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An Ethnography of the English Language Industry in The Republic of Korea

Melissa Stachel
Western University

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Melissa Stachel

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Abstract:

This thesis is the outcome of four months of multi-sited ethnographic research conducted in Canada and South Korea. It is my thesis that two beliefs, one held by Koreans and the other by foreign English instructors, maintain the English language industry in South Korea. South Koreans, I will show, believe that education, and specifically English, grants an individual and his or her family status. This belief, I argue, ensures a steady demand for English language instructors in the country. It is not only the desire to fill this demand, however, that motivates native English speakers to travel to South Korea. In fact, many native English speakers who migrate to South Korea believe that teaching English will provide a cultural immersion experience that will take them deep into Korean culture. However, this expectation is often not met. What foreign English teachers discover is that relationships between foreign English educators and Koreans have a complex history in this context. As a result of the ambivalence that often characterizes Korean and foreign English teachers' relationships, native English speakers often end up in a community of fellow 'foreigners.'

Keywords:

South Korea; foreign English teachers; English language learning; competitive power of English; back regions; migrant labor; tourism; community

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Mark, who has always been on my side and had undoubted faith in me, *saranghaeyo.*

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I. The Migration of Native English Speakers to South Korea

Every year, tens of thousands of native English speakers move to countries throughout the world to teach English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL). Some of the most popular destinations are The Republic of Korea (from here on, South Korea), Japan, China, and Taiwan. Over the past couple of decades the number of teachers going to South Korea has increased considerably. According to one newspaper report (Ford 2005), the official number of foreign English teachers working in South Korea legally is 7,800, but *The Korea Times* (Ford 2005) and an EFL-Law website based out of the country (2008) suggest that the number is close to 20,000, a figure that includes teachers without necessary documentation.

Native English speakers move to South Korea from various countries throughout the world including, Canada, The United States, The United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and India, among others. Many English speakers gain employment in South Korea through recruiting agencies that place teachers in various schools throughout the country. According to the EFL-Law website (2008) there are currently over eighty-six such recruiting companies, many located in South Korea, but some are also situated in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand.

As you walk through city streets in South Korea, you are likely to encounter private institutes (*hagwon*) on just about every corner. These institutes specialize in areas of study such as music, science, mathematics, Japanese, Chinese characters, Korean, art as well as English. Primary, middle, and secondary school students finish their studies at their public schools and go to at least one of these private academies every night. Hagwons can be independent institutions owned by individuals or franchises overseen by

large companies. Native English speakers are hired to work at English hagwons, as well as at public primary, middle or secondary schools, universities, foreign language centers, English villages (all-English activity centers) or businesses. They can also be employed by individual families as private tutors. This high demand for English education in the country has led to the influx of native English speakers over the past decade. According to *The Guardian Weekly*, the Korean government continues to increase the number of English teachers allowed in the country every year (Ford 2005).

Relationships between Native English Speakers and Koreans

I became interested in the migration of native English speakers to South Korea through my own experience as an English language instructor in the country for almost two years (2004-2006). This thesis is a result of questions that emerged from my own experience as well as my interest in the experiences of recruiters, directors of English institutes, Korean English students, mothers of English students, and foreign English teachers. Throughout my time as an English instructor I witnessed the amount of money Korean parents spent on extra English lessons for their children. In addition, I saw the immense pressure placed on such students not only to learn English, but also to gain entry into one of the most prestigious universities in the country.[1] For Koreans, it seemed, this emphasis on education for themselves and their children was a means of achieving status. On the other end of the spectrum, as an English teacher, I found that the native English speakers teaching Korean children migrated to South Korea for various reasons and that they had varied experiences of both teaching and living in the country. When they first arrived to the country, many teachers expressed the desire to make Korean friends, learn

[1] The three most prestigious universities in South Korea are Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University

the language, and learn the culture, but as time went on many found themselves spending more time with other native English speakers. This led me to consider the relationships that develop between Koreans and English instructors. In an effort to better understand the complex interests and motivations underlying the EFL industry in South Korea, in this thesis I address a number of research questions: Why do Koreans think it is important to learn English? What motivates native English speakers to go to South Korea to teach English? What do they expect from such experiences and does their lived experience meet their initial expectations? What happens when their expectations are not met?

It is my thesis that two beliefs, one held by Koreans and the other by foreign English instructors, maintain the English language industry in South Korea. South Koreans, I will show, believe that education, and specifically English, grants an individual and his or her family status. This belief, I argue, ensures a steady demand for English language instructors in the country. It is not only the desire to fill this demand, however, that motivates native English speakers to travel to South Korea. In fact, many native English speakers who migrate to South Korea believe that teaching English will provide a cultural immersion experience that will take them deep into Korean culture. However, this expectation is often not met. What foreign English teachers discover is that relationships between foreign English educators and Koreans have a complex history in this context. As a result of the ambivalence that often characterizes Korean and foreign English teachers' relationships, native English speakers often end up in a community of fellow 'foreigners.'

Migrant Laborers and Tourists

While carrying out preliminary research for this project I realized that nothing had been written by scholars about the experiences of foreign English instructors anywhere. Although research on the educational system in South Korea is substantial, with the exception of a few published studies (Baik 1992, Kim-Rivera 2002) English learning was merely given lip service in this work. In addition, foreign English educators were not mentioned in this research. The lack of research published on this topic led me to explore the literature that focused more broadly on the movements of people. From this research I found that the foreign English instructors on whom I focus here have much in common with both migrant laborers and tourists. In the following section, I will describe in general terms the commonalities they share with each group. In the conclusions of chapters three, four, and five, I will refer again to this comparison.

The causes for individuals and families to migrate are diverse. While in the recent past social scientists have focused on economic theories of migration, known as push-pull perspectives, these theoretical approaches are seen by some as individualistic, simplistic, and ahistorical (Gmelch 1992: 55, Castles and Miller 2003: 22). The push-pull perspective focuses on the push factors in the home country which lead people to migrate and the pull factors that attract them to a particular migration destination (Gmelch 1992: 55, Olwig 2007: 8). These theories assume that the poorest people move from the least-developed countries to the most developed ones. However, much research shows that this is not the case as the majority of migrants are people of an intermediate social standing who move from cities or countries that are undergoing economic and social change. Moreover, theories that privilege only the economic motivations of migrants assume that

movements are from densely populated regions to less populated ones, but countries which have many immigrants such as the Netherlands and Germany are already densely populated (Castles and Miller 2003: 22-23).

An alternative approach taken by social scientists in order to understand the causes of migration is the historical-structural approach, which has roots in Marxist political economy. In this approach, migration can be seen as a way in which developed capitalist economies dominated underdeveloped economies by exploiting poor countries for cheap labor. This theoretical explanation is criticized for not paying attention to the motivations and experiences of the individuals who are involved in the migration process (Castles and Miller 2003: 25-26).

One of the more recent trends in migration studies is the migration systems approach. Migration systems theory suggests that links between the sending and receiving countries, either through political, social, or economic ties, leads to an increase in migration (Castles and Miller 2003: 26). The migration systems approach is part of a trend towards an inclusive and interdisciplinary understanding of migration. According to Castles and Miller (2003: 27),

> The basic principle is that any migratory movement can be seen as the result of interacting macro- and micro-structures. Macro-structures refer to large-scale institutional factors, while micro-structures embrace the networks, practices and beliefs of the migrants themselves. These two levels are linked by a number of intermediate mechanisms, which are referred to as 'meso-structures.'

The migration systems approach has inspired some scholars to focus on the micro-structures of migration, such as social networks that lead migrants to select their destination (see, for example, George 2005, Olwig 2007). The migrants' points of view and their social relations have been the focus of such ethnographic studies. Network analysis entered the field of anthropology in the 1940s and 1950s in the context of rural-

urban migrants in Central Africa (Olwig 2007: 8). According to Massey and colleagues (1992: 442),

> Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration. Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to foreign employment.

Network analysis is useful for studies which apply the ethnographic method because it focuses on relationships among individuals (Olwig 2007: 10).

An example of this kind of approach is seen in the work of Sheba Mariam George (2005: 49) who suggests that Indian nurses who migrated to the United States to work "exercised connective autonomy, determining where and how they immigrated within the context of a new set of relationships formed through nursing networks." Karen Fog Olwig (2007: 10) describes a similar phenomenon in the migration of three Caribbean families to the United States, Canada, and England. Olwig (2007: 10) conceptualizes this as "network-mediated migration" which involves "individuals moving along the lines of personal relationships that extend from their place of origin to a migration destination." As will be evident in the upcoming chapters, network analysis is useful in exploring some of the reasons native English speakers migrate to South Korea to teach English. This approach allowed me to examine the relationships involved in the decisions to migrate and the teachers' choice of particular migration destinations. As well, I will draw insights from recent ethnographic studies that focus on the migrants' points of view.

Families and community also figure in migration networks. This can be especially true of "transmigrants," defined by Nina Glick Schiller and colleagues (1995) as,

> Immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state. They are not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside. However, at the very same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated.

Olwig (2007: 11) suggests that transmigrants' networks consist of diverse ties to both their country of origin and to the different social, economic, and political situations they have experienced as migrants. One of the main interlocutors of this study, Annabelle, can be considered a transmigrant and her decision to move to South Korea is a result of her ethnic ties to the country. Annabelle's family's migration history has resulted in her being tied to more than one nation-state, Bolivia, England, and South Korea and she has "multiple and constant interconnections across international borders" (Gamburd 2000: 32). I will discuss her case further in chapter three.

As no two migration stories are the same, the assumption of this thesis is that there is no single set of circumstances that foster individuals or families to migrate. However, social scientists can find common threads that run through personal accounts of migration. Throughout this thesis, for comparative purposes, I will draw from the work of Sherrie Larkin (1989) who conducted anthropological research among West Indian migrants who seasonally work on farms in Ontario and from the work of George Gmelch (1992) who conducted fieldwork with Caribbean migrants in North America and The United Kingdom. These two studies illustrate how ethnographic accounts of migrant experiences of migration can capture the complexity of the causes of migrating and the field of relations along the way. Through stories of the lure of adventure, Sherrie Larkin found that West Indian men working on farms in Ontario wanted to migrate to gain

"experience" with their goal being "a kind of exploration of the working scene, or a chance to learn something about the customs of a different culture and a chance to share this knowledge with people at home" (1989: 31). According to Larkin, working on Ontario farms offers West Indian men the money to "finance their children's education, to build and maintain homes, and to support their families" (1989: 29). The majority of Larkin's interlocutors sent money home every month to support their children. However, they all said that money was not the only reason they migrate to work on farms in Ontario. Similarly, George Gmelch (1992) found that West Indians who migrated to Canada, The United States, and England wanted to find work, further their education, learn more about their profession, or join their families. Many spoke of seeing "a bit of the world," and talked about it as beginning a new life. According to Gmelch, "there were often several considerations in their decision to emigrate, and economic motives were not always foremost" (1992: 261). Many of these interlocutors had jobs in the Caribbean when they decided to migrate, therefore their reasons for migrating were more complex than economic theories would suggest. In both cases, the migrants envisioned that they would form relationships with others in their host countries. Foreign English instructors are similar to the labor migrants discussed by Larkin (1989) and Gmelch (1992) in that the desire for experience in a different country is foremost in their decision to move.

The most important distinction between West Indians and foreign English instructors is their freedom of movement. Larkin (1989: 35-36) found that "a common disappointment among West Indian men is that they come to Canada to experience the people and the country and then they are isolated in the farm." Some of these men worked seven days a week and others only had Friday nights off, restricting their

movement within the country. Similarly, the majority of Gmelch's interlocutors did not move from the initial place where they settled. Gmelch (1992: 264) suggests that they did not move because they wanted to maintain their relationships with other West Indians who share their interests and values. The migrants described in this thesis are different. While many English teachers do stay in the city where they initially arrived and settled, many more teach in various cities throughout the country. In addition, foreign English instructors in South Korea have the opportunity to travel as most of them do not work weekends and get at minimum ten days vacation, in addition to national holidays.

Foreign English instructors' ability to travel within and outside of South Korea is something they share with tourists. They are similar in other ways too. One of the characteristics of the tourist experience that has been identified in the literature is that tourists are particularly concerned with an authentic experience of some aspect of society or other people (MacCannell 1976: 94). Foreign English instructors, like tourists, are also often looking for an experience that allows them into the "back regions" of a culture. Dean MacCannell (1976), one of the pioneers of research on tourism, builds upon the work of Erving Goffman (1959) by examining the functions of back regions. He suggests that in our society, real relationships are associated with intimacy and closeness. Therefore, 'going native' or being "at one with [the natives]" of a new society assumes that the outsider will be welcomed into the back regions (1976: 93-94). The knowledge of the existence of a back region creates the belief that there is "more than meets the eye" in everyday experience. It is only when the individual "[penetrates] into the real life of the areas he visits that he ends up in places especially designed to generate feelings of intimacy and experience that can be talked about as 'participation'" (MacCannell 1976:

106). For many foreign English teachers, like tourists, the possibility of experiencing the back regions of Korean culture is what motivates them to migrate. According to Michael Harkin (1995: 653), "this quest for authenticity is essential, if not to all tourism, at least to its most prestigious forms." Foreign English teaching, like fieldwork, can be thought of as a 'prestigious' form of tourism in that both of these endeavors are more likely to offer entry into the back regions of a society.[2]

Like the tourist industry, recruiting agencies capitalize on the desire of potential foreign English instructors to experience the authentic. The recruitment material I will discuss in chapter four promotes the belief that native English speakers will have cultural experiences. The brochures used to recruit teachers in their home countries present a particular image of South Korea, which attracts those in search of adventure, travel, and cultural immersion. According to Charles Lindholm (2008: 42), tourists are seeking a world that is more real than their own. Tourism literature assumes a clear distinction between work and rest, production and consumption (see, for example, MacCannell 1976, Harkin 1995) with the latter being associated with tourism. The foreign English teaching experience challenges these assumptions as their experience is one that combines all of these elements.

[2] Foreign English instructors will no doubt be disturbed by this comparison to tourists as there is a distinction between long term immersion and a short term sojourn. According to Dean MacCannell (1976: 94), the term 'tourist' has a negative association and refers to an individual who is content with having an inauthentic experience. By making this comparison I do not mean to suggest that foreign English instructors are no different than tourists. It is simply that English teachers have certain things in common with tourists, much as they do with West Indian migrants.

The English Language Industry: A Multi-Sited Methodology

In preparation for writing this thesis, I conducted multi-sited fieldwork in Canada and South Korea for four months, collecting data on the English language industry through participant-observation and interviews with recruiters, foreign English instructors, Korean English students, mothers of English students, and directors of English institutes. As well, I have also accumulated data for this research project through participation in Internet communities for English language instructors and the construction and implementation of an on-line survey. In the design phase of my study I decided to include the bulletin board system on "Dave's ESL Café," a website open to the public where anyone who has access to the Internet can participate, to complement interviewing I was doing with participants in South Korea. I expected that the on-line social interactions would complement the face-to-face interviews I would be doing, providing an alternate source of data. Based on my past experience of being a teacher in South Korea, I was aware that the majority of foreign language instructors were using some form of computer mediated communication in their day to day lives to cope with the change of moving to a different country, to form relationships off-line, and to be in contact with people in their home country. Due to the importance of these interactions, I decided the best way to get at the experiences of this group was to pose questions on the bulletin board system, join other on-line groups such as those on Facebook, and to read blogs.

I also gathered data through the on-line survey constructed for foreign English instructors in South Korea (see Appendix 1). Once I had composed the survey, I invited some colleagues who have taught in South Korea to participate in a preliminary study as

well as to offer any suggestions on the wording and choice of questions. Subsequent to their participation I sent the survey to friends who were past or present English teachers in South Korea and asked them to send the link to anyone else they knew who could participate. A brief description of the research and a link to the survey was posted on the Korean general and job discussion boards on "Dave's ESL Café," on blogs, Facebook groups constructed for foreign English instructors in South Korea, and the South Korea network page. This part of my methodology allowed me to interact with a number of different respondents and to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. I received eighty-five responses to this voluntary survey (see Appendix 2, 3, and 4 for the results of the survey).

Throughout the first month of my fieldwork in South Korea I divided my time between Bucheon and Seoul. Friends I had met while doing my undergraduate degree offered to let me stay with them and introduced me to their friends and colleagues. I conducted interviews with foreign English teachers and directors either at their private institutes or in informal social settings. I learned of an English café that was popular among Korean English students, so I spent as much time as possible there talking with Korean students and English teachers as well as taking part in English conversation classes. During this time, I also visited Paju English Village, an English immersion village where English teachers live and work. Teachers whom I had never met before welcomed me and told me their stories of living in the English Village. I will discuss this case further in my conclusion.

For the second month of my fieldwork in South Korea I returned to Daejeon; the city in which I had lived for the two years I worked in the country. Here, I talked with

English instructors, directors, mothers of English students, and English students either in their homes, over coffee, or at their private institutes. During this time, I also went to Busan to stay with some English teachers and to talk with the administrator of a non-governmental organization who would like to set up an interactive learning environment for rural students who cannot afford English lessons. Throughout my stay in all of these areas I spent almost every night with English teachers. I also participated in the events they attended, which included a wedding, a vocalist appreciation night, a Canada Day party, and a trip to a beach on the West coast.

Contributions to Migration and Tourism Research

My research is the first study that I know of to focus on native English speakers migrating to South Korea to teach English. Although Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language has been studied widely by scholars in the education field, this literature focuses on teaching and learning in the classroom (see, for example, Butler 2004, Simon-Maeda 2004, Jenkins 2006). None of the research I found looked at the actual experiences of both English learners and teachers beyond the classroom or their relationships with each other.

Many scholars who have written about labor migration focus on how the migrant's circumstances in the sending country motivate them to seek better opportunities elsewhere (see, for example, George 2005, Gamburd 2000). Other scholars look at migrant experiences in the receiving country (see, for example, Castles 1986 and 2006, Shah and Menon 1999). Migrants who are moving from developing to developed countries are the main interlocutors of much of the migration literature, however my own research concentrates on the experiences of migrant laborers who are moving from more

developed countries to an emerging, but less developed, one. In addition, all of the interlocutors of this study are well-educated and are from more developed countries, much like the tourists who have been the focus of so much recent attention. Among other things, the case presented here complicates and expands on existing models of migration by drawing together insights from literature in both migration and tourism studies.

According to Michael Kearney (1986: 350), there is a lack of literature on the "perceptions of and reactions to migrants by receiving populations." I contribute to this literature by looking at the reasons Koreans learn English and the relationships that exist between foreign teachers and Koreans. Through an examination of the grounded experiences of English teachers, I am also expanding on the limited literature which documents migrants' actual accounts of their own experiences.

The Structure of the Thesis

In the chapters that follow, I will discuss and analyze data gathered from scholarly literature, newspaper reports, websites, in-depth interviews, on-line chats on discussion boards and Facebook groups constructed for foreign English instructors, and an on-line survey. The combination of these sources allowed me to gather a wide range of data and document the diverse experiences of English educators. In chapter two, I place English language learning in historical context by describing the arrival of English in Korea and the reasons for English learning throughout Korean history. In addition, I use Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) concept of "social capital" to explore the contemporary belief in what a South Korean newspaper, *Chosun Ilbo*, calls the "competitive power of English" (Anonymous 2000a) in Korean society. In chapter three, I turn from the demand side of the English language industry to the supply side, examining the reasons why native

English speakers decide to teach English in South Korea. Here, I use network analysis theory (see, for example, Massey et al. 1993) to discuss the reasons native English speakers choose South Korea in particular as a migration destination. In chapter four, I investigate native English speakers desire to immerse themselves in a different culture, and their relationships with directors of English institutes, Korean colleagues, and students. As well, I look at romantic relationships between foreigners and Koreans. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the foreign English teacher's relationship with the Korean state. In chapter five, I discuss what happens when English teachers cannot find the place they seek in Korean society. I use Jean Lave and Etienne Wegner (1991) and Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet's (1992) concept of "communities of practice" and Benedict Anderson's (1983) concept of "imagined communities" to examine the foreign English teaching community in South Korea. Finally, I conclude by exploring Paju English Village in order to present a different case in which English is learned and taught. As well, I discuss some of my reflections on virtual research and suggestions for rethinking methodology in anthropological research if the community the anthropologist is studying participates on-line.

II. The Changing Role of English as a Foreign Language

The English language industry in South Korea is thriving. The increasing importance of English language acquisition in this country has led to an enormous demand for native English speakers to serve as teachers.

In this chapter, I place this demand for English in historical context. The first section of the chapter will illustrate how the Confucian legacy in South Korea continues to influence the belief that education is the single path to upward social mobility. I will also discuss the changing role of English as a foreign language in Korea's history to show how historical circumstances continue to drive the saliency of English language learning. In the final section, I will explore how both the Confucian legacy and the history of English language learning in South Korea help to maintain the contemporary belief in the competitive power of English.

Confucianism and the Importance of Education

In this section I draw from and build on Michael J. Seth's (2002) work on the history of education in South Korea. In *Education Fever: Society, Politics, and the Pursuit of Schooling in South Korea* (2002), Seth argues that:

> South Korea's "education fever" was the principal force that drove the country's extraordinary educational development...This preoccupation with the pursuit of formal schooling was the product of the diffusion of traditional Confucian attitudes toward learning and status, new egalitarian ideas introduced from the West, and the complex, often contradictory ways in which new and old ideals and formulations interacted. The especially intense nature of the competition for educational attainment was also shaped by institutions and practices introduced by the Japanese and by the political and social turmoil that characterized Korea in the mid-and late twentieth century (6).

Denise Potrzeba Lett (1998), an anthropologist who conducted field work in South Korea in 1991-1992, agrees with Seth, arguing that the Confucian legacy has contributed to the

rapid development of the global economy and education in the country. Potrzeba Lett (1998: 2) suggests:

> Although Korea's Confucianist past is often blamed for Korea's late start in industrialization at the macro level, at the level of family it is the Confucian legacy, or more specifically the legacy of the *yangban,* the aristocratic elite of Korea's former Confucian state, and especially their concern with status, that has been the driving force behind the development of South Korea's new urban middle class and the nation's rapid emergence as a major player in the global economy.

