...” (Hanvey, cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 219). As for a capacity to participate, Gadamer (1989) believes that a man is linguistic being in the world. In other words, human beings primordially have a capacity to participate through language. And a readiness to respect and a capacity to participate are related with the notion of *gawoundei* in that it can form a bridge to contact each other on and in which there is no discrimination.

In particular, the Korean people respect the Other who is in a relationship with them in daily life. Let me turn to the notion of respect between people from the perspective of the Korean people by reviewing how they use honorific forms of

words for Other.

As discussed in chapter 5, “when two people are not familiar with each other, they speak in referential styles. This referential form indicates that they are equal and respect each other.” (This volume, p. 193) As such, the unfamiliar persons in the *gawoundei* use honorific form each other which implies the notion of respecting each other. When somebody is waiting for me at the department office, the secretary calls me and say: “*Sonnim-i-osseodseumnida*” (*Son*, guest, somebody; *nim*, honorific form; *i*, subject postpositional particle; *osseodseumnida*, honorific form of *came*), which means “somebody came.”<sup>51</sup>

Reviewing discourse using the word *Sonnim* (the honorific form of *guest*) reveals how the Koreans treat the stranger within a relationship. Imagine two situations:

Situation One: A man whom the secretary didn’t know entered the department office and asked the secretary if Professor Kim was in his office. When he went out of the office, I ask the secretary who he is. Then, she says:

(1)

*Kim gyosoo nim chatneun son nim ipnida.*

Kim professor honorific marker meet guest(honorific) honorific marker be

(A guest who wants to meet Professor Kim)

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<sup>51</sup> *Osseodseumnida* can be divided into *o(-da)* (come)-*ss*(honorific form)-*od* (past particle)-*seum*(honorific form)-*ni*(connector)-*da*(verbal suffix)

Situation Two: A man whom the secretary didn't know entered the department office and went out of the office. When he went out the office, I ask the secretary who he is. Then, she says:

(2)

*Moreuneun saram ipnida.*

Don't know a man (neutral) be

(A man who she doesn't know)

In the above two situations, "a man" has two different forms in Korean. In case of forming a relationship with people, an honorific noun (son) and honorific marker (nim) are used, as in situation one. On the other hand, if the secretary does not know the man who entered the office, that is, there is no relationship, a neutral noun (saram) is used without any honorific marker. As such, the Koreans treat Other differently in terms of relationships.

From the perspective of the Korean language and people, the concept of the in-between space implies that beings (persons or things) in the space are situated on the basis of equality and respect one another. Adopting these assumptions to Gadamer's in-between, the figure of the in-between would be the closed or limited virtual space which interlocutors form when they encounter each other, and in which the effective historical consciousness of the participants is operating and dialectic interactions take place *on the bases of equality and mutual respect*. As such, the revised view can satisfy the three conditions for mutual understanding such as a readiness to respect and accept and a capacity to



participate which Hanvey (cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 219) argues for.

### 6.3.3 Differences in the in-between space

In 6.2, I have classified the differences which engender the conflicts of the native English speaking teachers into the three areas of culture, teaching and teachers, and school. These are then discussed in terms of the properties: the differences of culture are associated with value, those of teaching and teachers with expectancy, and those of school with justice. In this clause, I will address the properties within the revised concept of the in-between space because they exist and are reviewed within the space. Especially, I will attempt to explain how to reduce the differences of the properties by way of equality and mutual respect which are drawn from the implications of *gawoundei*, the Korean translation of the in-between space.

Firstly, the differences of values are very hard to reduce. The native English speaking teachers who have lived over fifteen years still feel some degree of strangeness and inconsistency with Korean culture. This alienation is attributed to the differences of culture which are deep-rooted, like language. As for this kind of difference, if a Korean staff member tries to force the native English speaking teachers to accept Korean culture or language, they will resist it or at least feel very conflicted by the force. On the contrary, if a native English speaking teacher compels Korean students to accept his or her culture in Korea, he or she will also face stiff resistance from the students.

In order to avoid these conflicts, we must recognize that everybody has his or her own culture and that all cultures are treated as having placed equal status. We

must also admit that we respect each other's culture. Lack of these inevitably engenders the discriminatory relations such as Self and Other, which will eventually bring about conflicts between the two parties.

