FOREIGN ENGLISH TEACHERS IN SOUTH KOREA: NEGOTIATING BODIES, DRESS, TEACHER SELVES, AND PROFESSIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the identities of individuals from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland who travel to South Korea and teach English as a foreign language. These “foreign English teachers” work in widely varying contexts ranging from private language academies, to public schools, to universities and teach a similarly wide variety of students and English language classes. As these teachers go about their daily lives and teach English, they construct stories of who they are as teachers, develop understandings of their roles within educational institutions, and shape and are shaped by various “teacher selves”. Additionally, these teachers, both initially when they arrive in Korea and later as they develop common daily routines, negotiate new experiences of gender and develop new understandings of gender as part of their larger social worlds and within educational institutions. This ethnographic interview study examines the teacher selves and gendered selves of 27 foreign English teachers through ethnographic interviews, but also draws upon other sources of data and my own experiences as a foreign English teacher in Korea. This study highlights the different possible stories these teachers tell about being English language teachers in Korea, and how constructing oneself as a “professional” teacher can shape teacher careers and practices within educational institutions in counter-intuitive ways. Further, this study examines the disruptions in gendered selves some foreign women initially experience after arriving in Korea, and their subsequent renegotiations of gendered selves. This study contributes to a growing discussion concerning language teacher identity, opening new areas of discussion regarding professionalism, gender, and teacher development.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Incheon International Airport in South Korea\(^1\) is home to an often repeated scene; people holding passports from United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa arriving in Korea for the first time, having already secured employment as English language teachers. These recently disembarked travellers may have found work as an English teacher through an agency that recruits foreign English teachers or independently through a website that advertises English teaching positions in Korea or through the English Program in Korea (EPIK\(^2\)) or the Teach and Learn in Korea (TaLK\(^3\)) program, both government sponsored programs that are involved in the recruitment of foreign English teachers to Korea. Regardless of how these new arrived residents of Korea found their English language teaching positions, these teachers will find themselves disembarking in a gleaming, highly efficient, and modern airport at the end of their flights. These weary travellers will sometimes fly to other destinations in Korea, sometimes take the high-speed KTX train to other cities, and often proceed directly to the capital of Korea, Seoul. Walking through the airport, guided by English signage and attentive multilingual Korean officials, these newly arrived guests may be surprised by the heavily armed security at the airport, but they will see little evidence of worry about North Korea, regardless of what is depicted in English-language media. Those proceeding to Seoul can choose to take large, modern, private buses, most of which leave at short, regular intervals, or

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\(^1\) Within this study the term Korea, used hereafter throughout this text, refers to South Korea or more properly the Republic of Korea.

\(^2\) For more information on EPIK see M. Jeon (2009).

\(^3\) TaLK aimed at recruiting teachers with two year associate degrees or those in their third year of university or higher to teach in rural Korean elementary schools in after school programs (TaLK, n.d.) and attempted to recruit ethnic Koreans raised abroad. For more information on TaLK see J. Jeon, Lee, and Lee (2015).
they can choose to take the new, dedicated airport rail line that takes them into the heart of the city. Leaving the airport and travelling onto further train stations, bus stations, and perhaps even ports, depending on where these teachers are working, these newly arrived residents of Korea will see a mix of buildings on their journey: tall, modern, concrete apartment buildings; individual or multi-family small homes; mixed-use commercial properties; international and Korean restaurants; movie theaters; traditional markets; and a wide variety of different buildings, typical of many developed, modern nations. Some teachers may be initially surprised by the number of nearly-identical, ten-story-or-taller apartment buildings grouped in large complexes, and the massive, multilane freeways crisscrossing Korea, but for others these features may be familiar, or simply an expected aspect of a modern metropolis. Initially, these teachers may stay in temporary residences, perhaps a motel, or they may move immediately into housing providing by their employer, or, less commonly, they may have found housing independently. Some teachers may be initially somewhat shocked at the small size of their accommodations, while others, having done research on the type of housing provided for many English teachers, may be prepared for a small one-room apartment, and still others, if they are lucky or living in a more rural area of Korea, may even find themselves pleasantly surprised by a larger apartment. Regardless of where they live, many teachers will be expected to start teaching within a day or two of arriving in Korea; such is the economic and competitive pressure on school principals, department heads, and others in managerial roles to immediately make use of these teachers. Depending on teachers’ backgrounds and the contexts in which they teach, there will be varying difficulties and challenges as they enter new classrooms, begin teaching English to new students, meet new colleagues, and establish working relationships with supervisors. Very quickly these teachers will develop an understanding that some English language classes, such as those focusing on speaking, are taught by American, Canadian, and other foreign English teachers, while other classes, such as those that focus on English grammar and English test preparation, are taught by Korean
teachers, with still other English language classes, typically those that take place in public schools, taught through a process of team teaching in which foreign and Korean teachers work together. This quickly developed understanding will help guide these teachers, to some extent, as they navigate the complex territory of their educational institutions. Over time, these teachers will develop further understandings of their classes, their educational institutions, both themselves and other teachers, and the larger world of English language teaching in Korea. They will also, to varying degrees, build social relationships and friendships, travel within and beyond Korea, engage in the common practice of buying needed or desired products, and establish various routines of everyday life. Inevitably, these teachers will be changed by these experiences and to a greater or lesser extent develop new understandings of themselves, others, and the world through these experiences as well. The vast majority of these teachers will eventually leave Korea and return home or move on to another country, altered in various ways by their time teaching English in Korea.

Of course this is a partial, limited, and to some degree fictionalized representation of only some English teachers’ arrival and subsequent experiences in Korea. Different people experience arriving in Korea as an English teacher in radically different ways. Some English teachers have studied in Korea as students before returning to Korea to teach English. Some American teachers arrive already familiar with Korea through the experience of being posted to Korea during their military service. Others arrive in Korea already familiar with Korea through Korean media and may recognize Incheon Airport and other famous locations from Korean television dramas. For some Korean-Americans, arriving in Korea to teach English may be a type of homecoming, with their experiences and understandings profoundly shaped by a personal or family history of migration. Still others are long-term travellers, moving back and forth between Korea, Japan, Thailand, and other countries before taking up work in Korea as an English teacher. Likewise, different educational institutions have radically different ways of working with teachers
new to Korea. Some educational institutions, despite pressures on supervisory personnel, have multi-day orientation or training programs that postpone entry into classrooms and prepare teachers for the requirements of their classes. Other educational institutions have mentorship programs with more senior teachers guiding those new to their educational institutions. Nevertheless, all of these teachers will, at some point, negotiate being an English teacher in Korea for the first time.

Regardless of individual experiences and paths towards English teaching, these teachers will live in Korea: a developed, democratic nation; the birthplace of major international corporations such as Samsung; and home to massive commercial and industrial enterprises in areas such as shipbuilding and oil refining. Many of these teachers will find Korea more technically advanced than their home countries with smartphones being nearly ubiquitous, on-time public transportation being easily available, and advanced recreational facilities, such as the world’s largest movie screen (J. Choi, 2014), being common. Further, they will live in a Korea that is in the midst of great change: a large shift in demographics means that fewer students are entering educational institutions (Yoon, 2015); many senior Korean leaders in educational institutions and beyond matured and developed through substantially different work and life experiences than those of the younger people they lead; the pressure for young people to find jobs has increased but those jobs are becoming more difficult to find and less secure (or at least that is the perception) (Y. N. Kim; 2016), and education remains a major means for Korean young people to advance even as small-but-growing doubts arise over the value of more common educational paths (Special Reporting Team-Korea Joongang Daily, 2015). Change has also come to Korea in the everyday world of food and drink: Seoul is now home to more Starbucks cafes than any other city on earth (Yanofsky, 2014), across Korea global brands such as Dunkin Donuts and McDonalds compete alongside Korean counterparts such as Paris Baguette and Lotteria (a hamburger chain similar to McDonalds) for customers, and the expanding culinary interests of
Korea consumers have led to a far greater variety of cuisine being available in Seoul and other major cities in Korea (Fifield, 2015). These teachers will live in a Korea that is changing in ways both explicitly visible and more quietly unseen, but their lives in Korea will be profoundly shaped by the context in which they live and teach.

These teachers will work in a place in which education is highly valued and a major competitive arena. Every year newspapers from around the world report on events surrounding the all-day College Scholastic Ability Test or CSAT\(^4\), which is the major university entrance exam in Korea. Police are deployed to guide traffic, rushing those few late test-takers to school, and banks and government offices open late; all to ensure high school students can successfully make it to their critical, once-a-year exam which often determines which university students will be able to enter, and much of their future. Famously, even air traffic is diverted around Korea to ensure there are no disturbances to the listening portion of English language section of the exam (S. Evans, 2015; H. Lee, 2013 Park, 2008) and non-test-taking high school students are given a day off school, although these younger high school students often form cheering squads to shout out encouragement as their older classmates walk into school to take this exam (Strother, 2011). A high enough score on this exam will allow entrance to an elite Seoul university, understood to be a vital step towards career success and a mark of significant social prestige. Failure to score high enough to enter an elite university is understood to be a substantial barrier to future professional development and potentially excludes these students from many of the most prestigious and lucrative career opportunities in Korea. While perhaps stories of this entrance exam are overly reported, this test is evidence of both the value placed on education in Korea, and the competition embedded within education in Korea. Further evidence of the value and

\(^4\) The CSAT in Korean is the Daehak suhak neungnyeok siheom and is far more commonly abbreviated as the suneung. These Korean language terms are romanized through the Revised Romanization System of Korean, as is all Romanization in this text.
competitive nature of education in Korea is the massive amount of money spent by parents on supplementary education outside of school, the equivalent of 18 billion USD in 2014 (Kwaak, 2014). Overall in Korea, “spending on private education is extremely high . . . (around 9 percent of GDP) because South Koreans believe admission to a top university is the only path to success for their children” (W. Choi et al., 2013), although some parents, concerned by both the increasing costs of after-school education and doubtful of the benefits an elite education is supposed to guarantee, have begun saving the funds they would have spent on private education in order to provide financial capital for their children’s future plans (Special Reporting Team-Korea Joongang Daily, 2015). Nevertheless, education remains a major focus of many families in Korea. Additionally, many college students and adults feel pressure to both prepare for further exams such as the Samsung Aptitude Test, administered by Samsung to potential employees (Hu, 2016), and further improve their competitiveness by acquiring additional qualifications, certificates, or high scores on exams such as the Test of English for International Communication or TOEIC (M. H. Lee, 2015). Even when there is broad skepticism regarding the effectiveness of seeking further qualifications or certificates as a means of distinguishing oneself on the job-market (Dong-A Illbo, 2015), these qualifications, certificates, and tests can be an important aspect of job seeking and continuing employment for some in Korea.

Within this broad focus on education, school, and testing, English education is a particularly intense arena of competition, leading many Korean people, young and old, to pursue English language learning both in Korea and beyond, and making English education a concern for many. This interest and worry over English education in Korea has made the quality of English education in public school a major political issue (Hankyoreh Media Company, 2008) with many viewing those classes taught in K-12 schools as less effective than those given in private after-school language academies. Many worry that access to these expensive English language academies confers a serious advantage on the children of families who can afford such lessons.
while increasing the pressure on many parents to further pursue extra English language education for their children. Additionally, some Korean parents elect to send their children abroad for various lengths of time in order to further develop their children’s English ability, and others such as college students and professionals choose to pursue English language learning abroad. More generally, concerns over one’s English ability are a common topic among students, employees, and parents, making advice about how to further develop one’s English language ability, such as knowledge regarding high-quality language schools, greatly valued. In the midst of this push to learn English, the English language has taken on special value in Korea and now marks class, status, and is an aspect of some Korean people’s desires and hopes (S. Park & Abelmann, 2004). Scholars such as Krashen (2003) and J. K. Park (2009) discuss an English Fever in Korea, referring to the intense pursuit of English language ability and test scores in Korea. This English Fever is the genesis of many English teaching positions which hire Americans, Canadians and others who travel to Korea and teach English.

Of course this is only a limited representation of Korea, education in Korea, and English education in Korea and just as critically, the Korea experienced by different teachers can vary wildly. The Korea of a newly arrived young American English teacher living in a rural fishing village may be a radically different place than the Korea of an older, South-African English teacher living and teaching in the elite area of Gangnam, Seoul, and the Korea of some teachers who happily travel throughout Korea during their free time, perhaps visiting Gangnam as well as rustic fishing villages, may be another Korea entirely. Within Korea the routine practices of daily life and the value placed upon education and English vary greatly and likewise those who travel to Korea and teach English vary tremendously in age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, personal history, interests, and more. Additionally, these teachers make choices regarding their experiences in Korea that dramatically shape the different Koreas they encounter. Nevertheless,
these teachers will live in Korea, they will teach English, and they will have to negotiate the experiences of living and teaching in Korea in a variety of ways.

As a Canadian English teacher who first arrived in Korea via Incheon International Airport in late 2002, I am, understandably, curious about the experiences of those who travel to Korea and teach English. However, my initial curiosity regarding the lives of the various Canadian, American, Scottish and other foreign English teachers I encountered in Korea grew into a more critical interest in how these teachers negotiate identities, gender, and place in Korea. This interest in these teachers, in understanding how people from different countries and diverse backgrounds change, develop, and come to understand themselves as both English language teachers and residents of Korea, is the genesis of this current study. My interest has always been with the entirety of teachers’ lives, including their classroom practices and issues of pedagogy, but also issues that are rarely discussed such as teachers’ hobbies, the everyday routines of teachers as they shop for common goods such as clothes and personal items, and the desires that bring teachers to Korea. I was partially interested in these teachers’ lives because, in my experience, the many diverse aspects of teachers’ lives interrelate and interconnect in many complex ways: hobbies and friendships shape teaching, and teaching shapes how some teachers understand their friends and the larger world around them. I came to believe this interrelated complexity demands a more holistic approach to understanding these teachers and the ways they live and teach English in Korea. My own experiences reflected how the complex negotiations of identity often escaped relatively bounded categories or places, and I knew that negotiating identities for these teachers could involve complex collisions of race, gender, sexuality, desire, and place. Therefore, I wanted to pursue research that would let me follow a diverse group of teachers as they went about their lives in Korea and moved between different places in Korea and beyond. These interests and desires led me to pursue research that would allow me to holistically explore the lives of foreign English teachers with a variety of nationalities, who work in a variety
of contexts, and who experience life and teaching in Korea in diverse ways. My initial interests and desires remain as important aspects of this text, but over time this study developed in key ways, narrowing its focus onto key research questions that emerged from the data I collected and analyzed.

In this study I explore two aspects of foreign English teachers’ lives in Korea. First, I explore the development and construction of these individuals’ teacher selves, examining how different teachers come to understand themselves as English language teachers in Korea, and how these teacher selves shape different aspects of their teaching, educational careers, and larger lives in Korea. Second, I explore the negotiation of bodies and dress, focusing on issues of gender that arise as these teachers arrive in Korea and over time develop understanding of bodies and dress in Korea. The term dress refers in this study to all clothing and worn items, in all their diverse forms, and, while not typically examined in studies of teacher development, dress emerged as a key aspect of this study. This focus on first, teacher selves, and second, bodies and dress, developed as this study progressed and themes rose and fell in prominence during the ongoing development of this study.

The focus on teacher selves developed as teachers participating in this study began discussing very different or unexpected stories of who they are as teachers. Further, some teachers were interviewed during moments of transition in their teaching careers and during moments of teaching related crisis, further raising the prominence of teacher selves within this study. This was accompanied by my own growing interest in contributing to the community of foreign English teachers in Korea, and my desire to create a study which could potentially benefit teachers as well as researchers. I came to believe that a focus on teacher selves would productively allow this study to examine issues important to teachers and contribute to larger scholarly discussions by highlighting and examining teacher selves that had been elided in earlier studies.
Additionally, the focus on bodies and dress emerged partially because of a wave of new scholarship on foreign English teachers in East Asia focusing on issues of gender (Appleby, 2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b; Kobayashi, 2014; Nagatomo, 2013; 2015; Simon-Maeda, 2004; 2011; Stanley, 2012). These studies have pushed TESOL⁵ to consider issues of gender and masculinity that were previously ignored, but critically, these studies have under-examined issues of bodies and dress. These studies, while raising critical issues regarding gender and masculinity, ignore the complicated interrelations between teachers’ bodies, clothing, living in new places, and teaching, something some participants in this study often extensively and spontaneously discussed. These elements gave greater impetus to this aspect of this study and led me to refocus a major aspect of this study onto issues of bodies and dress.

The terms foreign English teacher and teacher selves proved hard to define or were contested in certain ways both within this study and in scholarly literature more generally, and therefore deserve greater examination and discussion. I and other scholars face a challenge when collectively referring to these teachers of different nationalities who travel to Korea and teach English. Constantly naming the nationalities of these teachers would be awkward and any new term I created to refer to these teachers risks making this text less accessible, and potentially isolates this research from the already existing literature concerning these teachers⁶. Some texts

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⁵ Within this study TESOL or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and English language teaching are used interchangeably to refer to both the field of scholarly knowledge concerned with teaching English as a language and the practices which are done by teachers. This is done because both TESOL and English language teaching are used by prominent scholarly bodies to discuss this area of interest. However, TESOL is the only acronym I use in this study in an effort to make this text as accessible as possible for those less familiar with some of the language of TESOL and because the overuse of acronyms in English language teaching can, I believe, contribute to limiting and constricting communities of teachers through the privileging of specific insider terms.

⁶ Creating a new term to refer to a group risks isolating studies that use such a term as scholarly search engines such as Google Scholar may not include other relevant studies within searches for this new term. With the rise of Google Scholar and other scholarly search engines, identifying
refer to these teachers who travel to a place to teach English as *sojourning teachers* (Lai, 2010), but this term has not been widely adopted. Further, the term sojourn implies that these teachers will eventually leave the country in which they teach and return home, something not true for a few of these teachers. Lastly, the term sojourning teacher is essentially unknown and unused among these groups of teachers and therefore I do not adopt this term within this study.

The term *native English speaker teacher* or *NEST* has been adopted in many studies to refer to teachers who travel to Korea and teach English (S. Kim, 2012; M. Jeon 2009), and this term sensibly emphasizes these teachers’ status as individuals who are understood to have an intuitive understanding of English and a natural capacity to use this language. However, the idea of a perfect native speaker of a language has been shown to be deeply flawed (Cook, 1999; Paikeday, 1985), and positioning the imagined English native speaker as a standard for English language learners has been so damaging to many students and teachers (Doerr, 2009; Mahboob, 2007) I am hesitant to once again reify the concept of the native English speaker through the use of this term. Additionally, there is the complication that some teachers from Canada, the United States, and elsewhere may not consider themselves native English speakers. These teachers may have spoken a heritage language at home or learned English after immigrating or simply be a Canadian or South African who spoke French, Afrikaans, or Xhosa at home while learning English at school and consider themselves something other than a native English speaker. This does not automatically preclude such a teacher from receiving a visa allowing them to teach English in Korea, nor does it preclude them from speaking English well enough to teach in Korea, but these admittedly unusual examples challenge the use of the term native English speaker teacher as a collective term for the many teachers who travel to Korea to teach English.

significant, shared keywords to refer to specific areas of study is vital to making research easily accessible. The creation of keywords that can be shared among researchers studying particular groups of teachers or students can aid in dissemination of research and knowledge by making such research more easily found through these search engines.
A more general challenge to the use of the term native English speaker teacher is that for many of these teachers being a native speaker of English is less relevant than being a foreigner or being someone who is not Korean, both in classrooms and in their larger lives in Korea. Stanley argued, “‘foreign teacher’ is a better label than ‘native speaker teacher’ as ‘foreignness’ is more salient, in the context, than ‘nativeness’” (2013, p. 11) discussing foreign English teachers in Shanghai, China, and the same argument applies to these teachers in Korea. Further, J. S. Y. Park (2009) argues that an ideology of English in Korea positions English as inextricably foreign and external to Korea and English teachers travelling to Korea from Canada, South Africa, and elsewhere are similarly positioned as foreign in various ways. Therefore I use the term foreign English teacher in this study as I believe it reflects the particular position these teachers have in Korea.