The Korean people are well-known for the importance they place on education. This ideology has been largely attributed to fifteen centuries of Confucian doctrine which has dominated the country since the seventh century. Originally, a Confucian education was solely for the elite. In 958 Korea adopted a civil examination in order to recruit men into government positions. During the *Choson (Yi)* dynasty (1392-1910) the leaders established a network of schools which were "a means of establishing loyalty, maintaining orthodoxy, and recruiting officials" (Seth 2002: 10). A more basic form of education was provided by *sodang* (traditional village schools) or private tutors. Sodang were outside the official educational system, but the early leaders of the Choson dynasty encouraged them as a means for selecting and preparing young people for entry into state schools (*hyanggyo*). *Hyanggyo* (state schools) were prepatory for civil examinations (Seth 2002: 10).

When the Korean peninsula opened its borders to international trade and diplomacy in 1876, the Choson dynasty began to implement a Western-style education system prompting Koreans to develop new kinds of schools. The first school to offer non-traditional instruction was *Wonsan Haksa*, established in 1883 (Seth 2002: 14). In the same year, the first English language school was created in Korea to train interpreters (Kim-Rivera 2002: 263). According to Martin Jonghak Baik (1992: 24), a sociolinguist,

this educational institution was created as a response to the first foreign treaty Korea signed with the U.S. in 1882 allowing American Christian missionaries to enter the country for the first time (Potrzeba Lett 1998: 35).

Some scholars claim that Japan is responsible for the creation of the 'modern' school system in Korea during Japanese occupation (see, for example, McGinn et al. 1980, Kim 1973). However, when examining the history of 'modern' education in the country it is evident that the arrival of the 'modern' school was a reaction to the influx of Japanese merchants coming into the country in 1876 (see, for example, Potrzeba Lett 1998), rather than a product of colonialism. [3]

Although egalitarian views from the West, following Korean independence in 1945, made education available to all Koreans, the notion that education is the path to upward social mobility remains prominent in contemporary thinking. In addition, there continues to be considerable emphasis placed on competitive examinations in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Throughout the Choson dynasty Chinese literacy was associated with high status. Since this time, the English language has replaced Chinese as the marker of social status (Potrzeba Lett 1998: 164).

The Changing Role of English as a Foreign Language in Korean History

Throughout Japanese colonialism in Korea (1910-1945), English language learning was a site of resistance against Japanese educational policies. As of 1910, Japanese became the national language; foreign languages including English were

[3] When I use the term 'modern' to describe the change in the educational system in Korea I draw from Seth's (2002: 14) work which suggests that a 'modern' education included introducing foreign knowledge and technical skills, having state-supported schools, and replacing Confucian-oriented learning with modern curriculum.

abolished, and a strict educational policy was established[4] (Kim-Rivera 2002: 264). Few English language institutes continued to function throughout the first stage of Japanese colonialism, however a small number of privately run schools were maintained by missionaries (Kim-Rivera 2002: 264). Understandably, these private educational institutions became sites of resistance.[5]

Subsequent to the March First Movement (Simons 1995: 134), the first struggle for Korean independence, the Japanese government realized the strictness of its educational policies was ineffective and it initiated reforms.[6] The new educational reforms included the elimination of separate schools for Japanese and Koreans, the establishment of a university, and the allowance of foreign language instruction. English became a required subject in the secondary and higher levels of education. In addition, the departments of English language and literature were established at the university (Kim-Rivera 2002: 265).

English language education continued until the beginning of World War II when English was considered an enemy-language and it became illegal to learn or teach English in the country[7](Baik 1992: 24). As a result, the Japanese closed mission schools

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[4] Japan enforced four educational ordinances for Korea, in 1911, 1922, 1938, and 1943, along with several amendments to restructure the existing educational institutions to carry out the goals of the colonial government (Kim-Rivera 2002: 264).

[5] According to Seth (2002: 23), "a survey report in 1912 reported the existence of 16,450 traditional village schools, with 141,604 students. Seven years later, 23,556 *sodang* were counted, with 268,607 students." This number reached its highest level in the 1930's. This considerable increase in these sorts of schools displays the lengths to which Korean parents went to obtain an education for their children as well as the role education played in resistance movements (Seth 2002: 23-24).

[6] The March First Movement is also known as the Samil Independence Movement, which began March 1, 1919. During this year over 2 million people took part in over 1,500 demonstrations throughout the country (Simons 1995: 134).

[7] In February 1940, the Japanese governor-general ordered Koreans to adopt Japanese names (Kim-Rivera 2002: 267). There was more emphasis on subjects such as Japanese history and ethics, private schools were shut down, and religious teaching was forbidden. The Japanese colonial government made it mandatory that Koreans register at Shinto shrines in order to cultivate Koreans' belief in the Japanese emperor's divinity (Kim-Rivera 2002: 266).

and forced foreign missionaries out of the country (Seth 2002: 27). The educational restrictions forced the Korean people to abandon alternative forms of education in separate school systems.

At the end of the Korean War (1950-1953) the peninsula was partitioned along the thirty-eighth parallel separating North and South Korea. The United States military has occupied South Korea since its independence from Japan in 1945. At the end of the Korean War, the American presence in the country led South Korea to become economically dependent on the U.S.

The South Korean government's dependence on U.S. aid began in May 1952 with the signing of the Agreement on Economic Co-Ordination between the two countries. U.S. aid, amounting to $2 billion between 1953 and 1962, became one of the main sources of government revenue. The $100 million put towards education during this time went mostly to building educational facilities and training teachers. Along with monetary aid, the U.S. sent educational advisors to Korea (Seth 2002: 93-94). Despite the American attempt to "ideologically conquer" (Gramsci 1971: 10) the Korean educational system through aid, the Americans were unable to organize popular support for their initiatives as American advisors had very little knowledge of Korean language and were thus restricted to communicating with a small number of English speaking Korean educators. In addition, the existing educational system was resistant to these outside ideas[8] (Seth 2002: 94-95).

While economic ties between the U.S. and South Korea strengthened the belief in the importance of English language learning, so did the presence of the American

[8] According to Seth (2002: 95), one of the main ideas the educational system resisted was American teaching methodology. The Korean classroom remained teacher-centered and text-book centered, and route memorization was the norm.

military. Military bases were set up throughout the country during and following the Korean War. Three of the largest bases were erected in Seoul, Busan, and at the Demilitarized Zone separating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North) and the Republic of Korea (South). According to Martin Jonghak Baik, increased contact between American troops and Koreans brought about the revival of English in secondary schools "as it had been taught and studied before World War II, but now with more enthusiasm" (1992: 24). This point was corroborated in a discussion I had with a director of an English academy in Seoul:

> English became popular because of the Korean War. During Japanese colonialism Koreans were forced to learn Japanese. After the war UN soldiers [came] to Korea and the U.S. controlled this part of the country. [We] needed to rebuild everything. There was money for people who spoke English. If you spoke English at that time you were on the top of society. So that was the atmosphere [at that time], so parents thought they wanted their children to learn English (conversation with Justin,[9] June 14, 2007).[10]

As is evident from this account, the saliency of learning the language today is historically situated in the political and economic ties between the U.S. and South Korea. Furthermore, English speakers were able to secure employment after independence which led Koreans to believe that English proficiency would grant them status.

The IMF Crisis and the Global Economy

At the end of the Second World War the competitive power of English began to penetrate the economic and political realms of society because of the close ties and trade relations between the U.S. and South Korea. Rather than education, a majority of U.S. aid went to financing seventy percent of the goods Korea was importing from the U.S. (Seth

[9]To ensure confidentiality, all interlocutors' names are pseudonyms.
[10] Keep in mind as you read that many of the Koreans I interviewed speak English as a second or foreign language. I have kept the choice of wording the same as it was spoken to me in the interviews.

2002: 93). In turn, the U.S. provided a major market for Korean exports. As a result, South Korea's economy became export based, which led to an increased involvement in business with foreign companies. A consequence of this economic growth was an increase in the importance of international business to the development of the Korean economy. As the accepted language of international business, English became a vital component of social capital. Economic ties between South Korea and the U.S. were emphasized further in the late 1990s when there was an influx of multi-national companies into the country (Stevens et al. 2006: 169) following the International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis in Asia.[11] A combination of the high unemployment rate and the rapid increase in foreign owned businesses in the country helped to convince people further of the importance of English.

The interviews I conducted during my fieldwork corroborate this perspective. A twenty-one year old Korean sociology student explained this point:

> It's very near the IMF crisis. American corporations came into Korea, but Korean corporations wanted to work with them. After that English became important. American corporations came after the crisis. A lot of corporations conglomerated at that time. Many Korean companies came together. And America is a very good friend to Koreans (conversation with Jae-Hyun, June 17, 2007).

A Korean man, Chung-Hee, who at the time of the IMF crisis was graduating from university and looking for employment, conveyed the uncertainty of this time. Foreign companies "rushed into the country" and if a Korean person was able to speak English he or she was able to find employment. Chung-Hee continues by recounting his own experience: "At the time international trading wanted to hire, I applied and I realized

[11] The East Asian Currency Crisis is known in South Korea as the IMF Crisis. The financial crisis affected many East Asian countries, including South Korea. In late 1997 South Korea's exchange rate against the U.S. dollar went from below 900 Won to the dollar to 1,500 Won in a few months. The foreign exchange reserves were low and there was a market panic. The South Korean government asked for a rescue fund from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which came in a package of U.S. $56 billion. With this crisis came high unemployment in the country (Heo and Kim 2000: 492-493).

once I got experience I could open up my own business." Thanks to his skills, Chung-Hee was able to obtain a job with his proficiency as an English grammar instructor for a private company. Other individuals with similar English language skills had the opportunity to get jobs in international trade and finance. Chung-Hee's rationale for this was that the people who owned the companies were foreigners, so if you knew English you would get promoted. Now in his forties, Chung-Hee works for the U.S. army as an analyst and attributes his success to his knowledge of English (conversation with Chung-Hee, June 11, 2007).

The Competitive Power of English

The importance of education for the Korean people cannot be denied. Many children and young adults are under immense pressure to excel in school and to gain entry into one of the most prestigious universities in the country. In what follows I will discuss how the Confucian legacy contributes to the belief that education grants status to both an individual and his or her family. As well, I will show how this legacy influences the belief in the competitive power of English.

In this next section I will be drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "social capital," which refers to the honor and prestige possessed by an individual in a particular society (1977). Bourdieu sees the competition for capital being played out in social fields. For him, capital can only exist in and through competition in fields of cultural production (Bourdieu 1984: 228). The taking of cultural products for one's own use functions as social capital, which suggests they give profit in their distinction. Distinction, for Bourdieu, is "better class;" the rarity of the products and the means of obtaining them is the reason for this distinction (Bourdieu 1984: 228). For Koreans, the competition for

social capital is played out in the field of education where educational degrees and being proficient in English are markers of status.

The Prestige of English Acquisition

The prestige associated with learning English is associated with the South Korean government's need to 'catch up' due to their late development in industry and their involvement with the capitalist economic system. English language learning was associated with 'modernization' due to it being the language of both academia and international business (Potrzeba Lett 1998: 166). This has led to the view that it is a necessity for both national and personal development. Because of its association with the 'modern' world, proficiency in the language grants the individual social capital indicative of a higher status in society.

Conversations I had with Korean English language learners display that the belief in the competitive power of English permeates every level of Korean society. Whenever I asked a Korean English language learner why Koreans believed it is important to learn English I received similar answers. For example, a director of a well-known hagwon in Seoul explained: "We don't have natural resources so all we have is human resources, so in order to make this country better we had to study. For this country we have to export something so we need to communicate in English in order to sell something" (conversation with Justin, June 14, 2007). A similar response was given by a university student in Bucheon: "Koreans don't have natural resources; we just have humans, so we need to trade with China and Japan. English is a global language" (conversation with Tae-Hyun, June 19, 2007). This thinking is also evident in the younger generation, as one high school student in Daejeon suggested: "Korea has no natural resources so the way to

be rich is to make Korea rich. [We need] to develop Korea, [so] it is necessary to learn English and sell things abroad; it is very important" (conversation with Tae-Bek, July 6, 2007). While these responses were repeated by the majority of the Korean people with whom I talked, when asked about their personal motivation their responses were diverse. The common trend that began to appear in these answers, however, was that being able to speak English was a marker of status.

'Skirt Winds:' The Korean Mothers' Roles in Education

As discussed previously, education was historically encouraged for boys. In contemporary Korean society girls have the same opportunities to get a good education, but this is not a result of egalitarianism; they are encouraged to learn for different reasons. For many Koreans, a girl's education serves a role in the family. Girls are educated in South Korea despite women's poor employment opportunities because education is linked with marriage. Potrzeba Lett (1998: 162) describes how one mother of a middle-school aged girl explained to her that "a university education was necessary for her daughter so that that particular qualification could be listed with the matchmaker when it came time to seek a husband for her daughter." According to Potrzeba Lett's (1998) study, this statement represented the common attitude among parents and is connected with status.

In Korea, marriages are often arranged and parents of a marriageable son often seek a daughter-in-law who will be a proper 'education mother' or 'skirt wind.' A 'skirt wind' [*ch'imaparam*] is defined as "the force of a woman on a rampage," but in this context it refers to the role taken by a woman seeking to motivate her children through fear rather than guilt (Sorensen 1994: 26). It is said that when the 'skirt wind' is blowing

the child and husband will not be able to ignore it. Since the success of the children is not only for themselves, but also for their family, children usually take on the responsibility of working hard in school (Sorensen 1994: 26). The belief in the importance of education for upward social mobility and the educational role of the mother is something a Board of Education supervisor in Incheon believes is tied to the devastation Koreans faced after decades of war.

> In the case of the Korean people, our parents experienced long times of war so after finishing war our country's people were so poor. So the best way to make money is, the parents thought, to make the children go to university. Make their children get a job, so Korean people think that education is the best investment for their life, of course for their children, but also for themselves. Because if their children are rich and successful then we think the parents life is also successful (conversation with Chun-Hei, June 17, 2007).

Here, Chun-Hei, is discussing the status associated with educating children. The eldest male child takes care of his parents when they are elders, therefore when his parents invest in their male child's education they are also investing in their own future. As discussed above, one of the main reasons female children are educated is to find a suitable marriage partner and become proper 'skirt winds' themselves.

Given what I have already argued about the increasing significance of English acquisition, it is not surprising that an English speaking 'skirt wind' is preferred since she will be able to aid in teaching the children English, so they will be better prepared to compete in the social field of education by getting into the best English cram institutes and as a result into the finest secondary and tertiary schools. A business woman learning conversational English believed this and noted that "many housewives learn English to teach their children" (conversation with Chung-Cha, June 2, 2007). A working mother of two told me that in addition to hiring a tutor she herself teaches her son English with texts and cassettes from an English hagwon to help him with his English proficiency

(conversation with Hae-Sun, June 19, 2007). By being able to provide this extra help to her children, this mother may be in a better position to compete for social capital as the better educated the parents and the children the more status they have within society.

The role of the mother is to oversee her children's education, which takes up a great deal of her time. For example, Soo-Mi, a botanist and mother of one elementary aged son, believes that mothers think constantly about their children's education and take this role very seriously. She suggested that parents have the responsibility to "make a lot of money by their husbands (men need to make a lot of money), some mothers want to get a job, but it is difficult for women to get a good job after they are married." According to one of the Korean students I spoke with, the lack of employment opportunities for mothers to help in financially contributing to their children's education is worrisome. Tae-Hyun, a recent university graduate of economics, believes many women who have babies at the age of 35-40 are forced out of their jobs. She suggests they do not necessarily get fired, but the job is made harder for them so they feel they have to leave. Due to this practice she plans to migrate to a foreign country with better maternity leave and more rights for women (conversation with Tae-Hyun, June 19, 2007).

A good deal of a mother's time is also spent looking into the best private tutors and cram schools as well as meeting with teachers (Seth 2002: 246). For instance, despite Soo-Mi's (the botanist and mother) position in a scientific research institute, it remains her responsibility to find private tutors and hagwons for her son. Due to the fear of being the ones left behind, Soo-Mi believes there is competitiveness among her friends, which places immense pressure on mothers to send their children to these extra classes.

The role played by Korean mothers in the education of their children is further exemplified in the practice of sending children overseas for English instruction. In many instances, a mother and her children go abroad for an English education while the father, who supports them, remains in Korea to work. In South Korea, these mothers are known as "wild geese" (Onishi 2008). Fathers who visit their wives and children while they are overseas are known as "eagle fathers" and those fathers who do not have the time or money to visit their families are referred to as "penguin fathers" (Onishi 2008). This practice is not found in all cases as there are many children who travel to English speaking countries alone to meet with relatives or to live in homestays. As well, in other instances the father accompanies the family. In 2007, the number of elementary school children who were flying overseas without guardians was 4,500 at the end of the first half of the year. According to a newspaper article (Rahn 2007), airline officials suggested these short-term and long-term departures abroad were attributed to studying English. The main ports of entry were the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and China. To accommodate this demand, Korean Air has a "Flying Mom" service which takes care of child passengers during these long flights. Gillian Stevens and colleagues (2006: 175) suggest that Korean adults in their child rearing years are more likely to have their children accompany them to English speaking countries when they travel. This view corresponds with the conversations I had with mothers of young children.

While some parents send their children for a short-term stay in English speaking countries, others want them to go to university in North America. Justin, a director of a hagwon in Seoul, considers that the belief among some Koreans is that a North American university education is superior.

> People in Korea still strongly believe that American colleges have a better education. In Korea it is very hard to get into college but once you get in you don't have to study hard, but it is the opposite in the U.S., so most parents and employers know this too. A degree from the U.S. to the Korean people means you have a better education. There are thousands of agencies that send children to the U.S. to study (conversation with Justin, June 14, 2007).

This may be a biased opinion as Justin was educated in the U.S. Other people I spoke with did not agree with his view. Still, an article in *The Korea Times* estimated that in 2006 approximately 15,000 Koreans came to Seoul to take intensive SAT (United States college entrance exam) courses at "cram" schools during their vacation to prepare them for entrance into American universities. The cram schools specializing in these courses expect this number to go up this year despite the considerable cost. For example, one private institute in Seoul charges 10 million Won (approximately $10,000) for a ten week math SAT course (Park 2007). Soo-Mi, a mother of one son, hopes her child will be able to go abroad for his university education: "I hope he goes abroad for university. There are many chances and he will be able to have good status in Korea."

This competitive society makes the demand for overseas learning widespread despite the burden it brings to many families. Soo-Mi told me the story of her sister-in-law going to the U.S., so her children could learn English. "There are many people who go abroad to just study English. For instance, my sister in law went to the U.S.A for three years so the children can study English. [She] has three children. They spent a lot of money so now they have lost their house and their car" (conversation with Soo-Mi, July 19, 2007). This story may suggest that not only wealthy families send their children overseas, but also that some middle class families sacrifice a great deal for what they believe will be beneficial for their children's and their own future. Brian, a Korean-American visiting his birth country had a similar view, "Korean parents spend a lot of

money but they know the trade off for an American education will be worth it" (conversation with Brian, June 14, 2007).

Along with going to a North American university, another highly valued achievement is to be admitted to one of the top institutions in the country: Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University, collectively known as SKY. With this distinction students will not only obtain the best education in the country, but they will gain social capital due to the strong alumni network which tends to hire graduates who have attended these universities. In addition to these employment opportunities, the students "currency as a marriage partner increases as a SKY graduate" (Card 2005).

English Language Proficiency and Its Role in Education

As mentioned previously, civil examinations were implemented during the Choson dynasty and those who did well on their exams obtained a position in the government, which granted an individual status. Today, examinations are just as important and even more competitive. The examinations required for acceptance into the best secondary and tertiary schools have an English language component. Therefore, English language learning is vital to the success of Korean children since it is also a requirement within the educational system in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. In 2003, an educational reform, which stated that English classes are to be taught using English only, was implemented to better prepare students for their entrance examinations, however the number of hours teaching this subject is decreasing.[12] The view of a Board of Education (BOE) supervisor, Chun-Hei, in Incheon emphasizes this point: "Personally, I think making our children in elementary school learn English [will allow] most of the

[12] Many English classes taught by Korean English teachers are taught in Korean rather than English.

children [to] have an equal chance to learn English, but even though this happened rich parents, they keep on sending their children outside. I think they think it is the best way to learn English skills" (conversation with Chun-Hei, June 17, 2007). Chun-Hei is suggesting that although English is being taught in public schools, parents still think it is important to send their children to private institutes. This belief is widespread as nearly half of elementary, middle, and secondary school students take English lessons at private institutes or by a tutor (Anonymous 2000b).

As I noted earlier in this chapter, during both the Confucian times and Japanese occupation, traditional village schools and private tutors were a means by which students could receive an education outside the official educational system. In contemporary Korean society private institutes and tutoring continue to provide extra instruction. Parents spend a considerable amount of money on private tutors and cram schools to make sure their children are prepared for their entrance examinations.

> Parents pay 400, 000 Won [$400] to 700, 000 Won [$700] a month for 'English kindergartens' which are booming in Seoul and the metropolitan area. No matter how expensive the tuition fees are, parents appear determined to send their kids to these places in hopes that the kids will not have inferiority complex when it comes to English and in a belief that English is most important (Jun-Hyeok 2001).

Soo-Mi, the botanist, explained that she spends approximately 800,000 Won ($800) every month on extra lessons for her son. While this is a burden on her family, Soo-Mi revealed to me that some of her friends spend much more on education and she believes that the cost of private lessons has doubled or even tripled in Seoul in recent years. This estimate seems to jibe with a new report by the country's leading economic think tank in which it is noted that South Koreans spend roughly $15.3 billion a year on private English lessons alone (Card 2006). This estimate does not even include private lessons in music, mathematics, science, and other language courses which are common. According to

Chun-Hei, the BOE supervisor, "Korean parents think it is duty; it is a great honor as a parent. Being a parent is number one in their life. Even though I have to sacrifice my life growing children well it is the most important one. We think like that, the Korean people. It is changing, but most Korean people think this way" (conversation with Chun-Hei, June 14, 2007).