Next, the differences due to dissatisfaction with teaching performance require the native English speaking teachers and their schools to make efforts to meet the expectations of their students. The native English speaking teachers often point out that the Korean educational system is bizarre in that it is concentrated on the test scores and the learning style of memorization. On the other hand, U.S. President Barack Obama remarked on the success of education in Korea in his annual State of the Union address to Congress on January, 2011: "Let's also remember that after parents, the biggest impact on a child's success comes from the man or woman at the front of the classroom. In South Korea, teachers are known as 'nation builders.'" (The Korea Times, Jan., 27, 2011) These views are like two sides of the same coin. It is conceived that both the native English speaking teachers and U.S. President Barack Obama point to the realities of education in Korea.

As for the perspective of the native English speaking teachers, most of the research participants may feel conflicts due to the bad or indifferent responses of the students. However, Nick points out the lack of the introductory teacher training program for new teachers, but he does not mention his conflicting feeling in his classes. Some students told me that Nick's classes are very informative and are carried out using various repertoires, which is one of features of the expert teachers (Johnstone, 2004). From this, it is conjectured that they are satisfied with

Nick's class, and it may be why he does not feel conflicted in his class. On the other hand, Harry attributed the students' negligence of his class to his students (Oct., 30, 2008). Teachers are more powerful than students in that the former give scores to the students and control their classes.

At this point, teachers must have the orientation of equality which enables them not to control or oppress students and to encourage their students to collaborate or participate in their classes.

On the other hand, schools have more power than the native English speaking teacher. This asymmetrical relation may cause them to have conflicts in their mindsets. In order to reduce the conflicts, it is inevitable that the school administrators and teaching staff respect the value of their work and accept them as their colleagues, and provide them with the space to participate in the decision making. As in the case of the students' dissatisfaction with the teachers' performance, the school administrators and teaching staff should make efforts to enable them to participate in the faculty meetings and the special administrative committees on basis of humanitarian equality.

In this section, I have attempted to suggest some measures to reduce the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers have from the perspectives of respect and equality which are implied in the *gawoundei*, the Korean translation of the in-between space. In this vein, the differences or conflicts inform us about clues of what we do for the betterment of the educational activities. On the dictionary published by Summers (1992), "conflict" is defined as "a state of disagreement or argument between opposing groups or opposing ideas or

principles; ...” (p. 264) The definition is composed of many negative words such as disagreement, argument, opposing, and opposition.

It misses the hidden conditions for the conflicts such as insufficiency, dissatisfaction or differences of values, etc. These may not be detrimental to the betterment of the quality or environment of education. If we pay more attention to these conditions, “conflicts” may turn its negative meaning over to a positive one. For instance, if the native English speaking teachers put more time and energy on the development of their teaching performance in order to reduce their conflicts in class, then this effort will engender the betterment of the quality of teaching. And if the school administrators revise the school system or regulations to allow them to participate in the decision-making, their ideas may contribute to the development of the school system and pedagogy.

Moreover, if we have the will to reduce the conflicts, they may be the starting point to the betterment of the state. In this vein, “conflict” can be redefined as “a state of grasping what factors are engaged in disagreement or argument between opposing groups or opposing ideas or principles; ...” This reconceptualizing of “conflicts” is the basis of the development of section 6.4.

## **6.4 Relating the differences to the Korean context**

“Differences” or “conflicts” are not always regarded as negative states or mindsets but can be addressed as positive dispositions (Ellsworth, 2005; Trifonas, 2008). They can be clues to grasp what recommendations or revisions are required in the education context and can also be stimulants toward improving the pedagogical practices and systems. In this regard, identifying differences is a starting point for making an improvement. Another important idea is that the differences and the conflicts are impossible to remove or resolve, but reducing them can be conducted through negotiations or mutual agreements between the parties. Often when a certain difference or conflict is eased then another one may be unveiled. Starting from this point of view, this section suggests specific measures which can be applied to the Korean educational context.