However, the term foreign English teacher is not accepted by all those who would be encompassed within its scope. Bahk-Halberg (2010) argues that such a term excludes native English speakers from participating in Korea society and is a barrier to English language communication in Korea. Aware of Bahk-Halberg’s critique, I am more concerned that the term foreigner in Korea may be used more often for white, Western people in Korea, with other terms being used for English teachers of Color and those living in Korea from China, Japan, and South East Asia, and that by using this term I contribute to a damaging hierarchy of ethnic and racial terms in Korea and beyond. However, aware of these critiques and the potential danger of this term, I use this term as it best reflects the positioning of these teachers in Korea and many teachers’ own understandings of their places in Korea. Further, I am attempting to mitigate some of the danger of using this term by raising awareness of this issue, and perhaps bringing greater scrutiny to the names used for different teachers in Korea and East Asia. Nevertheless, I remain cautious of how the term foreign English teacher can shape, influence, and limit this study of teachers’ negotiations of bodies and dress and their construction of teacher selves.
I use the term *selves* to explore unknown but relevant issues within this study. The term *selves* acts as an unknown or catch-all term for issues of identity, subjectivity, positionality, self-perception, self-narration, playful imagining and more and is my attempt to name the unknown elements that are being explored within this study. Therefore, an examination of teacher *selves* is an examination of different possibilities of teacher identity, subjectivity, positionality, self-perception, self-narration, playful imagining, and more. Ideally, the term *selves* represents an unknown that is being productively explored and examined in this study of foreign English teachers who live and work in Korea.

I examine my two research questions regarding foreign English teachers in Korea through an ethnographic interview study of 27 foreign English teachers who participated in this study as they lived and taught in Korea. Importantly, some participants continued their participation in this study for more than one year allowing for an examination of how they negotiated teacher *selves* over time, and how they learned to negotiate issues of bodies and dress. This interview data is supplemented with participant observations, participant journals, my own journals, and autobiographical notes about my own experiences. This study draws upon this supplemental data to further examine issues that developed out of the interview data, but this study is primarily focused on ethnographic interview data.

All the participants in this study, at one point, travelled to Korea to begin living and teaching English in Korea. This process of initially arriving in Korea and beginning to teach and live in Korea is of particular interest as this initial arrival period seems likely to be a period of transition and development. I explore this initial arrival period through the participant of six new-to-Korea teachers and their experiences are extensively discussed at points throughout this study.

Although I adopt the term foreign English teacher to refer to those who travel to Korea from elsewhere and teach English, additional complicating elements shape who I included as possible participants in this study. This study only examines foreign English teachers who hold
passports from the United States, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand as it is the policy of the Korean government to grant E-2 English language teaching visas to English teachers from only these seven countries (Korean Immigration Service, 2015, p. 103). Therefore, this study focuses on foreign English teachers who hold passports from these seven countries. Importantly, citizens of countries such as the Philippines are successfully teaching English in Korea, and productive research has been done on the experiences, understandings, and identities of those teachers (Shin, 2007) and it is my hope that future research allows for a more holistic examination of all those who contribute to English language teaching in Korea. However, the issues teachers from these seven designated countries have to negotiate, and the issues teachers from the Philippines and other countries have to negotiate, such as visa regulations, are substantially different, and therefore this study remains focused on teachers from those countries designated by the Korean government as allowed to teach English with E-2 teaching visas. I believe these teachers share enough common experiences, and are typically grouped together by themselves and by others, so this study can productively focus on these teachers and explore these teachers experiences, understandings, and identities.

Limited to the seven countries proscribed by the Korean government, I recruited a widely diverse group of 27 foreign English teachers as participants in contrast to other studies of foreign language teacher identity in East Asia that focused on only one nationality and gender (Appleby, 2013a) or a single educational institution (Stanley, 2012; 2013). Participants vary widely in age and ethnicity, teach in educational institutions ranging from for-profit private language schools to universities, and have widely varying educational backgrounds and

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7 The choice of these countries by the Korean government is not random and represents a particular vision of English as a language only legitimately possessed by certain speakers. This understanding of English does not originate in Korea, but has its genesis in nationalism and empire and has been heavily examined and criticized by Phillipson (1992) among many others. Truly valuable research waits to be done on the origins and development of this Korean government policy, and on the means of challenging this particularly damaging vision of English.
experiences teaching. This diversity in terms of participants allows this study to explore under-
examined experiences of being a foreign English teacher, experiences and ideas that circulate
widely among foreign English teachers, and develop understandings that would not have been
possible if this study was more narrowly focused. However, the inclusion of participants who
differ in many ways means some participants’ experiences and understandings related to their
subject position, such as being Irish and an English language teacher in Korea, could not be
explored despite their importance to participants because of this study’s focus on foreign English
teacher selves and the limited participation of teachers occupying particular subject positions.
Regardless, the generous participation of many teachers in this study has made possible a
productive examination of issues that have been overlooked by many scholars concerned with
issues of foreign English teachers in East Asia.

The work of Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner, and Cain (1998) provides the primary
means of theorizing selves, and their ideas are used throughout this study. Throughout the
development of this research a variety of different approaches to theorizing selves was attempted,
but Holland et al.’s approach uniquely incorporated development and multivocality in ways that
proved to be particularly productive in this study. Drawing upon Vygotsky (1978), Holland et al.
focused on development and mediation and the ideas they crafted were especially productive in
examining how foreign English teachers understand and take action in moments of crisis and as
teachers change career paths. Holland et al.’s focus on multivocality, drawing upon Bakhtin
(1981; 1986) allowed an examination of how teachers appropriate voices and draw upon a variety
of discourses as they position themselves, narrate understandings, and mediate development.
Holland et al’ s concepts of figured worlds, positional identities, and spaces of authoring allow
this study to explore foreign English teacher’s various selves and engagement with bodies and
dress.
This study follows a relatively common structure beginning with the introductory chapter, which is followed by a literature review discussing current research on the language teacher identities of foreign English teachers in East Asia and further examining the concepts of Holland et al. (1998). This is followed by a discussion of the methodology of this ethnographic interview study, which examines the methodological scholarship that shaped this study and the particular methods employed within this study. The methodology chapter is followed by a chapter discussing teacher selves that examines different aspects of how teachers understand and narrate themselves as teachers, develop as teachers, negotiate discourses as teachers, and position themselves and are positioned through gender as teachers. This study then examines the figured world of bodies and dress and discusses teachers’ experiences arriving in Korea and the disruption in gendered selves some foreign English teachers experience through initial encounters with this figured world of bodies and dress, and how teachers came to understand themselves over time within this figured world. This study then ends with a discussion and conclusion chapter that examines issues of professionalism that arose within this study, the contribution this study can make towards teacher development, and the further development of language teacher identity research within TESOL. This study examines participants’ negotiations of teacher selves and how these participants engage with a figured world of bodies and dress, but ideally this study is only the opening turn of a longer scholarly discussion involving issues of foreign English teacher identity in Korea and East Asia.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

In this chapter I explore scholarship on language teacher identities of foreign English teachers in East Asia and discuss the work of Holland et al. (1998) which I use to understand how foreign English teachers in Korea negotiate teacher selves and issues of bodies and dress. Although I also discuss theory throughout this text, this chapter situates my study in broader ongoing discussions of language teacher identity, and outlines the theoretical means I use to examine identity. Much of the literature I introduce in this chapter I later expand upon as I move through the experiences and understandings of foreign English teachers in Korea.

Language Teacher Identity Issues Relevant to this Study

A variety of studies related to language teacher identity from around the world informs this study and provides a needed catalyst for further discussion and analysis within this research. These topics include the positioning and role of foreign English teachers in educational institutions (M. Jeon, 2009; S. Kim, 2012; Stanley, 2013; Trent, 2012), the limited careers of English language teachers more generally (Johnston, 1997), and representations of teachers in advertisements that recruit foreign English teachers and publicise English language educational institutions (Ruecker & Ives, 2014). These studies are not all focused on Korea or East Asia, in some ways challenging their relevance to this study, but they provide a needed beginning point for further discussions of foreign English teachers in Korea.

Stanley’s book length ethnography of foreign English teachers working at a university in Shanghai is the most authoritative account of foreign English teachers in East Asia to date. Her original research questions centered around how short-term English language teacher preparation
courses such as the CELTA\textsuperscript{8} prepare foreign English teachers for teaching, especially in contexts such as mandatory English classes in a Chinese university. However, her study expanded, and discusses issues such as the pressure foreign English teachers participating in her study felt to be “fun”, and how fun framed these teachers less as teachers and more as entertaining “Others” within this university. Further, she discussed how these foreign English teachers serve the Chinese state in some ways by embodying an “occidental Other” that allows the construction of a state approved Chinese self for Chinese students within this university community. Her work is a touchstone for this current study and is further discussed both within this literature review and throughout this study.

S. Kim (2012), and M. Jeon (2009) discuss identity issues of foreign English teachers in Korea, highlighting their complicated negotiations of identity. Focusing specifically on foreign English teachers who work for the English Program in Korea or EPIK, M. Jeon (2009) describes how the contextual negotiations of foreign English teachers’ identities are more complex than the twin constructs of English native speaker as English language authority and foreign English teachers as illegitimate, unqualified teachers within the Korean school system. M. Jeon highlights how different foreign English teachers within EPIK negotiated complex aspects of their teaching practices, relationships with students, and relationships with colleagues. M. Jeon’s study is the most relevant research within the growing genre of intercultural team teaching studies (Carless, 2006) focused on productive practices of foreign English teachers and local co-teachers (Carless, 2006a; Carless, 2006b; Carless & Elizabeth, 2006; Chen & Cheng, 2010; M. Kim, 2010; J. E. Park, 2014; Tanghee, 2013).

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\textsuperscript{8} CELTA stands for Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and is a program taught through approved centers from Cambridge English Language Assessment that takes four to five weeks to complete (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2015). See Ferguson and Donno (2003) for a discussion of one-month English language teaching training programs, and Hobbs (2013) for a more recent ethnographic study of these courses’ place in English language teaching.
S. Kim (2012) explored identity issues of four foreign English teachers in Korea who taught in higher education, including the reasons they chose to teach English in Korea.

One of the primary reasons for the participating NESTs [Native English Speaker Teachers] to come to Korea was because they were in a transitional period of their career and needed a job they could have for a relatively short period of time. They chose Korea as a transitional place, and intended to stay tentatively to explore career possibilities. They were at a stage where they were uncertain of their career and needed something different from their previous jobs. (p. 39)

She further found that for these teachers “professionally, the Korean experience was instrumental in solidifying teaching as their career and they came to define themselves as confident teachers in the sense that they were serious about their impact on students’ learning process” (p. 51). However, she also found these teachers, while feeling somewhat respected overall, did not have close relationships with their Korean colleagues, and experienced ambivalence over their understanding of themselves as confident professional teachers in their classrooms and their understanding that they had limited influence within their respective educational institutions. This was compounded by an understanding that within Korea more generally they, as foreign residents of Korea, “had to live with the ambivalence between being a comfortable resident and a distant outsider” (p. 52), as, according to these teachers, their lack of Korean skills and larger aspects of Korean culture positioned them as outsiders within local communities. In response to these multiple ambiguities, these teachers strengthened their notion of themselves as professional teachers through both their teaching and through trusting relationships with students (S. Kim 2012, p. 52). S. Kim (2012) highlights how teaching English in Korea can benefit some foreign English teachers in terms of teacher development, but simultaneously can involve challenging ambiguities that require deft negotiation. Further, S. Kim (2012) discusses how these teachers
may be continually positioned as temporary visitors to Korea, challenging teachers’ who may envision themselves more permanently living and teaching in Korea. The work of both M. Jeon (2009) and S. Kim (2012) are echoed by Trent (2012) who highlights similar issues among foreign English teachers in Hong Kong, demonstrating that these issues extend beyond Korea.

Both M. Jeon (2009) and S. Kim (2012) show how foreign English teachers negotiate complex aspects of living and working in Korea and examine how some foreign English teachers, working within perceived institutional and societal limitations, creatively find ways of negotiating acceptable selves in Korea. However, further elements can also shape the complex identity negotiations of foreign English teachers in Korea.

Foreign English teachers and their work contexts are influenced by a myriad of elements including the recruiting materials that bring them to their place of teaching. Ruecker and Ives (2014) examined 59 websites related to recruiting native-speaker English teachers for English language teaching positions in East Asia, with their study acting as a capstone to other studies that have examined recruiting discourses in English language teaching (Lengeling & Pablo, 2012; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Selvi, 2010). Ruecker and Ives found that within this online discourse were representations “that the ideal English teacher is young, inexperienced, and enthusiastic” (2014, p. 12), and further argued:

Because the supply of NES [Native English Speaker] teachers does not always meet the high demand, recruitment websites work to hold prospective teachers’ attention with clever slogans, eye-catching images, and lighthearted videos that promise an exciting adventure for any native speaker of English looking for a new experience. As a result of these marketing tactics, prospective teachers are situated as consumers of a product: ELT opportunities in exotic locales. As this analysis has shown, such commercialization of the ELT profession allows for stereotyping of and discrimination against individuals based on age and
marginalizes NNESTs [Native English Speaker Teachers] despite relevant qualifications, thus denigrating the level of professionalism in the field. (p. 18)

This construction of English language teaching in places such as Korea as a fun, exotic adventure is an important finding of Ruecker and Ives (2014). Further, they found these sites “delimit who qualifies as a native speaker through the use of repeated images of white teachers and text demanding that teachers produce passports from a list of predominantly white, inner-circle countries” (2014, p. 19), and this binding of whiteness to English authenticity through these websites is an important argument. Further, they highlight how these websites discriminate on the basis of age, with some websites explaining that prospective teachers who appear middle-aged or older should not expect many job offers. Further, they argue that by using these websites foreign English teachers “are taking advantage of, and even perpetuating, a legacy that continues to privilege members of the oppressor group” (2014, p. 20). Additionally, Wang and Lin (2013), argue that recruitment practice for foreign English teachers in Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and Taiwan damage the professional status of local non-native speaker teachers through these advertisements’ focus on “‘native speaker norms’” (p.5) and an emphasis on attracting “unqualified and inexperienced” (p.5) native English speaker teachers. Ruecker and Ives (2014) and Wang and Lin (2013) valuably discuss how some websites associated with recruiting foreign English teachers for employment in Korea construct English as being linked to whiteness, how these websites position English language teaching as a fun exotic adventure, and they argue foreign English teachers who travel to Korea are complicit in damaging colonial practices.

However, the studies of Ruecker and Ives (2014) and Wang and Lin (2013) are limited as they focus exclusively on websites with no examination of teachers, students, educational institutions, or contexts; making their larger conclusions about teachers who use these websites too grand for the limited data they present or perhaps, as Stanley (2012) might argue, these
scholars have “post-colonial axes to grind” (2012, p. 72), meaning their uncritical embrace of imagined post-colonial resistance led them to “Other” foreign English teachers and has expanded their arguments far beyond any reasonable understanding of the data they collected. Finally, Wang and Lin, like many other scholars, uncritically argue that teacher professionalization is good for students, teachers, and English language teaching more generally, an assumption that deserves greater scrutiny.

Teacher professionalism and TESOL careers have been examined and explored by a variety of scholars. However, within TESOL scholarship, teacher professionalism has received limited attention, partially because English language teaching involves widely diverse groups of educators. Discussions of TESOL professionalism may include or not include teachers focused on the private sector, certified English language teachers working in compulsory education (often K-12), and teachers who live and work in other countries as foreign English teachers. This diversity complicates discussions of English language teacher professionalism as these different contexts may have radically different teachers, managerial regimes, and demands for examples of professionalism (Maley, 1992). Nevertheless, TESOL scholars have discussed concerns over the professional status of English language teachers (Johnston, 1997; MacPherson, Kouritzin, & Kim, 2005; Pennington, 1990; Pennington, 1992; Wang & Lin, 2013), appropriate definitions of TESOL professionalism (Farmer, 2006; Walker, 2011; 2014; Thornbury, 2001), and relationships between TESOL teacher education programs and professionalism (Liyanage, Walker, & Singh, 2015), mirroring similar discussions in education more broadly, but focused on the particular issues relevant to English language teachers.

Several studies, some focused on issues of language teacher identity, examined the professional or other than professional status of English language teachers. Examining a diverse group of English language teachers in Poland, Johnston (1997) asked if English as a Foreign Language teachers have careers, answering in the negative for the most part. His study, one of the
few that examines the careers of English language teachers, highlighted that many English language teachers viewed English language teaching as having limited social status and as something temporary, easily entered, easily left, and a form of work with limited avenues of advancement, at least as a teacher. Johnston’s study, while done within post-communist Poland, is echoed by Appleby’s (2013b) examination of foreign English teachers in Japan. Appleby (2013b) noted “the lowly status ascribed to English language teaching as an occupation readily available to ‘native speakers’ of English” (p. 3), highlighting an understanding among some foreign English teachers and others that foreign English teachers occupy a relatively lower social status in East Asia. Additionally, Cho (2012) discussed English language teaching in Korea as a somewhat marginal job in Korea given its limited contract nature.

This section has discussed research that argues some foreign English teachers experience teaching and their larger lives as residents of Korea as welcomed and somewhat privileged outsiders; that the recruiting websites used by many foreign English teachers link English authenticity with whiteness, constructs the ideal language teacher as young and fun, and constructs Korea as an exotic place of adventure; and that foreign English teachers like those discussed in this study do not have ready-made or easily followed careers and career paths. These general findings are important in contextualizing the larger world of foreign English teachers in Korea, but additional research, examining how different foreign English teachers negotiate their complex selves in East Asia, provides a more detailed context on the teachers discussed in this study.

**Foreign English Teacher Identity Studies in East Asia: Desire, Gender, Sexuality, and Race**

A new wave of research focused on the complex gendered, racialized, and sexual identities of foreign English teachers in East Asia has generated insights into these teachers’
experiences and development, the contexts in which these teachers work, and made possible new scholarly discussions concerning teacher identity and related aspects of teaching. The work of Appleby (2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b), Nagatomo (2013; 2015), Simon-Maeda (2004; 2011), and Stanley (2012; 2013), has focused on the construction of gender by both men and women in a variety of ways and represents the leading edge of scholarship in this area. This section examines these studies’ findings regarding foreign English teachers’ constructions of masculinities, femininities, and other gendered and racialized selves.