The familial duties associated with Confucianism remain prominent in Korean society. If, as many believe, the first born son is to care for his parents when they are elders then the education he receives and the employment opportunities available to him are vital to his family. Among middle class Koreans English is a necessity in order to become a part of the professional strata as it is a valuable skill in an increasingly competitive job market. There are numerous English proficiency tests Korean employers consider when evaluating the skills of new applicants or to promote those already in the company. This has lead to an increased emphasis on studying for English tests, the most widely recognized being Tests of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). It is estimated that every year Koreans spend $752 million on tests of English proficiency, including TOEFL, making South Korea the world's largest market for this test (Card 2006). This emphasis on English language ability in professional occupations has partly generated the increased emphasis of English skills in tertiary levels of education (Stevens et al. 2006: 170).

The Increasing Importance of English Acquisition in the Professional Strata

The social capital acquired through learning English is also seen when examining the recent trends in university education. More universities are offering courses in English only. Graduate students at universities in South Korea are starting to write their

Master's and PhD. theses in English in order to exchange relevant information with foreign researchers and to reach the international academic community (Anonymous 2000a). According to one newspaper reporter, Yang Keuman (2001), more universities are offering English classes not only in the English department, but also in other disciplines. There have been mixed responses from students as younger ones are welcoming the chance to improve their English skills while older students are afraid they will be confused in their classes. Two recent university graduates with whom I spoke discussed their experiences with English in university. Tae-Hyun, a recent graduate in economics, said that as a freshman she "read some articles and talked about things," but that there were only a "few economics classes that were in English only, but they were for international students, not Koreans" (conversation with Tae-Hyun, June 19, 2007). Jae-Hyun, a recent graduate in sociology, had a similar experience as she learned grammar, vocabulary, and reading in university. She was critical of the minimal conversation lessons she received (conversation with Jae-Hyun, June 17, 12007).

Professors are now traveling to the U.S. or Canada during their sabbatical year to attend lectures, learn how to prepare lectures in English, and to secure financial aid to develop new texts (Keuman 2001). Soo-Mi, a botanist, indicated how English has aided her in her career in academia. Showing me one of her published articles she explained the process: "After I get my results I have to publish them in English, I publish them in foreign journals and Korean journals" (conversation with Soo-Mi, July 19, 2007). In addition, in order to disseminate her research to a broader academic audience she became proficient in English. While the opportunity to study English in South Korea is widespread, the capability to speak fluently is rare, therefore the ability of professors and

students to be able to write and lecture in English only is exceptional and grants them distinction.

The accumulation of wealth on its own does not necessarily grant an individual with social status as educational degrees play an important role in providing many Koreans with power and advantages. This point is suggested in a story presented by Clark W. Sorensen (1994: 24), a professor of International Studies who conducted research on education in South Korea. Sorensen writes of a Korean man who was a successful director of a construction company. According to Sorensen, it was apparent that this man had economic capital as he owned cars, a house, and expensive clothes. Although he occupied this position in the company he was also going to night school for his PhD. in economics. He mentioned this situation to another Korean friend of his, who explained, "Oh ho, of course! Otherwise people will talk behind his back. They will say he makes all this money, but he is really only an uneducated *sajangnom*," a derogatory term for uneducated, coarse businessman (1994: 24). From this story we can see that status is not merely associated with wealth and that to gain social capital education is necessary.

Conclusion: English as a Form of Neo-Colonialism?

In this chapter I explored the historical role of English language learning in South Korea and the reasons for the importance of learning the language today. This helps to explain why there is such a high demand for native English speakers to teach in the country. Although some believe that English teaching is a form of neo-colonialism, I do not share this view as it assumes no agency on the part of the Korean people in acquiring the language and cannot explain the changing role of English in their history. English is the global language of the twenty-first century, but to argue that the globalization of

English is the reason for acquiring it is much too simplistic and does not take into consideration the context in which it is being learned. For instance, the use of Konglish (Korean English) by the Korean people can not be explained from a neo-colonial framework. Konglish is the use of English words in a Korean context. These words could either be originally English words or they may be a combination of Korean and English. The assumption is that there is one 'proper' way to speak English, but this example displays there are world 'Englishes' that are appropriated in their own way by English speakers and learners throughout the world.

Along with appropriating English in their own way Koreans do not solely focus on this language. Students and adults alike learn Mandarin, Japanese, German, Spanish, French, Russian, and Arabic. One Korean woman explained to me that learning Chinese languages is becoming increasingly important because China has opened its borders to trade. In addition, learning Arabic is becoming extremely popular because of the increase in business between South Korea and the Middle East. As can be expected, foreigners from various countries throughout the world who speak these languages are also being employed as language teachers in South Korea.

In this chapter I have outlined why it is that there is such high demand for English language instruction in South Korea. In the next chapter, I discuss why it is that native English speakers are flocking to South Korea to supply this demand.

III. The Decision to Migrate to South Korea

In the previous chapter I explored the reasons for the proliferation of English language learning in South Korea. In this chapter I will discuss the decisions of native English speakers to migrate to this country to serve as teachers. In addition, I will draw on network analysis theory as discussed by Massey and colleagues (1993: 449) to demonstrate how social networks in the native speakers' countries of origin are central in choosing South Korea as a migration destination. These networks include not only personal ties to community, kin, friends, and university student networks in Canada and the U.S., but also ethnic, political, and economic connections between the two countries. I will also look at the role recruiters play in encouraging South Korea as a place of employment.

Four Individual Cases

I decided that an in-depth look into the experiences of four different people would prove to be the most fruitful way to capture the diverse experiences of native English speakers migrating to South Korea to teach English. Many anthropologists have taken this approach when looking at the life stories of migrating people (see, for example, Bauer and Thompson 2004, Gmelch 1992, Olwig 2007). In the case at hand, I focus on the stories of four individuals with the purpose of following each person from his or her country of origin to South Korea to reveal the experiences of living and working in the country. These migrant stories are dissimilar to the life stories used by the above anthropologists in that I will not focus on the entirety of the individual's life, but only the migration experience itself.

What follows is a brief introduction to each of the four people on whom I will be focusing here. I explain the way I met each of these individuals and my own reflections of our conversations.

Ethan. It was a long flight to Incheon International Airport and I was worried about being able to find Ethan because I did not have a cell phone for him to contact me. After about a half an hour of waiting outside in the sweltering summer Korean heat, I saw him approaching me. I was so happy to see a familiar face and eager to get started on this project. Ethan and I got on the bus and traveled to Bucheon, where he lived and worked at an elementary public school as an English instructor.

I first met Ethan in 2002 at the university we both attended when we both worked as bartenders at the university pub on campus. When Ethan finished university he decided to move to South Korea. Arriving to the country for the first time on his twenty-sixth birthday, he has been there for three years now; longer than his initial expectation of one to two years. Like many Canadians, Ethan gained employment in South Korea through a recruiting agency. This particular agency recruits for the Board of Education in South Korea, placing native English speakers in primary, middle, and secondary schools. For his first contract Ethan was placed in a primary school in Incheon. The year Ethan migrated to South Korea was the first that native English speakers were hired to work for the Board of Education at the primary level, therefore there was only one foreign teacher placed at a given school. Ethan found this first year to be difficult due to the isolation he felt living on his own and being the only foreign teacher at his place

of employment. Subsequent to this contract, Ethan worked at a public elementary school in Bucheon, which he "liked a lot better." He has worked at this school for two years, but has recently obtained a position at Gyeongin National University of Education where he will teach conversational English to university students.

When I told Ethan that I was looking to return to South Korea in order to carry out research on the experiences of foreign English language instructors he was eager to help me. He offered to let me stay at his apartment and to introduce me to his friends. One night when the two of us could not figure out what to do I asked Ethan if he would allow me to interview him. He seemed a little reluctant at first, but as we began to exchange stories of our experiences we forgot about the recorder. We talked about work, living in South Korea, the foreign community in the area, and the frustrations of teaching in what he described as a constrictive environment. At the end of the interview, I left the recorder on and we continued talking until late into the evening.

I decided to include Ethan as a main interlocutor because he was the person I was closest to throughout my study. In addition, Ethan could be considered a prototypical foreign English teacher in that he is a Canadian who migrated to South Korea subsequent to university to pay off some financial debt, to gain teaching experience before making a life in Canada, and to experience what it was like to live in a different country.

Annabelle. Many women go to South Korea to teach as well. Annabelle, a twenty-six year old who migrated to South Korea about three and a half years ago, is one of them. I met Annabelle at a concert in Seoul where there were both foreign and Korean musicians performing. She was singing with her band on stage that night.

Ethan, a good friend of Annabelle's, introduced us. I was easily drawn to Annabelle because of her constant smile, warmth, and fun loving nature. Annabelle is not a typical foreign English teacher. What makes her unique is that she is ethnically Korean, but born in Bolivia. Because Annabelle was born in a different country Korean citizens consider her to be a *gyopo*. A *gyopo*, she explained to me, is "a Korean person who has not been raised in Korea." She went to university in Manchester, England majoring in professional broadcasting techniques. Her first language is Spanish, but she is fluent in English and can speak a little Korean.

Annabelle's brother was studying at Seoul National University (SNU) when she decided to migrate to South Korea. Initially her plan did not include teaching, but her brother gave her one of his private tutoring jobs and "that is how it all began" (conversation with Annabelle, June 26, 2007). She was a private tutor for a couple of years. At the beginning she felt as though there was some hesitation from the mothers of her students because she is Korean, but soon she became well known and was very busy with lessons. In January of 2007, Annabelle obtained a teaching job at a university in Incheon where she teaches freshmen and sophomore English writing and reading comprehension. I recently learned from Ethan that Annabelle also obtained employment at Gyeongin National University of Education for the upcoming academic year. About a year after her arrival, Annabelle's mother went to South Korea to visit her and soon thereafter her father did as well. She told me that they "just never left" and now

they all live together in a small apartment. At the present time, she takes care of both her mother and father financially.

When I first approached Annabelle for an interview she was pretty excited about it. It had been a long day for her and her partner, so she decided that we should go to the corner store to talk and have a beer. Both Annabelle and her partner exchanged stories about their experiences with me. They talked about how they met and their views of Korean culture. At the end of the night Annabelle told me her dream to work for National Geographic as a journalist, but believed that she needed to think about her family right now.

I selected Annabelle as a main interlocutor for many reasons. I wanted to include the experiences of a female who had migrated to South Korea. In addition, her unique Korean-Bolivian identity can provide a glimpse into the experiences of being a gyopo and teaching English in the country. Annabelle's familial obligations also can act as an example of how economic obligations may play a role in this migration community.

Sean. Sean is a fifty-two year old American who came to South Korea for a second career. I met Sean through the Daejeon blog- he was looking for someone to look after his cat while he went on vacation for a few weeks to the U.S. I replied to his request, giving me the opportunity to meet this humble and kind man. In return for looking after his cat I was able to stay in his apartment for the weeks I was in Daejeon.

I met Sean in person for the first time when we got together for him to show me where he lives and to meet my new roommate, Epuni, a multi-coloured cat. Sean has been in South Korea for seven years and has a Masters in Teaching

from the U.S. Before building a new life in South Korea, Sean "spent about fifteen years in the film and video industry [where he] split [his] living as an actor and then a producer" (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007). Sean told me about his life before migrating to South Korea, his divorce from his wife, and his experiences since he left the U.S.

Sean wanted to leave the U.S. as soon as possible after his divorce, so he searched on the Internet to find employment overseas. He applied to a job posting and was in the country twenty-nine days later. At first, he taught conversation classes to diverse levels of English learners at a foreign language center located at a university in Chung-Ju. With some changes in administration he found himself to be no longer happy, so he decided it was time to move on. He gained employment at a university in Daejeon where he continues to work in the English education department teaching future English instructors.

Sean expressed his ups and downs with living and working in South Korea. He also confided in me that he never thought he would fall in love again after his divorce, but feels he has since been blessed with finding someone in South Korea to share a life with.

Sean was an obvious choice because of his long time experience of living in South Korea and his position as a university professor. Sean's experience as a man in his fifties living in the country can offer a different perspective as there are many retirees or individuals teaching EFL as a second career in the country.

Eric. I met Eric a few years after he returned to Canada from South Korea while I was doing graduate work. He approached me after he learned that I had also been

a teacher in South Korea. Throughout the year we exchanged stories and he expressed his wish to return one day to the country he loved.

Eric's experience will give a glimpse into the world of those who are undocumented or 'illegal' migrant laborers. This kind of case is one that may be more familiar due to the publicity it has received in the news. Eric was considered an illegal teacher because without a university education he could not obtain employment in South Korea without a counterfeit university degree and transcripts.

Eric was very eager to share his story with me. He talked about his life before migrating and his experiences of living in South Korea. He also spoke frankly about how he gained employment 'illegally' in the country and how he was subsequently deported. I have never met a person who has such a love for teaching and learning about other cultures. His eyes lit up every time he spoke about his memories of teaching Korean children and the thrill he got when he taught them something new. Eric was unable to return to South Korea after he obtained his university education, but he is now living and teaching English in Japan.

I chose to include Eric's story because there are many foreign English instructors in South Korea who are 'illegal' or undocumented migrants. Along with the illegality of his employment, I selected Eric as an interlocutor because, like the majority of English teachers, he was employed at a hagwon.

I chose to focus on these four individuals because each experienced South Korea in different ways. Ethan, a man in his late twenties who migrated to South Korea after

completing university, provides a case of a prototypical foreign English instructor. Sean's experiences as a man who migrated for a second career before retirement offers a balance to Ethan's perspective on what it is like to be a English teacher in South Korea. I included Eric because he experienced South Korea as an illegal migrant. Lastly, Annabelle was selected as a main interlocutor because as a Korean-Bolivian her case is unique. In addition, her experiences as a gyopo and a woman provide a different point of view. These four cases will act as a basis for comparison, but I will also use information gathered from other interviews, on-line chats, and responses to the on-line survey to show the diversity of the experiences of English language instructors.

The Decision to Migrate to South Korea to Teach English

The question of why people decide to migrate to the South Korea to teach English was one of my main interests when I started this research project. Throughout the two years I lived and worked in the country I found that many teachers were there for various reasons, some I would have never expected. The stereotype is that foreign English instructors are recent university graduates, but based on my experience I have found this not to be the case. Along with university graduates, I met corporate drop-outs, retirees, teachers, and tourists, among others. This diversity was also remarked upon by a man, I will call Michael, who started a recruiting company with one of his friends in Vancouver after teaching in South Korea for five years. From Michael's perspective there are five different kinds of people who want to teach overseas; "the holiday traveler, the adventure traveler, the social misfit, the retired, and the professional teacher" (conversation with Michael, June 4, 2007). Michael's company receives seventy to one hundred applicants

per day for English teaching jobs in South Korea. He explained the different kinds of applicants he has seen over the years:

> The holiday traveler is the person who doesn't want to grow up, [who] graduated university and they still want to party, have some fun, and just go out and not join professional North America. Then there is the adventure traveler who just wants to experience something different before resigning themselves to commitments locally. The social misfit is the person who can't get by here… and this could be anyone from an older individual to younger people who just do not seem to find their mark or their place in society here… and by going over there, there is a kind of a weird social phenomenon [that] as a result of language differences and cultural differences an acceptance ratio increases exponentially when they go over to these cultures, so they find their mark and their place there. Then there is the retired who may be at a mid life crisis or they are retired and they just want to travel… they want it paid for or at least taken care of. There are professional teachers who are going over there for experience; to get experience before getting into a classroom here or before getting into a Master's program.

These different people go to Korea for diverse reasons. Equally diverse are the actual experiences of English teachers; many people have decided to make a life in the country, some marry a Korean man or woman, others depart after a year (the end of a contract), while even others ignore their contracts to go home early. In the next two sections I will show how the possibility of a cultural immersion experience *as well as* the accumulation of savings and work experience makes teaching in South Korea a desirable option for those who pursue it.

The adventure of immersing one's self in a different country plays a significant part in native English speaker's decision to migrate as 71.4% (i.e. 70/83) of the participants in my survey reported that adventure was significant, 89.6% (i.e. 77/84) of the respondents stated travel was important, and 83.7% (i.e. 72/83) of the respondents said learning about a new culture was central in their decision. These numbers are significant as they show that for foreign English instructors their experience in another country is more important than the money they accumulate.

Many of the respondents to the online survey maintained that they wanted a cultural experience when I asked them their personal reasons for migrating to South Korea. For instance, one respondent said, "Any chance to explore another part of the world and immerse myself in a culture is very appealing" (Respondent 1), while another said, "I wanted to live in a country that did not speak English in order to, sort of, see English from the outside. I also wanted to see what it was like to learn a language in the culture itself" (Respondent 13). Another teacher said something similar,

> I wanted to experience living in a different culture, one that contrasted England and the culture to which I'd grown up in and was so familiar with. I'd traveled before and from these experiences realized that you could never really know a culture or truly experience it without living within it for a substantial period of time- allowing me to gain a real understanding and knowledge of the people, their beliefs and their way of life (Respondent 33).

For native English speakers this kind of work is appealing as it offers a glimpse into the back regions of Korean culture. It is only when a person gets to see life as it is really lived that he or she feels that they are penetrating the back regions of the particular culture (MacCannell 1976: 93-94).

Of course, there are other factors in choosing to migrate to teach. When I asked whether saving money was a factor in migrating to South Korea 66.3% (i.e. 57/84) reported that it was. Similarly, paying off financial debt was an issue for 48.9% (i.e. 42/83) of the respondents. One respondent who believed that economic motivators were important stated: "I chose Korea because it paid the most and I had just graduated and needed the most money I could get doing what I wanted. "Wanted" being that I didn't want to go directly into the workforce but I wanted an adventure first to recharge my batteries" (Respondent 10). Another respondent reported: "Well it was the only

advertisement which I came across that offered free accommodation and a free ticket" (Respondent 17).

Along with adventure and economic benefits, some individuals migrate for work experience that would apply when they return to their country of origin or when they decide to make a career of teaching ESL overseas as 41.9% (i.e. 36/84) respondents reported that this was significant. These reasons for migrating were expanded on in the open-ended parts of the survey. For example, one respondent said, "I was interested in teaching and couldn't afford to take the time off paid employment to get work experience. Korea seemed a good option for money and experience" (Respondent 46). Another had a similar sentiment: "I completed a Master's in Education-language and literacy / tech in education and wanted to apply my degree and my skills. I hope to pursue doctorate work in the future, so teaching English at the university level is great experience for me" (Respondent 47). Another respondent sought experience as an EFL instructor:

> Teaching English is my chosen profession. Though there are some flaws to the Korean education system, I do feel that Koreans absolutely value education (even if they go about it in a different way than we would back home). I think the fact that Koreans care so much about education, and are willing to spend so much time and money on learning (even after they graduate from university), makes it a great country for a teacher to work in (Respondent 63).

While the decision to migrate to a particular country may involve a cost-benefit analysis on the part of the individual, the majority of the migrants who move to South Korea are not being 'pushed' from a country that has low wages and a high level of unemployment and 'pulled' towards a wealthier country. There is more at work in this case as native English speakers with a university education have many opportunities for employment at 'home.' In the section that follows, I will explore individual decisions to

migrate to show that making the decision to migrate to South Korea for work is more complicated and cannot be placed into preconceived categories of motivations.

Individual Experiences of Deciding to Migrate

I am now going to revisit the migration stories with which I began this chapter to offer more in-depth perspectives on the reasons these individuals migrated. Ethan explains that his incentives for going to South Korea were "because [he] wanted a career in teaching." As well, he "needed money and teaching experience for Teacher's College." He acknowledged that South Korea has helped him to be more confident speaking in front of an audience since he is now "running classes and being a master's of ceremonies at English camps during the vacations" (conversation with Ethan, June 21, 2007). While an immersion experience or travel was not the main concern for Ethan when he first decided to teach in South Korea, it became more important over time. Ethan continues to work on his Korean language ability. Due to learning the language Ethan has been "able to talk more to Korean people" and feels that the Korean people "really appreciate when you try to speak with them in their language." In addition, Ethan has attempted to immerse himself in the culture through joining Korean sports such as *taekwando* and *hapkido*.

Eric also wanted to gain experience in South Korea, but unlike Ethan his motivation is attributed to his lack of opportunity in Canada because of his elementary education. This is Eric's story:

> At that time I was kind of going through a hard time. I got fired from a job and then I had another job that was a minimum paying job, living with a friend. Then I got a phone call from friend who was teaching in Korea during the World Cup and he asked if I wanted to go and that's what made me go. Just a change in my life because at that time… everything at that time was just shit and I thought Korea [is] definitely an opportunity to change my life and it did.

Eric seemed to be in search for a job that he found fulfilling, he explains; "I was used to working crap jobs, none of it I liked, teaching didn't feel like work" (conversation with Eric, May 7, 2007). Unlike others I talked with, Eric did not wish to teach in Canada, "I don't think I would be a teacher here because I love different cultures and different languages. That is why I took anthropology because I love different cultures."As will be seen in the next chapter, Eric spent much of his free time with Korean friends and even chose to date Korean women because he wanted to be immersed into the culture. He also had a desire to learn the language and told me that he could carry on a basic conversation with the Korean people he met.

Annabelle's decision to migrate was based on her ethnic origins; "My parents wanted me to come here to see what it was like, know my roots, and know where I come from." From my own observations and the number of interviews I conducted with Korean-foreigners, this decision to migrate is common as there are many English instructors in South Korea who are ethnically Korean, but were raised in a different country.

Although initially she did not go to South Korea to be a teacher, once Annabelle began teaching her motivation was financial rewards. She describes a further reason for staying in South Korea as a teacher:

> I know a lot of my friends in England didn't know what to do and they kind of got sucked into their jobs because they did it one year and then would get a bit of a pay rise the next year. They are working their way up in places like Marks and Spencer's or some kind of clothing company or something or some have jobs at banks as cashiers and they are working their way up to be managers or something like that and they don't really enjoy it. And actually I could have gotten citizenship in England working as a make-up artist which was fine and was a good job for a person my age there, but it was not something I could see myself doing for the rest of my life (conversation with Annabelle, June 26, 2008).

Many of my interlocutors discussed their desire not to join professional or corporate North America or Europe. They felt that traveling or living in another country was a kind of rite of passage before they got married, had children, or obtained a job in their desired career. For instance, a survey respondent has similar views to Annabelle stating: "I traveled a lot in university and when I graduated I knew I was not ready to settle down. I wanted to see a part of the world that I had never been to before. It was at the perfect time in my life because I did not have any responsibilities at home so I was free to explore the world" (Respondent 59). The desire to extend this liminal stage in their lives may be further reason native English speakers decides to migrate to teach English.