### **6.4.1 Cultural differences**

Cultural differences are rooted in the personal values based on a person’s historical or biographical background. As such, the conflicts caused by them seem to be difficult to reduce. If we divide culture into the institutional, the host country and the native country cultures, we may apply specific measures to ease the conflicts caused by the cultural differences. The newly arrived native English speaking teachers are stressed because they come to Korea with a poor knowledge

about the host country. One native English speaking teacher told how different his bias was from the real teaching situation: “I got two days of classroom observation and was then put to work. I quickly learned that the stereotype of Korean students – quiet, hard-working, obedient and always respectful of the teacher – was largely untrue.” (Korea Times, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

From 2009, I sponsored a monthly meeting with one of the native English speaking teachers in my university. On September 1<sup>st</sup> in 2009, when we had a foreign instructor meeting, the newly appointed teacher attended the meeting and asked about the textbook to teach, the course plan, etc for an hour. Mickey remembered the time when he first came to Korea: “I went to Itaewon to meet friends and feel comfortable. Very quickly I realized that when I went to Itaewon there was always drinking, always a party. In my opinion that destroys my life style.” (Oct 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008) Mickey was very lonely and uncomfortable about being with Korean people at that time, so he went to bars and enjoyed himself with other foreigners. Familiarization with the Korean language, culture and people are the pivotal factors for becoming comfortable in the society and in the classroom. However, there was no guide or supporter who could help him in expanding his horizon about the new social culture.

As practical measures, I suggest two things for guiding or supporting the newly arrived teachers. One is that the school open a Korean culture program for the new teacher. The course can be managed partly by a native English speaking staff member who has had long years of stay in Korea and partly by a Korean faculty staff member who is in charge of the department in which the new teacher

belongs. The Korean staff member takes responsibility for school culture and some of Korean culture. The foreign staff member introduces the new teacher to authentic social culture. The second measure of support is that the department hires a part-time student assistant who can help the new teacher in doing practical jobs and in understanding Korean culture. The assistant student can help the teacher with his or her teaching job by grading or photocopying.

Most importantly, it is necessary to have regular meetings between the Korean and foreign teaching staff. Living culture is so changeable and delicate that it is not easy to teach in the training program. Especially, the foreign teachers face a variety of pedagogic difficulties in their class. As such, the meetings will be a good space in which the native English speaking teachers may consult them with the Korean staff as well as their foreign colleagues. At the same time, it will contribute to the expansion of the Korean staff's understanding of the foreign staff with respect to their pedagogic lives and to the betterment of pedagogy by the collaboration of both sides.



### 6.4.2 Teacher training

It is generally believed that most native English teachers come to Korea for the purpose of making money for one or two years.<sup>52</sup> They usually decide to stay longer and settle down in their first year. Then, they start to change their mindsets and try to adapt to this professional and social environment. They often enroll in a Korean language course which is offered in a university or a language institute.

As for teacher training, there is not any special introductory training program for the new teachers who are expected to work at universities and at the private educational institutes, the Hakwon. The native English speaking teachers without any teacher training have trained themselves by reading books related with pedagogy, learning to teach by talking about teaching in class with their coworkers and by asking advice from their colleagues about motivating the students. Another important source is not practicum but real teaching, in which the students' feedback is the textbook for training themselves. This self training may be called either "teacher as self-made" (Britzman, 2003) or "students as teacher trainers." Britzman (2003) points out that this forms the image of "the teacher as rugged individual," by emphasizing personal teaching style rather than the dynamic relationships of the teacher, the students, the curriculum, the knowledge constructed in exchange and the discursive practices." (p. 232) Next,

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<sup>52</sup> Some native English speaking teachers came for other reasons such as avoiding personal agonies, enjoying the Eastern culture, etc. For instance, Peter has been teaching here for over fifteen years, but doesn't care about money. He wants to live peacefully without any stress as much as he possibly can. However, the Korean teachers seem to think that the native English speaking teachers came to Korea to find a job. One teacher calls them "economic migrants with little commitment to the profession." (Korea Times, Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

self-made training implies that students can be teacher trainers because the teachers depend so much on the students' responses. Such an absurd situation makes them struggle in carrying out their profession. The self-made teaching style is very unsettling because it can be changeable depending on the students' responses. As such, the native English speaking teachers live in a state of fully uncomfortable, stress-inflicted life.