The studies of Nagatomo (2013; 2015), Simon-Maeda (2004; 2011), and Stanley (2013) highlight sexist and gendered practices which limit opportunities for women teaching English in East Asia, with Kobayashi (2014) explicitly calling for further studies of this gender gap in English language teaching. Kobayashi (2014) argues that, among foreign English language teachers, Western men far outnumber Western women in East Asia:

Space limitations do not allow for the detailed description of numerical evidence for white male NESTs’ [Native English Speaker Teachers] domination in east Asia. Just for reference, among 243 first-author presenters at JALT (The Japan Association for Language Teaching) 2012 conference who have Western first/last names and are affiliated with Japanese higher education, 84.8 per cent of them (206 presenters) are male, with females no more than 37 presenters, which is in stark contrast to other female-dominant ELT conferences [e.g. TESL Canada 2012 Conference in which, among 151 first-author presenters affiliated with Canadian higher education, 115 (76 per cent) are female and 36 (24 per cent) are male]. (p. 220)

She argues this is partially caused by the commodification of white English speakers, but more critically men’s migration factors, local chauvinistic practices, and “local women’s alleged
longings for white men” (p. 219) all contribute to and legitimize Western men “dominating” East Asia’s English language teaching. However, it should be noted that the JALT attendees are very often foreign English teachers employed in higher education, and therefore her claims regarding the domination of Western men in English language teaching may be less applicable in other educational settings such as public schools.

Appleby (2014a) and Nagatomo (2015) argue that within higher education in Japan, foreign women teaching English as a foreign language are marginalized by male homosocial networks of friendship that aid foreign men in finding and securing employment as foreign English teachers in Japanese institutions of higher learning. These networks often exclude foreign women, and none of the studies discussed in this section contained an example of a foreign woman finding and securing employment through such a social network. Further, Nagatomo (2015) argues that aspects of Japanese employment in higher education favor foreign men who are often given further employment and benefits because of the assumption that, as men, they are responsible for providing a needed family income, while foreign women employed in higher education are often assumed to be working for supplementary income, as their presumed husband is assumed to be the primary provider of family income, and therefore foreign women teaching English can be the first to have hours and pay reduced or eliminated. Additionally, Nagatomo (2013) examined the experiences of foreign women married to Japanese men who taught in the informal eikaiwa9 or language school industry in their homes and local communities. Her study revealed these teachers found the flexibility and pay of this work advantageous, but were challenged by complex negotiations of student-teacher relationships which, given the informal nature of these educational contexts, often straddled the positions of student, client, acquaintance, and friend, with those evolving relationships creating added complications in teaching.

9 I use the Japanese term eikaiwa from eikaiwa gakkō following the practice of Nagatomo, Appleby, and other scholars who write about language schools in Japan.
Nagatomo’s study is especially valuable as it explores eikaiwa, an understudied aspect of Japanese education, and the complex gendered experience of a group of understudied teachers who have settled in Japan and may have a lasting impact in their community.

These studies have shown that many foreign women are marginalized as English language teachers in Japan through a variety of elements and how some women successfully negotiate these barriers in a variety of ways. These studies can highlight potential issues among foreign English teachers in Korea, and critically inform this study and its examination of gendered selves. Importantly, studies of language teacher identity and gender have also focused on men and their negotiations of gendered selves. Masculinities and men as a gender, while being ubiquitous and profoundly influential in English language teaching, have remained relatively less-discussed in much of language teaching (Appleby, 2013a), but newer language teacher identity studies have begun discussions of masculinities and English language teaching, allowing for a more holistic view of foreign English teachers’ negotiation of selves in these contexts.

Appleby (2013a) examines white, straight, Australian men teaching English in Japan within eikaiwa, adult language schools in which Japanese women are the primary students. Within these contexts, these Australian men are valued to some extent as exotic, somewhat-sexualized, masculine objects by both school management and the Japanese women who attend these schools. Appleby (2013a) argues these Australian men essentially cannot construct professional masculine identities, given that their qualification for these teaching positions are embodied not achieved. Appleby argues that white, straight, Australian men’s desire to achieve a professional masculine identity involves understanding oneself as having achieved some goal, but within the context of eikaiwa teaching, where sexualized desire for white, male bodies shapes workplace achievement, such professional masculine identities were impossible, for at least any of her participants. Appleby’s research echoes and draws upon other research into Japanese eikaiwa, that examine these for-profit language schools not as educational institutions dedicated
to improving language skills, but as places of recreation in which desirable and exotic employees, sometimes young white foreign men, are part of that recreational experience (Kubota, 2011). Further, Kelsky’s (2001) large ethnographic study of Japanese women’s desire for western men; Takahashi’s (2010) autoethnographic exploration of English language learning and romantic desire for English speaking Western men; and Piller and Takahashi’s (2006) examination of how the eikaiwa industry incorporates desire and longing for an imagined, English-speaking, romantic West, including romantic desire for Western men, further highlight how these desires circulate and potentially can shape both educational contexts such as those in Korea and foreign English teachers negotiations of identity.

Appleby (2014a) further examined white, western men working in Japanese higher education and found they constructed academic identities through an erasure of gender and sexuality as well as negative contrasts of gender and race, especially racialized aspects of Japanese masculinity. Unlike the white, straight, Australian men who worked in eikaiwa and whose professional achievements were embodied, those foreign men teaching English in Japanese higher education were able to achieve some degree of a professional self.

Appleby additionally examined how white, straight, Australian men negotiated masculine selves through discourses of singleness, marriage, and particular Japanese discourses which position some foreign men in Japan as sexually promiscuous (2013b). She found that for some of these teachers, being married to a Japanese woman and being able to draw upon discourses of marriage allowed for the construction of an appropriate and desirable masculine self, which acted a bulwark against discourses of foreign English teaching men as sexually promiscuous, perpetually excluded from Japanese society, and less serious teachers. Further, Appleby (2013b) showed that drawing upon discourses of marriage reproduced heteronormative gendered relations among the teachers, and constructed single, mid-life or older men teaching English in Japan as “abject” single men, rendering these men as “Others” who must be excluded
even from communities of foreign English teachers, and further discussing how some mid-life foreign men teaching English in Japan experienced discrimination in their teaching careers due to not being married.

Appleby, in her studies of white, straight, Australian men in Japan (2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b), unintentionally, and perhaps without her notice, interviewed teachers who are striving to achieve some type of professional selves, with these teachers often constructing themselves through an “Othering” of more hedonistic, sexually promiscuous, carefree men teaching English in Japan. Stanley’s studies of foreign English teachers working at a single university in Shanghai (2012) features some foreign men who more fully embraced “the ‘hedonistic’ masculinity attributed to them” (p. 227), while also examining the complex discord between the masculinities assumed of these men, and their own negotiation of selves in this place. Stanley (2012) examined the experiences of seven Western men who taught in Shanghai and their negotiations of masculine selves. She discusses how some men are called upon or are able to achieve desired masculinities and masculine practices beyond those they experienced in their home countries, and how some men resist or reject these calls and hyper-masculine experiences. Appleby stated, “most of the men in this study did perceive increased self-confidence, social empowerment and external validation of social and sexual success” (p. 222), but also were challenged by “the perception of transactional relationships, tensions between socially constructed roles and the personal identities of individuals, and the sanctioning of enacted identities considered socially unacceptable at home” (p. 222). Stanley, in examining these men’s negotiations of masculinity argued that they were navigating multiple expectations and pressures that originated within their context:

The Western men in this study are expected, and pressured, to behave according to a model of masculinity based neither on hegemonic masculinity nor Chinese masculinity, but on Occidentalist Chinese constructions of what Western men are
like. Thus even though most of them disapprove of the behaviours sanctioned by this model, they perform, to a greater or lesser extent, the roles expected of them. The ‘gaze’ both of Chinese women and of their Western peers forces them to stage an ‘authenticity’ that is attributed rather than appropriated, and to commoditize themselves in the process. (p. 227)

Stanley’s study adds further theoretical nuance to understandings of the negotiations of masculine selves of foreign men teaching English in Korea, and examines the experiences of those teachers who embrace other-than-professional teacher selves.

These studies of foreign English teachers’ gendered selves in East Asia focus almost entirely on teachers whose discussed experiences lay within heteronormative discourses. However, Simon-Maeda (2004) examined the experiences and understandings of gay and lesbian foreign English teachers in East Asia, highlighting how these teachers often face challenges in maintaining work and careers as English language teachers, and demands to act within the bounds of local heteronormative discourses (Simon-Maeda, 2004, p. 424).

Just as there have been relatively few studies of LGBTQ foreign English teachers in East Asia, there have been relatively few studies of Asian-Americans who teach English as a foreign language in East-Asia. Cho (2012) examined the experiences of Korean-American men teaching English in Korea, discussing how these teachers must negotiate a variety of issues including the authenticity of their English; questions of why they “returned” to Korea; a new sense of masculinity arising from living not as a visible minority but as, possibly, a Korean person within Korea; and the complicated wealth and class issues that stem from teaching the children of Korea’s elite.

Importantly, there are significant gaps in this literature and many foreign English teachers may review this collection of research and find no representation of themselves, their experiences,
and their understandings of being a foreign English teacher in Korea. It may be impossible to ever examine and represent all possible ways of being a foreign English teacher in Korea, and there is a danger in scholars seeking out teachers who satisfy certain acknowledged subject positions in an effort to collect a token representation of some imagined teacher identity. However, further studies would add much to this literature. Studies of teachers of Color who are not Korean-American would allow for a far more nuanced understanding of how foreign English teachers can negotiate racialized and gendered selves in Korea. Additionally, one area not discussed within this body of research, but discussed by many foreign English teachers in Korea are the different subject positions created by nationalities and their associated passports. How Irish, South African, New Zealander and other nation state identities are negotiated is another area that would further develop this body of research. Ultimately, this body of research sheds much needed light on foreign English teachers’ negotiation of gender, race, and sexuality in East Asia, but there remains further valuable research to do and there is a need for further examination and critique of these studies themselves.

**Foreign English Teacher Identity Research Critiques and Challenges**

The large numbers of relatively recent studies on language teacher identity have begun to provoke some limited albeit important critiques and discussions. Further, this body of research may have developed to the point at which more critical examination of these studied may be warranted including questioning how these studies contribute to those teachers being examined and their educational contexts, and the overall goals of language teacher identity research.

Cheung (2015) argues “the time is ripe to identify how improved understanding of language teacher identity might positively contribute to an improvement in teacher education” (p. 175) and that, within language teacher identity research, there is a need for more longitudinal
studies, comparative studies, quantitative studies, and “more systemic research on the formation and negotiation of the professional identity of experienced teachers (e.g., teachers who have five years or more of teaching experience)” (p. 179). While many language teacher identity studies embrace a pluralistic view of language teacher identity and the possibilities of language teacher identity studies, Cheung calls for these studies to develop a greater focus on the methodological issues in language teacher identity research and asks how these studies can better contribute to teacher education and language teaching more generally.

Stanley, in her book length ethnography on foreign English teachers working in a university in Shanghai (2013) critiques some scholars who she argues have “postcolonial axes to grind” (p. 72) in their studies of foreign English teachers. Stanley argues there is value in examining postcolonial perspectives, but that some scholars unthinkingly adopt a perspective that positions foreign English teachers as imperialist agents, regardless of the context or data collected.

Canagarajah’s (1993) nuanced, emic study amply demonstrated how students may resist imported methods or materials. What I am concerned about is the tendency in some ‘critical’ ELT literature to construct such resistance as ‘postcolonial’ (and therefore good) and Western teachers as ‘imperialist’ (and therefore bad). (p. 44)

Stanley further argues “Westerner-bashing has become something of a trope in ‘critical’ ELT” (p.44). and specifically critiques the work of Bright and Phan (2011) as “Othering” foreign English by uncritically casting these teachers as Eurocentric and colonial in their attitudes, ignoring the complexities of power relations and the agency of people such as students’ parents, and ultimately going beyond the reasonable claims of their data they collected within the Vietnamese context they examined. Additionally, Stanley critiques Holliday’s (2011) otherwise valuable study for textually constructing foreign English teachers as boorish caricatures while
constructing others through more nuanced, rich representations. Finally, she critiques the tendency in much of the literature on native-speakerism to equate native English speaker teachers with monolingual English speakers, something she rightly argues are two unrelated constructs. Stanley’s critiques have not been discussed within academic publications on foreign English teacher identity, perhaps because of their recent date of publication, and perhaps because her critiques are very much an outlier within TESOL academic discourse. However, her critiques echo many of the arguments of foreign English teachers that are done outside of academia, and her critiques may demand a more serious response.

This study addresses the critiques of Cheung (2015) by crafting a text that can contribute to teacher education broadly conceived, while acknowledging that further studies are still required. The critiques of Stanley are addressed primarily by engaging in a nuanced representation of the participants in this study, attempting to keep elements of a “postcolonial” edge in some thinking, but also maintaining awareness that such theory can seduce researchers into making claims far beyond the merit of their data.

**Theorizing Identity and Development within this Study**

This study uses the work of Holland et al. (1998) to explore and examine foreign English teachers’ identities and shared cultural worlds. Their goal is a framework that incorporates the formative capacity of culture as well as people’s capacity for innovation, development, and change. They draw heavily upon Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1981; 1986) to understand how identities develop over time, how identity development is mediated and mediates action, and how identities can be acts of positioning within larger cultural places. They developed this framework through a variety of interrelated concepts, with this study primarily using the concepts of the “figured world”, “space of authoring”, and “positional identity”. Although the ideas of Holland et
al. have been used in educational research, as in the special issue of *The Urban Review* on figured worlds and education (Urrieta Jr., 2007a), and the special issue of *The Bilingual Research Journal* on the figured world of bilingual education (Fránquiz & Ortiz, 2015), these ideas have been only used in a limited number of TESOL studies (Costley, 2015).

**Figured Worlds**

The concept of figured worlds refers to the imagined worlds, stories, and specific terms that are used by groups to come to understand themselves and others. According to Holland et al. (1998) “by ‘figured world,’ then, we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (p. 52). Holland et al. further explain, “figured worlds could also be called figurative, narrativized, or dramatitized worlds” (p. 53), emphasizing that figured worlds are partially abstract storylines that give meaning to and emerge out of everyday life. Figured worlds, as a lens, allow the examination of shared collective understandings of foreign English teachers that often make use of story.

**Mediation and Development**

Holland et al. also stress the role of mediating artifacts, both material and conceptual, in individual’s development within figured worlds. They discuss how material elements such as poker chips in Alcoholics Anonymous can become imbued with new meaning, such as signifying time spent sober, within that figured world, contributing to a new understanding of oneself. Further, conceptual means, such as learning to tell one’s story as someone within a figured world, can
provide people with capabilities to influence their own behavior in these worlds.

As people’s subjectivity(ies) becomes better organized around certain issues important to the figured world, their behavior manifests the ascription of new meaning and the favoring certain activities and practices over others. (Urrieta Jr., 2007b, p. 110)

Continuing the example of Alcoholics Anonymous discussed by Holland et al. (1998, p. 67), learning to tell a story of oneself as an alcoholic in the figured world of Alcoholics Anonymous can, for some at some times, mediate one’s behavior, granting greater control over one’s drinking.

As part of a broad community of Vygostskian second language pedagogy researchers, Johnson and Golombek (2002; 2011) have discussed the capacity of narratives to mediate second language teacher development. They examine how narratives, acting as mediating elements, can “foster teacher professional development” (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. 486) focusing primarily on development that contributes to classroom practices. They show how narratives can mediate teacher practices allowing for greater self-regulation and control of one’s thoughts, actions, and larger worlds.

Johnson and Golombek, along with most Vygostskian sociocultural scholars concerned with second language learning, are primarily concerned with second language teachers improving their classroom practices and are less concerned with issues of identity, as conceived within this study of foreign English teachers in Korea. Additionally, there has been little crossover between scholars who use Vygostky in second language education and those who draw upon Holland et al. (1998). Nevertheless, Johnson and Golombek’s emphasis on narrative’s capacity to regulate and grant control of teachers’ actions informs this study, and their work provides a vital starting point.

for further discussions of mediation, identity, and foreign English teacher development, and these topics are further examined throughout this study. Importantly, Johnson and Golombek, much like Vygotsky, focus on the development of skills and capacities, eliding critical issues of power and different possible paths of development. Holland et al. (1998) argue Vygotsky overlooked development’s “negative aspect—both the censuring and ‘extinction’ of behaviors irrelevant to the learning task and the shaping and inculcation of only those skills and actions ‘fit’ for the social position the neophyte was accorded” (p. 176). As a partial correction, Holland et al. (1998) argue artifacts such as narratives can make possible new actions through mediation, but also emphasize these mediating elements require submitting to new cultural forms (Holland et al., 1998, p. 64) that may limit practices in their own ways. Narrating oneself as an alcoholic in Alcoholics Anonymous may grant greater control of one’s drinking, but doing so requires subsuming oneself within the figured world of that particular institution, and taking on particular actions and practices within that figured world. The capacity of narratives and other artifacts to mediate actions carries with it additional elements that may bind some teachers to particular figured worlds and their practices.

**Space of Authoring**

Mediation is critical to Vygotsky, Johnson and Gollombek (2011), and Holland et al. (1998) but Holland et al. further draw upon Bakhtin to refine some of the ideas of Vygotsky within their concept of a “space of authoring”. Bakhtin had a multitude of interests, including an interest in development, albeit to a far lesser extent than Vygotsky, and he discussed the differences between “the neophyte, given over to a voice of authority, and the person of greater experience, who begins to rearrange, reword, rephrase, reorchestrate different voices and, by this process, develops her own ‘authorial stance’,” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 183). This place of
reorchestrating diverse, competing, antagonistic voices is Holland et al.’s (1998) space of authoring, a particular Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) in which there is the possibility of fashioning or refashioning oneself (Holland et al., 1998, p. 183). Through the reweaving of voices, and a process of asking and answering, within this space of authoring development is possible, but this is an understanding of development from Holland et al. (1998) that incorporates issues of power and subject position.

Vygotsky quite appropriately emphasized the potential of words as tools, as ‘bootstraps’ by which one could pull oneself up to another form of behavior, but he ignored the conflicts and struggles, the whole history of contested practices now emblematized and brought along with the tools. Vygotsky’s tools, according to Bakhtin’s vision of human expression, came marked with social division and the often incomparable perspectives attached to them. (p. 177)

The space of authoring, as defined by Holland et al., incorporates an understanding that mediated development involves contestation, particular perspectives, and inevitably issues of power. Additionally, this space of authoring, can be a place of bootstrapping oneself into actions and practices: “the possibility of directing speech to oneself is equally, for Vygotsky, the possibility of achieving at least a modicum of control over one’s behavior.” (Holland et al, 1998, p. 175). For Holland et al. this means people can, appropriating a variety of voices and language broadly conceived, talk themselves into action, new attitudes, and changes in themselves. However, only some will have this capacity and others may require outsiders to contribute as mediating elements for such actions to take place. Returning to the figured world of Alcoholics Anonymous, some may be able to tell themselves a story of not drinking, reweaving the voices of others and possibly their former selves into their self-told story, crafting a story that aids them in not drinking, but others may need help in telling these stories, at least until further development occurs. Critically,
a space of authoring is a power-laden space, in which voices are contested, appropriated, and reorchestrated in ways that allow action and change, carrying with them a myriad of consequences.

**Positional Identity**

Positional identity refers to the taking up of relative positions with and against others, within and outside figured worlds, maneuvering through status, social capital, relative privilege, and their negotiation. Holland et al. (1998) make a distinction between figured worlds in which narratives circulate, artifacts are given meaning, and development is possible, and positional identity, done within figured worlds, where privilege and status are offered, refused, and in constant negotiation. Positional identity allows an understanding of how teachers, within the figured worlds of foreign English teaching, “constitute relations of hierarchy, distance, or perhaps affiliation,” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 128). Holland et al. further define the term positional identity.