In addition to not wanting to work in a job that she did not enjoy, Annabelle discussed her familial obligations. She says that "money made me stay because now I have saved a lot more money than most people my age; I have actually saved over fifty percent of what I make here every month." After spending considerable time with Annabelle I also learned that this money is needed in her family since her parents have joined her in South Korea. "I want to get out of here as soon as possible because I don't even like it here, now I have saved so much money. But because of my family situation, I am the breadwinner" (conversation with Annabelle, June 26, 2007). I have since heard from Ethan that Annabelle is remaining in South Korea for at least one more year.

The familial obligations associated with Annabelle's decision to stay in South Korea are not uncommon in migration stories (see, for example George 2005). As noted earlier, the notion that children should take care of parents is deeply rooted in Korean

society. What makes this case interesting is that usually it is the first born son who takes care of the parents, but in this case, it is Annabelle who has taken on this role.

Like Ethan and Annabelle, the possibility for saving money in South Korea is one of the reasons Sean works in this country, but dissimilar to these others Sean is saving for his retirement and wanted to get "far away from [his] past." This is his story:

> When I got laid off at the TV station my wife and I were talking about what would be the next step and my dream was to retire as a college teacher, so that is when I went back and got my Masters in Teaching and during that process is when the marriage fell apart. So I found myself with a MA but no family and the dream was to work for twenty years, make some money and retire. So I wanted to get as far away from those ghosts as possible. So the first thing that came up when I clicked my mouse after typing in "teaching in Korea" was the language institute and they needed a teacher in twenty-nine days. Literally something happened in my life and I thought I have to get the fuck out of here.

He later explained that "when [he] came to South Korea he was forty-six years old, [his] life was half over and [he] really wanted the second half to be something [he] was proud of." Sean then spoke of his long term plans:

> I don't have much of a retirement at home because I lost everything in the divorce and so again as long as I am healthy and happy…It may be that I retire here or be one of the expats that retires in the Philippines or something because money doesn't go very far in America (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007).

Among survey respondents, saving for retirement was unsurprisingly a concern for people working in South Korea who are in their fifties and sixties. A male from this age category suggested that one of the reasons he chose to work in this industry was "the level of remuneration for English teaching" (Respondent 79). Along the same lines, a female respondent wrote:

> Although America has age discrimination laws, it is very difficult to find professional full-time positions once you are over fifty. Korea has, over the past few years, opened the doors so to speak, for aging Americans. Korean public schools and hagwons offer safer environments. You can teach without worrying about being attacked by a student or having to break up fights. Administrative duties are minimal. Although Koreans do have a national way of thinking, I don't

> find it too inhibiting. Individuals are individuals, wherever you go (Respondent 84).

Although Sean had a concern with savings, he also discussed ways in which he has immersed himself into Korean culture. When he arrived to South Korea he got a private tutor to teach him *Hangeul* (Korean language). He expressed his disappointment in not mastering the language yet. Sean was also extremely interested in Korean movie culture. In fact, he had rows and rows of Korean films on his shelves. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Sean also spends a considerable amount of time with his Korean friends and partner.

Social Networks in Choosing a Migration Destination

Many of the people I talked with said they had selected South Korea because of the free flight and accommodation provided by their employer. These perks are significant in drawing native English speakers to teach in this country, but they are not the most significant factors in their decision. Contemplating my own reasons for choosing South Korea and inquiring further into others experiences I realized there was something more to their choice of this migration destination. In response to a question about how they had first heard of teaching overseas 59.3% (i.e. 51/84) of the survey respondents indicated "word of mouth." This led me to examine the open-ended questions of the survey and the experiences of those whom I interviewed. What came from this analysis was an appreciation for the established social networks that influence people's decisions to choose to migrate to South Korea.[13]

[13] For the purposes of this study, established social networks are those interpersonal relationships already in place when migrants arrive in the country, which increases the likelihood of choosing this country to teach in.

Some migration literature has focused on social networks that cause migrants to select their destination (see, for example, George 2005, Olwig 2007). In the case at hand, social networks are also important because they provide migrants with the knowledge that living and working in South Korea is possible. Many of the respondents to the survey had networks of friends in South Korea before they arrived in the country. One explained his experience in the following way: "I had friends who were already living here who told me to come and crash on their floor. They helped me get set up and I had a great support system already in place" (Respondent 28). Similarly another respondent said, "My friend had already spent a year in the country and I thought it was a good opportunity to take. He had already experienced what I was about to" (Respondent 25).

Taking a closer look at the specific individuals introduced earlier we will see that social networks were in a large part responsible for their selecting South Korea as a migration destination. Ethan's and my own experience of deciding on South Korea are closely intertwined. When Ethan and I were working at the university bar, I started revealing my plan to move to South Korea upon graduation. Throughout his last year of university we kept in touch with each other. Because he was interested in teaching as a career, he began to ask me about how to get a job, what to look for in contracts, and the kinds of institutes he could work for. I described to him the cities I was familiar with and advised him on what he could do to prepare. Ethan decided he wanted to live in or near Seoul where he would meet a lot of people and would be able to find all of the amenities of home. He contacted a recruiting agency who gave him an interview and advised him to take the Teaching English as a Second/Other Language (TESOL) program, so he would

be able to earn more money. During the three months preceding his departure, Ethan volunteered as an ESL instructor at a high school in preparation.

Eric also had established social networks when he decided to migrate to South Korea. He was contacted by a friend who was working in the country who asked Eric to join him. To find his way there, Eric knew a recruiter from London who was teaching at a university in South Korea and who also recruited illegal teachers for a "finder's fee of one thousand dollars." According to Eric, the recruiter "looked for people who were willing to take a risk and leave for South Korea at the drop of a hat." The two private institutes that hired teachers from this recruiter were aware of the illegality of their teachers, but preferred them because they were able to pay unqualified teachers less than qualified ones.

Sean learned about South Korea as a possible migration destination from colleagues in the U.S. who had returned from teaching English there.

> When I was getting my Master's a couple of students ahead of me had gotten married and come here. They wanted to get nest egg together and it was them who told me that there were a lot of positions over here, so I kept that in mind. When I first thought about teaching English I thought I would go to Taiwan because I thought that would be really interesting. But then I thought I better check out Korea because maybe it was more realistic (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007).

Through these stories we can see that networks of people who have taught in South Korea help individuals to learn of the possibilities of employment, the amount of savings that can be accumulated, and the possible experiences it could provide. Without these networks the number of people migrating to South Korea would not be as considerable.

Ethnic Origins: Another Reason for Selecting South Korea

Along with interpersonal relationships in the country of origin, ancestral ties can also influence decisions to migrate to South Korea. This was the case for Annabelle. Her parents' belief that she should experience her ethnic origins was the primary motivating factor in her migration decision. Two of the respondents to the online survey also suggested they had migrated to South Korea to learn about their ethnic origins.

> I love to travel and once I graduated from my university, I was not sure what I would do. Teaching here gave me the opportunity to see a new place, be closer to countries I wish to travel to, give me experience, and save a bit of money. It also gave me the opportunity to meet family I didn't know existed and learn more about the culture of half of my ancestry (Respondent 29).

Similarly, another respondent wrote that she chose to migrate to South Korea because "It's my roots and to learn the language" (Respondent 26). In addition to Annabelle, I met several of directors of private English institutes who were born in the U.S. or Canada, but are ethnically Korean. One of the directors of a prominent English institute in Seoul explained that he came to South Korea to teach English at a university for only a year or two, but once he got here he realized that his knowledge of Korean culture increased his ability to teach Korean children English. He has now been in the country for fifteen years.

Political and Economic Ties

Along with social networks from their countries of origin and familial ties to South Korea, it seems as though foreign language instructors may also choose South Korea due to personal ties to Korean people or to the country. For example, many respondents to the online survey said they chose to migrate to South Korea over other countries for reasons such as "[they] lived with Koreans and studied Korean in

university" (Respondent 43) or "I was familiar with Korean food and culture since I grew up with Korean-American friends, and I studied quite a bit about Korean Traditional Music, which is a personal interest of mine" (Respondent 75). These networks allow for foreign English teachers to learn of the opportunities available to them in other places throughout the world. As well, due to the history of the Korean War, the continued presence of American military in the country, and the number of Korean immigrants in Canada, the U.S., New Zealand and Australia there are political, economic, and social ties that make South Korea and Koreans familiar to those who are interested in teaching overseas.

The Influence of Recruiters

Recruiters like the ones I interviewed in Toronto and Vancouver may also influence the native English speaker's choice to migrate to South Korea. Similar to tourist brochures and web pages that promote tourist destinations through images and other media representations of place (Young 1999: 375), recruiters promote teaching English in South Korea as a particularly attractive option. Some businesses consider themselves to be teacher placement companies meaning that they do not recruit for specific educational institutes or even countries, but place teachers wherever they have the qualifications to go. The recruiters I will be focusing on here are based in Canada and place teachers in South Korea.

Among the survey respondents 37.2% (i.e. 32/84) contacted the institute that hired them through a recruiter. In addition, 52.3% (i.e. 45/82) of the respondents reported that a recruiter aided them in securing a position in South Korea. From these statistics it is evident that a significant number of potential teachers contact a recruiting company when

they make the decision to teach overseas. Three out of the four foreign English instructors I have focused on in this chapter also used a recruiter to find employment.

The recruiters with whom I spoke make a business of convincing people who want to teach overseas that South Korea is the place to go. For instance, one of the largest recruiting agencies in Canada that recruits for South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan advertises on their webpage:

> South Korea offers some of the best ESL teaching opportunities in the world. Do you need to save money, pay off student loans or build for the future? If so, Korea is the place for you. Korea offers the highest starting teaching salaries, the best benefits with regard to round-trip airfare and free housing AND the cost of living is really cheap (Footprints 2008).[14]

As seen here, recruiters know that their target audience for teaching in South Korea are those people who want to save money or pay off financial debt.

Another Canadian recruiting agency promotes adventure, travel, and level of remuneration on its website:

> *Experience a new culture!
> *Take on a fun, energetic job with a great salary!
> *Travel the countries of East Asia with ease!
> *Make life-long international friends!
> How would you like to live in Korea for a year and teach ESL (English as a Second Language)? Just imagine how exciting it would be to learn an Asian culture, try new delicious foods, enjoy a vibrant nightlife, learn a new language AND save money? (Korjob 2008).[15]

Along with the websites, recruiters target university campuses in Canada through their recruiting brochures distributed at career fairs and in career centers. According to Martin Young (1999: 375), who has conducted research on tourism, "brochures are not in the business of depicting the reality objectively; they selectively present information to their audience in order to create a particular image of a place designed to attract potential

[14] http://www.footprintsrecruiting.com/teaching-english-korea.php, accessed May 3, 2008
[15] http://www.korjobcanada.com/, accessed May 3, 2008

tourists." Recruiters use similar techniques in promoting teaching in South Korea. These agencies know potential teachers are in search of a cultural experience, but *also* want to accumulate savings, therefore they promote both adventure and money in their brochures. For example, Canadian Connection's brochure's front page reads "the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." Within the brochure they state their philosophy:

> Leaving the comfort of your home, friends, and family to travel to a new land rife with cultural differences is, no doubt, a HUGE decision in your life. The first thoughts of going are most often born of a natural curiosity to experience new places, new people, and things; to grow as a person. But this curiosity alone cannot carry you the whole way. There are other attributes necessary to make this journey possible. These include courage, confidence, faith....and knowledge. While you may be able to supply the first three, the fourth one is impossible unless you've already taught in Korea (Canadian Connection 2007).

This brochure promotes the experience and conveys to the potential teacher that he or she needs to use this recruiter in order to work in South Korea. These kinds of advertisements for teaching English in South Korea are common on recruiting websites and brochures.

Many of the recruiting agencies brochures or web pages display 'traditional' images of South Korea, such as Korean flags, women in *hanboks* (the traditional Korean dress), Korean drums, and mountains. These images represent a 'traditional' Korea giving the impression to the potential teachers that they will have a certain experience.

The 'traditional' representations of South Korea influence the visions that prospective teachers develop of the country as is evident in the stories of the four individuals I have focused on in this chapter. Ethan "pictured [South Korea] to be a lot more third world," but as he explained "it is nothing like that, here there is a lot of money, everything is accessible, and they have everything you want" (conversation with Ethan, June 21, 2007). Eric had a similar view of the country before he arrived: "I saw it more like Japan with cherry blossoms and mountains. I didn't expect tall buildings. I

thought I'd see more villages" (conversation with Eric, May 7, 2007). Annabelle had been to South Korea as a child, therefore she had seen the country before it had become industrialized, but she was shocked with the change; "Yah, I had been here once when I was seven, but it was totally different. It was more third world and there weren't any tall buildings. Now it is more developed than it is developing. It was still dingy, but not as clean as [it is] now" (conversation with Annabelle, June 26, 2007). Sean had an altogether different image of South Korea before he arrived; "The only thing we ever see of Korea is eating dogs and politicians fighting with each other…" (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007). What is evident from these four accounts is that media representations do not adequately depict South Korea as it is today. Many of the people I spoke with believed they would be living in a more 'traditional' place and were surprised to see how 'developed' the country was.[16]

Conclusion: Motivations to Migrate

In this chapter I have looked at the reasons native English speakers choose to migrate to South Korea to teach English. English language instructors, like migrant laborers, choose to migrate because they want a different 'experience' and want to accumulate money. Dissimilar to other migrant laborers, the majority of the English instructors do not send the money they earn 'home' to support kin. Annabelle, one of the interlocutors featured in this chapter, financially supports both her mother and father, but she is able to do this in the host country.

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[16] According to the United Nations Human Development Report (2007/2008), The Republic of Korea ranks 26 out of 177 countries included in this study. Development indicators used in the Report indicate that South Korea is clearly within the realm of "High Human Development." Although the Gross National Product of South Korea is lower than that of the U.S. and Canada, life expectancy in South Korea is 77 years, compared with 77.4 years in the U.S. and 79.8 years in Canada. Another important indicator, Infant Mortality Rate, shows that infants in South Korea have a better rate of survival, 5 out of 1,000 live births, than they do in the U.S., 6 out of 1,000 live births.

The choice of South Korea as a migration destination for native English speakers is influenced by social networks in their country of origin. This is similar to migrant laborers who usually have connective ties to their migration destination either through friends or kin. In addition to these kinds of social networks, many migrant communities have political and economic ties to their migration destination.

While there are similarities in the experiences of migrant laborers and foreign English instructors in terms of motivations to migrate, the way in which native English speakers are recruited to work in South Korea has more in common with tourists. For foreign English instructors their recruitment is similar to the way in which tourists are lured to their traveling destinations. Images and other representations in the media are used by recruiters to promote a cultural immersion experience.

Native English speakers desire a cultural immersion experience that is something more than merely vacationing in a country for a few weeks or months, making them different from the typical tourist studied in anthropological literature. English instructors seek to gain access to the back regions of Korean lives. In the next chapter, I will explore the relationships that develop between foreign English instructors and Korean directors, colleagues, students, and Koreans outside the work environment to explore whether they find the experience they seek and therefore are able to access the 'authentic' South Korea they were looking for.

IV. The Korean Experience

Introduction: The Experiences They Seek

"I learned a lot about Korea because I hung out with Koreans…I wanted the Korean experience" (conversation with Eric, May 7, 2007). As was the case with Eric, I found that many foreign English instructors I interviewed and surveyed wanted to make Korean friends, experience Korean culture,[17] and learn the Korean language,[18] despite the fact that there is no work-related incentive for them to do so. In the previous chapter I noted part of the reason that native English speakers migrate to South Korea because they seek a cultural immersion experience. In this chapter I will show how they attempt to gain this experience.

Dean MacCannell suggests that some tourists have the desire to "share in the real life of places they visit" and through relationships with people in the host society are allowed to "peek into one of its back regions" (1976: 96-97). I argue that, much like MacCannell's prototypical tourist, foreign English teachers seek to "share in the real life" of South Korea through relationships that they hope will allow them to "peek into one of its back regions." Unfortunately for them, these relations do not always live up to this promise. Among other things, in this chapter I try to explain why this is.

The First Relationship in South Korea: Foreign Teachers and Directors of English Institutes

"They think we are more credible on paper, but with that is a lack of basic respect. There are a lot of contradictions in Korea" (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007). This contradiction to which Sean is referring seems to characterize the relationships between

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[17] 83.7 % (i.e. 72/83)
[18] 38.4% (i.e. 33/84)

some foreign teachers and the directors of the institutes they work for. Directors hire foreign teachers with the belief that their schools will be viewed as more reputable than others who do not employ native English speakers. However, in many cases teachers find themselves in situations where their input is not acknowledged. In order to explore the reasons why this friction occurs I will examine the cultural miscommunication surrounding the employment contract that begins this relationship.

People in the ESL/EFL industry in South Korea talk about contracts a lot- they certainly feature significantly in the interviews, on-line chats, and survey comments on which this thesis is based. Some teachers complain about their employer's alterations to the contract after they have arrived, which may result in contractual disputes.

Consular Affairs Canada (2006) warns Canadians about the legality of the contract on their website by stating: "For many Koreans, a contract is part of the symbolism involved in beginning a relationship, and "beginning" is an important word. The contract thus is only as binding as the personal connection." What is insinuated here, and corroborated in interviews, is that Korean directors view the contract more as a guideline than a legal document. According to Consular Affairs Canada (2006:8), "Koreans tend to view contracts as infinitely flexible and subject to further negotiation. Furthermore, the written contract is not the real contract; rather, the unwritten, oral agreement with an employer is the real contract." The miscommunication regarding the legality of the contract between the employer and employee can begin this new relationship on poor terms.

In order to discuss issues surrounding the contract I will briefly describe what items are most important to a teacher when signing. I have identified these items by

looking at the reoccurring themes discussed in reference to contracts on "Dave's ESL Café" and the warnings put forth by Consular Affairs Canada on their website.

The Labor Standards Act in South Korea was established on March 13th, 1997 and was last amended on September 15th, 2003. According to this Act, the any employment contract should be issued for the period of one year and should include the following provisions:

> An employer shall clearly state remuneration, working hours, and other terms of employment to a worker at a time when a contract of employment is concluded. In this case, matters as to each constituent item of remuneration, and the methods of calculation and payment shall be specified according to the methods prescribed by the Presidential Decree (The Labor Standards Act, Article 24 1997, 132)

The amount of pay, the day of the month the teacher will receive his or her wages, vacation time, severance pay, recess hours, and overtime are usually factors that teachers consider when signing a contract.

One member of "Dave's ESL Café" believed that teachers need to become more aware of the provisions that will affect them the most, but are usually not stated in the contract.

> Everyone here judges a contract by the salary amount (higher the better), hours worked (lower the better), pension, health insurance, holidays, severance, airfare, etc. But what I really see missing in every contract is the clause that protects the employee under default by the employer.
> There are absolutely no provisions for:
> -failure to pay salary or pay on time.
> -conditions in case the hagwon defaults financially (bankruptcy)
> -failure to pay pension
> -failure to provide health insurance
> As an example:
> "Failure to be pay salary within 15 days of the agreed upon pay date, the employee has an option to be granted a Letter of Release", etc..... Things like that. What is really being signed is just "*a lengthy job description*", not a real contract in my opinion (Dave's ESL Café 2008).

Contracts seem to protect the employer and not the employee. An important issue discussed on "Dave's ESL Café" is the right of the teachers to respond or break a contract if they find themselves in working conditions which are unpleasant. In such cases, teachers may ask for a letter of release from their employers so they can find work at a different institute. A letter of release may be difficult to obtain if the employee asks to resign within the first six months because the contract states that employees need to repay their airfare and their recruiter fee to their employer if they leave their job before this time. As well, directors stipulate a thirty to sixty day notice of resignation.

The practice of breaking contracts contributes to the negative stereotypes Korean directors may have of foreign teachers. For instance, a director of two English institutes in Daejeon explained:

> Some teachers in the middle of their contract say they want to leave Korea and I ask them why and they say they are not happy. They usually don't tell me why they are unhappy; they just say it is a personal reason. The problem must be cultural things or the different way of thinking in Korea or the work environment, but I usually say no problem just give me time to find another foreign teacher, which is about one or two months and I will accept their thinking that they want to leave (conversation with Brian, July 12, 2007).

Often times foreign teachers do not want to give this much notice when they decide to break their contract for fear of not getting paid or getting treated badly throughout these last couple of months. This belief stems from the 'horror stories' told within the foreigner community of the 'wicked' director who does not pay his or her employees and makes their lives miserable because they have terminated their contract. For example, this is a posting from a member of "Dave's ESL Café" looking for advice on how to get out of a contract:

> I was thinking about leaving my hagwon job (i.e., breaking my contract). I won't bore you with the details, but the job just isn't working out/not what I

> expected/not what I was promised/my boss is a snake/etc. According to my contract, I am required to pay my company for airfare and the temporary hotel they gave me if I am fired or quit within the first six months of employment (about 1.5 million Won). However, I recently discovered that my boss pockets some of the money that I pay for rent every month. I don't know if that is illegal, but it is certainly unethical. That's the story. Here are the questions.
> If I give notice of quitting they will probably withhold my entire final check (more than what I contractually owe them) by inventing some other fees and charges. They have done it before with others. But I'm worried about just leaving because I don't know if this sort of debt can follow me back to Canada. Can I get into any legal trouble (criminal or civil) for just leaving without paying them my contractual debts? Can it damage my credit or result in my Canadian wages being garnished? I know this course is morally ambiguous (scamming my boss who is scamming me), but I am most worried about the legal issues. Possibly related to this, somebody mentioned on this website that if you are going to abandon your contract you should leave your alien registration card with Korean immigration at the airport on your way out of the country. They did not say why. So, why do I need to do this?
> So sorry for the length and topic, you guys must get a million of these questions. I'm just in a bad situation and don't know what to do (Dave's ESL Café 2008).

Another member asked for advice about breaking his contract:

> I am breaking my contract after 8 months in October. I had been planning on giving the two months notice required by my contract, but I have recently heard horror stories of teachers giving notice and being terminated on the spot. Does anyone have experience with breaking contracts? How did you go about it? How did your boss handle it? Thanks (Dave's ESL Café 2008).