It is high time to open an in-service training institute for the native English speaking teachers working in universities or the private educational institutes (Hakwon). The Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) is one of the suitable organizations which can assume responsibility for the teacher training for the native English speaking teachers working at universities. The native English speaking teachers all feel the need for training, but do not want to be trained by the Korean faculty. One of them suggested to me that a good place would be the universities in Canada. This is due to there being less proficiency here in English language use.<sup>53</sup> Practically, it is less possible to establish an institute for native English speaking teachers who are expected to work in the universities in Korea. As an alternative for meeting their needs, it may be plausible and desirable to establish or manage a training institute in Korea collaborating with universities or institutions in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., or Australia because most of them came from those countries.

More serious problems have been raised about training the newly arrived native English speaking teachers entering the private educational institutes,

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<sup>53</sup> This is somewhat related with native-speakerism, which refers to the belief that native-speaker teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology. (Holliday, 2006, p. 385)

because the new teachers usually start their teaching profession at the private educational institutes. I mentioned in chapter 4 what Mickey told me of his first day teaching, thinking to his student: "OK, please don't cry. You're new to this. I'm new to this." (Oct., 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008) This may be likened to "a torturous moment that tests the inner strength of the novice." (Britzman, 2003, p. 230) As the private educational institutes are spreading around the country and mostly operate on a small scale, the government could put a district training center in every Local Office of Education and support the management of the center, because the private educational institutes are under the supervision of the Local Office of Education.

### **6.4.3 School Administration**

Considering the linguistic dominance of English over the world, the native English speaking teachers have two goals: They have “the noble goals of teaching across language and cultures and the hegemonic, colonizing dimensions of the same process” (Johnston, 1999, pp. 276-277). In other words, they have roles both as a foreign language teacher and “unofficial emissary of governments and nations” (Johnston, 1999, p. 277).

In reality, many Korean teachers do not seem to regard native English speaking teachers as qualified language teachers and do not think of the foreign teachers as unofficial emissaries of their cultures but as service workers. This reality engenders tensions between the native English speaking teacher’s hidden roles as linguistic dominator and unofficial emissary and the Korean view of the foreign teacher as a service worker. The conflicts may be caused by a lack of respect for each other based on equal ground. They may require us to have more conversational interactions to understand each other.

However, there are few or no interactions between them and the host administrators, and between them and their Korean colleagues. As there is little or no dialectic conversation between the native English speaking teachers and the Korean administrators and teaching staff, there is little or no understanding between them. As a result of this, the foreign faculty at one university expressed their worries about their working conditions and made recommendations in a six-page document to the school administration in 2009. Their recommendations can

be summarized in three areas:

**One:** Streamline the hiring process to reflect the realities of the current market for native English teachers in Korea.

**Two:** Work with the existing foreign faculty members in an inclusive manner, mindful that the conditions and needs of the foreign faculty members are different from those of the Korean professors.

**Three:** Make changes that benefit students and ensure that quality education is a priority at the university.

This document is not the expression of personal matters but that of the group's matters. Reviewing the three claims may unveil the differences between the administrators and the foreign teachers with respect to how they think of each other. The native English speaking teachers point out the inefficient management and ineptitude, discriminatory treatment and lack of quality of education.

These claims are not just for resolving their difficulties but also for redressing injustices. In other words, the conflicts between the native English speaking teachers and the administration may be associated with their lack of legitimacy and with redressing injustice.

In reality, their claims are legitimate. The hiring process was more complex and took longer and the salary rate had been little changed compared with that of the year of 2002, when their salary was drastically raised. Lastly, the normal class size was mostly over 30 per class, which is too overloaded for a conversation class. These realities support the view that the claims of the native English

speaking teachers were just.

Furthermore, reflecting the work done, none of the managing staff discussed the issues with the native English speaking teachers. Although their salary rate was raised and the class size was reduced afterwards, nobody knew what their responses were because no dialogues took place between the two parties. The university administrators assumed that the native English speaking teachers would be satisfied with the results. This series of events reveal how the administrators think of the native English speaking teachers.

The administrators are in a position of controlling the native English speaking teachers. Unlike the Korean teaching staff, they are foreigners who are situated outside the inner groups of the school such as faculty staff and managing staff. As such, the native English speaking teachers are marginalized and excluded from the decision makings. They become domesticated by the marginalization and exclusion which, practically, play the roles of control and oppression (Freire, 1970/2000).