Positional identity, as we use the term, is a person’s apprehension of her social position in a lived world: that is, depending on the others present, of her greater or lesser access to spaces, activities, genres, and, through those genres, authoritative voices, or any voice at all. (p. 127)

Holland et al. highlight how positional identity is made alongside others and shapes different people’s capacity to move and speak in various ways, and how in some circumstances positional identities can be extremely limiting.
Holland et al. in Use

This chapter has only briefly explored the work of Holland et al. their concepts, and how others in education have made use of these concepts. However, these ideas are critical for this study and provide an alternative to other perspectives on identity and development. The ideas of Holland et al. are further explored in this study, as they are used to examine the experiences and understandings of foreign English teachers in Korea.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the growing number of studies on foreign English teachers in East Asia, and discussed the work of Holland et al. (1998) and their means of conceptualizing identity and development, broadly conceived. These relatively new studies of foreign English teacher identity in East Asia have created new possibilities for discussion, and this study joins those studies in a hopefully productive discussion that serves both foreign language education and the teachers being discussed. Further, a major contribution this study makes to this discussion is further introducing the work of Holland et al. (1998) regarding identity, and ideally this study should serve as an example of how this understanding of identity can productively serve research in this area. This study, through the use Holland et al. (1998), both extends and challenges the work of Appleby (2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b), Nagatomo (2013; 2015), Simon-Maeda (2004; 2011), and Stanley (2012; 2013) opening new paths of scholarly discussion regarding language teacher identity.
Chapter 3 Methodology

Michael: Okey dokey, I have nothing prepared and it's been a little while, and that's gonna create some issues with my research I suspect.

Nancy: [laughter]

Michael: But, we'll see, ughhhh, so yea, I guess it’s catch up time, to see what happened during [the last few months]?

Nancy: When was the last time we talked?

Michael: uh I’ll have to check my computer, but I think it was almost at the end of, um, around winter [redacted] so a lot of different stuff has gone on, um, so yea, [long pause] talk!

Nancy: Haha, you’re the worst interviewer [laughter].

Introduction

This study primarily relies upon interviews conducted with foreign English teachers between October 2010 and January 2013 as data. As such, this text is best termed an ethnographic interview study which draws upon additional sources of data to supplement interviews which are the primary focus of analysis. As an ethnographic interview study, a wide variety of ethnographic scholarship informs this study overall, and contributes to the design of this study, the collection of data, the analysis of this data, and the writing of this final text. Further, this
Ethnographic scholarship has provided guidance on how to incorporate my own voice and experiences into this text, and guidance on how to move between and focus on multiple sites within this single study. Ultimately, this study seeks to understand foreign English teachers’ negotiations of teacher selves and gendered selves as these teachers live and work in Korea, and this chapter provides a view of how these complex negotiations of selves were examined and analyzed.

Importantly, this study transformed substantially as it was being done, with lengthy stops and restarts, that, as the excerpt at the beginning of this chapter highlights, shaped both individual interviews and the larger path of this study. This chapter examines these halts and restarts, and attempts to showcase how they, at times, influenced this study.

This chapter serves to tell the story of doing this study while also situating it within broader scholarship of ethnography and ethnographic methods. As such this chapter begins with a discussion of ethnography and which strands of ethnographic methods and thought shaped this study. This chapter then examines entering the field, recruiting participants, interviewing participants and engaging in other research methods, essentially recounting how this study was done. Finally, this chapter ends with an examination of my identity as the author of this study, and detailed profiles of the key participants who are featured in this ethnographic text.

**Ethnography Guiding this Study**

This study draws upon examples of scholarship concerning ethnography and examples of ethnography in practice to shape this study’s approach to the research questions being asked, the general approach to the knowledge generated in this study, and the intricacies of actually doing this study in the field. Anderson-Levitt (2006), in a nuanced examination of ethnography in education, discussed the types of questions ethnography can answer; “ethnography is useful, first,
for discovering what meanings different actors are making of a situation,” (p. 282) and she continued:

Second, ethnography is useful for developing a valid understanding of local situations in all their complexity. Ethnography provides the opportunity to explore actions in their wider context and thus to describe the real-world complexity of human behavior. Third, because ethnography takes time, it gives us the opportunity to observe and understand processes as they happen. In short, ethnography is good for asking, “What is going on here?” (p. 282)

This study began by asking, in broad terms, “What is going on with foreign English teachers in Korea?” and draws upon aspects of ethnography to answer this question. Further, ethnography’s particular place in educational research has provided important guidance in shaping this study. Ethnography in education has developed over time in particular directions in particular contexts (Yon, 2003), and with strands of ethnographic research developing in different directions in different places (Delamont, 2012). Much of this development has focused on ethnography’s capacity to develop knowledge of students’ understandings of school (Yon, 2003, p. 412) and there is a long-standing tradition of North-American classroom and school ethnography focused on issues related to the challenges marginalized students experience in educational institutions, and the broad issue of “school failure” (Delamont, 2012). Alongside this focus on students and school, ethnographic studies in education have also focused on teachers and those who occupy critical roles in schools, with Britzman’s (2003) study of developing teachers and Stanley’s (2013) study of foreign English teachers working in a university in Shanghai serving as excellent examples. It is these studies that provide vital guiding influences to this study of foreign English teachers in Korea.
The Ethnographic Interview

Ethnographic interviews are the primary data being discussed in this study and the wealth of scholarly discussion on ethnographic interviews valuably informed this study. Heyl (2001) offers a productive definition of ethnographic interviews that reflects the philosophy of interviewing embraced in this study.

The definition of ethnographic interviewing here will include those projects in which researchers have established respectful, on-going relationships with their interviewees, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds (p. 369)

Within this study I sought to embrace this understanding of ethnographic interviews as I engaged in interviewing different participants over different lengths of time. However, scholars of ethnography and qualitative interviewing more generally, following a variety of “turns” in scholarship of ethnography, have also discussed the need for additional consideration of complicating elements in ethnographic interviews, the means to further develop these interviews, and some of the potential dangers and pitfalls of this approach to gathering data.

A variety of scholars concerned with ethnographic interviews, including those examining feminist research methodologies (see Reinhart (1992) for a brief introduction to this topic), have emphasized the conversational nature of interviews and how these conversations are co-constructed between the interviewer and interviewee (Heyl, 2001, p. 374). This interest in co-constructing interviews emerged in this study both generally, through an awareness of how interviews developed in different ways, but also very specifically in certain practices with Carly, a participant in this study who requested not to be audio recorded. Drawing on scholarship on the
co-construction of interviews, but also scholarship on methods of co-constructing or perhaps co-authoring interviews, observations, and narratives discussed in autoethnography (Bochner & Ellis, 1992; Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Ellis, 2004) and narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), I adopted an alternative back and forth collaborative note-writing process with Carly instead of recording and transcribing interviews. Carly’s participation is further discussed later in this chapter and while this practice is a more literal example of co-constructing interviews, within this study I embraced a general awareness that both I and participants shaped this study’s interviews in various ways.

Along a similar line of feminist thought, Devault (1990) has emphasized the complex aspects of listening to interviews, and the importance of both what is said, not said, and the challenges of attempting to speak about topics which are not spoken of more generally. This awareness has again contributed greatly to this study, making visible the particular challenges some participants experienced discussing certain topics and the tendency of some men participating in this study to elide issues involving masculinity such as feeling “bigger” or masculine in some contexts. This scholarship is especially relevant given the gendered topics being examined in this study, and the tension that can emerge in discussing issues of bodies, gender, and desire.

Kvale, in a notable critique that included her own earlier work involving interviews (Kvale, 1996), criticized some interview scholarship in which, “power asymmetry and conflicts in qualitative interviewing were given little attention” (Kvale, 2006, p. 483) and Kvale further argues, “the power dynamics in research interviews, and potential oppressive use of interview-produced knowledge, tend to be left out in literature on qualitative research” (2006, p. 483). Further, Kvale discusses how interviews can often be made to feel as welcoming and caring dialogues that elide the fact that these discussions also serve particular purposes for the interviewer. Additionally, Kvale highlights that ethnographic interviews are also a particular
genre of speech that shapes, controls, and limits what is being said. Kvale raises awareness within this study that dialogical interviews are a particular genre of talk that carry with them particular practices and power relationships that shape these interviews in a myriad of ways. In particular, Kvale’s scholarship afforded an opportunity to reevaluate certain interviews, which at the time for both me and the participant felt somewhat therapy-like, and examine how for both this participant and me particular patient-therapist roles evident in genre-talk may have shaped particular ethnographic interviews. This understanding of a limited number of interviews, and Kvale’s larger argument, contribute to a greater awareness of issues of power that shape interviews within this study, but this understanding does not prevent this study from making use of any interviews or other data.

This section has examined relevant scholarship on ethnographic interviews, and briefly discussed how they connect with this larger study. These connections and their importance to specific aspects of this ethnographic interview study are expanded upon and addressed later in this chapter.

Fieldnotes and Participant Journals

Additionally, I intended to pursue the writing of fieldnotes and collect participant journals as part of the methodology of this study. Drawing upon scholars such as Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) and examples of ethnographers such as Whyte (1943) whose work contained discussions on the vital role of fieldnotes in ethnographic studies, I believed fieldnotes regarding social activities of importance to foreign English teachers could be illuminating for this study. These scholars highlight how fieldnotes can allow for the examination of practices of people as they happen through the careful recording of people’s actions. Prior to returning to Korea, I imagined a variety of social situations in which writing fieldnotes could be illuminating such as
social gatherings in which teaching, life in Korea, and information regarding new work opportunities are discussed. However, in practice I found pursuing the act of writing of fieldnotes rather challenging. Additionally, I believed that journals kept by participants in which they wrote about their experiences, understandings, feelings and more would allow this study to examine some negotiations of selves as they occurred that otherwise might be difficult to examine. However, like fieldnotes, I would find incorporating participant journals into this study a great challenge.

Reflexivity, Subjectivity, and the Self in Ethnography and Ethnographic Interview Studies

Within this study, a variety of scholars with differing backgrounds and interests have raised awareness of how researchers using ethnographic methods benefit from reflexive examination of themselves and their data (Coffey, 1999; Pellatt, 2003), and the critical role researchers’ selves play in the genesis and development of their ethnographic research (Peshkin, 1988). Some critical aspects of this discussion have focused on how ethnographic researchers can textually represent themselves in their ethnographic texts, and how these researchers can make use of their various selves (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Ivy, 1995).

Pelatt discusses how “reflexivity involves the researcher in intimately interacting with texts to make some sense of the meaning, and there has to be an awareness of the ways in which self affects both research processes and outcomes”, (2003, p. 30). Further, Fetterman (2010), discusses how ethnographic researchers when conducting their studies, “recognize that their presence is a factor in this human equation” (p. 128). Within this study I have attempted to be aware of how my presence and who I am has shaped this study from participant recruitment, to collecting data, to analysis, and the writing of this final text. In particular instances of participant recruitment and ethnographic interviews my presence as a straight, white, Canadian man teaching
English in Korea shaped much of the talk and events that occurred, and this study explores this both in this chapter and beyond. Further, an understanding of myself and my own negotiations of masculinity deeply shaped the analysis of some participants’ negotiations of gendered selves. A reflexive understanding of how my presence in different contexts shaped elements of this study is an important element of this text.

Peshkin (1988), again influencing this study, highlights how ethnographic researchers’ selves can shape what a researcher becomes aware of and how attention and interest shift with these selves. Peshkin discusses encountering his own subjectivity in his research by discovering he was writing about a context and participants in less-positive ways, and how this chance encounter led him to make efforts to use his subjectivity in his future research (p. 287) and not be caught unaware again. Peshkin argues a researcher’s subjectivity can be part of the contribution that a researcher makes towards a field as it is an aspect of the unique perspective and view any one researcher inevitably brings towards any study. Further, he argues a researcher can use her or his subjectivity in particular ways.

How did I know when my subjectivity was engaged? I looked for the warm and the cool spots, the emergence of positive and negative feelings, the experiences I wanted to have more of or to avoid, as well as when I felt moved to act in roles beyond those necessary to fulfill my research needs. (p. 287)

Peshkin went further and named his different subjectivities and explored how they shaped and reshaped his research and work in form of “subjectivity audit” (p. 288). While I did not conduct a subjectivity audit, the awareness Peshkin discussed in his research inspired aspects of this study, including attempts to examine how my own subjectivities shaped my curiosity and interest in different aspects of this study.
A variety of scholars ranging from those concerned with autoethnography\textsuperscript{11} to those examining ethnographic interviews have explored how ethnographic researchers can explicitly incorporate their own voices and selves into their ethnographic studies. These scholars advocate a myriad of different approaches to incorporating the ethnographic researchers’ presence into a text with some, such as Fetterman (2010), arguing that at a minimum ethnographic researchers disclose their presence in a text.

Thus, rather than present an artificial picture, ethnographers openly describe their roles in events during fieldwork. The voice of the ethnographic writer is heard in discussions of site, data, and relationships with key actors. This is a form of reflexivity, in which the ethnographer is embedded in the research (p. 128)

This perspective is important and I have attempted to explicitly place myself within this text when the context demanded I do so for issues of clarity and analysis. However, others go further, and those ethnographic scholars who explore sites and contexts in which they are deeply familiar can draw upon their own experiences and incorporate them into their ethnographic studies as explicit autobiographic discussions as Hayano (1982), Britzman (2003), Stanley (2013), and Canagarajah (2012) did. In this study I follow these scholars and draw upon my own experiences as a foreign English teacher and at relevant points weave my own experiences into this larger ethnographic study, treating myself as a participant, to a limited degree. I explicitly represent myself in this text when, in my judgment, my own experiences best compliment and develop the already existent ethnographic data, and when my analysis or understanding directly arises from my personal experiences as a foreign English teacher in Korea. One critical aspect of bringing my own voice into this study is representing my own identity within this text. I describe myself at the

\textsuperscript{11} See the special issue of the \textit{Journal of Contemporary Ethnography} on autoethnography (Hunt & Junco, 2006) for a brief introduction to some issues concerning autoethnography and Canagarajah (2012) for a productive example of an autoethnography within TESOL.
beginning of the participant identity section at the end of this chapter and again when I discuss my experiences in different sections throughout the remainder of this text. However, additional scholarship has challenged me as I wrote these researcher identity sections, and hint at the challenges and difficult choices that lie in representing myself as the researcher and author of this text.

By all means, writers should reflect ceaselessly and critically on the terms of their interests in particular subjects or objects. But I tend to be more fully persuaded (or moved, or engaged, or inspired) by writers who embody such reflection in the very texture of their writing, where it may be discovered by reading. That readerly preference has undoubtedly shaped my writerly choices.

The question remains: Where does reflexivity lie? In the writing of a text? A chapter? A paragraph? A comma? A hyphen? Perhaps a specific hyphen in all its particularity can embody more reflexivity, more experience, and more real politics than all the enframed assertions of politics ever could. (Ivy, 1995, p. 28)

Ivy crafted a text that moves away from an explicit engagement with the authorial, first-person “I” that announces the authors’ selves, reflexivity, subjectivity, and instead crafts a text that allows a reading and engagement with an awareness of the author’s presence, but without interjections from author. This idea has intrigued me and shaped much of the writing of this final text. Ultimately, I concluded this text demanded I include multiple explicit interjections of my authorial presence, but elsewhere I have endeavored to pursue some of the paths laid out by Ivy.

Ivy is not alone in critically examining issues of researcher subjectivity, reflexivity, and self-representation in ethnographic research (Berger, 2015), but I have found the approaches discussed in this section productive overall for this study. I have attempted to incorporate issues
of reflexivity, subjectivity, and issues of related to researchers’ presence into this text and I believe they have contributed to enriching this ethnographic interview study.

**Multi-sited Ethnography**

Multi-sited ethnography “moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space” (Marcus, 1995, p. 96). This focus on circulation, movement, and multiple places that can include relatively close locations and those separated by vast global distances can productively further studies of migration, diaspora, and movement with Falzon arguing that “multi-sited ethnography defines as its objective the study of social phenomena that cannot be accounted for by focusing on a single site,” (Falzon, 2009, p. 1). Critical to multi-sited ethnography is the idea of “following” and Marcus discusses how researchers can follow the people; follow the thing; follow the metaphor; follow the plot, story, or allegory; follow the life or biography; and follow the conflict. These ways of following or tracing or mapping particular paths through time and space are important as they allow for the examination of people, objects, and ideas that increasingly move and interact in a globalized world, with, as Marcus argues, multi-sited ethnography arising “in response to empirical changes in the world and therefore to transformed locations of cultural production” (Marcus, 1995, p. 80).

Within this ethnographic interview study, scholarship on multi-sited ethnography (Falzon, 2009; Marcus, 1995; Marcus, 2011) has raised an awareness of how stories and people move within Korea, beyond, and the migration of foreign English teachers to and from Korea. Further, this scholarship has contributed to an awareness of boundaries I have drawn around different places in Korea, and those boundaries participants in this study experience and understand as they live and teach in Korea. While there is a wealth of scholarship concerned with multi-sited
ethnography, within this study multi-sited ethnography has contributed to a valuable awareness regarding movement, boundaries, and the possibilities of following different elements.

**Drawing on Ethnographic Scholarship**

A wide swath of ethnographic scholarships has shaped this study, raising awareness of vital issues and influencing the totality of this study from its genesis and design to the messiness of fieldwork and interviews, to the construction of this final text. Importantly, the story of doing this study, collecting data, and the halting and iterative process of data collection, analysis and constructing this text highlights how I moved with different degrees of awareness of different issues at different points as I slowly brought this study forward, and struggled to make meaning out of the collected data.

**The Beginnings of Fieldwork**

This study began when I returned to Korea in August 2010 to take up a position as a full-time lecturer teaching English language classes at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in the Department of English Interpretation and Translation. Arriving in August after two years of being away from Korea in pursuit of graduate studies in the United States, I was initially eager to begin this study but also had substantial teaching commitments, especially as I was in a new department and struggled to fulfill both my commitments to my students and the university. The conflict between dissertation research and university commitments, including but not limited to teaching, would be a running issue throughout this study, manifesting in several different ways.

Like the commitment required by my job, the social obligations of my friends would substantially shape my commitment to this study, given that I was again immersed in a social
world that had extensive social obligations which simultaneously demanded a large amount of
time, but also granted me access to networks of foreign English teachers. There is a critical
tension in this study between my social world as a place of recreation and my social world as a
place of research. Aspects of this tension emerged in the competition between my desire to make
use of my already existent social networks within this study, and my desire to simply socialize
with old and new friends, and how those desires occasionally conflated, limiting in some ways
my productive engagement with fieldwork. It was tempting upon my return to Korea to socialize
in places with many foreign English teachers and where participant recruitment was possible, but
navigating both the practices and temptations of a place that was both a site of recreation and
research proved challenging. Likewise, there is a tension between, for me, the pleasurable
fieldwork of spending time with foreign English teachers alongside conducting interviews and my
engagement with the frustrating and emotionally challenging work of transcription, analysis, and
committing difficult words to page that represent participants, identities, and arguments about
foreign English teachers in Korea. This tension would, especially initially in this study, lead me to
unproductively overemphasize the more enjoyable aspects of this study such as interviews, at the
cost of further analysis of already collected data that could have informed fieldwork as it was
being done.

Participant Recruitment Goals

I began this study explicitly pursuing two major goals for recruiting participants,
although I was also open to any foreign English teacher who wished to participate in this study.
First, I wanted to recruit foreign English teachers who were new-to-Korea. I believed that by
bringing new-to-Korea teachers into this study and observing and hearing about these teachers’
initial experiences in Korea I could better understand some of the more important aspects of how
foreign English teachers learn how to be foreign English teachers and negotiate teacher selves. Based on my own experiences, I believed some of the most important experiences for these teachers occur when they first arrive in Korea, and I was especially interested in gaining access to organizations that bring foreign English teachers to Korea and hoped to make use of those organizations to recruit participants who recently arrived in Korea via those organizations.