This member received fifteen responses to his inquiry. Some of the members said that if he did not want to work in South Korea again he should pull a midnight run, while others advised him that the right thing to do is to give his boss notice. After a few specific responses to this inquiry the conversation turned to horror stories. One member gave a brief description of his experience: "I gave notice at my old job- not long ago, and wish to god I'd run. This particular school tried to take me for five million Won [$5000], and it basically came down to forfeiting my last month's pay- if I wanted the release letter. That said a friend left her job after giving notice without a hitch." Another member had two similar stories of his friend's experiences of giving notice:

> Two friends came to my hagwon together... one got sick and went back to Canada for treatment. He gave 1 month's notice after only being in Korea for 1 month... They couldn't find another teacher so they made him stay another 2 weeks... still no teacher but he had to go. He had to refund his plane ticket, and they tried to get the recruitment fee back from him... (Don't know if they did or not though - I think they made a deal with the recruiter for a new teacher for free instead). They wouldn't give him a release letter so when he left the country he was interrogated by immigration. He came back to Korea for another job - the hagwon is trying to sue him for deceiving them (or some other rubbish). He had to pay for his ticket home, including canceling and rescheduling fees.
> The second teacher (after 3 months) gave a letter to management citing problems with the school - things he wanted to change - he gave 30 days for them to make the changes or he would tender his resignation. Nothing changed so he told them that on Monday he'd give his resignation - they didn't pay him (when pressured later they only gave him 1/2 of his pay - he is fighting for the rest), they refused to give him his degree back, they are refusing to give him his release letter, they are trying to get him deported and are saying he is a bad teacher (they gave him a bonus last week for being a good teacher!!!).
> Both teachers gave notice and did the right thing - both got screwed. My advice... it's not worth the hassle. Run. However, they might put some black mark against you when you come back... but Korea is pretty disorganized so I even doubt that. It's not worth the fight. But teachers who run are one of the reasons why hagwon owners don't trust foreign teachers. Good luck! (Dave's ESL Café 2008).

According to the EFL-Law website (2008), which aids teachers who find themselves in contractual disputes, many of the contracts they have examined were not acceptable. The website suggests the contracts are filled with ambiguous wording, contradictions, vagueness, and information that violate Korean Labor Law.

There are also stories which circulate within the English language teaching community describing employers who dismiss their employees before one year or make it uncomfortable for them, forcing them to quit. As a consequence, teachers are concerned about the terms of dismissal. Article 30 of *The Labor Standards Act* (1997, 133) maintains under the heading "Restriction on Dismissal, etc" that:

> (1) An employer shall not dismiss, lay off, suspend, transfer a worker, or reduce wages, or take other punitive measures against a worker without justifiable reason.
> (2) An employer shall not dismiss any worker during a period of temporary interruption of work for medical treatment of an occupational injury or disease

> and within 30 days thereafter; nor shall any female worker before and after childbirth be dismissed during a temporary interruption of work as provided herein and within 30 days thereafter; however, if an employer has paid the lump sum compensation due under Article 87 hereof or is not able to continue his business, this shall not apply.

The discourse used in this article leaves room for the employer to dismiss their employees for reasons they deem 'justifiable.' For instance, one member of "Dave's ESL Café" talked about the reason her friend was fired:

> So here is the deal. I made a new friend about a month ago. I don't know her too well, but she seems like a decent, hard-working teacher. She's not a member of Dave's so I said I'd post this for her.
> She works for a large hagwon and was called in to the director's office yesterday. She was told she was being let go because they had received some complaints from parents that she was "not loving enough toward the students." What? Who measures that and how? (2008).

'Horror stories' of contracts gone wrong seem to be commonplace in professional migrant experiences (see, for example Gamburd 2000), acting as a warning in the foreign teaching community and helping to perpetuate the belief that the only way out of a contract is to pull a midnight run. The story commonly told of the midnight runner within the English teaching community is that this person purchases a ticket for a flight home and leaves the country in the 'middle of the night.' For instance, after explaining her reasons for wanting to leave her contract this English instructor talks about her worry if she is honest with her employer.

> Naturally, should I decide to leave at this early stage, this could doubtless bring about problems.
> To even try and explain my reasons to those in charge could make things a hell of a lot worse for me and I don't know what to do should I up and leave.
> The decent and honorable thing to do would be for me to verbally agree to terminate my contract and for me to reimburse them the cost of the flight - which is not a problem. It is not a money issue at all.
> That said, I am the distrusting type I suppose (and feel like I have good reason here) and am just keen to leave the country first and foremost and then start feeling guilty (and reimbursing them for my flight).
> However.....logistically / legally speaking, can I be stopped by anyone at the

> airport should I leave unannounced to the school?
> Does the E2 visa tie me in legally and will this be seized upon by airport officials? Is a 'midnight run' even a realistic option? I know it should be the last option and not the first, but the only thing keeping me going right now is the thought of leaving Korea.
> I'm curious to cover any angle and would hugely appreciate any help whatsoever with these issues. I must stress that on the face of it, the school has not breached their contract. My worry is if my honesty comes back to haunt me and life becomes more difficult as a result (Dave's ESL Café 2008).

After one respondent was harsh on this member for seeking advice on pulling a midnight run another came to her defense and considered the reasons she may want to do as she planned.

> Sure, giving notice may be the most honorable thing to do but what with the horror stories that have appeared on this very board it may not be the sensible thing to do. Directors in the past have felt that an employee leaving early is being disloyal and have made their last month hell, then cheated on the final payment. Although highly unlikely, furious directors have attempted to stop people leaving Korea through falsely calling the police to allege theft (Dave's ESL Café 2008).

I spoke to teachers who knew someone who had pulled a midnight run, but only one who had done it himself. Simon was a foreign teacher in South Korea who left the country nine years ago. He talked with me about his reasons for leaving:

> It was sort of everything together. You know I got sick of being asked everywhere I went [by Koreans]: where are you from? How old are you? What do you do? ... And that was it. Then having an off duty cop get pissed off and toss his drink at his girlfriend and I go inside to apologize for riling him up, I guess. And I am getting dragged away by the staff for apologizing to a woman. I walk down the street and see a guy beating on his girlfriend and know you cannot do anything about it because she will tell you to fuck off because she will get it twice as bad later. And kids are sleep deprived and I know at least some of them are getting smacked around and you know…not cool. And the director was a complete psycho, invading our apartment and I already know I am getting screwed out of my bonus and I was three months engaged and I hadn't seen my fiancé, so it was time to leave (conversation with Simon, May 7, 2007).

As was the case with Simon, disillusionment, dissatisfaction with their job and missing home are some of the main reasons teachers decide to break their contracts.

In numerous contracts posted on "Dave's ESL Café," I found that many of the employers do not stipulate the notice of dismissal, but rather state how many days notice the employer needs if the teacher breaks their contract. Often foreign teachers are not aware of their rights, therefore much of their knowledge comes from sites such as "Dave's ESL Café," trial and error, or from others in the foreign teaching community. According to the EFL-Law (2008) website, the rights of the teacher are very limited even if the contract is in accordance with *The Labor Standards Act* in South Korea. The website states, "*The Labor Standards Act* provides pseudo protection to teachers who are employed in South Korea. The reason we say 'pseudo' protection is because if the employer does not follow the law, there is almost nowhere the teacher can seek a remedy."[19] EFL-Law (2008) goes on to suggest that those teachers who do file a complaint with the Labor Office find that they do not have the time to complain before they must leave Korea because the school they work for holds the visa for the teacher.

One of the owners of a large recruiting agency in Vancouver explained how he believed these horror stories started.

> I was there during the peak of the IMF crisis, which was '95 and '96, and during that time we found that there was a need among the foreigner community for some representation. People just automatically and arbitrarily came to us because we had been there longer and had some language ability and they asked us to help them negotiate their contracts because at that time they were on a rolling system where they would pay the Korean teachers one month and then the foreign teacher the next month. They had no money. There was a mass exodus of teachers leaving Korea at that time because people were losing their jobs left, right, and center, and parents couldn't afford to send their kids to these private schools anymore. As a result of these financial strappings that the employers felt, the teachers were receiving the brunt from the Korean employers, [which gave them] a terrible reputation, that is where it started…the bad rep [of directors of private institutes] and they have perpetuated that, certainly, in some cases, but we also identified that there were good schools that as a result of situations couldn't get or retain

[19] EFL-Law is a website that aids teachers in South Korea with contractual disputes, http://www.efl-law.com/contracts.php, accessed June 5, 2008

> good teachers. This was the start of the midnight run. When I say there was a mass exodus it was probably two of your friends a week were leaving. They were telling their friends and having secret going away parties and so on and so forth. In some cases where they didn't know they could trust the other foreigners on staff they were saying nothing and just disappearing, leaving massive bills. As a result of this discombobulation the schools had no teachers; they were desperate because just retaining the students at that point had been a challenge because parents of course had no money for it (conversation with Michael, June 4, 2007).

From this account we can see that the IMF crisis in Asia affected private institutes and therefore affected the trust between foreign teachers and Korean employers.

While it is obvious that bad experiences with directors are common in South Korea, there are English teachers who are happy with the school they work for and therefore have a great experience. For instance, one respondent to the on-line survey had this to say about his experience: "The staff (directors and owner) and teachers all make an effort to ensure that I have adjusted well and want me to remain happy" (Respondent 2). Similarly another respondent said: "I really enjoyed my hagwon. They became like a family to me!" (Respondent 5) While another said: "The staff at the public school I worked at was very eager to help me assimilate into their school society. The kids were very respectful and excited about English. Every day just felt so rewarding" (Respondent 20).

When foreign English instructors migrate to South Korea the employer-employee relationship is the first they encounter. If it is characterized by mutual distrust some teachers may start to form negative opinions of their Korean hosts and vice versa.

An Unequal Relationship: Foreign and Korean English Teachers

Foreign teachers often build relationships with their Korean colleagues at the institutes in which they teach. As with other relationships, those between foreign and Korean colleagues range from quite friendly to strained and ambivalent. For instance, at

the private institute where I taught in Daejeon, another foreign teacher Greg, and three Korean co-teachers were on staff. We all became friends outside of the workplace and as a result went out as a group to bars, movies, and restaurants. Both Greg and I would learn about Korean dishes and the language from those with whom we worked. Similar to other foreign teachers, Greg became romantically involved with one of the Korean co-teachers.

These kinds of relationships are commonplace, but there are some instances where relations between Korean and foreign teachers are more ambivalent. For example, Ethan expressed that he found working at the public school isolating because of the segregation of foreign and Korean teachers there. Putting a positive spin on this he said that although he wished he worked with other foreigners, he feels that he is "getting full exposure to the culture through working with only Korean people at a public school."

Foreign teachers are considered to be guests of the country by Korean citizens. Because of this status some Koreans believe they need to host their guests by helping them adapt to the culture through such things as taking them out for dinner or teaching them how to speak Korean. For instance, Chun-Hei, a supervisor of English Education for the Board of Education in Incheon, explained "there are some native [English speakers] who are not accustomed to Korean culture or food, so whenever the Korean teacher find out that problem the Korean teacher feels like they have to help them, so then they feel bad for them" (conversation with Chun-Hei, June 17, 2007). The practice of treating foreigners like guests for the duration of their stay leads some teachers to wonder whether these relationships are authentic. To clarify, it is not what the Koreans are doing that makes foreigners suspicious- it is how they come to see these efforts to

help. However, some foreigners welcome these offers, and even see them as invitations to the back regions of Korean's lives.

For Korean teachers, past relationships with foreign teachers colour new ones. Korean English teachers work in an environment where they have foreign teachers coming and going every year. While some foreign instructors work at an institute for more than one contract, in many instances teachers change their places of employment. Therefore, these relationships will most likely end when the foreigner completes his or her contract. What is more, there are unequal power relations between the foreign and Korean teachers. The duties of Korean teachers are often more numerous than those of their foreign counterparts. What is more, the salary paid to Koreans is significantly less. Sean expressed his frustration with this saying that "[directors] don't even pay locals the same, even though they have lived in America for some time" (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007). In the institute where I worked the foreign teachers were getting paid 2 million Won ($2000) per month while Korean teachers only received 1.2 million Won ($1,200). In addition to their salary, foreign teachers also receive free accommodation while working for the school. This inequality contributes to the ambivalence that is felt between these two groups and does not allow for equal relationships to develop between them. Annabelle agrees with this saying, "they just find it unfair that you get paid more just because you were born or living abroad." This inequality was also mentioned by Simon, "Korean teachers were not treated that well by the school. They got paid considerably less than the foreign teachers."

Cultural Immersion: Relationships with Korean Students

"I loved the kids they were amazing, but the middle school students made me laugh" (conversation with Eric, May 7, 2007). According to interviews and surveys, the relationships that develop between foreign teachers and their students are usually positive. Eric, one of the teachers profiled in the previous chapter, was one of the most poignant when he talked with me about his relationship with his students.

> I never had a problem with a student. I remember that students that were so bad with other teachers for some reason just warmed up to me. I think it is because I come from such a big family, I have so many little cousins that I have always been around kids so it easy to be with kids. I have this natural connection…it's wired…I get along with kids very easily. They called me 'game teacher' after a while and I used to get cards all the time saying 'Teacher, I love you' and everyday some kid would draw me a picture or something…It made me want to go back to university and go back, definitely. I miss that so much. Like, for example, I was going out with this girl for a really long time in Korea and I thought I was going to be with her, like marry her and stuff. And she broke up with me and I was heartbroken and if I was in London doing my regular job I would still be heartbroken but honestly it took me…as soon as I walked to school all the kids jumped on me and gave me cards and hugs and I didn't even think about it…it was gone. It's not until I went home that I would start to think about it, but when I was back at school…it is weird… when I was at work I was so happy, I didn't even care…I was like …I love my job…These kids are the best (conversation with Eric, May 7, 2007).

Positive relationships with Korean students can extend beyond the classroom as 53.5% (i.e. 46/82) of survey respondents reported that they had such experiences with students. For some of the foreign teachers these relationships could develop through teaching in other spaces. Sean described how his relationship with his students continues to go beyond the classroom:

> I do a lot of advising…a lot of the students come in and sometimes they are not even in the department, but they come in and they will be asking me questions about where to study and then I have to find out what they want, what is their dream, and why they want to study English and things like that, so I do a lot of advising. I do a lot of helping with paper work when they are applying and also I'll be a liaison for them sometimes e-mailing the contact wherever they are trying

> to go to school. I volunteer probably about a couple of hundred hours a year to the drama group in my department and it's really a lot of fun and they work real hard. They do one performance a year and two one act plays and they work so hard. You never know what quality it will be, but it is a lot of fun (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007).

This positive relationship with students both within and outside of the classroom can lead foreign teachers to become emotionally invested in the ways students learn and are taught.

Similar to Eric, Ethan felt that he had a good relationship with his students, but often felt frustrated when they did not want to learn English or participate.

> I find the experience is better when you see progress in the students. I know they can learn if they are into it, but like I said when they are just going through the textbook…I am not into it, they are not into it. But what we would do…like… it's broken into the aspects of…there listening, there is reading, there is writing, and there is speaking and each chapter basically has four different parts. There is always a song, there is some dialogue, and then there is vocabulary practice which is speaking, listening, reading, and writing and the way that we had it going last year, which was fantastic was we just would make a big display of the dialogue or the chant or something like that and you know be kind of charismatic about it and then we would have them in their groups to practice. We would tell them you will come up here and do it perfect or you are going work on it and come back and do it for us at lunch time and that worked. And it wasn't even difficult dealing with them. Whereas now nobody is listening and nobody cares and neither do I. So it kind of took all the fun out of it (conversation with Ethan, June 21, 2007).

The relationships between students and teachers are sometimes mediated by directors. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, many directors do not listen to the input of the foreign teachers. There is miscommunication about their roles; the foreign teacher has his or her cultural conception of what it means to be a professional teacher, but the Korean directors have their own ideas on how to teach the children and the role of the foreign teacher. The frustrations foreign teachers have with directors can stem from this relationship with students as they get disgruntled with the education system in South Korea as well as with the way English is being taught. Foreign teachers often feel that their students' best

interests are not a priority. This is especially true in some private institutes (hagwon) since they are run more like businesses than educational institutions. For example, in some institutes students who are not ready to move up a level the following semester may be advanced anyhow for fear that their parents will pull them out of the academy.

Foreign teachers' relationships with their students can lead to relationships with their students' family members as well. This is evident in Sean's story of being welcomed into a Korean family.

> I have a really good friend in Chung-Ju who used to be my dentist and then she asked me to give her and her son private lessons and they just brought me into their family. And it is so nice to feel like you are a part of a family and you miss that when you are away. So it was really fun to have a Saturday afternoon huge dinner (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007).

Similarly, when my partner and I were teaching in Daejeon we became private tutors for a family who welcomed us to their home. We spent some afternoons and evenings going out to dinner or being their guests. Obviously, the positive relationships that develop between students and their foreign teachers can offer teachers experiences of Korean culture, but some questions may remain. For instance, there can be a certain level of concern among English instructors that they are being used for free lessons or that their Korean friends are using them to gain prestige associated with having a foreign friend. Sean expressed this feeling in a conversation with me: "They do treat you differently…sometimes they'll want to use you as a living English book…no matter when it is or when you are out for dinner or something like that, they want you to be their English teacher."

Romantic Relationships between Foreigners and Koreans

"I've got this wonderful relationship and I thought I was completely done with romance and somehow we found each other" (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007). One of the ways in which foreigners access the back regions of Korean culture is through romantic relationships with Koreans. As mentioned earlier, Sean moved to Korea after his divorce in the United States and fell in love with a Korean woman, a story often seen in the foreign community.

Many of the people I spoke with expressed that their relationships with Koreans were usually with their friends' Korean partners or through their own romantic relationships. For instance, Ethan explained "I have had Korean friends, but I don't really have any now except through the friends that have Korean girlfriends and their friends. Most of my [foreign] friends have Korean girlfriends" (conversation with Ethan, June 21, 2007). Similarly, Eric believed that his experience of Korean culture came partly from his romantic relationships. "I only dated Korean girls, it was a fantastic experience. It wasn't taking them and having sex with them, it was more of the experience… like learning how to communicate in Korean and learn the culture" (conversation with Eric, May 7, 2007).

These relationships can often be the reason why foreigners decide to stay in South Korea. For example, when I asked the survey respondents how long they expect to stay in the country one person wrote: "I will cross that bridge when I come to it. If I marry my girlfriend, then probably forever. If we broke up, probably one more year" (Respondent 28). Similarly, another respondent said: "Permanently (married to a Korean)" (Respondent 34). In some cases staying in South Korea is not planned and may come about with a romantic relationship or the birth of a child.

Even though there are positive relationships between Koreans and foreign teachers, the question of whether it is an authentic relationship can creep into the minds of foreigners. For example, on "Dave's ESL Café" one of the members asked whether anyone else had noticed that having casual relationships with Korean women is fine, but when they are in a relationship they are "crazy." Some of the answers he received were even more telling. One member suggested: "Just give them their free English lessons and call it even," while another wrote: "They can't visit you every night when they are splitting their time between 3 whitey 'boyfriends'" (Dave's ESL Café, 2008). Another member had a similar view because of his dating experience:

> I met a girl at the bar through an acquaintance. She was a regular.
> We exchanged e-mails. This was before everyone had a cell phone.
> She would send me messages every few days- "how's it going? I'm doing this and that," etc. I would reply. After this started up, whenever I would see her at the bar, she would be very ambivalent and act as if she didn't care about talking to me.
> The e-mails continued. Finally, I e-mailed her asking why she acted so disinterested in public, but so eager to communicate by e-mails. She never answered.
> I couldn't figure out if she just wanted me to pursue her more or she wanted to practice English. Either way, I figured she wasn't worth it (Dave's ESL Café 2008).

Within the foreign community horror stories of Korean women manipulating foreign men in order to obtain everything from free English lessons to citizenship in another country are prevalent. Some stories even include women getting pregnant on purpose in order to get foreigners to marry them. These kinds of stories act as warnings against cons as there is a concern of being taken advantage of.

The Foreign Label and the State

Although I am uncomfortable with it, the term "foreigner" [*waygook sarram*, literally "foreign person"], is the label given to native English speakers in the country by Koreans. It is also how many native English speakers label themselves. In this section I will explore how the sense of otherness fostered by this label and various other differences aid in maintaining the feeling of being a guest while living in South Korea.

One of the reasons that the label of foreigner is inescapable is because of the obvious differences between foreigners and Koreans. Many of the people I talked with expressed the feeling that their ethnicity was a major reason why they felt this way. Simon (the teacher who left South Korea and broke his contract) expressed his frustration in finding his place in the country. "I wanted to do when in Rome do what the Romans do, but I didn't get to do that because everyone treated me like a North American." Later on in our discussion this frustration arose again,

> I tried [to adapt to the culture], I honestly wanted to behave in a way that was socially acceptable to Koreans as opposed to being polite by North American standards, but I cast that off. They did not react to me the way they would react to another Korean; they would always treat me like a North American. They would actually react to you as if they were a North American so the politeness and respect stuff that goes on between Koreans didn't really show up in their interactions with North Americans…that they could call you on anything. As someone that was older than the person I was talking to and a teacher… if I was another Korean they wouldn't have said the things…they wouldn't have called me on not having another drink or things like that…these sorts of things would get ignored if I were Korean…I didn't get a sense that I was a teacher twenty-four hours, I got a sense that I was a white person twenty-four hours and an English speaker, but I think they would have done it to any English speaker. We were conspicuously white and of course the kids when you are walking down the street yelling *meegook sarram* [American person] and constantly explaining you are not American. But…I guess just being constantly approached with the three questions and treated differently (conversation with Simon, May 7, 2007).

This difference is not only felt by the foreigners who look different from Koreans, but is also significant among Korean-foreigners. Annabelle described what it feels like to be a gyopo in Korea and the difference she feels because she is unable to speak the language fluently.

> From Korean people we get separated into many degrees, some people think that it's very cool because I speak another language and they ask me a lot of questions, but other people… there is a lot of envy in this country and they are very quick to show it as well. Some people will treat me bad…like in any kind of service place if I can't speak the language they just have this kind of like, why can't you speak Korean…they don't say that, but they treat you like lower than other Koreans, basically… they give you a huff and puff and do their work (conversation with Annabelle, June 26, 2007).