Marginalization towards the native English speaking teachers is prevalent in Korea and Japan. Seen from the administrative perspective, the foreign teachers are stipulated as assistant teachers in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program and the English Program in Korea. In reality, although they fulfill the main roles in teaching English class and Korean teachers function as assistants in charge of discipline, the foreign teachers are given the status of the assistant teachers. The native English speaking teachers are also stipulated to foreign language instructors in the universities in Korea and Japan who cannot be promoted to

assistant professor in terms of their status. These things indicate that the native English speaking teachers are situated on the margin of their profession.

What is implied in this exclusion and marginalization is the unequal relationships between the two parties. These are injustices with respect to humanization, which will put the native English speaking teachers into distress. They are also treated unfairly with respect to the salary rate, teaching hours, benefits, etc. The conflicts caused by the discrimination between the native English speaking teachers and the school administrators are not rooted in the complaints about the present conditions but in human rights.

In order to restore their human rights, it is urgent that the native English speaking teachers be allowed to participate in the decision-making committees. This will enable the administrators to have opportunities to hear the voice of the foreign teachers and the teachers to have confidence in their profession. Moreover, the two parties should endeavor to have true conversation in order not to simply exchange ideas among conversation participants. Without true conversation, the dialogue may be exchanges of empty voices with no (re)action taking place in the end. In order to share true conversation, the people in the in-between space should engage in the dialogue with “solidarity” (Rorty, 1989), “compassion” (Carson *et.al.*, 2001), or “love, humility and faith” (Freire, 1970/2000). Without true conversation between the parties, the conflicts keep on happening and engender ruptures between the university and the teachers, which will make the students the victim of these conflicts.

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the hermeneutic endeavor to form a fusion of horizons between the Korean and the foreign staff and between the perceived Korean and the perceived Canadian culture which will never be fused.<sup>54</sup> Through the process of hermeneutic understanding, I shed light on the differences between the perceived Korean and Canadian cultures, and between the Korean staff and the native English speaking teachers with respect to culture, personal relations and school administration.

Then, I attempt to reconceptualize the notion of “in-between space” which is “the true locus of hermeneutics” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 295). According to Gadamer (1989), language is a world view of human beings and a particular orientation and relationship to the world. Together with this current situatedness, language has a historical significance in that “Words and language obviously stand at the beginning of human history and the history of humanity.” (Gadmer, 1998, p. 3) As such, as a Korean, I understand the term “in-between space” within the horizon of the Korean language. The translation of the “in-between space” into the Korean language corresponds to “*gawoundei*,” which implies “being equal.” By combining this notion of “*gawoundei*” and the Korean honorific use regarding the stranger within a relationship, I suggest that the people in the in-between think and act on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Based on the revised concept of the in-between, I have reviewed the

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<sup>54</sup> The notion of a fusion of horizons between two cultures is practically impossible partly because many imperial countries attempted to reach a fusion of culture by colonizing the other countries and failed in the end, and partly because no human beings can fully share their thoughts with others without disruption or disagreement in their mindsets as well as minds.



differences in the in-between space. I suggest that the cultural differences be respected by each other on the basis of mutual equality and respect in the in-between space. Furthermore, I suggest that, if there are asymmetric power relations between the parties in the in-between space, the more powerful parties have to try to balance the power in order to meet the mutual equality between them. Finally, I propose some practical measures which enable the people in the in-between space to secure mutual equality and respect with respect to cultural differences, teacher training and school administration.

As for cultural differences, I propose the introduction of Korean cultural courses related with pedagogy and life and of a Korean assistant student for helping them in their profession. More importantly, I suggest that there be regular meetings between the Korean and foreign staff. Next, considering the practical conditions, I propose to establish a teacher training center for the native English speaking teachers in Korea in collaboration with universities or educational institutions in the native English speaking countries such as the U.S., Canada, the U.K., etc.