Beyond seeking out new-to-Korea teachers, I also wanted to recruit teachers for this study whose stories or experiences surprised or challenged me. I believed I should pursue this rather loose and open strategy of recruiting interesting and different teachers as I was greatly concerned that within this study I would simply be reifying my own previously held beliefs about foreign English teachers in Korea. Especially as I was using my own social network for participant recruitment, I felt there was a danger that I would remain cocooned within a very small social circle and see only those negotiations of selves with which I was most familiar. I believed pursuing a strategy of recruiting surprising or challenging teachers would allow me to examine a wide swath of foreign English teachers’ experiences and negotiations of selves.

Therefore, I planned to ask friends and acquaintances to put me in contact with teachers they felt were interesting or different and was also prepared to ask teachers I encountered in my daily routine who surprised me in some way to join this study, believing that through this recruitment process I would be able to expand this study and create a more productive exploration of how foreign English teachers negotiate selves in Korea.

Additionally, I must acknowledge the danger of seeking out interesting or different teachers. It is easy for this strategy to slip into simply seeking out tokens of difference among foreign English teachers. It can be easy to simply meet a disabled South-African teacher of Color and immediately assume that this teacher’s experiences are different and that by including her or him in this study I can further expand this scope of this study. However, I was aware of the danger in only seeking out difference in terms of gender, race, sexuality or larger subject
positions and how any attempt to recruit diverse participants could potentially lead to superficial explorations of difference. I believe this awareness, to some degree, mitigated some of the potential dangers of this recruitment strategy.

Participant Recruitment in Practice, Initial Interviews, and Wandering Methods

Arriving in Korea I started contacting some of my remaining friends in Korea, both to reestablish old friendships and invite them to participate in this study in a number of ways. I reached out to these friends, or those I felt comfortable reaching out to, and invited them to directly participate in this study and asked that they put me in contact with others who might be interested in this study as well. Before I began collecting any data I had a classroom experience that led me to start journaling about my personal experiences. These journals are personal reflections of my experiences, focused very much on myself, my feelings, and my understandings that allowed me to reflect on my personal experiences as a resident of Korea, a foreign English teacher in Korea, and a researcher engaging in an ethnographic interview study. These journals at points carefully accounted for some events involving others, in order for me to understand my experiences in those situations, but were more a reflective account primarily focused on me and my understandings, emotions, actions, and experiences. These journals were an attempt to navigate some of the conflicting aspects of my social obligations, my personal experiences and desires, and the demands of this research. Further, these journals were a place for me to begin considering ideas that emerged from this study, and initially develop ideas about further recruiting participants.

Attempting to recruit teachers newly arrived in Korea, I initially reached out to several friends who had contact with the Korean government sponsored English Program in Korea or EPIK, which recruits many new-to-Korea foreign English teachers for Korean public schools, and
asked them to help me contact EPIK in order to gain access to an organization that could facilitate participant recruitment. Unfortunately, I failed to find any means of productively approaching EPIK, and abandoned that strategy. Instead I simply asked teachers I knew to put me in contact with any foreign English teachers they knew who were newly arrived in Korea. Further, I personally began asking new-to-Korea teachers I encountered to join this study. This strategy eventually allowed me to recruit six new-to-Korea teachers who became valuable participants in this study, all of whom were recruited through these personal connections.

Attempting to recruit interesting foreign English teachers in Korea meant that whenever I met foreign English teachers for the first time, I invited those who surprised me or told me interesting stories into this study. In other cases when speaking with friends or participants and they asked about who I was looking for to participate in this study, I told them I was interested in recruiting participants who have different experiences, although in at least one instance this was understood by a friend to mean teachers of Color.

However, I must acknowledge that I also pursued additional recruitment strategies that were not explicitly part of my research design, nor was I completely aware of them until after at least a year of fieldwork. First, I especially relied on my close friends for participants as I felt that as close friends they would participate in this study and would provide a reservoir of participants should I fail to recruit any others. Although not all of these “close-friend participants” contributed greatly to this study, their inclusion is an unintended or implicit strategy I unknowingly embraced. Second, I pursued further interviews with those participants who seemed more at ease in interviews with me and who were more willing to speak freely about a variety of issues of interest within this study. While this is a reasonable strategy to pursue, I was not aware I was engaging in this practice until more than a year after beginning fieldwork and this unintended practice shaped this study in possibly unproductive ways, limiting important contributions from participants who
may have had important elements to add to this study, but were, seemingly, less eager to speak with me.

Additionally, my extended social network encompassed several different cities in Korea and so several participants who resided in several different cities joined this study. I believe this added to this study as these participants’ perspectives allowed me to examine how different foreign English teachers negotiated different selves in different contexts, and allowed me to examine how some discourses, such as those concerning shopping in Seoul, circulate well beyond local contexts. Within this study Seoul retains the name Seoul as this city is large enough that confidentiality is not endangered by discussing this city. However, the two other cities participants reside in are given pseudonyms, General City and Industrial City in order to preserve participant confidentiality. General City and Industrial City are two cities with close to or over one-million people and are within two hours travel of Seoul by high-speed train. Descriptions for every participant recruited for this study are contained in the Appendix as are details of their participation in this study. Additionally, those key participants whose experiences are extensively examined are further described at the end of this chapter.

After two initial interviews I noted in my journal my self-assessed weaknesses in these interviews, my need for improvement, and the opportunity these initial interviews represented.

I need to work on my interviews, working on not asking why questions or yes-no questions, but instead getting participants to tell stories and give understandings.

I was really putting Arizona on the spot, so I need to work on that. I need to work on my interview skills and Arizona and use my initial participants to develop my interview protocol further.

These initial interviews, and to some degree all initial interviews with new participants, were awkward, with this awkwardness later acknowledged and discussed by some participants, but as
the study progressed I became more comfortable with the interviews and most importantly worked towards asking open ended questions and giving time for participants to answer these questions and tell the stories they wished to tell.

Additionally, many times, both at the beginning of this study and later as data collection continued, I engaged in activities such as shopping and having dinner with friends who were also participating in this study, and these activities informed this study in several ways. Practices such as shopping for electronics and clothes allowed me to observe these participant-friends’ negotiation of issues related to selves and bodies. However, initially in this study, these experiences were only recorded in my journal. These journal entries would prove useful in reexamining issues I encountered in activities I did with participants, but eventually I would find my use of journal entries overly focused on me and my perspective, and would move back towards another practice of writing notes that more closely resembled fieldnotes.

Moving Beyond the Beginning

Soon after beginning this study, I began focusing on interviewing the few participants I had recruited. Although I wanted to conduct participant observations I found it difficult to find specific activities that I thought would lend themselves to observation, and found most participants seemed happy to be interviewed and less comfortable being observed. Out of these initial interviews came an interest in shopping, in encounters centered on clothes and notions of appropriate clothing, and in language use among teachers as I had met a large number of Spanish speaking foreign English teachers who had learned Spanish as a first language, second language, or as a heritage language. However, at this point I was writing about my personal experiences of social encounters with others, touching on these issues raised by participants only in my journal and only infrequently. As this initial part of my study continued, I spoke with participants about
journaling activities, but most participants were reluctant to participate in journaling activities, primarily because of the effort and time it took, with only four participants contributing larger journal entries\textsuperscript{12}. This push towards recruiting new teachers, doing interviews, and failing to really engage in participant observation or other forms of data collection continued until June 2011.

**Bringing in Participant Observation**

In June 2011 I reviewed this study and found that essentially all my data was in the form of interviews and decided I needed to re-focus on participant observation. I had been present for numerous situations that I felt could valuably inform this study, and in some instances I had written journal entries about them, but had no fieldnotes reflecting these experiences nor had I sought out a particular observable activity with a participant. Reviewing this study and my original research plan, I decided to engage in participant observation in order to bring further data to bear on the areas I was investigating. I wanted to conduct fieldwork and write fieldnotes because I believed these practices would further my understandings of the experiences and actions of some foreign English in Korea, but another reason I pursued this research practice was my own desire to do ethnography in the manner of earlier great ethnographers such as Whyte (1943) who engaged in long term fieldwork in which they detailed the lives of relevant participants. This desire to “do ethnography” pushed me towards engaging in fieldwork at this point in the study despite some concerns regarding my goals with these activities. I was, to a limited degree, uncertain what activities I should or could observe and what insights I would gather from observing particular activities. Many participants had related in interviews notable or

\textsuperscript{12} Nancy, Jerri-Lee, Morraine, and Emily contributed larger journal entries to this study.
unusual experiences involving interactions with shopkeepers and encounters with passersby while walking in public that I very much would have liked to observe, but these experiences were the product of a wide variety of elements and occurred so irregularly they would be difficult to observe. Further, hoping to observe such an unusual activity seemed counter to the purpose of fieldwork which, in my mind, was primarily focused on observing the routines of people in a community. Despite any uncertainty I felt over how to conduct fieldwork, I was strongly interested in observing shopping for clothes as this was a major area of discussion with several participants and seemed a major arena in which gender is renegotiated as a foreign English teacher in Korea. Additionally, I became more interested in better understanding two neighborhoods in Seoul; Itaewon and Hongdae, areas that seemed incredibly important to foreign English teachers, with even some participants who lived outside of Seoul extensively discussing these places. Itaewon is an area in Seoul near a major American military base and is a particular “foreign” place in Korea (E. Kim, 2004; Schober, 2014), while Hongdae is a neighborhood near a major art-focused university and has numerous artistic venues and an active nightlife. Lastly, I wanted to further detail my social encounters with participants through the writing of detailed fieldnotes representing these activities so that as I moved towards analyzing the entirety of data collected in this study I could examine, analyze, and reevaluate the social activities of some key participants.

I began by writing fieldnotes about social events with two participants in which we had dinner and drinks. In writing fieldnotes after these encounters I attempted to represent the events of these nights as best as possible and noted in analytic memos several aspects of these experiences that were potentially important, such as how the large physical size of one participant influenced how he walked and moved in the streets and subways of Seoul and issues regarding use of Korean and English in some social encounters, but I also questioned how these fieldnotes would allow me greater insight into my developing areas of interest in this study. Further, some
of the most interesting aspects of these fieldnotes were the conversations that took place during these dinners in which participants told stories of their lives in Korea and discussed teaching. However, these conversations were incredibly similar to the interviews these participants did with me, with the additional complication of not being audio recorded and only reconstructed from my memory.

I also engaged in a planned participant observation of clothes shopping with one participant and another participant observation of clothes shopping that followed an interview with another participant. In the first example, I travelled with Nancy from her home to an area of Seoul with several large, international clothing retailers and attempted to record in detail her actions as she left her home, travelled to the area of Seoul she chose for her shopping trip, and engaged in shopping in a large clothing retailer, however, at points she seemed uncomfortable with my presence and suggested I shop as well and see if I could find any clothes I needed. Further, as I attempted to observe Nancy’s actions in the store, I noticed the most relevant aspect of this experience appeared to be that most of the clothes available in the store were too small for Nancy, causing her frustration to varying degrees. However, this experience of not being able to find appropriately sized items at clothing retailers in Korea is an experience I well understood from my own many experiences shopping for clothes in Korea, and from Nancy’s earlier interviews discussing this issue. In the end I produced a short fieldnote representing this observation, but was skeptical that this participant observation would contribute much to this study. The later participant observation of clothes shopping I conducted took place spontaneously, after an interview with Carly. Following this interview, done in Hongdae, Carly suggested going for a walk and stopping by her favorite clothing store which offered indie rock related clothing and items. This participant observation and the fieldnotes it produced offered greater insight into Carly’s negotiation of bodies and dress and her complicated relationship with the world of indie bands in Korea, a vital aspect of her life in Korea.
I also wanted to further explore foreign English teachers’ engagement with the two neighborhoods of Itaewon and Hongdae and decided to pursue walking tours of these neighborhoods to generate further data that could inform this study. Pink argues that practices such as engaging in a walking tour with participants can allow ethnographic researchers to better understand how some people experience and “make” a place.

By attending to the sensoriality and materiality of other people’s ways of being in the world, we cannot directly access their ‘collective’ memories, experiences or imaginations. However we can, by following their routes and attuning our bodies, rhythms, tastes, ways of seeing and more to theirs, begin to make places that are similar to theirs, and thus feel that we are similarly emplaced. (p. 193)

I first engaged in a walking tour of Itaewon alone, attempting to record my own experiences and understandings of travelling to and walking around this particular place. I produced a detailed fieldnote that in many ways successfully represented my experience of walking about this neighborhood, and the understandings I had of this place, but this practice of a solo walking tour did not seem to offer many new insights or understandings of this place or suggest that this practice would contribute further to this study. I found the written record of fieldnote valuable as a text I could present to readers that represented the experiences and understandings of some foreign English teachers in Korea\textsuperscript{13}, however, it also seemed to be a record of what I already knew based upon my earlier experiences of simply walking around this neighborhood during my normal social activities. Therefore, I followed this solo walking tour of Itaewon with a walking tour of Hongdae conducted with Morraine. She often socialized and shopped in Hongdae and this neighborhood had value to her as a unique, creative, and artistic place in Korea. In this walking tour of Hongdae and this neighborhood had value to her as a unique, creative, and artistic place in Korea. In this walking tour of Hongdae and this neighborhood had value to her as a unique, creative, and artistic place in Korea. In this walking tour of Hongdae and this neighborhood had value to her as a unique, creative, and artistic place in Korea. In this walking

\textsuperscript{13} I did not include this fieldnote within this study as the focus of this study shifted away from experiences and understandings of Itaewon. Regardless, this fieldnote was both valuable data and a text that successfully represents some foreign English teachers’ experiences and understandings of this place.
tour I tried to develop a sense of Morraine’s Hongdae as we both walked through this neighborhood. Morraine was very willing to participate in this walking tour, and activity narrated the tour as we walked between restaurants, bars, cafes, small shops, and the university campus that anchors the neighborhood. As we walked she told stories of some of her experiences in these different locations and discussed the various meanings of this neighborhood to her, contrasting it with other areas of Seoul. In doing this walking tour with Morraine I gained a sense of what this place was to her and other foreign English teachers in Korea, but in almost every key way Morraine’s Hongdae was also my Hongdae; the Hongdae I knew from my own experiences walking around and socializing in this neighborhood. Given my already existent knowledge, this research practice did not provide a greater insight into issues relevant to this study. What proved more insightful and revealing were Morraine’s stories of her experiences in this neighborhood, told as we walked by the different locations in this place. These stories were, at points, new and surprising and offered insight into how she negotiated a variety of aspects of her life in Korea, but the purpose of this research activity was not the collection of stories, which was already being done through interviews, and so I again questioned the value of my attempts at fieldwork in this study.

Overall, my attempts at fieldwork contributed to this study by emphasizing how the physicality of bodies, especially the size of some foreign English teachers such as John, shaped some aspects of their experiences in Korea. Further, a participant observation with Carly granted greater insight into her engagement with the world of Korean indie bands and how shopping and dress are important elements of that engagement. However, in many ways my efforts to make participant observation and walking tours part of this study did not grant greater insight into important aspects of this study, and for the most part are not incorporated into this text. The purpose of these activities was to better understand the routines of foreign English teachers and how these teachers experience and understand particular places such as Itaewon and Hongdae, but
my research practices did not contribute new insights to this study. These research activities allowed me to observe aspects of how these teachers experienced shopping for clothes and social activities and by being present with them in particular places attune myself to how they experience these places, but I already had acquired much of this knowledge through my many years living and teaching in Korea. In the most critical ways I had already done the equivalent of fieldwork through my own daily routines of living and teaching in Korea. Therefore, these activities often added little to my already existent knowledge.

Importantly, I engaged in fieldwork with participants who were comfortable or even eager to contribute to this study and with participants who, in some ways, were similar to me, exacerbating how these fieldwork practices only served to reexamine issues I, for the most part, already understood. If I had engaged in a walking tour of Hongdae or Itaewon with a participant who understood these places in radically different ways than me or had engaged in participant observation of a foreign English teacher whose social activities were radically different than those I often engage in, I may have learned more about how different foreign English teachers negotiate different selves in Korea. These additional unexplored possibilities of fieldwork and foreign English teachers are further explored in Chapter 6 when I discuss future research that can further explore issues examined in this study.

Ultimately, the fieldwork practices I engaged in made only a limited impact on this study and only briefly appear within this larger text. However, the knowledge I acquired through living and teaching in Korea, in many ways the equivalent of fieldwork and the primary reason such fieldwork practices did not contribute many new insights to this study, contributed to this study in numerous ways. My own experiences would, in the most critical ways, replace the larger fieldwork that was done or could have been done as part of this study. However, the long term familiarity I had with the experiences and understandings of foreign English teachers in Korea would make examining some of the unstated and more hidden assumptions of these teachers more
challenging, something I struggled with as I analyzed the data collected as part of this study and further discuss later in this chapter.

Importantly given this is a study or teachers, I did not observe schools or classrooms, although at times I entered and observed participants’ classrooms for reasons unrelated to this study. I originally avoided participant observations of classrooms and schools as I wanted to focus on the more social worlds of teachers, not their classrooms and classroom practices, and believed there would be a danger of focusing of pedagogy rather than schools as one place in which teachers lived out their lives. However, as this study developed and participants extensively discussed issues involving their teacher selves, issues of classrooms and schools became more relevant to this study. However, my understanding of this theme emerged late in this study and adding observation of classrooms and educational institutions would involve considerable challenges involving participant concerns and the concerns of students and instructors at those educational institutions. Further, the educational institutions that may have been the most productive to observe were the classrooms and schools filled with the most tension and potential negative career consequences for the participants teaching there. Several participants experienced severe breakdowns in their work relationships with administrators and colleagues and observing those educational institutions, including interactions with colleagues and students, could have been productive, but in several cases would have been impossible or incredibly challenging, given the conflicts and tensions in those workplaces. Instead this study relies on interview data and the knowledge that comes from knowing participants over time and in social activities to discuss how these teachers crafted teacher selves. In interviews these teachers discuss their lives, which included their experiences teaching and working in educational institutions, and in these discussions they discussed who they are as teachers, their schools, their students, and a variety of issues related to them being teachers. This interview data allows for an examination of how these teachers construct themselves as teachers, and what this
construction does for them in different ways. While these discussions involve talk of schools, effective classes, ineffective teachers, excellent educational management, and other aspects of different educational institutions, this study uses this talk to only examine how these foreign English teachers develop teacher selves. Future studies, engaging in long-term intensive observations of educational institutions, may go beyond this study and explore further issues of English language education in Korea and contribute in ways beyond this current study.

Ultimately, the primary data that shapes this study is ethnographic interviews. Therefore, this study is best termed an ethnographic interview study, and importantly, there are limits to the participant observation in this study, and the quantity of observation does not equal those studies in which daily field notes focused on a bounded place are kept for a year or more. My journals, the participant observations, and the walking tour activities done as part of this study compliment the interviews collected, but this study’s primary focus is the ethnographic interviews done with foreign English teachers in Korea.

Analysis and Writing as a Halting and Iterative Process

Analysis began in the midst of initial data collection with analytic memos, and notes reflecting on interviews being written shortly after the study began. However, this process was intermittent, with any effort towards analysis dropping off for periods of several months as other commitments became priorities. Regardless, these initial efforts allowed for this study to progress and within a few months of data collection issues of shopping and language use emerged from the data as key areas of interest.