Although Annabelle feels as though she is surrounded by family living in the country where her parents were born, she also expressed feeling different because she was unable to converse with other Korean people.

Similarly, the Korean state actively perpetuates the division between Korean citizens and foreign guests. As part of their efforts at making people "legible," (Scott 1998) the state strives to keep track of foreign teachers through paper records at the Immigration Bureau, placing each into constructed categories. Every teacher must register with their local municipality to document where they are employed and their address. The Immigration Bureau also provides an alien registration card that has a number, the migrant's picture, their address, and an expiration date. This card must be presented any time a foreign teacher wants to wire money to his or her home bank account, visit a doctor, rent a movie, or buy a cell phone.

Along with the alien cards, visas are also granted by the state to foreign English instructors, placing them into different categories of migrants. The most common type for foreign English instructors is the E-2 status visa. This document is administered to the

individual who has the qualifications specified by the Minister of Justice and wants to instruct foreign languages at private institutions, public educational institutions or any other language training institutions. The Immigration Bureau states that "in principle, a foreign language instructor shall be a native speaker of the teaching language" and needs to provide a passport, application form, an employment contract, copy of their diploma, reference, and documents for a foundation of institution or organization (Immigration Bureau 2005). I have recently been told by Canadians who are looking to work in South Korea that a drug test and a police record check are now needed to teach in the country. Well-publicized cases of foreign teachers behaving badly feed into this effort. The foreign teacher is granted the E-2 visa once these documents have been approved, which allows him or her to stay in the country for a period of one year.

An F-2 visa status is issued to those foreign teachers who marry Korean citizens. This type of foreigner needs a passport, an alien registration certificate, a Korean family register, a Korean resident registration, a marriage certificate, sponsorship (notarized), a Korean partner's employment certificate, and an application fee at the immigration office having jurisdiction. Special permission and legal qualification is based on the visa status of the immigration law (Immigration Bureau 2005).

The last kind of visa that is granted most often to foreigners is the F-4 visa for overseas Korean residents who do not have citizenship in Korea. For this visa, the Korean-foreigner needs to provide a passport, application form, documents for an applicant's ex-Korean nationality such as a Korean family tree register, and substantiating documents for the reasons and the time of obtaining a foreign nationality. If, like Annabelle, the individual is a Korean descendent who was not born in the country,

he or she needs all of these documents plus proof of his or her parent's ex-Korean nationality and documents that show the relationship of the family such as a birth certificate (Immigration Bureau 2005).

For foreign teachers these documents make them legible within the state. The combination of having to carry around an alien card as proof of your 'legal' migrant status and the visa that places you into preconceived categories act as constant reminders of your status as a non-Korean.

When I asked an owner of an English Café in Bucheon who has been living in the country for eight years if he felt as though he were still a guest in the country, he explained to me why he believed he is.

> Perhaps you are looked at differently if your spouse is Korean and you are here on a more permanent basis as well if you are doing something other than teaching. Because I think Koreans view all teachers the same. I don't think foreign language teachers have gained as much respect as say a Korean school teacher would, so to be here as a foreigner doing another job then maybe you get a little more respect, but still… I am not saying that Koreans are racist, but they are still not used to having foreigners living in Korea as permanent citizens. You are still looked at as an outsider. I think in England we wouldn't say to a foreigner, "you are a foreigner," so they do not verbally discriminate, but here they do that. They will say *waygook sarram*, so it doesn't make you feel that welcome because they label you as an outsider and I don't think they mean to but little things like that make you feel that you don't belong. Not enough time has gone by. Korea was a closed country up until 1988, they couldn't travel anywhere so we are only talking twenty years that they have been able to travel to the outside world and all of a sudden foreigners have landed on their door step so I think it will just take some time (conversation with Andy, July 2, 2007).

Similarly Sean who has been in the country for seven years expressed his feelings about being a guest.

> I think I will always feel a little like a foreigner. I don't feel immersed and the language is a big part of it…I don't speak the language very well… I think I always feel like a foreigner and depending on who I am with… I am either a welcomed foreigner or they are indifferent with me or they are uncomfortable (conversation with Sean, July 6, 2007).

Negative Media Attention on Undocumented or 'Illegal' Migrant Laborers

As in other migration contexts there are many 'illegal' foreign English instructors working for Korean employers. The negative media coverage maintains this fear of inauthentic teachers, leaving those who are undocumented or 'illegal' at an increased risk of losing their jobs and being deported to their country of origin.

There are a few kinds of illegal teachers working in South Korea. The first is a teacher who obtains a counterfeit university degree from the internet or a recruiter. This is considered fraudulent by the state because the visa is granted based on false documentation. These teachers have recently been the recipients of a backlash as a result of negative media coverage. An article by *The Asian Pacific Post* entitled "Dozens of English Teachers Deported from South Korea" (Anonymous 2005) reported one of many instances of English teachers being detained and deported from the country. In the case presented by this report, at least fifty Canadian teachers were suspected of working illegally or with false documentation. The article proposes that "officials put the number of English teachers working legally in South Korea at 7,800, including hundreds of Canadians. The number of those working without the necessary documentation is believed to be around 20,000 in over 5,000 schools" (Anonymous 2005). Whether or not these statistics are accurate, this report suggests that undocumented teachers make up the majority of foreign English instructors in the country.

The second type of illegal English teacher is an individual on a tourist or work visa who gains employment. Once the teacher finds a job the employer pressures the teacher not to get an E-2 visa because he or she does not want to pay for it. They will sign a contract, but often in these situations, it is an illegal contract.

The third type of illegal teacher is an individual who does not work for an institution, but works privately, either for a company or for themselves. A teacher does not normally carry out this work during his or her first year in South Korea. Only after they have made contacts with Korean families and agencies do opportunities for this kind of work present themselves. These teachers enter Korea on a tourist visa, which for Canadians allows them to stay in the country for six months. After six months, the teacher leaves the country for a few days and then returns on a new tourist visa. I have known these kinds of teachers.[20]

It is evident that undocumented or illegal English teachers are a concern for Korean immigration officials as the crackdowns on them are escalating. The 2005 article discussed above reported that the rise in the number of teachers working illegally is due to the increase in the number of English language institutes. Another article written by Park Chung-A in *The Korea Times* (2006) suggests it is due to the high demand for English within the country. There is not a strict enough labor law for English language schools. "When hagwons get caught employing unqualified teachers, they receive a warning or five black marks from the government office, regardless of the number of unqualified teachers they employ. When they collect thirty black marks, hagwons are forcefully closed for seven days" (Park 2006). These slaps on the wrists are evidently not deterrents as these institutes continue to hire undocumented teachers.

The Korea Times (2006) suggests that from January 2003 to July 2006 231 foreign English teachers got caught teaching while on tourist visas. *The Asia Pacific Post* reported, "The Canadian Foreign Affairs Department is reportedly monitoring the

[20] As a note, these last two kinds of illegal teachers I described will be referred to here as undocumented migrant workers since there is no record of them being employed, but the first will be referred to as illegal because they are documented.

situation and has confirmed that at least 35 Canadian teachers had been deported after being detained. Some reports put the number of teachers being detained at 150" (Anonymous 2005). Such reports of unqualified teachers are continually in the media, however hagwon directors are not scrutinized in the same way. The number of undocumented teachers shows how valuable they are to the English language learning industry. The human side to these stories is that their status in the country marginalizes them putting them at an increased risk of being exploited as they have no rights if they are not documented by the state.

Eric was one of the teachers affected by the crackdown on undocumented and illegal foreign English instructors in the country. His story of being arrested and deported after the Immigration Bureau discovered that his degree was counterfeit is revealing.

> I was deported from Korea. I got caught with an illegal diploma…a fake diploma and transcripts. Actually they didn't nail me for that originally. They nailed me for an illegal visa because in order to get your visa you needed these documents which were forged. The way they found out was that they called Acadia University and they found out that I was never enrolled and that's how they found out, so I ended up going to jail for a night and then got transferred to another place… to an Immigration holding cell for six days. I actually don't remember how long it was…I think it was seven days, but it felt like forever. They were actually really nice to us. The Immigration officers were awesome. They even said, "They love Canada and they hate doing what they are doing to us because they knew we were not bad people." They brought up the Korean War a lot of times and said that "Canada did so much for us; you know that we do not want to do this because you guys did so much for us." They felt bad for arresting us and after a while I felt bad because I didn't want them to feel bad. They knew we were not bad kids… that is just the way it is. That's the law. There were six of us from Canada. They were trying to get out of us who the recruiter was. And it was kind of scary because they were saying that I was lying and that I was going to jail for a long time, but I just said, "Hey man, I have no idea what you are talking about, I don't know this guy." Our interrogation…mine was fifteen hours and my one buddy's was eighteen hours. It was hell. They asked the same thing over and over again, but differently, just to see if you were lying or not. I had an interpreter, she was good. It was long. They got us at school. They waited for us after our last class. They called us in the cafeteria to talk to us and they said come with us. We talked to them in the cafeteria about like what year did we graduate and all this

> kind of stuff. And then they just said come with us we are going to ask you some more questions. There were two guys in front of us and two guys behind us and it was me and my friend in the middle. And they just followed us outside and they were actually nice enough to not handcuff us in front of the kids and stuff until we got to the van, then they handcuffed us. York and Acadia University were the two famous [degrees] being made. They were investigating this for a very long time because I remember sitting at the desk of the Immigration officer and here was the calendar that named all of these schools and it said something in Korean, which probably was saying to know these schools for illegal documentation, so they had been investigating for a very long time, I would imagine. We went to the airport and then we were handcuffed of course at the airport with jackets over our hands and we were sent to a holding cell in the airport, which I never knew existed, but they do. There was one for men and another for females. I met a lot of cool dudes there I have to say… from Africa. They were working construction. One guy got deported seven times. I was like man, what is going on and he said "I don't know. I work hard." We felt bad [so] we gave him one hundred thousand Won after we left because he was there for two nights. They kept saying his name was not coming up, so we gave him some money, so he would at least have money. Then they walked us to the airplane (conversation with Eric, May 7, 2007).

According to Nicholas P. De Genova (2002: 421), little ethnographic research has been used to get the perspectives and experiences of undocumented migrants. In recounting Eric's story I hope to show the need for anthropologists to conduct research among undocumented migrants.

In 2005, the crackdown on unqualified teachers triggered growing resentment toward English instructors. This was partly fueled by a documentary which displayed foreign teachers as lazy and unqualified by depicting them as an assortment of "high-school dropouts, losers, drug peddlers, and pedophiles" (Anonymous 2005). According to this reporter, this television show started a campaign to have foreigners leave South Korea. A further factor contributing to this resentment was a website set up for English teachers to find employment, which had a forum displaying Seoul's social life which also set up parties "where Westerners and Korean girls drank, flirted, and danced" (Anonymous 2005). Once Koreans heard of the site they had it dismantled.

The negative depiction of foreign English instructors in the media helps to maintain the ambivalence some Koreans feel towards foreigners and foreign teachers in particular. Therefore, not only are the undocumented English instructors affected, but the rest of the foreign community is as well.

Conclusion: The Complex Relationships between Foreign English Teachers and Koreans

Foreign English instructors are similar to other labor migrants in terms of the experiences they seek. For both migrant laborers and foreign English teachers the experience gained by living in a foreign country is foremost in their decision to move. In the cases presented by both Sherrie Larkin (1989) and George Gmelch (1992) migrants envisioned that they would form relationships with others in their host countries. Foreign English instructors and West Indian migrants run into complex histories of relationships between guest and host in their migrant communities; their hopes of forming friendships with those in the host society or gaining a cultural immersion experience are often thwarted by these past relationships.

The ambivalence between employers and employees is maintained through the horror stories told and retold to both sets of parties. Directors of English institutes recount stories that characterize English teachers as lazy, losers, and not to be trusted while foreign English instructors tell stories of their 'wicked' directors.

Foreign English instructors also have a lot in common with the undocumented workers discussed by Nicholas P. De Genova (2002: 422). Undocumented labor migrants are labor migrants in that they provide a service to citizens in the country they are migrating to. In addition, they live and work among legal migrants and citizens everyday. Their status as undocumented migrants is largely irrelevant in most contexts, but

becomes an issue in certain ones. Considering that the majority of foreign teachers are working without necessary documentation displays that the English language industry needs them to maintain itself.

The recruitment process differs from other migrants as they are recruited more like tourists who are choosing between destinations. Foreign English teacher's expectations are raised in the recruiting process. Much like anthropologists foreign English instructors are in search for a real experience rather than a staged one. For foreign English teachers, getting a glimpse of the back regions of a society or a people is one of the main motivations for living and working in this country.

The foreign teaching experience is similar to both migrant laborers and tourists in terms of their motivations and the experiences they seek, therefore it would be conceivable that they would be the most likely to access the back regions of Korean culture. I have focused on the relationships between foreigners and Korean directors, teachers, students, and others outside of the work environment to show that these interrelations are more multifaceted than one would presuppose. Although many relationships between the two groups are positive, there tends to be ambivalence, inspired in part by concerns over authenticity and the possibility of deceit.

If foreigner's relationships with Koreans do not develop as they imagined, then what community do they become a part of? In the next chapter I will explore this question and discuss what happens to these teachers when they do not find what they seek.

V. The Community they Find: Experiences of the Foreign English Teaching Community

> Being with foreigners is comfortable. They can speak English and have a Western frame of mind. I have never quite understood how to get along in the [Korean] way of thinking, which has been the most frustrating part…communication break downs happen often. They want you on the outside and I don't mind being on the outside (conversation with Paul, June 25, 2007).

As discussed in the previous chapter, foreigners often migrate to South Korea with the intention of immersing themselves in the culture. With time, however, the community they find is one they share with other migrants. In this chapter, I discuss this community, drawing inspiration from Jean Lave and Etienne Wegner's concept "communities of practice"(1991) and Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (1983).

The Foreign Community as a Community of Practice

Lave and Wegner (1991) coined the term "community of practice" to understand social learning in the workplace suggesting that the members learn through a mutual engagement in an activity. Building on the work of Lave and Wegener (1991) Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) define "communities of practice" as:

> An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations-in short, practices-emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, community of practice is different from a traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages. In addition, relations between and among communities of practice, and relations between communities of practice and institutions are important: Individuals typically negotiate multiple memberships.

Foreign English teachers in South Korea can be thought of as a community of practice because the practice of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in the country defines their membership. In addition, they come together around a mutual engagement

in the endeavor of learning how to adapt and survive while living in a new country. Among the phenomena which have emerged from this mutual endeavor are reciprocal relations among the members, group formation within the community, and relations between this community of practice and institutions.

Reciprocal Relations among Members

One of the main practices that aid teachers in adapting and surviving in South Korea are reciprocal relations among the members of the community. As discussed in chapter three, the social networks that are already in place for foreign English instructors are reasons for choosing this country as a migration destination, therefore many migrants rely on their kin or friends to help them adapt when they first move to the country. When a new teacher starts at a school the existing teachers usually explain where to get certain amenities, how to take buses or taxis, and give advice on how to teach English at the particular institute. In addition, they introduce them to the nightlife. For instance, in Daejeon when a new teacher came to the school, we would set up a dinner at a Korean restaurant and then take them to a couple of bars in the area. This helps them to get through this new and strange life in South Korea.

Not only are other foreign teachers at the schools in which one teaches a source of social support, but it is common for people who live in the same areas to meet and ask for advice. One respondent to the on-line survey said that in his area: "We are all pretty much in the same boat and experiencing the same things; we extend friendship and information easily" (Respondent 11). Usually when a foreigner in a smaller city sees another foreigner they greet each other and at times stop and talk if they have not yet met. In other instances, at restaurants or bars, foreign teachers will join others and strike up a

conversation about living and working in the city. If a person needs advice, foreign teachers will often seek out other foreigners on the street to ask them. For instance, a survey respondent said this about his neighborhood: "We are an inseparable community of coworkers and community members for better or worse. This has great advantages and disadvantages" (Respondent 12).

The disadvantage to being a part of a tight-knit community is that it can be incredibly suffocating. In addition, many could find themselves on the outside. For instance, a respondent to the on-line survey had this to say about the foreign community in his neighborhood: "Most of the foreign communities where I am living are in little cliques, so to speak. It's hard to even get a hello out of them, let alone a smile. In Mokpo, I was part of a community with people from all countries. There were maybe 40 of us and it was great" (Respondent 15). Another respondent had a similar experience:

> In Ilsan I was a big part of the community since there were only 50 foreigners in the whole city. I knew everyone and ran group activities with my friends. In Daejeon, I am part of some foreigner communities, but there are far too many to be a part of all of them. The bigger cities have less personal, more segregated groups (more like back home) (Respondent 57).

Group Formation

As with any community of practice the context of the categories that they are a part of are always changing in various ways as the "members of that community engage with one another in various practices" and there are variations within the group (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 463). The groups that are formed among foreign English instructors are not based on nationality, but on the activities and interests of certain groups of people. Nationality is not usually the basis of group formation because as one English instructor said to me "we are all foreigners here."

Some groups form within the foreign community through sports leagues such as ultimate Frisbee, boxing, martial arts, and hockey. Many of the teachers I spoke with discussed their involvement in these kinds of activities and how they were able to form social networks through them. Ethan spoke with me about his involvement in hockey.

> Where I was there weren't very many foreigners that I met or that I liked and there just wasn't that much to do other than going to work and drinking, which I made some good friends that way. I made a lot of Korean friends that way. But then I joined hockey and I started playing on a few different hockey teams and that got me into a bunch of different groups of people, so I met a lot of different people that way…We meet people any way we can. I played for Incheon which was mostly foreigners and a few Koreans, but that has been a revolving door of people coming in and out with people finishing contracts and leaving…Gecko's hockey in Seoul is a little more stable and I guess you meet different people. There are not many Koreans that play there. It is more Korean-Canadians and Korean-Americans and there are a lot of U.S. army guys that play there too. Just this year me and a couple of my friends from here we joined the Jim Peck Hockey League who has some stores here and an intramural hockey league…I played baseball last year and I was the only foreigner on the team, but it wasn't what I was used to and I didn't really enjoy it as much…It wasn't a very good experience. I have tried a bunch of different things; I did taekwando and I started hapkido here, but I was the only foreigner. I didn't really like that atmosphere because they make a kind of big deal about it when you are the only guy here. Then they want to use you for advertising and stuff like that and I don't like that…I tried a boxing gym for a while, but it seemed like the trainer was busy helping the Koreans so there wasn't that learning environment. Then I organized a group of six foreigners to start a class in hapkido, but then I hurt myself, but hopefully I will start that up again (conversation with Ethan, June 21, 2007).

Here Ethan attempted to immerse himself in Korean contexts, but he ended up feeling uncomfortable in these situations. After trying various activities and not succeeding in becoming a part of a group of Koreans, he decided to join up with other foreigners instead.

Similar to Ethan's experience, others discussed their involvement in martial arts classes and organized sports leagues as a way to meet other foreigners. A few of the respondents to the on-line survey also reported that they met friends this way: "I play soccer and keep up with many friends that way" (Respondent 7), "I play for a football

team in the area I'm currently living which is made up of people from all over the globe. It's quite an international community" (Respondent 19), "I play on an Ex-pat Women's Soccer Team so I have met a lot of people from the community in that way" (Respondent 29). Others have an interest in music, Annabelle has put together a band and Sean writes music and plays guitar in his spare time. Obviously, socializing in these contexts led to socializing in others.

The groups formed while participating in the above activities also help people to find out about prospective jobs. For example, when conducting my fieldwork Ethan told me that he had learned of an employment opportunity at a university through a friend he met playing hockey. A few months later Ethan recounted the story of how he was offered the job at the university. The practice of helping others to find employment is something which emerged from this community.

Another way in which foreign teachers become a part of a group is through participating in the nightlife. A favorite past time of many teachers is going to a bar or club to drink.

> I feel a part of the community, mainly because I partake in the night life of it all. There is a huge community in Seoul that congregates to certain areas: Itaewon for one, and Hongdae, where I reside. While I don't always enjoy being surrounded by other English teachers (I would like to meet more Koreans), I can't help but feel a part of it all (Respondent 29).

From this account we can see that foreigners do not often want to be a part of this community, but it is the one they end up with. Others may not feel as though they are a part of the community because they are not interested in the bar scene.

> In Daegu I had friends but I didn't really involve myself in a 'community' as such as I felt most people focused mainly on drinking and clubbing which I wasn't interested in. I didn't like a lot of the foreigners in my immediate area. My main friends came from my Korean class. Seoul I think has several 'communities' but I

> am not sure I am a part of any of them. Again, I have lots of friends but I tend to avoid the main foreigner bars and clubs were communities tend to develop. I am just not interested in that social scene really (Respondent 18).

Another survey respondent had similar feelings about this:

> I mostly socialize with teachers from my school since there are so many that work there. I am not a big drinker and I don't like clubs, so that really limits the amount of foreigners you meet and hang out with. Alcohol, bars, clubs are what most foreigners do, and I am really not into that, so I don't meet many people (Respondent 46).

Due to the high turnover of foreign English instructors, the ones who have lived in the country for many years form groups of friends that have been there longer as well. Annabelle described how she used to be a part of a community of foreigners in the area she lives in, but now she finds that "people who have been here longer than a year, they see people go, so your circle of friends gets tighter" (conversation with Annabelle, June 26, 2007). Others have stopped hanging out in the drinking scene because they have families and are interested in different things. Andy, who has been in the country for eight years, explains that:

> Bucheon has changed a lot. There are a lot more foreigner teachers here for like a gap long year break and they seem to be much younger. A lot of my friends are Korean especially now that I am married and responsible and you move away from that scene. But for the first 4 years it was like an extended spring break but I managed to sort of get out of that. Ones that have been there for a long time get out of that scene because they realize I have been in Korea for five years and what am I achieving. There are people these days that are pursuing things here other than drink such as learning Korean or art or something. I am taking Korean classes, mountain biking. In Korea other than going to the movies or going out for drinks you are somewhat limited in things in terms of outside recreational pursuits. There is not much offered or it is expensive or far away it's not like home where it is on your door step (conversation with Andy, July 2, 2007).