Most importantly, many of conflicts that the native English speaking teachers bear in their minds are concerned with the inaccessibility to decision making in the university and the unequal working conditions compared with the Korean staff with respect to salaries and welfare. These practices may ignore the reality that they live in the in-between space and collaborate with the Korean staff to teach the students. They may falsely imply that the native English speaking teachers are situated outside the in-between space. More seriously, the practices may run

counter to social justice and equality which are an important fundamental value of education. In order to restore their human or pedagogic rights, it is necessary to open the decision making meetings to the foreign staff, and encourage them to participate in them and to propose their voices. This measure corresponds to the implications of the in-between space.

In these veins, differences in the in-between space are not isolated points to confirm contradictions or inconsistencies but starting points to reduce or remove them. They can reduce this gap enough to reach a consensus among themselves. In order to achieve consensus by expanding the horizons of the participants in the in-between space, it is necessary for them to share mutual equality and respect in their mindsets.

Although we reach a consensus about stakes over which the participants in the in-between space have conflicts due to differences, it is nearly impossible to completely remove differences. Together with this, social or personal relations among the participants in the in-between space are not stagnant but dynamic. It is inevitable that different or latent conflicts will happen among the participants in the in-between space. Most importantly, however, conflicts are not complaints but sources which reveal the issues to work an improvement.

## Chapter 7. Epilogue

Reflecting on my path from Seoul through Edmonton to Seoul, I believe myself to be more transformed rather than changed in my understanding not only of the native English speaking teachers but of the perspectives of my research. Before coming to Edmonton, I was fettered by the quantitative, the hypothesis-proof, reason-based tradition of research. I have passed the encountering of hermeneutic, poststructural and critical theory, and confusing and stabilizing paths during my stay in Edmonton and in Seoul.

Through the lens of hermeneutics, in particular, I have broadened and transformed my views of languages. Before leaving for Edmonton, I believed that a language is mainly a device or tool for communication. Due to Gadamer (1989) I came to understand that a language is a medium of conveying its cultures and its history embedded in the society of the language users. This is the fundamental idea of this research. The experiences of native English speaking teachers in Korea can be understood through exploring the traditions of the languages which they are contacting and living with, i.e., English and Korean.

These traditions and the historical genealogy of the languages enable me to look into the conditions of the conflicts which the research participants have undergone. What is implied in this is that the native English speaking teachers perceive the historical traditional differences of the languages, and some practices they believe need to be corrected with respect to pedagogical and social practices because their own, they believe, are correct. But they realized that they could not

change the pedagogical and social practices which they believe need to be corrected, such that they felt lack of power and conflicts in their lived experience.

In this research, I attempted to unearth the conditions of the languages from their history and traditions. Regarding Korean, it is very common that it involves the honorific inflections and affixes, which has formed the Korean people in their establishment of human relationships. They tend to think and use the suitable forms of expressions in talking to others considering their hierarchical relations with the others. This way of addressing indicates that the Korean people are thinking on the ground of the hierarchical mode.

On the other hand, the English language involves only a few honorifics which may rarely be used except in the highly formal written forms and context. In spite of the equal and democratic features of English it has been concerned with the colonialism and the current American-led globalization (or imperialism). This legacy can be traced back to the Western supremacy over the other cultures and countries. These colonial and hegemonic powers seem to be imbued in the mindset of the native English speaking teachers in that they propose that their pedagogical and social practices are models to be followed rather than admitting their differences.

These different traditional backgrounds of the languages inevitably put the native English speaking teacher into troubles, frustrations and indifferences. Although they have intentions to change the pedagogical practices for the best, they have had rare opportunities to tell them and only endured undesirable conditions. There are nearly no communications between them and the institutions

including administrators and the Korean colleagues. This would result in no understanding between the two sides, which is the moment to necessitate the hermeneutics.

In order to secure the hermeneutical understanding, I adopt the notion of Gadamer's (1989) in-between, which can be translated into "*gawoundei*" in Korean. Tracing the etymology of the word, "*gawoundei*," it is unraveled that it involves "equality" and "mutual respect." By these two implications it is explored how they can reduce the conflicts that the native English speaking teachers have.

This exploration would not be adequate in order for Koreans and the native English speaking teachers to understand and form a fusion of horizons. But this research may be one step toward expanding our understanding of each other between the expatriate teachers and their colleagues and between their culture and the host culture.

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