Analytic memos were written in the midst of data collection as a means of writing through ideas involving this study, aiding the development of important concepts, and helped guide this study in several ways. These memos were attempts to make sense of the data collected,
and a means of textually reflecting on ideas that were of seeming relevance to this study. In using the act of writing as a means of understanding and further developing data, my ideas, and this study, I was embracing writing as method of inquiry (Richards, 1994) and analysis. This process of writing as a means of analysis allowed for the development of ideas that would shape interviews and data collection in the midst of this activity and led to the development of ideas that would eventually shape this final text. Within this study, writing as a means of developing ideas went far beyond analytic memos and was an important element throughout the writing of this text, but it was within analytic memos that much initial key analysis took place. However, the writing of analytic memos, again, was done intermittently, and at times halted.

Additionally, notes were often written immediately after interviews and these helped develop emerging themes in this study. These notes allowed for reflection on the interview, and would sometime outline additional questions for that participant’s subsequent interview and additional questions for other participants’ interviews. These notes also allowed for a quicker process of reflecting on interview data as often during the first two years of this study the process of listening to recorded interviews was put aside because of pressures of time and other responsibilities, a potential weakness of this study as this left some issues raised by participants relatively unexamined if they only became apparent through careful review of the recorded interviews. Nevertheless, these quick notes proved productive in moving this study forward.

In the midst of collecting data some interviews were listened to and brief notes were written about the contents of these interviews. Usually the interview was listened to and topics, keywords, and limited key sections were transcribed into files associated with the interview. These practices provided a means of quickly reviewing interviews and allowed for an examination of the accumulating data. As the study progressed and data collection came to an end in early 2013 transcription of interviews became more of a priority and work was done transcribing key interviews.
Transcription both for analysis and in representing the words of participants is a deeply political practice (Bucholtz, 2000; Green, Franquiz, & Dixon, 1997; Ochs, 1979; Roberts, 1997). Challenges in transcription in this study involved English speakers from a variety of places using a variety of Englishes, participants using Korean vocabulary that had become common among foreign English teachers such as *hagwon*, and participants who, occasionally, mid-sentence switched into Korean during interviews, with one participant occasionally assuming I could easily comprehend those statements when, in fact, I sometimes could not. These challenges were met by working with some participants, when possible, to discuss how they are represented in interviews (Roberts, 1997, p. 170), and engaging in a reflexive transcription process in which I questioned how and why I transcribed interviews in certain ways and how my choices shaped representations of participants. Further, I experimented with alternative forms of transcribing during the course of this study in order to understand the opportunities for analysis and representation offered by different forms of transcription. Ultimately, I adopted a transcribing method that is common in ethnographies in which interviews are naturalized (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1461), so that oral speech appears as conventional written text that is easily understood, and with punctuation adhering to the conventions of journalism, novels, and other common texts. Further, I adopted a limited use of colloquial spellings (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1456), despite the dangers of marginalizing participants through the use of marginalized forms of speech, as these limited colloquial spelling, I believe, best represent the oral qualities of these interviews. In order to mitigate some of the dangers of colloquial spelling I ensured I used these spellings systematically when I represented interviews within this text. My goal with this transcription process is to create a text that best represents for the reader the participants’ voice and speech, aware of the politics and power of representation in transcriptions, and the profound limits of representing spoken language in written forms.
Not every interview was transcribed and some participants’ data was only reviewed to a limited extent. The decision to transcribe some interviews and not others, and focus on some participants and not others, was based on several factors, but was driven by the limited amount of time that could be devoted to transcribing interviews, the minimum benefits this effort would deliver, and some concerns over issues of representing certain participants.

One participant in particular appeared to simply be uncomfortable in interviews. Despite carefully discussing participation in this study, discussing exactly how this participant would be represented, and this participant’s consent to be a part of this study, I was not comfortable with the level of comfort this participant showed in interviews and later this individual discussed feeling somewhat uncomfortable during interviews, in the midst of a conversation outside the context of this study, and I ultimately did not transcribe those interviews, although this unnamed individual remains as part of this study. Additionally, a few participants discussed experiences very similar to other participants and in those cases I chose to focus on the participant who best represented the issues I was attempting to examine, and who I was most comfortable representing within this text, attempting to balance these issues in my decision. Importantly, all the participants represented within this study consented to be a part of this study, but the issue of being textually represented in an ethnographic interview study can also involve issues of comfort and concern over who and how people are discussed in the final version of a text.

In other cases I did not transcribe participant interviews because after listening to the interviews and typically, but not always, writing notes about the interviews, I decided transcription would not further contribute to the already emerging themes in this study. At the time, I typically noted that I should transcribe the audio recording later, but as the study developed and I focused on particular issues within this study, I eventually elected not to further transcribe many of those interviews as I believe they would not add further to the focus of this study and the already existing notes allowed me to understand the content of the interviews.
Regardless, I believe all the interviews I did as part of this study contributed to this final text in varying ways, and so I represent all participants in this study in the Table 1-1 Participant Descriptions and discuss the extent of their participation in this study in Table 2-1 Data Collected, both of which are located in the Appendix.

As I continued the analytical process of reading and rereading notes, transcribing interviews, reading participant journals, writing and reading my own personal journals, and writing analytic memos I developed themes and areas of interest, and began to code primarily the interview and journal data. I embedded keywords into the transcripts focusing on content discussed, and as analysis and writing continued also coded for emerging concepts that were of interest in this study and I believed were embedded in certain sections of data. I initially coded context for teaching, shopping, dating, language, and clothes and later coded concepts for mediation, teacher identities, and professionalism. I would continue coding different participants’ data adding further terms items such as holidays and job-searches, but also abandoned some terms when they proved to be of less relevance to this study. With these terms embedded within transcripts, searches of these files using a variety of different Microsoft operating systems returned examples and made searching and reviewing the data relatively simple. Further, as this data was being coded I began writing longer notes about each theme which contained excerpts of interviews, notes about the original interview, details of the original interviews and key ideas I was developing. As these notes grew I began to arrange them into larger documents that became nascent chapters. These larger documents were then extended, rewritten, and revised while I also continued to review data and relevant literature.

This process of analyzing data relied upon writing as a means of further understanding the themes being developed as part of this study (Richards, 1994). The reading and rereading of interviews, the review of the limited participant observations collected, and self-reflection regarding my own experiences as a foreign English teacher in Korea all contributed to this larger
process. Drawing upon my own experiences as a foreign English and my own general knowledge as someone who has lived in Korea for many years as a foreign English teacher allowed me insight into the experience and understandings of the participants in this study, and allowed me to understand some critical aspects of these teachers that might have required other researchers to undertake more extensive fieldwork and participant observation. However, my own great familiarity with both these teachers’ experiences and the contexts in which these teachers lived and taught also created challenges for me as I attempted to both analyze and contextualize the data collected as part of this study. Often the most naturalized and invisible assumptions of foreign English teachers in Korea were also my own internalized assumptions, creating significant analytical challenges for me as I attempted to critically examine certain practices, experiences, and understandings of some foreign English teachers. It was not until relatively late in the analytical process, and through the writing and rewriting of multiple analytical memos exploring issues of teacher selves, that I uncovered some of my own hidden assumptions regarding English language curriculum in Korea and the roles of Korean teachers of English and foreign English teachers in Korea. Sharing aspects of this text with others, explicitly asking what assumption both participants and I were making with regards to certain aspects of teaching, and a continual process of writing and rewriting helped make visible some of the naturalized assumptions I made during the process of analyzing data in this study and allowed me to bring these aspects explicitly into this study. This process of seeking out hidden assumptions and naturalized understandings, such as the differing roles Korean English teachers and foreign English teachers hold in the vast majority of curriculum in Korea, contributed greatly to this study overall.

Additionally, my great familiarity with the contexts of foreign English teachers in Korea made contextualizing the experience and understandings of foreign English teachers more challenging as so much of the background of this study had ceased to be part of any research
project for me and had long ago simply become a naturalized part of my daily routine and normal life. To work towards contextualizing this study I had to adopt the unfamiliar stance of someone to whom Korea and the experience of travelling abroad to teach English was relatively unknown. Adopting the viewpoint of an imagined scholar interested in this topic but less familiar with the details of the places and teachers under discussion in this text let me contextualize this study in a far more productive way, and granted me new insight into aspects of these teachers’ experiences and understandings as well.

Throughout the analysis of data and the writing of this larger study I continually wrote and rewrote analytic memos and larger potential sections of this final text. This iterative process continued with certain major chapters being discarded and certain themes and corresponding chapters emerging as the most productive aspects of this study, and eventually being incorporated into this final text. Importantly, this was a halting and iterative process of analysis, with month-long stops in which I focused elsewhere and upon returning to this study I both had to relearn what I had been focusing on earlier, and approached some ideas with new perspectives brought about by looking at the data and ideas with a new perspective. Ultimately this iterative and halting process of reviewing data and writing narrowed this study to a focus on teacher selves, issues of bodies and dress, and the role of professionalism among foreign English teachers. Earlier areas of interest such as personal relationships, language learning and use, recreation, and arrivals and departures while remaining areas of study worth further examination were removed in order to focus on areas most relevant to researchers and teachers, producing this final version of this ethnographic interview study.
Researcher as Participant and the Mingling of Researcher-Participant Selves

One of the most salient aspects of the overall methodology of this study is the juxtaposition of me as researcher concerned with foreign English teachers in Korea and me as a straight, white, male, unmarried foreign English teacher in Korea with more than ten years’ experience teaching, and a relatively elite teaching position. The tension between these two positions influenced my orientation and understanding of this study in many ways, productively contributing much to this study, but also requiring an awareness of my subject positions and the orientation I brought to my areas of inquiry. Importantly my status as both researcher and foreign English teacher shaped my relationships with participants as well, influencing the collection of data, opportunities to access places and participants, and general development of this study.

As a foreign English teacher working for Hankuk University of Foreign Studies my position often became a point of conversation with other foreign English teachers. Although I often asked participants if they had questions for me, and they rarely had many questions, my job was one topic about which participants and other teachers would initiate a discussion, focusing often on how I was able to find my job, what qualifications I had, and how teachers can move from private academies to public schools to university positions, with these positions typically offering increasing pay and much longer paid vacation time. In this situation my position as a teacher created the discussion that followed and shaped my position as a potential mentor to some participants in this study. Further, my choice to pursue a master’s degree in TESOL through a Korean university was a subject of discussion, as were my studies at The Pennsylvania State University. Therefore, the most critical aspect of my relationship with some participants is my position as long term teacher with a desirable teaching position, rather than simply my position as a foreign English teacher in Korea. Also notable was the possibility that my position closed off some potential discussions criticizing foreign English teachers who remain for many years in
Korea, although I attempted to ensure participants knew they were free to voice whatever opinions they wished.

My position as a man who is white, straight, unmarried, and in my thirties man positioned me in some ways within circulating discourses of romance and desire, which also impacted my relationships with participants and this study in general. Some foreign women who participated in this study discussed their understandings of and feelings towards white men in Korea who exclusively desire Korean women, and these discussions sometimes provoked additional questions about me and my life, occasional apologies for raising this topic, and moments of limited discomfort for both me and some participants. Likewise, some foreign women in this study discussed desiring exclusively Korean men, creating different possible tensions and questioning regarding my position, and their desires. Further, discussions with men participating in this study would also involve talk of romantic desire and these discussions would likewise involve issues of me agreeing or disagreeing with participant’s statements, and questions over my beliefs and experiences. While issues of identity and romantic desire would eventually be excluded from this study, these discussions still shaped my relationships with participants, and the development of this study. Ultimately, the data collection itself occasionally became very explicitly a negotiation of gender and desire between participants and me, a rich if occasionally uncomfortable way of exploring how different teachers negotiate these issues. As the researcher I, depending on the context, often shifted the interview away from what I felt were overly sensitive areas and let participants subtly change topics as well, and occasionally pushed some questions further if I felt comfortable doing so.

Lastly, discussions of teaching and relationships with colleagues were areas of tension for participants, and perhaps more so for me. Several participants experienced great difficulty and conflict with co-teachers, managerial personnel, and in their classrooms more generally. Interviews about these topics in which powerful emotions shaped the telling of narratives of
betrayal, deception, honor, and more were times when I felt the desire to possibly offer insight or advice based on similar experiences. However, I almost always avoided attempting to help as I felt that in those moments participants were not seeking advice and any attempt at advice could be received poorly. Additionally, I also understood my role in meeting these participants was that of listener and researcher, not mentor. Nevertheless, the urge to mitigate ongoing or, I believed, impending school and classroom disasters inevitably influenced this research and my orientation to this study.

The Importance of Time within this Study

A critical element of this study is my continuing relationship with participants over time in Korea. With all six of the on the new-to-Korea participants I was able to follow them over a large extent of time in Korea, some from near their arrival in Korea to the conclusion of this study and others to when they left Korea. This provided valuable insight into how these teachers changed over their time in Korea and how they, overtime, naturalized certain aspects of their negotiated selves in Korea. With some other teachers, who had been in Korea before joining this study, I was able to follow them leaving Korea, going to their home nation, and then, in some cases, deciding to return to teaching in Korea, following, albeit intermittently, this process of returning to Korea. Overall, conducting interviews with participants over more than two years allowed me to follow the journey these teachers took, often seeing these teachers radically rethink their plans for teaching, move from one city in Korea to another, change teaching positions, and renegotiate how they understood themselves as residents of Korea and English language teachers.
Reflections on this Study’s Methodology

This chapter explored the methodological foundations of this study, and the path I have taken to explore how foreign English teachers in Korea negotiate selves. This path has notably relied on my own social network to gather participants and leapt from place to place in Korea in what may appear to be a less rigorous and chaotic study. However, I believe in the case of foreign English teachers in Korea, and other groups of transnational, travelling workers, moving between different sites and recruiting widely varying participants may be an effective way of exploring the width and breadth of how people negotiate selves. I believe this because for many foreign English teachers in Korea their lives involve colliding worlds and people, and these teachers often move about Korea and the world, therefore, focusing on only one site or one university risks overlooking this vital issue of movement and change. Likewise, recruiting radically different participants reflects many teachers’ experiences in which their social worlds involve other teachers who work in completely different teaching environments with experiences socializing alongside these different teachers impacting so much of some teachers’ experiences in Korea. Ultimately, in adopting the methodology of this study I believe I have matched the particular methods needed to explore this community, with the migratory and transnational nature of this group of teachers.

Key Participant Descriptions

There are 27 participants in this study and all contributed to this study in various ways. However, the key participants in this study shaped it tremendously and contributed in vital ways to the overall development of this study. In order to develop an understanding of these key participants, this section describes a limited number of key participants and acts as a touchstone
for exploring these participants’ experiences and understandings. Additionally, I begin this study with a description of myself in order to contextualize those sections in which I discuss my own experiences as a foreign English teacher in Korea, and to provide an understanding of my own researcher identity.

My Identity as a Researcher and a Foreign English Teacher in Korea

I am a white, Canadian man who at the time of completing this study is in his late thirties. I began this study in fall 2010 after returning to Korea to work at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. I returned to Korea both to complete this study and because I greatly enjoyed living in Korea, learning both Korean and about Korea, and found teaching English surprisingly enjoyable. Besides teaching English in a university for much of this study, I volunteered as an English teacher at a social welfare center teaching children whose parents often could afford to send them to English hagwons. While I greatly enjoyed learning Korean in the past, since beginning to study in an MA TESOL program I have had progressively less time to study Korean or anything outside of my area of research. This study shaped much of my last five years in Korea and provided a means of understanding myself in Korea that was different than my earlier experiences. I explore the role of this study in shaping my experiences in Korea later in this study when I discuss how my story of being a researcher mediated some challenging experiences in my workplace.

Key Participants who joined this Study as New-to-Korea Teachers

The first five participants discussed; Nancy, Mandy, Jess, Trent, and Mary, all joined this study within four months of first arriving in Korea and their participation allowed this study to examine the changes that took place as they initially lived and taught in Korea. The remaining
participants; John, David, Carly, and Jerri-Lee all joined this study after living in Korea for more than six months.

_Nancy_

Nancy is a white, American woman who was in her late twenties when she joined this study. She joined this study within two months of arriving in Korea to teach English and participated in this study until her departure approximately two-and-a-half years later. She taught English prior to arriving in Korea in a Spanish speaking region, speaks Spanish, and had extensive training in English language teaching. She participated in twelve interviews, submitted a lengthy journal containing emails and notes discussing her path to Korea and her initial experiences in Korea, and participated in one formal observation of shopping for clothes. Further, I became familiar with the university in which she taught, and we became friends during the duration of this study, and remained in regular contact further contributing to this study. In total this study followed Nancy as she taught in Korea over approximately two-and-a-half years and therefore is able to examine her experiences prior to arriving in Korea, her experiences in Korea as they happened, her decision to leave Korea, and that experience of leaving Korea. Nancy’s interviews contributed greatly to understanding how some foreign English teachers’ understandings of bodies and dress change after they initially arrive in Korea, and how some foreign English teachers come to understand themselves as they initially develop routines as teachers and residents of Korea.
Mandy

Mandy is a white, American woman who was in her mid-to-late thirties at the time of her participation in this study. She participated in only three interviews as part of this study, and was originally contacted by me through a mutual friend in General City. She taught only one year in Korea and joined this study less than four months after arriving in Korea. Mandy taught English in a public school in General City. Mandy extensively discussed several critical topics including the difficulty of shopping for larger sized clothes in Korea, the challenges of working with the Korean teachers in her school, the impossibility of dating in Korea, and her concerns regarding future work in Korean universities. Mandy’s final interview was conducted less than three months before leaving Korea. Mandy’s data offers insight into the changes that took place in her understandings of living and teaching in Korea during her first and only year in Korea.

Jess

Jess is a white, straight, Canadian woman who was in her early to mid-twenties when she joined this study. She travelled to Korea with her partner Trent, and they participated in this study as a couple, completing five interviews together over ten months and taking part in one participant observation of a Thanksgiving Day dinner during their one and only year teaching English in Korea. Jess had already been dating Trent for several years before travelling to Korea to teach English in the same children’s English hagwon. Jess, prior to arriving in Korea, had finished university and found rewarding work, but at the time was considering different options for her future career, including the possibility of further training to become a certified elementary school teacher. She saw teaching in Korea as an opportunity to experience teaching before committing to the further education required to become a teacher in Canada. Additionally, she
wanted an opportunity to go abroad for a year and teaching in Korea was one of several options considered, but Korea was chosen because of the benefits offered by teaching positions in Korea, and the opportunity to be more settled in one place, rather than backpacking or other travel that involves more movement. Jess’s participation added greatly to this study’s discussion of foreign English teachers who engage in teaching as an opportunity to “go abroad”, and contributed to larger discussions of professionalism in English language teaching.