Obviously not all foreign English instructors become a part of a foreign community or even hang out with other foreigners. For instance, one on-line respondent said, "I hang out with the teachers from my school, but don't look to really make friends with other

foreigners. I find it can be a negative experience" (Respondent 20). Another respondent suggested that he did not have any foreign friends: I hung out mostly with gyopos or real Koreans" (Respondent 24). A third respondent contradicts himself when talking about his experience: "I didn't go half-way around the world to spend all my free time with other expats (although, I did spend a lot of time with other Canadians, Europeans, Aussies, Kiwis and Yanks). I spent my first year in Korea alone, with mainly Korean friends/colleagues (Respondent 45). The sense of communion among foreign English teachers is a result of their mutual engagement in the practice of teaching English. Unfortunately the people who have rejected this community entirely are not the people I talked with, which could be considered a limitation in this study.

Continuing Commitments to the Foreign Teaching Community

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 462) suggest that in communities of practice "the mutual engagement of human agents in a wide range of activities creates, sustains, challenges and sometimes changes society and its institutions." When individuals or families migrate to new countries, they often affect the host society by creating new organizations and agencies that cater to foreigners. This has been the case with foreign English instructors in South Korea who have, whether through their efforts or their mere presence, helped to produce agencies and organizations that continue to serve their community. Transnational recruiting agencies are among these. The organizations I am going to discuss here have been developed by former English instructors who felt a need to represent foreign English teachers in South Korea and the students who are taught by them. The recruiters discussed here reflect on their past experiences and their desires to improve things for the next round of community members.

Pat is a young proprietor of a small recruiting agency based in a large Canadian city. He began his agency because of his personal experiences of being a teacher in the country.

> I was there for three years and really immersed myself into the culture, so I didn't have many foreign friends…I was really skeptical of having foreign friends because my motivation was pretty sincere and I really love Asian culture. I learned to speak Korean and studied it. I had a girlfriend that didn't speak any English. I found that it was fascinating to have a third language. The cultural aspect… I was really respectful of it. There are things now that get on my nerves, but when I first got there I was really open-minded and on my best behavior and put my best foot forward because it was not my country. I thought, "What do I want to do?" But I didn't know if I wanted to work in the environment again. The work didn't really do it for me. I needed change. I had a nightmare experience when I first went to Korea and that was my motivation [to start the company] and I thought I had a lot to offer. The last agency I went through was really good, but they didn't have any North American representation and they were just in Korea and I thought they could really use someone like me to extend the ties between the two and transcend cultural language barriers. So I got together with them while I was still there and I proposed the idea in Korea and set up my website. My partners have changed…I don't work with any schools that don't have other teachers there (conversation with Pat, June 4, 2007).

This recruiter's mandate to not place teachers in schools without any other foreign teachers stems from his experience of going to South Korea with a friend. Pat and his friend were told when they were hired that their schools would be within walking distance from each other, but when they arrived they were picked up in separate cars and driven to different cities in the middle of the night. They finally were able to contact each other and meet up after a few days. Pat's friend expressed that he was having a really hard time because he was the first foreign teacher ever to be employed at his school. A few days later Pat received a call from their recruiter who told him that his friend had pulled a midnight run. Pat found himself alone since there were no other foreign teachers at his school, which caused him to go through a bit of a depression.

Other recruiters establish agencies with the interests of the students rather than foreign teachers, in mind. Samantha, a recruiter in Vancouver, explains:

> The reason why I started this was because when I was in Korea there was always these less than desirable people and that is not to say that can not happen in public schools here in Canada, but at least they do some check. There was a guy in my neighborhood that taught in Korea for a year and then went back to States and got arrested with attempting to have sex with a fifteen year old and he is in jail for eighteen accounts of indecent internet usage and child pornography and stuff like that. That was my turning point to start this company because the kids are so wonderful there and my experience was so good and they don't deserve that (conversation with Samantha, June 5, 2007).

All of the recruiting companies I talked with expressed concern about the welfare of the children in South Korea and are trying to figure out ways to create change in policy in hiring foreign teachers. Samantha continued to talk about this and her long term goals for her agency.

> You can't change the system over night. All I can do is create some credibility and a name for myself and then once I get to that point I can work with other companies to sort of get the government to change things. It's just too easy…I am specific to who I am hiring making sure I send the best teachers possible…My focus is to not specifically to send teachers to Korea, but I am assisting another company in sending students to Canada for summer camp programs…I value education. I hope to turn a percentage of the profits to education places in the world to give them an opportunity to study…for underprivileged children as well as teachers to volunteer, building some schools in communities. That is my driving force behind it (conversation with Samantha, June 5, 2007).

Making sure that South Korea hires credible teachers is also something that another recruiter talked with me about.

> The public schools…when I say that things are becoming more professional…for a teacher to step into a school in North America the teacher needs a criminal record check, period. We don't require it for all of our private schools. We require it for every one of public school opportunities. But as we grow we will change those requirements so that it becomes a standard requirement for every single teacher to submit it…period. There is that one group that is different…very different. So we brought in this policy with the National Ministry of Education to get police checks on every single candidate who goes there (conversation with Michael, June 4, 2007).

From these accounts we can see that this community of practice extends beyond the borders of South Korea into North America. Recruiters seek to create networks of responsibility in order to improve the reputation of teachers. Recent cases of foreign English teachers, who are found to have been pedophiles (see, for example, the case of Christopher Paul Neil, BBC News 2007) make others wary of being classified among other foreigners. The experiences that recruiters had as teachers in the country continue to have an impact on their work and the Korean English language learning industry. They continue to challenge and try to create change for new community members by challenging policy to ensure that qualified and competent teachers are hired. For instance, the new policy that native English speakers who want to migrate to South Korea to work need to have a criminal record check is now in place.

The Imagined Community of Foreign English Teachers in South Korea

Although the English language teaching community in South Korea can be seen as a community of practice it also shares features with "imagined communities." The concept of "imagined communities" can be applied to all kinds of 'non-traditional' communities of people. Benedict Anderson (1983) developed this concept because he was dissatisfied with the Marxist conception of nationalism, suggesting instead that nationalism should be viewed as a cultural artifact. The community is considered imagined because members may not know all of the members, "meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1983: 15-16). In this section I will show that the community of English language teachers is 'imagined' in the same way.

According to Anderson (1983), imagined communities were possible because of print-capitalism, which created a common discourse. Foreign English instructors migrate to South Korea from various countries throughout the world, however as English teachers, one thing they all have in common is English which aids in forming networks and building alliances. One way in which they form relationships with others in the community is through blogs and bulletin board systems. This allows for the giving and sharing of advice and information, which generates relationships. For instance, consider this posting by Mike M., a member of "Dave's ESL Café," seeking advice about a job offer:

> I need a reference point. I have been offered an employment opportunity teaching English, proof reading documents and providing electronic technical support. They have offered me 3,000,000 won per month for a 40 hour week. There is no medical, pension, bonus or accommodation. I think I would only get public holidays off as well. I need to counter offer but I need to back it up somehow, can anyone help me out with some salary figures of a similar position. What does a 35 year old Korean Man/Women graduate with 10+ years work experience get per month for a salary? Personally I think their offer is on the light side what are your thoughts or comments.

Mike M. received five replies with a few of the respondents breaking down the wage and comparing it to other teaching jobs. Almost all of the respondents told him to either ask for more money or not take the job (Dave's ESL Café, 2008).

Another way of maintaining a sense of communion and comradeship among foreigners in the country is through English newspapers. The national English newspapers, *The Korea Times* and *The Korea Herald*, have weekly Foreign Community sections where both Korean and foreign writers talk about events and give advice to those living and working in the country. For instance, there are articles on foreign music stores, bookstores, festivals, tourist sites, concerts for foreigners, and art exhibits. In addition,

there are articles written by foreigners on their personal views of living in South Korea, social movements as well as some of the social issues facing foreigners in the country. For example, some of the headlines this past summer (2007) were "EFL Teachers Report 'Moderate' Stress in Joenju Survey" (Brundage 2007), "Thriving in the Hermit Kingdom," in which two writers give advice on what it takes to adapt to Korean culture (Smith 2007), "Teaching a Culture of Deceit," an article on the protests regarding foreign workers rights to fair work conditions, legal representation, and contractual accountability of Korean employers (Shipard 2007), and "Search for Korean Life in a Global City" in which a foreign teacher reflects on his experience of being able to get all the amenities of home in Seoul (Scott 2007). In addition to such articles, *The Korea Times* offers a question and answer section for those who want advice from the Seoul Global Center for Foreigners. The common language of English helps to create a common discourse among the members of the foreign community, which results in this sense of feeling as if you are a part of a larger community of foreign English instructors.

Foreigners in South Korea keep informed about events of interest to foreigners through other media sources as well, such as magazines, Facebook groups, and other internet discussion groups created for foreign English instructors. Annabelle described how she finds out about events in Seoul through free English magazines such as "Rock On," which advertises upcoming events in the city. She explained that in Incheon they have a Facebook group that sends people information on events happening in and around the area that would be of interest to foreigners. When I was conducting my fieldwork this summer I joined Facebook groups that sent out event information. One such event was the mud festival in Daecheon beach which attracts many foreigners. *The Korea Times*

(Koller 2007) estimated that 20,000-30,000 foreigners came to the nine-day festival. During this event foreigners and Koreans paint their bodies with mud because it is healthy for the skin. The festival caters to foreigners as there is translator information, free storage lockers, brochures in English and other conveniences (Koller 2007).

The sense of communion among foreign teachers is heightened by their involvement within these on-line communities. Many English teachers traveling to South Korea for the first time rely on the Internet as a source of information. Without sites like "Dave's ESL Café" and others like it, the number of people migrating to South Korea would not be as considerable.

In my research at "Dave's ESL Café" I focused mostly on the Korean general discussion forum; a public asynchronous general discussion board where anyone, anywhere with access to the internet can reply at any time to the questions and comments that others post. Here, past, present, and future English language instructors in South Korea interact by giving and receiving advice, providing information on living and teaching in South Korea, and by discussing topics ranging from where to buy a Wii to the North Korea disarmament talks. Although most of the members of this group may never meet face to face, the rule of generalized reciprocity seems to prevail amongst them. To give a few examples, one member received six different responses upon an initial inquiry about documents needed for a visa renewal, another asked for advice about getting out of a bad relationship with a Korean woman, while a user inquired about information on a specific city (Dave's ESL Café, 2008). Although users may never meet, the relationships they develop through this discussion forum are real.

I also explored the 'newbie' forum reserved for those who are thinking of teaching in places throughout the world and are new to teaching English. Here questions about how to choose which country to teach in, what qualifications are needed, and information on visas are some of the topics covered. On this discussion board some of the 'vets' help to answer these questions. For instance, after an inquiry into the safest place to take a child when teaching English abroad a member received five responses on the kinds of jobs that were available and the safest places to live in Asia ("Dave's ESL Café" 2008).

Reciprocal relations are a commonplace on these forums, but it is not unique to on-line communities. In many contexts in which foreigners interact in South Korea this kind of reciprocity is typical whether they take place face-to-face or through computer mediated communication. In keeping with the research of Steve Woolgar (2002: 16), a professor of marketing and director of the *Virtual Society?* Program, we might say that the relationships formed on "Dave's ESL Café" and Facebook groups do not replace other forms of exchange among foreign English instructors, but supplement the social support they receive as members with the other communities in which they participate.

In all of these ways, the foreign teaching community functions as an imagined community as there is a communal feeling among foreign teachers in South Korea whether or not they ever meet. Obviously as with any other community there are members who do not share information. What this indicates is that there is a voluntary side to being a part of the community; those who are a part of it have to want to participate.

Conclusion: Continued Ties to South Korea

Foreign English instructors are similar to migrant laborers in terms of the expectations of their experiences in that they both want to form relationships with people in their host society, but find that they end up spending most of their time with other migrants. For instance, George Gmelch (1992: 261, 273) describes the relationships Caribbean migrants form in their host societies. While many want to be friends and form relationships with people of other nationalities, what these migrants found, he explained, was that they formed relationships more closely with other West Indians. Similarly, Sherrie Larkin (1989: 31-32) found that West Indians who migrated to Ontario wanted to experience a new culture, but were often disappointed that they could not form friendly relationships with Canadians. Larkin found that for the majority of these men, the friendships developed in the bunkhouses with other migrant laborers were the only ones they would have during their stay in Canada. In the same way, foreign English instructors are often frustrated when they find that the experiences they seek, being immersed into Korean culture, are not the experiences they end up having.

One of the reasons for the development of these relationships is the concentration of migrants in certain areas. For instance, West Indian migrants live in the large cites, for the most part, and stay "in or near areas that have a concentration of West Indians [which] can provide moral support as well as information about jobs and economic opportunities" (Gmelch 1992: 264). Similarly the bunkhouses are a place where West Indian farmers in Ontario form social support networks with other migrants (Larkin 1989). The experiences of foreign English instructors are similar as the English institutes

are usually close to one another and they provide housing to their teachers within these areas.

Migrants also develop social supports with other migrants due to similar circumstances in the host country. Even though Caribbean migrants recognize that there are clear differences between West Indians from different islands this was not as important as their commonalities as "they were all regarded as the same, all lumped together as 'black people' or as 'Jamaicans,' by their host white society" (Gmelch 1992: 276). In the same way, foreign English instructors are from different English speaking countries, but what they have in common- their experiences in South Korea- far outweigh their differences. Foreigners are usually classified as Americans by Koreans, which is partly due to the continued American military presence in the country as well as the economic, political, and social ties they have with the U.S.

As I mentioned in the previous chapters, although foreign English instructors have a lot in common with migrant laborers they do differ in terms of their ability to move within and between countries. For foreign English instructors the practices they engage in with other foreigners are similar to those engaged in by tourists. Much of what they do on their time off includes going to events or festivals, taking part in activities, and traveling. Some of the more popular events foreigners attend are the Cherry Blossom Festival, Buddha's Birthday, and the Lantern Festival. Similar to other tourist experiences, these events are not the immersion experience foreign teachers initially seek. While Koreans do take part in these events, foreigners are still witnessing spectacles that are not representative of the common day to day lives of Koreans.

Other activities that bring together foreign teachers are excursions to sites throughout South Korea, such as weekend getaways, white water rafting, wake boarding, visiting tea plantations, visiting markets, and climbing mountains. Through these experiences foreign teachers are getting a tourist experience as they usually do them with other foreigners. This is not to say that Koreans do not participate in such activities, but it is how the activity is experienced that defines whether they are gaining access to the back regions or not.

Foreign teachers also participate in tourist activities by traveling to countries outside of South Korea. The majority of people who responded to the on-line survey and those whom I interviewed discussed their traveling experiences. Many foreign teachers plan trips together to such countries as China, Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. One of the interesting points to make here is that in traveling discussions among foreign teachers, many try to 'one up' each other on their personal knowledge of Asia to show that they are more experienced travelers. Often times, among this group of people, importance is placed on traveling and the experienced traveler is given status in the community. This status seems to be associated with how rare it is that one person has traveled to so many places. The experienced traveler is then looked at as the 'vet' who can offer advice and support to the other community members.

In this chapter I have discussed the ways in which the foreign English teaching community functions as a community. There is a feeling of communion among foreign teachers in the country although they may never meet, which is partly maintained through modern media communication and their common language. Membership to this

community is based on their work as English instructors. The reciprocal relations among members aid them in adapting and surviving in the country.

The experiences of the recruiters and their continued involvement in the English language learning industry in South Korea display that in many cases the relationships with people in the country do not finish when they leave. Even though many foreign English instructors believe that working in the country is temporary, to those who have left and those who are still there I am constantly being told that "Korea is always an option" and it continues to influence their lives.

VI. Conclusion

The Case of Paju English Village

In this thesis I have argued that two beliefs, one held by South Koreans and one held by foreign English teachers, maintain the English language learning industry in South Korea. South Koreans believe that learning English is a way to gain status, and, as I have shown in chapter two, the Confucian legacy and political and economic ties between the U.S. and South Korea contribute to the contemporary belief in the competitive power of English. This belief ensures this demand for native English speakers to serve as teachers. However, it is not only the demand that motivates native English speakers to migrate to South Korea. In fact, many foreign English teachers believe that teaching English in South Korea will provide them with an immersion experience that can only be accessed by living and working in the country. As I have shown in chapter four, this expectation is not always met. Instead, what foreign English teachers find are complex relationships with Koreans that have a history in this context. As a result of the ambivalence that characterizes Korean and foreign English teachers' relationships many native English speakers end up in a foreign teaching community.

By way of concluding I present the case of Paju English Village, a particularly puzzling place I had the chance to visit at the beginning of my fieldwork. Visualize this scenario involving an English language instructor who has just arrived to South Korea.

As we drive towards the village I am surprised at the enormity of the fortress wall surrounding it. I step out of the shuttle bus and enter through the gates to hear "London Bridge" playing over the loud speakers. The village's appearance overwhelms me as it is nothing I would have ever expected to see in South Korea. I, of course, expected an English village, but as I walk along the cobblestone path past a restaurant, museum, pub, theater, and city hall, I am in awe. I follow a Korean woman who is giving me a guided tour, but I am merely trying to take it all in. Many smiling faces greet me and Korean children giggle holding tightly onto each other as I pass by. After my tour, I am shown to my apartment which may be better described as a dormitory seen in most Canadian

universities. A foreigner introduces himself and asks me if I would like to join a few of the teachers for a beer at the pub. After a couple of hours, there are about twelve of us sitting around drinking wheat beer and smoking cigarettes. We talk about our decision to come to Korea. This led to conversations of home. Some teachers have been here only a few months and others since the village opened. They are from all over the world, Canada, Australia, the United States, South Africa, Serbia, and Romania but that does not seem to matter; we are all foreigners here.

The site described above is another context where foreign English instructors in South Korea meet and form relationships. It is Paju English Village a community modeled after European villages where people eat, sleep, live, shop, and, most importantly, learn English. Within it are a bakery, pub, restaurant, café, bank, theater, and a city hall among other land marks you would expect to find in any village. Although constructed for Korean students, the village is also home to over one hundred teachers and seventy staff from diverse English speaking countries (Anonymous 2006). The entire village is surrounded by a fortress wall with a palace like entrance. To add to the experience, upon entering visitors walk through a mock 'immigration' department to get their passports stamped, creating the feeling of entering a new country. English songs and stories are played over the loud speakers throughout the day. Trams, complete with conductors in full uniform, transport visitors to various places throughout the village. Every site in it has native English speakers which aids in maintaining realism. In the theater and the streets, edu-tainers (educational entertainers) educate the students through performance, the use of instruments, and dance. In addition, there are commercial teachers who work in the shops, museums, or restaurants. All of the native English speakers who are hired to work as teachers, edu-tainers, or commercial teachers also live in this village. The village is not a tourist attraction, but another context where Korean students learn English.

Some of the questions that emerged as a result of visiting Paju English Village were: Why does Paju English Village exist? Do teachers that work in this village want to gain access to the back region of Korean culture? What are the experiences of the people that live there? The research that I have conducted for this thesis has enabled me to make familiar what initially seemed like a strange place. Indeed, the questions raised by my first visit to this place are akin to those I have addressed throughout this thesis. In conclusion, then, I present this specific case in order to review the key ideas I have dealt with in this thesis.

The English Village was created by the Gyeonggi province to provide an English immersion opportunity to Korean students without leaving home. I noted in chapter two that the prestige associated with learning English is associated with the South Korean government's late involvement in industry and the capitalist economic system. The creation of Paju English Village indicates the Korean government's commitment to English language learning. As discussed in chapter two, with the increasing importance of English in secondary and tertiary levels of education, business, and academia a person who has the ability to speak the language fluently is granted status and distinction in contemporary Korean society. The fact that villages, such as this one, are frequented by Korean people displays their belief in the competitive power of English. According to some of the people I talked with at the village, Paju English Village was constructed because "the government wanted to stop people from going overseas because they would spend a fortune overseas rather than in Korea. [It was] a way of bringing together the economic gap" (conversation with Paju teachers, July 3, 2007). As discussed in chapter two, the number of children going overseas to learn English is considerable. Many

Korean families do not feel that their children learn enough English in their public schools and at private institutes to properly prepare them for secondary and tertiary levels of education (see Onishi 2008). Therefore, the Korean government is trying to provide the English education parents are seeking by hiring ten thousand more English teachers over the period of one year as well as constructing English immersion villages such as this one.

The teachers who migrate to South Korea to teach English at Paju English Village may be considered different from others that I have focused on in this thesis as it may be assumed that teachers who choose to work in such a context are not necessarily interested in becoming immersed in Korean culture. However, the English teachers who work in this village have similar experiences with Koreans as those discussed in chapter four as their level of interaction with Korean directors, colleagues, and students is similar to that of other foreign English instructors. In fact, what is perhaps most evident in Paju English Village is what some foreign English teachers seem to forget when they came to South Korea, that they are not there for a cultural immersion experience, but to supply a service to Korean citizens.

I noted in chapter three that social networks in the native speaker's country of origin and recruiters influence his or her decision in selecting South Korea as a migration destination. Native English speakers who decide to migrate to work at Paju English Village are recruited by recruiting companies in the same way as other foreign English instructors.

Although many foreign English instructors initially migrate to South Korea with the intention of becoming immersed in Korean culture they find, in time, that they spend

most of their time with other foreign teachers. Paju English Village is a representation of this experience as there are no illusions of who you are going to hang out with as an English teacher working at the village. In other communities in South Korea the foreign teaching community is the one English instructors end up in, but here it is the only choice. In chapter five I discussed how migrants develop relationships with other migrants due to their concentration in certain areas. In other foreign English teaching communities, English institutes are close to one another and they provide housing to their teachers in the same neighborhoods, therefore relationships develop. A similar, yet more extreme form, of this experience is evident in Paju English Village as teachers are given dormitory–like accommodation.

As discussed in chapter five, within the foreign English teaching community reciprocal relations among members are typical. In her book *Social Solidarity and the Gift* (2005), Komter outlines how the exchange of information on "what one gives is not dependent on what one has received but springs from one's perception of other people's needs" (22). Contrary to Marcel Mauss's (1970) argument that a person is obliged to give after he or she have received, in this community it does not matter who gives and who receives as it is believed it will balance out in the end. This community of sharing is evident in my experience of going to the English Village for the first time. I received the names and e-mails of two American teachers, Marie and Tony, through a recruiting agency in Vancouver. I e-mailed both of these teachers whom agreed to meet and provide me with an interview at the English Village. I took the subway to the Ilsan. It was a long journey; about two hours. I had no idea what to expect and only a faint idea of where I was going. Marie had sent me her phone number so I could call her from the subway

station in order to help me get to the village. When I got to the station I called Marie who was already in the city waiting for the shuttle bus. We met to take the bus together into the town. She introduced me to other foreign teachers, we sat around talking throughout the evening, and she gave me a place to stay for the night.