*Trent*

Trent is a white, straight, Canadian man who was in his early to mid-twenties when he joined this study. He travelled to Korea with his partner Jess, and they participated in this study as a couple, completing five interviews together over ten months and taking part in one participant observation of a Thanksgiving Day dinner during their one and only year teaching English in Korea. Trent had already been dating Trent for several years before travelling to Korea to teach English in the same children’s English hagwon. Trent, prior to arriving in Korea, had finished university and secured employment and a career that provided desirable benefits and a long-term career path that Trent was intent on following. This career also offered substantial opportunities for long-term unpaid leave allowing Trent to suspend his work for a year and teach in Korea. Trent did not see English language teaching as a career or as anything other than work that would allow him to go abroad for a year, prior to travelling to Korea. Trent desired to spend a year abroad, and Korea was one of several possibilities considered, eventually being selected because of the benefits offered with teaching English and the comforts available in a developed country such as Korea. Trent’s participation added greatly to this study as his interviews provided insight into the experiences and understandings of foreign English teachers who explicitly do not see teaching as a career for themselves.
Mary

Mary is a multi-ethnic woman of Color from the antipodes who joined this study in her late twenties, less than two months after arriving in Korea. Prior to arriving in Korea, Mary had successfully completed higher education above the undergraduate level in an area not related to English language teaching, and had experience teaching in higher education. Additionally, before travelling to Korea she had learned a substantial amount of Korean through experiences with a Korean roommate and self-study of the Korean language. She also described herself as being very interested in languages and had experiences learning several different languages prior to arriving in Korea. Mary decided to travel to Korea after finishing her education and not finding compelling work opportunities in the Antipodes, and because of an interest in learning “real Korean”. Mary initially was hired to teach at a university in General City, and then left that university to then go work at another, more prestigious university in the same city that had more benefits and higher pay. Mary studied the Korean language during her time in Korea through classes, tutors, and self-study, taking and passing several Korean language tests and she studied English language teaching through an educational institution as well during her time in Korea. After approximately two and half-years she left Korea to pursue work in the Antipodes. Mary participated in eight interviews and her participation in this study greatly contributed to understanding how some foreign English teachers experience and understand their initial entry to Korea, and over time develop an understanding of themselves as a resident and teacher in Korea.

John

John, a multi-ethnic American man of Color in his late twenties, joined this study while working for a business English hagwon, having previously taught English in a Korean public
school. Additionally, he would leave this business English hagwon and begin working at a university English center during his participation in this study. At the same time John frequently taught private classes, earning a large income through this private teaching. Additionally, John was a large, bulky, athletic man who in observations would occupy enough space when walking through subways and on sidewalks that either he had to carefully maneuver around others or they had to move around him. At the time of his initial interviews John taught business English to wealthy, influential business people in classrooms located on campus at his business English hagwon and often travelled around Seoul teaching English on location at various corporate offices to business people and executives. He was required to wear suits, which he had custom made according to detailed personal instructions, in all his business teaching activities.

Throughout John’s participation in this study, John’s teaching took up a very large amount of his day, necessitating early mornings and late evenings. Before joining this study I knew John as a friend and this allowed for the establishment of a close relationship in interviews, and allowed for an observation of many social activities such as dinner with John’s colleagues. John participated in five interviews over a little more than a year and nine field notes were written featuring John as a major figure. John’s participation in this study allowed for the examination of negotiations of a particular masculinity less discussed in English language teaching and an examination of a business teacher identity that would not have been possible otherwise, greatly enhancing this study.

David

David joined this study in his mid-to-late twenties while teaching in a public school in Seoul. He is an African-American teacher who taught in a rural part of Korea before moving to Seoul and beginning his participation in this study. David actively participated in several aspects
of this study, discussing hobbies related to music, was observed performing and being involved in this musical world, and participated in three interviews in total. David, while very interested in several areas such as music and popular culture such as film and science fiction, was also focused on succeeding as a teacher. Before joining this study, I knew David as a friend and this contributed to his willingness, I believe, to discuss some of the challenges he experienced with his public school in Seoul. David, in his last interview wanted to almost exclusively discuss the difficulties he was facing at his public school due to breakdowns in relationships with his Korean colleagues. David’s participation in this study allowed a detailed examination of how he experienced and negotiated the conflicts he experienced at his public school greatly contributing to this study overall.

**Carly**

Carly is a South African woman who joined this study in her mid-thirties and taught at a university in Seoul during her participation in this study. Carly did not wish to be recorded during her interviews and so instead notes were taken during her interviews and these notes were then discussed with her in a follow-up meeting that produced a final text. This procedure was repeated during a further observation as well. Carly participated in two interviews and one participant observation as part of this study. Additionally, Carly is a friend and the knowledge gained through this friendship contributed this study. This friendship with me was responsible for her interest or at least willingness to participate in this study. Carly is an award winning teacher who designed and taught innovative classes at her university in Seoul, but in many ways she does not consider herself a teacher. Instead she considers herself a professional with a job, and this understanding shaped much of her understanding of English language teaching. Carly’s passion and primary interest is the independent rock music of Korea and she has pursued this interest as a
hobby and as an area in which she would like to work, even securing part-time employment with a media company discussing Korea’s “indie-scene” in English. Additionally, Carly sees herself as permanently settled in Korea, with no plans to live again in South Africa. Importantly, Carly, given her relative disinterest in English language teaching, would not have participated in this study were it not for her friendship with me, highlighting why some participants’ experiences and understandings may not have been part of earlier studies of foreign English teachers in East Asia. Carly’s passion for music, her view of herself as a professional, and her disinterest in teaching as a career allow this study to examine issues previously un-discussed in other studies of foreign English teachers in East Asia.

**Jerri-Lee**

Jerri-Lee is a white American woman who joined this study in her late twenties. She taught in a prestigious public school in Seoul during her participation in this study, and had previously taught in English language academies for more than two years in Korea. She was also very interested in the arts, had studied photography, and was interested in pursuing a career in the creative arts that drew upon her photography and creativity, but was not interested in pursuing a continuing career as an English language teacher. Jerri-Lee submitted one journal entry and participated in five interviews with second-to last interview being done less than five months before departing Korea and her last interview done in the few days between finishing her teaching and leaving Korea permanently. Jerri-Lee’s participation in this study allows for an examination of leaving Korea and the transitions she experienced as she left English language teaching and Korea.
Chapter 4 Teacher Selves

This chapter examines the teacher selves of a variety of foreign English teachers in Korea. Teacher selves refers to the variety of ways these participants engage with, craft, purposefully shape, unknowingly shift, and are pushed by others into ways of being teachers. This study examines these teacher selves primarily through interviews with these teachers, while also drawing upon other sources of data as well. This chapter examines teacher selves through Holland et al.’s (1998) concepts of the figured world, positional identity, and space of authoring alongside a compatible understanding of discourse, drawing from Foucault (1979), and how discourses can shape and conflict within figured worlds.

This chapter contains five different explorations of teacher selves. First, this chapter examines the figured world of possible English language teaching positions available to foreign English teachers in Korea. This section discusses the different jobs available to foreign English teachers in Korea, and the shared collective understandings of these jobs. The second major section examines the teacher selves some participants negotiated, with four distinct and important teacher selves being extensively discussed. Third, this chapter examines mediated changing selves within spaces of authoring, and how some foreign English teachers mediated their actions through understandings of themselves as teachers in both times of profound crisis and in times of more gradual change. Fourth, this chapter examines conflicting discourses within some foreign English teachers’ figured worlds of English language teaching. The fifth section examines how foreign English teachers position themselves through gender and how gender positions teachers in various ways. These issues of teacher selves, positional teacher identities, mediated development of teacher selves, gendered positioning, and conflicting discourses interrelate and these important
intersections are further discussed in the conclusion of this chapter and in Chapter 6, the discussion chapter.

The Figured World of Foreign English Teacher Jobs in Korea

In order to understand the particular identity negotiations of these teachers, the larger teaching ecology of English language education in Korea and global TESOL must be briefly examined as these elements shape how teachers develop understandings of themselves in Korea. The ecology of teaching positions in Korea can be understood as a figured world of teaching positions with terms, titles, stories, and characters all taking on specialized, layered meanings that are widely shared among foreign English teachers, and are rapidly disseminated and learned by new foreign English teachers in Korea.

The participants discussed in this chapter work in academies or “hagwons”, various types of schools, and universities. These institutions have particular attributes as characters within a figured world (Holland et al., 1998) understanding that within each category wild diversity also exists. Hagwons, or academies, are private, non-degree granting, for-profit institutes that can teach almost any subject ranging from math for high school students, to art as a hobby, to Korean writing for university entrance exams, to English. English hagwons can vary from relatively relaxed after school programs for young children focused on conversation, to programs focused on high school English entrance exams, to programs focused exclusively on business English for adults with classes offered very early in the morning before the start of the business day and then late in the evening after most businesses finish work, to other types of specialized classes. Many English hagwons employ foreign English teachers to teach English conversation classes, English writing classes, and a wide variety of English language classes.
Schools, whether elementary school, middle school, or high school, employ foreign English teachers typically as co-teachers with some foreign English teachers operating entirely independently and others working closely with Korean co-teachers. In addition, many foreign English teachers come to Korea to teach in these schools through programs such as EPIK, or similar government authorized programs that bring teachers to Korea.

Additionally, many foreign English teachers work and teach at universities in positions teaching “content classes” such as literature, linguistics, or education classes, with others teaching for-credit English language classes, and others teaching non-credit language classes to both university students and the public, with some teachers only being responsible for one type of class and others teaching a wide variety of these classes as part of their university duties. Finally, there are a few additional positions that are less prominent in the figured worlds of foreign English teachers in Korea. These positions vary from international school content teacher, a position teaching content classes within an accredited educational institution teaching another county’s curriculum and employing only certified K-12 teachers from that country, to corporate English teacher, where a large organization such as an airline employs an in-house foreign English language teacher to develop the English language skills of their employees. However, these final two teaching positions circulate far less than the iconic positions of hagwon teacher, school teacher\textsuperscript{14}, and university teacher, which anchor a figured world of foreign English teacher positions.

As potential employers, hagwons, schools, and universities have particular relationships within the figured world of foreign English teachers concerning the desirability of employment, benefits, and elements associated with them. Generally, hagwon teaching positions are seen as the easiest employment to find and the least demanding in terms of qualifications. These positions

\textsuperscript{14} I use the term “school teacher” here aware that many of these positions will be designed assistant teacher or another particular term. I use this term as it best reflects the position of being a teacher in a school.
also typically have the least vacation time and in many cases pay relatively less, although the most elite hagwons catering to either the children of wealthy families or wealthy business people have substantially more generous vacation time and potentially very high pay. Teaching in a hagwon, among foreign English teachers, can be seen as sensible if a teacher is “taking a break” from life back home for a year or two. However, after three years, or perhaps more, teachers may voice more of a desire to find employment in a school or university, and other teacher may question or comment on a teacher who continues to stay in a hagwon position after several years. Those who stay in such positions may, when discussing their desire to teach in a particular hagwon, talk about their place of employment as different, rewarding, well managed, having wonderful kids, offering only business English to adults, or of their desire to only teach young children in a kindergarten like environment, depending on the position, in some ways justifying their continued career choice.

School positions, for some teachers, are “a step up” from hagwons and can feature more holidays and, for some, the feeling of engaging in somewhat more serious employment, compared with hagwons, although this is contested by many through multiple discourses. Further, this employment can feel far more similar to the educational experiences these teachers experienced themselves in schools or saw in media depictions of schools. Teaching can involve Korean co-teachers, and relationships with co-teachers can be a common topic of discussion. Further, some teachers may talk positively about how at their public school they are allowed to teach without a co-teacher. Public schools often only hire teachers at certain times of the year and may only use teachers hired through special programs such as EPIK, further complicating finding employment with these schools. Also, these schools may have additional time when no classes are being held, but in some cases teachers may be asked to come to school during regular hours with no assigned duties. This is commonly called “desk warming” during which teachers must be on school grounds or at their desk, but have little or no direction in what to do and are free to read, watch
media on computers, or do whatever they wish as long as they remain at their desk. Additionally, many schools will only employ one or two foreign English teachers in a school with many Korean teachers, an element that often arises in discussion of teaching positions, though it can be positive and negative. Although somewhat contested, the public school teaching position is a recognized element of the figured world of foreign English teachers with elements of potentially longer holidays than hagwons, Korean co-teachers, desk warming, and a more direct connection with more common discourses of being a teacher. Additionally, these positions are often intimately connected with government policy, with the genesis of many of these teaching positions being the adoption of a program placing foreign English teachers in Korean schools in 1996 (M. Kim, 2010). Therefore, changes in government policy at various levels can radically change the nature of these teaching positions with positions disappearing, pay being radically cut, and jobs transformations all being possibilities. Further, and beyond the idea of public schools as elements of a figured world, these schools and the practice of having foreign English teachers teach alongside local teachers has been relatively heavily studied by academics. Areas of interest have included research on good practices for team teaching between foreign English teachers and Korean teachers (Carless, 2006; Carless & Walker, 2006; I. Jeon, 2010), experiences of team teaching (M. Kim, 2010), and how foreign English teachers and Korean teachers collaboratively work together “to meet unforeseen interactional and instructional needs” (J. E. Park, 2014, p. 34). Additionally, researchers have discussed how these foreign English teachers can productively contribute to their schools (M. Jeon, 2009, p. 240) but also discussed how some foreign English teachers in these positions feel like “‘performing monkeys with entertainment value’” (M. Jeon, 2009, p. 238) and some researchers discuss some of these teachers being used

like a “human tape recorder” (Carless, 2006, p. 238). These issues also enter foreign English teachers’ discussions of working in these school positions.

Lastly, universities tend to be seen as both the most desirable teaching position and the most demanding in terms of qualifications and are regarded as perhaps the most difficult to position to find. University teaching positions can wildly vary in terms of pay but are highly desired because of the considerable vacation time that often accompanies these positions, often ranging between one and four months of paid holidays. Some universities also offer hagwon classes, and the term “uni-won”, an amalgam of university and hagwon, is sometime used by some teachers to describe these particular institutions. Regardless, for many teachers intending to continue teaching in Korea finding a university position becomes a career goal, though issues with varying and changing requirements, such as a master’s degree or a minimum amount of experience, complicate these plans. University positions occupy a place of desire within foreign English teachers’ figured world of teaching positions. As such, university positions can often arise as a topic in discussions of work and jobs among foreign English teachers interested in continuing to teach English in Korea. Especially in personal introductions among foreign English teachers, during which describing where one works is part of the introductory routine, stating one works at a Korean university can often followed by a comment about vacations, and discussion of how such a position was found by those foreign English teachers who do not work at universities.

Additionally, the idea of “privates” and independent work outside of official jobs also circulates among foreign English teachers in Korea. The term privates refers to students or classes taught by teachers outside of a hagwon, school, or university privately with an arrangement in which fees are paid directly to the teacher. Some foreign English teachers earn considerable amounts of money teaching privates outside of the contracted work. Importantly, teaching privates can be a violation of teaching visas, which require any outside work to be authorized and reported to immigration, and potentially can create legal problems with
immigration and employers. Nevertheless, privates and private teaching is another iconic aspect of the figured world of foreign English teacher jobs in Korea.

Peripheral, but still relevant to this figured world of foreign English teaching positions is the idea of work “back home”, wherever that may be, and the possible teaching or TESOL positions in that place. While a far less common topic of conversation, these positions occupy a potentially limited form of employment, drawing on larger discourses of ESL teachers being underpaid and undervalued in much of the English-speaking world. This position or character may be somewhat ethereal in this figured world, haunting ideas of returning home and shaping TESOL careers quite broadly.

Additionally, foreign English teachers in Korea quickly understand curriculum and programs in which classes taught by foreign English teachers and classes taught by Korean English teachers are, in almost every case, rigidly divided. The idea that foreign English teachers or native English speakers are and should be responsible for certain types of classes such as speaking and writing classes, and Korean English teachers are responsible for other types of classes such as reading and grammar classes is almost omnipresent, although in practice the actual classes vary widely with individual institutions. These divisions and roles are quickly learned by foreign English teachers and become a naturalized and often unremarkable part of the larger figured world of foreign English teachers in Korea. Even those teachers who prior to Korea have little or no experience with teacher training or language learning quickly internalize an understanding of this divided curriculum. This division of tasks is so naturalized it is rarely discussed or noticed but is a foundational element of most foreign English teachers’ classroom experiences and shapes the possible career trajectories they envision for themselves in Korea. Notably, this division stands in contrast to efforts to end discriminatory practices against nonnative English speaker teachers by larger professional elements of English language teaching such as TESOL (TESOL International Association, 2006).
Foreign English teachers in Korea navigate, construct, and to varying degrees are constructed by a figured world of foreign English teaching positions. The iconic positions or characters of the hagwon, the public school, and the university routinely circulate in common discussions, introductions, and the everyday work routines of different teachers. Even as individual personal engagements with these iconic aspects of this figured world shift, change, and are even revised into radical or less common views of their own teaching position, any foreign English teacher will know how most other foreign English teachers view teaching in a hagwon, public school, and university. This shared and collectively known story of teaching involving these characters is, in varying ways, re-voiced and reframed in the positional teaching identities of almost all foreign English teachers in Korea, while also shaping the varying elements that arise within some teachers’ spaces of authoring.

**Foreign English Teacher Selves in Practice**

Within the figured world of foreign English teachers in Korea, four distinct categories of teacher selves emerged from the interviews and other data collected as part of this study. While still anchored within a figured world of hagwons, public schools, and universities these distinct teachers selves are possible paths of negotiating teacher selves that draw upon varying artifacts, discourses, stories, and other elements. Importantly, some teachers do not engage with teacher selves that related to teaching and education, instead crafting notions of themselves as simply being abroad and engaging in work that supports that effort. The following four sections examine particular categories of distinct teacher selves that emerged from this study of 27 foreign English teachers in Korea.
Desirable, Sometimes Masculine, Teaching Selves: Figured Success in Prestige Teaching

For some teachers, their teaching position becomes over time a critical element in a positional identity within a figured world that allows them to see themselves as teaching English in a somewhat prestigious and unique way, a separate way from most other foreign English teachers, but also unrelated to larger notions of more conventional teacher development. These identities, for some, become critical elements of their careers teaching English in Korea, and beyond. In the larger figured world of foreign English teachers in which the figured identities of hagwon teacher, school teacher, and university teacher are iconic easily-recognized roles, the position of prestigious teacher is more nebulous, sometimes requiring further identification in personal encounters with phrases such as “I teach business English” or “I work for the Korean Space Program as an English teacher”. The term prestigious teacher, while not used by any participant in this study, comes from John, a critical participant in this section, and his discussions of the prestige attached to teachers in Korea, and the greater prestige attached to teaching English to successful and powerful business leaders. He said, “there’s a prestige to being an English teacher, there’s even more of a prestige teaching the kinda people I teach now, so I really appreciate that”, referencing the numerous corporate leaders he taught as a business English teacher. I use the term prestigious teacher to reference a particular teacher positional identity that, while drawing upon aspects of being a teacher, also heavily references aspects of teaching or a teaching position that are desirable and interesting in a fashion unrelated to teaching practices themselves.

An example of a possible prestigious teacher identity is someone who, while teaching English to South Korea’s first two astronaut candidates on behalf of Korea’s manned space program, crafted an understanding of herself or himself as participant in a national science

16 I happily taught English to Korea’s two astronaut candidates for six weeks, not long enough to
effort and as a contributor to a goal beyond or outside of English education. For this person, the
telling of others, and even oneself, about great aspects of this job, the using of stories of this job
in social interactions that draw attention to this person, and asking if friends and others would like
to visit this space center are all aspects of crafting a prestigious teacher positional identity. These
stories and invitations, in varying ways, position the speaker relative to those listening as
someone who does important work, has access to restricted spaces, and regularly works with
widely valued, elite people. Additionally, in order to examine this teacher’s understanding of her
or his place in Korea and her or his career development, this teachers’ prestigious teacher
figurative identity must be considered as well. Figurative identities are aspects of identity that
present a story or plot and in this example this teacher’s self-told story of being in Korea, and
seeing herself or himself as doing something important and significant that can continue into the
future, is important and makes possible a particular career path for this teacher. This figurative
identity of being a prestigious teacher, anchored within a larger figured world of foreign English
teacher jobs in Korea, makes possible a coherent story of staying in Korea teaching astronauts in
this program. This figurative identity mediates practices such as continuing to teach English in
Korea for multiple years and provides a coherent narrative that supports and allows for the
development of such a practice. Importantly, this astronaut English language teacher example
only exists in this text to revisit the ideas of Holland et al. (1998), and highlight how these ideas
serve the larger issues that arise in examining these participants’ construction of identities.