One of the aspects of gift giving that was central to Mauss's inquiry was the reason why others feel obliged to return a gift after they have received it (1970: 1). According to Andrew Walsh (2007: 8) one of factors that keep systems of giving, receiving, and reciprocating going is confidence. In discussing gift exchange among Malagasy people Walsh noticed that "people do not simply give to others with a sense that doing so is the proper thing to do, but also with the unspoken understanding that those to whom they give have the same sense of what is proper. And when those to whom they give then receive and reciprocate in appropriate ways, they too are compelled by the same sort of confidence" (2007: 8). Foreign English teachers seem to operate in similar ways. As noted in chapter five, the act of aiding those who are new to the country maintains the sense of communion within this group. To go back to the exchange just introduced, both Marie and I had to have confidence in our exchange in order for the system of giving and receiving to operate. Although I did not reciprocate in this case, Marie had the confidence that she would or could receive the same sort of hospitality in the future. For both of us this confidence was a result of the reciprocity we had received in the past from other foreign teachers in this community. This experience highlights that the seemingly 'authentic,' but ultimately impersonal relationships between Koreans and foreigners at Paju English Village are indicative of the kinds of relationships that many foreign English instructors have with Koreans more broadly in the places where they

serve as teachers. However, the relationships among foreign English instructors themselves are typically reciprocal and perceived as 'authentic.'

Reflections on Virtual Research

As noted above, my visit to Paju English Village and the insights that resulted from this experience were precipitated and enabled by on-line interactions. For example, the interviews which took place with recruiters, directors, and the teachers at the English Village were all set up through on-line exchanges. In addition, I learned about the village and its creation through the Internet. These facts have led me to reflect on doing research in virtual contexts. From my experience as an English language instructor I knew that computer mediated communication was a large part of these people's lives. What I discovered from this research is that on-line relationships may continue to inform or be a part of one's off-line life. Therefore, while anthropologists may not design their study to include Internet communities, it may become a requirement if the communities they study participate on-line. Of course, millions of migrants do not have access to this technology therefore I am discussing a specific category of people who have access to the Internet.

Carrying out research in two different locales, in "Dave's ESL Café" and in South Korea, complemented each other methodologically and gave more breadth to this study. Through lurking on the bulletin board system I was able to eaves drop on conversations, which allowed me access to certain topics participants may not have been as forthcoming about in interviews. For instance, as a woman I would not have gained insight on foreign men's perspectives on dating Korean women. In addition, I was not influencing the conversation in any way and in this way was an unobserved observer.

In closing, I offer a few thoughts on the social relationships formed within and between communities of the sort I have discussed in this thesis. In order to ask questions about groups of people who form relationships off-line and on-line as well, some anthropologists have chosen to research both face-to-face and on-line interactions in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of how these experiences are intertwined (see, for example Wilson 2006, Hine 2000, Markham 1998). This new territory has led to innovative methods for conducting fieldwork.

When studying members of communities involved in on-line social interactions it is important to understand that these relationships are not always confined to cyberspace. In researching Internet communities it is not sufficient to study them without considering off-line social and political contexts (Kendall 1999: 60). While it is true that on-line relationships can function by themselves, many individuals who foster strong relationships on-line extend those off-line. In addition, participants draw from their off-line lives to experience their on-line interactions (Kendall, 1999: 58, 62).

As I noted in chapter one, when I designed this study I decided that I would use the Internet in order to access a wide range of interlocutors and to learn of their different experiences. To this end, I joined "Dave's ESL Café," Facebook groups, read blogs, and created an on-line survey for English language instructors in South Korea. While this methodology was not primary to my study it became increasingly important as it informed me of the most pertinent issues at the time of my research and as a consequence led to more productive and informative interviews. As well, computer mediated technology was a space where I could recruit interviewees for face-to-face interviews.

Using the Internet in my research provided me with the ability to carry out preliminaries to fieldwork to set up interviews. As well, I was able to make contact with those I interviewed subsequent to my fieldwork. Consequently, if there was a question that went unanswered or the research went in an unforeseen direction I could pose questions to those who use the Internet. In addition, due to the textual nature of many Internet sources I have been able to look at the records of the interactions among the members through time. In very practical terms, doing research on the Internet allowed me to gather more data in a shorter amount of time at minimal expense.

While there are many ways in which on-line interactions can be useful for anthropological research I am not suggesting that it will make gathering data less complicated and problematic. Researchers studying Internet communities may find the amount of data accumulated on discussion boards to be overwhelming. It may be difficult for the researcher to assess the importance of interactions in the title of the log, therefore the entire textual interaction may have to be examined to sort out issues of relevance and interpretation. Even within any posting or message there may possibly be a sentence that only the sender or receiver understands or knows the meaning of (Garton et al., 1999: 92-93).

A further aspect of researching on-line communities and relations that has been a concern for researchers is the issue of the genuineness. Critics may state that the person with whom you are speaking is unknown. My question to this criticism has always been: How do you know who you are speaking to in face-to-face interactions? Anyone who has carried out fieldwork is aware that relationships with informants are often based on chance encounters that can just as easily take place on and off line. Informants may

perform the role of an informant on a particular subject when the anthropologist is present, but when they are alone or when they are among a different group of people these informants perform a different role. In other words, there is not a unified self. For example, foreign English instructors are performing their roles as teachers and migrant workers living in South Korea in my interviews with them. Furthermore, in professional migrant contexts most migrants do not know each other, making it entirely possible that individuals choose what roles they perform with their peers in the migrant community. Therefore, the question of the genuineness of informants is similar whether conducting fieldwork on-line or off-line.

With an increased interest in migration, researchers are going to have to think of new methods for considering relationships and interactions that take place within and across borders. Methods appropriate for the study of on-line relationships and interactions will be among these. According to Woolgar (2002: 17), "not only do new virtual activities sit alongside existing 'real' activities, but the introduction and use of new 'virtual' technologies can actually stimulate more of the corresponding 'real' activity." "Dave's ESL Café" is a place where people look for teaching jobs in countries throughout Asia. In almost every instance, foreign English instructors in South Korea are aware of its existence and have been referred to the site when they have a question that is left unanswered. Without this web page and others similar to it, the number of people migrating to South Korea would not be as considerable. What is more, without this website, I would have not been able to know about the availability of certain teaching jobs in South Korea and the experiences they could provide for me. In short, some anthropologists may find it useful to conduct their research both on and off line if the

members of the community they are working with are involved in on-line social interactions.

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Appendix 1: On-Line Survey

1. What is your sex?

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What age group are you a part of?

☐ Ages 18-25 ☐ Ages 26-35 ☐ Ages 36-50 ☐ Ages 51-65 ☐ Ages 66+

3. What is your highest level of education completed?

☐ Elementary School ☐ High School ☐ College ☐ University ☐ Bachelor of Education ☐ Master's Level ☐ PhD. ☐ Other

4. Where is your country of origin?

☐ Canada ☐ United States ☐ United Kingdom ☐ Australia ☐ New Zealand ☐ India ☐ Other

5. How did you first hear about teaching English overseas?

☐ Word of mouth ☐ Advertisement ☐ University ☐ Recruitment agency ☐ Internet ☐ Other

6. Why did you choose South Korea over another country?

7. Rate the extent to which each of these reasons was a motivating factor for teaching overseas.

	not at all				very much	N/A
For Adventure	○	○	○	○	○	○
To travel	○	○	○	○	○	○
To learn a new language	○	○	○	○	○	○
To immerse yourself in a new culture	○	○	○	○	○	○
To save money	○	○	○	○	○	○
To pay off financial debt	○	○	○	○	○	○
To be with friends	○	○	○	○	○	○
To be with a romantic	○	○	○	○	○	○

	not at all				very much	N/A
partner						
To find a romantic partner	○	○	○	○	○	○
To get away from issues at home	○	○	○	○	○	○
To get work experience	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Can you expand on your reasons for going to South Korea to teach English? (any additional comments would be helpful)

9. How did you get into contact with the English institute which hired you?

☐ Friend ☐ Recruiter ☐ Internet ☐ Other

10. Did a recruiter aid you in getting a teaching position in South Korea?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Did the recruiter aid in your transition from your country of origin? Explain how they did or did not aid you.

12. Were you familiar with Korea and/or Korean culture before you went to the country?

☐ Very Familiar ☐ Familiar ☐ Somewhat Familiar ☐ Unfamiliar

13. What other places in Asia did you visit (tourism or work) before living in Korea?

14. What places have/did you visit during your time in South Korea?

15. What city or town have/did you work(ed) in South Korea?

16. What is/was your average income per month from the institute(s) you work(ed) at?

Less than 2 million Won | 2.1-2.4 million Won | 2.5-3.0 million Won | 3.1-3.5 million Won | 3.6 million Won or more

17. What kind of English language institutes have you worked for?

Hagwon | Elementary School | Middle School | Secondary School | University | Other

18. In general, how satisfied were you working at the hagwon? (If you did not work at a hagwon skip this question)

Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Unsatisfied | Very unsatisfied

19. In general, how satisfied were you working at the public school? (If you did not work in the public school system skip this question)

Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Unsatisfied | Very unsatisfied

20. In general, how satisfied were you working at the university? (If you did not work at a university skip this question)

Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Unsatisfied | Very unsatisfied

21. Can you explain some reasons for your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with your places of employment?

22. How many other foreign teachers work(ed) at your institution?

I am/was the only foreign teacher | 2-5 | 6-10 | 11-20

23. What are the level(s) of the students you teach/taught?

Kindergarten | Elementary School | Middle School | Secondary School | University | Adults

24. Do/Did you have a good relationship with your students?

25. Do/Did you have a relationship with your students outside of the classroom?

☐ Yes ☐ No

26. How long have/did you live in South Korea?

Less than 1 year ☐ 1 year ☐ 2 years ☐ 3 years ☐ 4 years ☐ 5 years or more

27. Are you currently residing in South Korea?

☐ Yes ☐ No

28. If Yes, How long do you expect to remain in South Korea?

29. If No, Please comment on this statement:
Since teaching in South Korea my attitude towards the country in general has:

☐ Become much more positive ☐ Stayed the same ☐ Become much more negative

30. Please elaborate on the question above: Why do you think your attitude has changed/or stayed the same?

31. Are you planning on returning to South Korea or somewhere else in the world to teach English?

32. What has teaching in South Korea taught you about life/love/family, etc? To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Teaching overseas has changed my life for the better	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have learned a great deal about myself through teaching	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
overseas						
Teaching has given me confidence to achieve other goals in my life	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching overseas has provided me with a sense of purpose in life	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching overseas was a major life goal for me	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching overseas has made me appreciate my family and friends	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching overseas has taught me a great deal about other cultures	○	○	○	○	○	○

33. Is/Was there a foreign English teacher community in the area you are residing in?

☐ Yes ☐ No

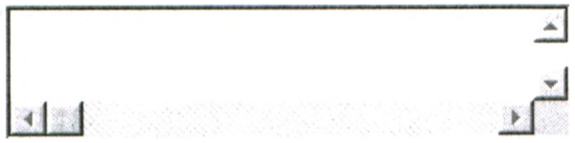
34. Do you feel you are a part of this community? Can you expand on this experience?

35. Did you have a good experience while you were an English teacher in South Korea?

36. What would have made your experience in South Korea better?

37. Would you recommend teaching overseas to other people?

38. If you were conducting this study what questions would you like to ask other English teachers?



Appendix 2: Results of On-Line Survey

1. What is your sex?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	**51.2%**	43
Female	48.8%	41
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

2. What age group are you a part of?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Ages 18-25	20.0%	17
Ages 26-35	**55.3%**	47
Ages 36-50	17.6%	15
Ages 51-65	7.1%	6
Ages 66+	0.0%	0
answered question		**85**
skipped question		**0**

3. What is your highest level of education completed?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Elementary School	0.0%	0
High School	1.2%	1
College	1.2%	1
University	**59.5%**	50
Bachelor of Education	15.5%	13
Master's Level	21.4%	18
PhD.	2.4%	2
Other	2.4%	2
answered question		**84**

3. What is your highest level of education completed?

skipped question	**1**

4. Where is your country of origin?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Canada	**44.6%**	37
United States	32.5%	27
United Kingdom	9.6%	8
Australia	3.6%	3
New Zealand	3.6%	3
India	0.0%	0
Other	6.0%	5
answered question		**83**
skipped question		**2**

5. How did you first hear about teaching English overseas?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Word of mouth	**61.9%**	52
Advertisement	11.9%	10
University	3.6%	3
Recruitment agency	4.8%	4
Internet	11.9%	10
Other	9.5%	8
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

6. Why did you choose South Korea over another country?

	Response Count
view	84
Answered question	**84**
skipped question	**1**

7. Rate the extent to which each of these reasons was a motivating factor for teaching overseas.

	not at all				very much	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
For Adventure	2.4% (2)	4.8% (4)	8.4% (7)	18.1% (15)	**66.3% (55)**	0.0% (0)	4.41	83
To travel	0.0% (0)	1.2% (1)	7.1% (6)	23.8% (20)	**67.9% (57)**	0.0% (0)	4.58	84
To learn a	9.5% (8)	16.7%	**34.5%**	14.3%	25.0%	0.0% (0)	3.29	84

7. Rate the extent to which each of these reasons was a motivating factor for teaching overseas.

new language		(14)	**(29)**	(12)	(21)			
To immerse yourself in a new culture	1.2% (1)	1.2% (1)	10.8% (9)	34.9% (29)	**51.8% (43)**	0.0% (0)	4.35	83
To save money	9.5% (8)	6.0% (5)	16.7% (14)	22.6% (19)	**45.2% (38)**	0.0% (0)	3.88	84
To pay off financial debt	16.9% (14)	15.7% (13)	14.5% (12)	16.9% (14)	**33.7% (28)**	2.4% (2)	3.36	83
To be with friends	**61.9% (52)**	13.1% (11)	10.7% (9)	11.9% (10)	1.2% (1)	1.2% (1)	1.76	84
To be with a romantic partner	**72.6% (61)**	4.8% (4)	2.4% (2)	4.8% (4)	11.9% (10)	3.6% (3)	1.74	84
To find a romantic partner	**69.9% (58)**	9.6% (8)	12.0% (10)	4.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (3)	1.50	83
To get away from issues at home	**44.6% (37)**	20.5% (17)	20.5% (17)	9.6% (8)	1.2% (1)	3.6% (3)	1.99	83
To get work experience	**25.0% (21)**	13.1% (11)	16.7% (14)	22.6% (19)	20.2% (17)	2.4% (2)	3.00	84
	Answered question							**84**
	skipped question							**1**

8. Can you expand on your reasons for going to South Korea to teach English? (any additional comments would be helpful)

	Response Count
view	66
answered question	**66**
skipped question	**19**

9. How did you get into contact with the English institute which hired you?

	Response Percent	**Response Count**
Friend	16.7%	14
Recruiter	**39.3%**	33
Internet	34.5%	29
Other	15.5%	13

9. How did you get into contact with the English institute which hired you?

Answered question	**84**
skipped question	**1**

10. Did a recruiter aid you in getting a teaching position in South Korea?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**53.0%**	44
No	48.2%	40
answered question		**83**
skipped question		**2**

11. Did the recruiter aid in your transition from your country of origin? Explain how they did or did not aid you.

	Response Count
view	61
answered question	**61**
skipped question	**24**

12. Were you familiar with Korea and/or Korean culture before you went to the country?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Familiar	3.6%	3
Familiar	17.9%	15
Somewhat Familiar	23.8%	20
Unfamiliar	**54.8%**	46
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

13. What other places in Asia did you visit (tourism or work) before living in Korea?

	Response Count
view	75
answered question	**75**
skipped question	**10**

14. What places have/did you visit during your time in South Korea?

	Response Count
view	82
answered question	**82**
skipped question	**3**

15. What city or town have/did you work(ed) in South Korea?

	Response Count

15. What city or town have/did you work(ed) in South Korea?

view	83
Answered question	**83**
skipped question	**2**

16. What is/was your average income per month from the insitute(s) you work(ed) at?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 2 million Won	34.5%	29
2.1-2.4 million Won	**52.4%**	44
2.5-3.0 miilion Won	13.1%	11
3.1-3.5 million Won	3.6%	3
3.6 million Won or more	6.0%	5
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

17. What kind of English language institutes have you worked for?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Hagwon	**78.3%**	65
Elementary School	22.9%	19
Middle School	20.5%	17
Secondary School	18.1%	15
University	28.9%	24
Other	18.1%	15
answered question		**83**
skipped question		**2**

18. In general, how satisfied were you working at the hagwon? (If you did not work at a hagwon skip this question)

	Response	Response

18. In general, how satisfied were you working at the hagwon? (If you did not work at a hagwon skip this question)

	Percent	Count
Very satisfied	13.4%	9
Satisfied	**41.8%**	28
Neutral	22.4%	15
Unsatisfied	13.4%	9
Very unsatisfied	9.0%	6
answered question		**67**
skipped question		**18**

19. In general, how satisfied were you working at the public school? (If you did not work in the public school system skip this question)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Satisfied	**38.7%**	12
Satisfied	29.0%	9
Neutral	22.6%	7
Unsatisfied	6.5%	2
Very unsatisfied	3.2%	1
answered question		**31**
skipped question		**54**

20. In general, how satisfied were you working at the university? (If you did not work at a university skip this question)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very satisfied	**43.5%**	10
Satisfied	34.8%	8
Neutral	13.0%	3
Unsatisfied	8.7%	2
Very unsatisfied	0.0%	0
answered question		**23**
skipped question		**62**

21. Can you explain some reasons for your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with your places of employment?

	Response Count
view	75
answered question	**75**
skipped question	**10**

22. How many other foreign teachers work(ed) at your institution?

	Response Percent	Response Count
I am/was the only foreign teacher	29.6%	24
2-5	**39.5%**	32
6-10	28.4%	23
11-20	23.5%	19
answered question		**81**
skipped question		**4**

23. What are the level(s) of the students you teach/taught?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Kindergarten	57.3%	47
Elementary School	**82.9%**	68
Middle School	74.4%	61
Secondary School	52.4%	43
University	42.7%	35
Adults	48.8%	40
answered question		**82**
skipped question		**3**

24. Do/Did you have a good relationship with your students?

	Response Count
view	81
Answered question	**81**
skipped question	**4**

25. Do/Did you have a relationship with your students outside of the classroom?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**56.1%**	46
No	47.6%	39
answered question		**82**
skipped question		**3**

26. How long have/did you live(d) in South Korea?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less	19.5%	16

26. How long have/did you live(d) in South Korea?

less than 1 year	**20.7%**	17
1 year	19.5%	16
2 years	12.2%	10
3 years	9.8%	8
4 years	18.3%	15
5 years or more		
answered question		**82**
skipped question		**3**

27. Are you currently residing in South Korea?

	Response Percent	**Response Count**
Yes	**75.0%**	63
No	25.0%	21
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

28. If Yes, How long do you expect to remain in South Korea?

	Response Count
view	66
Answered question	**66**
skipped question	**19**

29. If No, Please comment on this statement: Since teaching in South Korea my attitude towards the country in general has:

	Response Percent	**Response Count**
Become much more positive	40.0%	16
Stayed the same	**52.5%**	21
Become much more	7.5%	3

29. If No, Please comment on this statement: Since teaching in South Korea my attitude towards the country in general has:

negative

answered question	**40**
skipped question	**45**

30. Please elaborate on the question above: Why do you think your attitude has changed/or stayed the same?

	Response Count
view	45
answered question	**45**
skipped question	**40**

31. Are you planning on returning to South Korea or somewhere else in the world to teach English?

	Response Count
view	68
answered question	**68**
skipped question	**17**

32. What has teaching in South Korea taught you about life/love/family, etc? To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
Teaching overseas has changed my life for the better	0.0% (0)	1.2% (1)	6.0% (5)	32.1% (27)	**59.5% (50)**	1.2% (1)	4.52	84
I have learned a great deal about myself through teaching overseas	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (6)	34.5% (29)	**58.3% (49)**	0.0% (0)	4.51	84
Teaching has given me confidence to achieve other goals in my life	0.0% (0)	1.2% (1)	22.6% (19)	**38.1% (32)**	35.7% (30)	2.4% (2)	4.11	84

32. What has teaching in South Korea taught you about life/love/family, etc? To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements.

Teaching overseas has provided me with a sense of purpose in life	1.2% (1)	10.8% (9)	**28.9% (24)**	27.7% (23)	26.5% (22)	4.8% (4)	3.71	83
Teaching overseas was a major life goal for me	7.1% (6)	22.6% (19)	**26.2% (22)**	25.0% (21)	16.7% (14)	2.4% (2)	3.22	84
Teaching overseas has made me appreciate my family and friends	0.0% (0)	7.1% (6)	25.0% (21)	**36.9% (31)**	29.8% (25)	1.2% (1)	3.90	84
Teaching overseas has taught me a great deal about other cultures	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	8.4% (7)	33.7% (28)	**56.6% (47)**	1.2% (1)	4.49	83
	answered question							**84**
	skipped question							**1**

33. Is/Was there a foreign English teacher community in the area you are residing in?

	Response Percent	**Response Count**
Yes	**84.5%**	71
No	16.7%	14
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

34. Do you feel you are a part of this community? Can you expand on this experience?

	Response Count
view	74

34. Do you feel you are a part of this community? Can you expand on this experience?

answered question	**74**
skipped question	**11**

35. Did you have a good experience while you were an English teacher in South Korea?

	Response Count
view	79
answered question	**79**
skipped question	**6**

36. What would have made your experience in South Korea better?

	Response Count
view	74
answered question	**74**
skipped question	**11**

37. Would you recommend teaching overseas to other people?

	Response Count
view	79
answered question	**79**
skipped question	**6**

38. If you were conducting this study what questions would you like to ask other English teachers?

	Response Count
view	58
answered question	**58**
skipped question	**27**