This section examines the prestigious teacher identities of John and Percy, the two
teachers whose participation led this study to examine the idea of prestigious teacher identities.

Based upon three interviews with Percy and five interviews with John and participant

forge any kind of identity, although this experience remains on my CV.
observations involving John, I examine John’s crafting of a prestigious business English teacher
self and Percy’s crafting of a prestigious departmental English teacher self.

John, a multi-ethnic American man of Color, joined this study in his late twenties while
working for a business English hagwon, having previously taught English in a Korean public
school. John is a large, bulky, athletic man who in observations would occupy enough space
when walking through subways and sidewalks that either he had to carefully maneuver around
others or they had to move around him. At the time of his initial interviews John taught business
English to wealthy, influential business people in classrooms located on campus at his hagwon
and often travelled around Seoul teaching English on location at various corporate offices to
business people and executives. He was required to wear suits, which he had custom made
according to detailed personal instructions, in all his business teaching activities. At the time of
his first interview, John’s teaching took up a very large amount of his day, necessitating early
mornings and late evenings. Percy, a white Canadian man in his late thirties had taught English
for more than ten years in Korea when he joined this study. During the time of his first and
second interviews, he worked for a university in General City, teaching exclusively in a
professional department within that university.

For John, teaching in a private hagwon that heavily targeted professional business clients
and often sent teachers to work on location at the headquarters of large corporations created
opportunities to craft alternative identities not available to those who taught English elsewhere,
such as kindergartens or even elite Korean universities. John discussed money in his interviews
and described his ultimate purpose in Korea as making money, but beyond this objective, earning
more money than other teachers and being immersed in contexts in which tremendous amounts of
money were made, spent, and discussed became elements of narratives he often told, as reflected
in both interviews and observations. John compared his earlier position at a public school and the
position he held at the time of this interview, highlighting both money and those he taught in his discussions.

You know man, I’ve experienced the public and private sector in terms of education in Korea. I’ve taught in a public high school, and now I work in a private business institution, and they both have their plusses and negatives. The private institute I make a lot of money, I make a lot of great connections. I know some of the top businessmen in the country, (I’m) very fortunate, and I don’t take that for granted. But the negative is that I don’t get any free time. I work six days a week. I’m basically an English slave.

While negatively discussing his workload, John emphasizes both his income and the social relationships that were possible because of his work. These, I argue, contribute to a larger identity as someone who teaches English in Korea in a unique and prestigious position. In another excerpt, John discusses his understanding of how respect is given to business people in Korea, and how this improves his work opportunities and shapes how he sees himself as a teacher in Korea.

I have about three months left on my contract, and I’m, uh, I got some resumes and I dropped some letters filled out by some of my businessmen, some of the students. I have, they’re basically letters of reference from the top businessmen in the country. Plus, I’ve put together some business cards of everybody I’ve ever worked with, it’s a very elite package. And the reason I’m doing that, I don’t know if it would help me in the West, but in Korea in, I can’t speak for other Asia countries, that certain amount of prestige is respected and it can benefit me, if people know I’m working for executives for these top companies in Korea. It’s kind of a weird respect for company culture here in Korea. It’s kind of interesting.
These discussions of John’s plans to explore other teaching opportunities, including possibly teaching in a university, are, I argue, more than just a strategic calculation to maximize income and find a teaching position that best matches his desires. In discussing his prestige and respect John is also telling himself a story of his life in Korea in which he is doing more than an average foreign English teacher, and going above and beyond simply working as a business English teacher. He is saying he is learning about Korean business culture, accruing a certain amount of prestige and respect, and successfully maneuvering himself among elite Korean businesspeople. This is a story he finds more acceptable than other less prestige granting stories. John also discussed his experiences meeting and teaching his students in multiple interviews, returning to this topic several times. Further, I observed John telling similar stories related to his job when he socialized with English teaching friends. I argue these stories were both entertaining anecdotes of unusual experiences in Korea told to friends and acquaintances, and were elements of a more prestigious teaching self. In both the experience of teaching wealthy students, and telling the stories of teaching wealthy students John engaged in crafting an understanding of himself that repositioned him as something other than a regular or even a professional English teacher. In the following excerpt, John gives an example of teaching a business student in this student’s office.

John: Here’s an example, tomorrow morning, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, I work for the CEO of Xcompany. So this guy is the top of the top, and I’m sure you understood the dynamic between students and teachers. It’s a very respected dynamic that the teacher always gets respect no matter their status, where in the States, [it’s] not like that, but here, it very much is. And this guy is, it’s crazy, this guy has his own private elevator, and I get escorted around by some of his own personal escorts, and I get to use his personal elevator, and I get taken up to his top floor, and his office is on the top floor of Xbuilding in Y neighborhood, and his office is the entire floor and the elevator doors open and it’s his entire office, whole thing, and there’s a huge round desk and he has three secretaries
and the three secretaries are gorgeous. They may be between 180 [centimeters] and 185 [centimeters] tall and they’re all uh little tiny skirts, big smiles, they have their hair up in buns like flight attendants, and they all have their hands [grasped together in front of themselves] and are bowing, ‘‘Annyeonghaseyo seonsaengnim’ [“Hello teacher” in Korean] but like showing a lot of respect and then whenever the CEO comes out everyone’s on their feet and showing a lot of respect. I walk to the CEO and the CEO bows to me [added emphasis]. That’s a weird dynamic man, really weird, and it’s just because of the student teacher dynamic. This guy is one of the most powerful men in the country, and he’s showing me respect and I’m just a snot nosed English teacher so it’s really weird man, I don’t know what to say about it

Michael: That’s a cool story

John: It’s a weird dynamic

Michael: [A discussion of confidentiality regarding the names of those involved in this story]

John: And I see it with a lot of them, if you think of every top company I work with all of them at least one time or another. It’s weird man, I enjoy it, I go out drinking with them they show me a good time, they show me what’s it’s like to be a top Korean business man, but I’m not being a businessman.

This story highlights John’s experience and contact with the highest levels of corporate success in Korea, but also is followed by a claim that he is still just an English teacher. I argue both are aspects of John’s particular teacher identity as a prestigious English teacher who acknowledges his role as a teacher of English and his separation from common English teaching through connections to the world of elite Korean business. Additionally, this excerpt ends with John referencing his social experiences with his students, which often involves spending large sums of
money, in highly masculinized environments. Both in interviews and when spending time with friends, John told stories of being picked up with his male students by large, expensive black sedans, whisked to gourmet meals, and drinking large amounts of expensive alcohol, alongside stories of being ushered into corporate offices, all of which, I argue, shape aspects of John’s teacher selves. John’s experiences socializing with his students, in gendered and sexualized places such as bars or restaurants in which men are exclusively customers and women are employees, were told as stories with English teaching friends and contributed to particular aspects of his teaching selves.

Additionally, John discussed experiences in which his size, athleticism, and athletic background were important elements. These points ranged from students asking about his athletic background to wealthy and powerful students discussing their own similar backgrounds and

17 Several scholars have explored issues of hostess bars in East Asia and constructions of corporate masculinities. See Alison’s (1994) ethnography of a Japanese hostess club for a discussion of their role in corporate Japanese masculinity, and Zheng (2006) for a discussion of how drinking and sex consumption in Chinese hostess bars can be elements of business rituals. While the work of Alison and Zheng cannot directly apply to Korea, their work can inform understandings of homosocial bonding among Korean businessmen in bars. Further, Sea-ling (2000), writing specifically about the Korean context, examines masculinity and nationalism in corporate drinking and sex consumption arguing that these practices are “essentially a process of giving legitimacy to the expression of desires and the constitution of a virile masculinity,” (p. 44) that further develops group solidarity. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine any foreign English teachers’ participation in practices similar to those discussed by Alison (1994), Zheng (2006), and Sea-ling (2000), but these places and similar practices to those discussed by these scholars may contribute to the construction of some foreign English teachers’ masculine selves.
interests to some simply commenting on his large size. Generally, these reported comments were positive and were a point of mutual interest and a means of further social relationships. For John, being perceived as larger and comfortable with certain sports and activities commonly understood to be played and done by men was a particularly masculine element of his relationships with his students and the social worlds he travelled with them. This perception of masculinity afforded John greater opportunities to impress some of his students, socialize with some students, and contributed to his teacher selves.

Additionally, in an interview discussing another teacher who had been teaching a number of years and had gained considerable experience teaching English in Korea, I mentioned that this teacher had been teaching in a public school. John responded, “I’m really surprised that he even works for a public school, sounds like he’s been here for a long time” and then added, “cause after you’ve been here a while, you kinda realize that’s like, it’s kind of a bottom feeding job”. At other points John spoke more positively about public schools and those foreign English teachers who teach in those educational institutions, however, in this brief excerpt he adopts a fairly common hierarchy of teaching positions in Korea, positioning those who continue teaching in Korean schools as being in relatively poorer teaching positions and positioning himself in a superior teaching position to many others. The assumption in this statement that most teachers should be moving towards better teaching positions, I argue, is common among teachers who continue to live and teach in Korea, but also demonstrates the larger hierarchy in which John’s less common prestigious teacher identity is embedded. In fact, John more often spoke positively about himself, his position, his students, and the opportunities both presented to him through his teaching and created through his effort, than the positions of other teachers. While aware that some prestige is awarded any teacher in Korea, and that a large-scale hierarchy exists in teaching positions, John positioned himself in his stories, and through artifacts such as his tailor made suits,
rather uniquely as a prestigious English teacher, earning a highly desired salary and being peripherally associated with the business elite of Korea.

Further, John also discussed extensively teaching “privates”, students he taught outside of his hagwon privately and who paid John directly for his educational services. John discussed using the curriculum developed by his hagwon in these classes, and how this curriculum allowed him to improve his classes and further the language development of his private students. Over John’s five interviews, multiple observations, and continuing after as I continued to know John, he would seem to further develop his ability to maneuver within this world of private English teaching to Korean business elites, recruiting or attracting further private students, and becoming a desirable and sought after recruit for a variety of enterprises needing business English teachers.

Holland et al.’s ideas of positional identities and figured worlds as well as their understandings of mediation and development can contribute to a productive understanding of John’s teacher selves. In telling stories of having exciting experiences with wealthy students and through direct comments on negative qualities of other teaching positions such as schools, John is constructing a prestigious teacher positional identity. He positions himself within the larger figured world of foreign English teachers as receiving greater rewards for teaching, including greater access to Korean elites and restricted places such as expensive restaurants and drinking establishments. Further, John positions himself as being capable of maneuvering within this social world of Korean businessmen18, and being capable of succeeding within this world.

Importantly, this type of positioning can be contested, and foreign English teachers within this study at points did contest how other foreign English teachers such as John positioned themselves through stories, clothes, and practices. Regardless of possible attempts to contest John’s prestigious teacher positional identity, John often positioned himself as a business English teacher

18 The term ‘businessmen’ is used here as it reflects her exclusively male students involved in this context. This is the case wherever the term ‘businessmen’ is used in this text.
with greater access to financial rewards, Korean elites, and social experiences than almost any other teacher. In positioning himself this way, John emphasized money, power, and to some degree sexuality and gender to a degree not often associated with teachers more generally. I argue these associations, which are elements of a positional identity, also shaped John’s prestigious teacher figurative identity or the story of him as a teacher embedded within a larger figured world, and mediated in some ways his career as a business English teacher in Korea.

John crafted a particular prestigious teacher figurative identity that shaped aspects of his teaching career in Korea. Holland et al. write, “put perhaps too simply, figurative identities are about signs that evoke storylines or plots among generic characters”, (1998, p. 128) and I argue John told a larger more generic story of who he was as a teacher to himself and others that structured and gave meaning to his larger career as an English teacher. This story of teaching the business elites of Korea, learning from them while maneuvering and socializing among them, and earning a large income was more acceptable to him than other stories circulating among foreign English teachers in Korea. Further, this story of being a prestigious teacher mediated his continued teaching English in Korea, and to some degree allowed him to continue teaching English in Korea as it “made sense” to continue this career when understood within this story. Additionally, I argue masculinity was to certain degrees incorporated into this figurative identity and the accompanying story of being an English teacher in Korea. John’s story was gendered with men and women taking on particular somewhat sexualized roles, shaping, in a limited way, his career as a foreign English teacher in Korea.

Additionally, John over his time further developed his career as a business English teacher, and became more adapt at securing private students and earning greater income through his English teaching. Holland et al. (1998) discuss the complex relationships between figured worlds, identification, and development in their exploration of young women’s negotiation of the world of college romance.
This suggests that involvement—the salience of and identification with the cultural system of romance—codeveloped with expertise. If a woman did not develop a clear identification of herself in the world of romance, then romance was not likely to be very salient for her and she was not likely to be much of an agent in conducting romantic relationships. Similarly, if she had not developed expertise, then she was unlikely to have formed much of a romantic identification. Salience, identification, and savoir faire appeared to develop together in an interrelated process—a process that was continually supported and shaped in the context of social interaction. (p. 116)

John was already a business English teacher and enmeshed within a story of teaching business English to Korean elites by the time he joined this study. However, during the time he participated in this study, and the time I knew him beyond this study, he developed a greater ability to maneuver within this social world of business English teaching to Korean elites. I argue that he developed a greater identification with this world as he developed a greater expertise in maneuvering within this world, with “salience, identification, and savoir faire” (1998, p. 128) all co-developing over time. John told a story that partially constituted a figurative identity with a larger figured world of being a prestigious teacher that mediated his development, allowing for the development of greater expertise in this area, and his continued teaching in Korea.

John’s teacher selves can also be contextualized within language teacher identity literature. Appleby (2014b) and Stanley (2012) within their respective studies based in Japan and Shanghai, discuss how foreign English language teaching men fail to craft satisfying masculine selves, because of desires in their contexts for Western masculinity that is embodied not accomplished, and tensions over transactional aspects of teaching and personal relationships. However, John has constructed a narrative of teaching English in Korea that draws upon his
masculine body, homosocial networks of Korean businessmen, and artifacts such as suits and other clothing that is satisfying to him and incorporates a narrative that supports an ongoing career as an English teacher in Korea. The example of John’s particular teacher self adds to the understandings of Appleby (2014b) and Stanley (2012), showing an alternative path of crafting foreign English teacher masculinities in East Asia, that was not incorporated into either studies’ understandings of Western men’s identities.

Additionally, John’s particular masculine, business-English teacher identity aligns, in some ways, with a business-oriented understanding of TESOL professionalism. Farmer (2006) and Walker (2011; 2014) have advocated particular client-centered visions of English language teacher professionalism that draw upon business discourses and practices such as interest in client satisfaction, profitability, and the marketability of language teaching. John, in engaging in private work as an English language teacher especially, has crafted a guiding narrative of teaching English in Korea that unintentionally and unknowingly mirrors elements of this form of professionalism. He does this through his interest in satisfying his private students, or in other words his clients’ desires, his interest in expanding his private teaching, and his general orientation to English language teaching as a for-profit commercial enterprise. John’s experiences and understandings as a business English teacher and his crafting of a prestigious business English teaching positional identity can inform particular business-oriented understandings of English teacher professionalism (Farmer, 2006; Walker, 2011; 2014) and represent an example of a successful market-oriented teacher (Walker, 2014).

John’s prestigious positional identity and figurative identity were both constructed through a variety of discourses and artifacts. Some of these were physical such as the tailored suits he wore, others were stories he told of his experiences with students, and others were elements directly related to his work such as his pay. These artifacts mediated his development, shaping, for example, his understanding of fees he should charge for teaching privates.
Importantly, should these mediating elements disappear or be eliminated by another person this can directly impact the possible teacher selves of some foreign English teacher in Korea. Percy crafted a prestigious teacher identity, however, he experienced a dramatic change in his teaching context that directly shaped his teaching selves.

Like John, Percy crafted a prestigious teaching self that was related to the contexts in which he taught English. Percy, when he first joined this study, taught exclusively in a rather unusual professional departmental environment in an institute of higher education. He was involved in departmental clubs, practicums, and events, which gave students an opportunity to experience the practical aspects of their chosen area of study. Critically, Percy crafted a figurative identity and a positional identity that separated him from other English teachers, and created the possibility for him to tell himself an intelligible satisfying story of being in Korea as a member of this professional department. However, Percy, unlike John, lost this teaching position during this study. Percy continued teaching English, but no longer within a professional department and instead was asked to teach a variety of more commonly taught English classes with various, different departments with which he had no affiliation or special relationship, saying overall regarding his work, “my job is nothing special any more”. He discussed the emotional hurt he felt extensively in the interview following this change in his work. The subsequent devastating disruption in teaching selves and emotional effects of this change led him to consider leaving Korea and English teaching. In Percy’s case, the changes in both his teaching position and teacher selves illustrate two vitally important connections: first, the profound connection between particular forms of employment and the identities foreign English teachers have available to them and second, the connection between these identities and how teachers feel about their work and lives in Korea. Importantly, these connections can shape teachers’ career trajectories and overall well-being in a variety of ways.
Some foreign English teachers in Korea find themselves in less common teaching positions through which they create both prestigious teacher positional identities, figurative identities, and enter or craft larger figured worlds. Teachers, to varying degrees, can engage with various elements in their teaching environments that can create opportunities or collapse possibilities for teachers to fashion prestigious teacher selves and different teachers may or may not take up opportunities to see themselves as prestigious teachers. Those that do craft prestigious teacher selves must negotiate these possible selves through obtuse and subtle communication, deliberate and less carefully chosen stories, and a variety of activities ranging from classroom performances, discussions with colleagues, paying for dinner, and self-talk. Importantly, the prestigious teacher selves of John and Percy were founded in and dependent on certain specific conditions of teaching, sometimes tied to a particular teaching place, and circulated well beyond classroom spaces.

The particular prestigious teacher identities of John and Percy are products of the personal histories of these teachers, their teaching contexts, and the co-development of their identification with these teaching positions alongside their ability to successfully work in these places. However, for other teachers these same elements may be part of a highly uncomfortable teaching context, and may generally impede the construction of a figurative identity that allows for an ongoing career in Korea as an English teacher, perhaps by contributing to an understanding that he or she cannot be seen as a professional English language teacher in Korea. Tracy, a white, American woman who joined this study in her late twenties, taught English to Korean businessmen in a part-time teaching position. These businessmen in class sometimes discussed or attempted to “tell jokes” about sex and prostitution, echoing some of the elements through which, partially, John’s prestigious teacher self was made. However, for Tracy these elements constituted moments of discomfort and contributed to discourses in which she saw herself as not valued for her teaching ability, and limited her ability to tell an intelligible, desirable story about
herself being an English teacher in Korea. Critically for this study, the needed elements of some teachers’ prestigious teacher selves can be serious barriers to continuing to teach for others, even contributing to understandings that one cannot teach English in Korea as a career. The teaching elements that contributed to John seeing himself as a prestigious teacher contributed to Tracy’s understanding that teaching in Korea for her is limited in significant ways\textsuperscript{19}, highlighting how the teaching contexts that contribute to teaching selves come into meaning with other artifacts, larger circulating discourses, and the personal histories of different teachers. Already substantial research has documented sexist practices within English language teaching in East Asia that potentially limit the career development of many women teaching English in Korea (Nagatomo, 2013; 2015; Simon-Maeda, 2004; 2011; Stanley, 2013) and there have been calls to further examine this important topic (Kobayashi, 2014). The experiences and understandings of John and Tracy add to this research, highlighting how practices within the figured world of prestigious business English teaching can advantage some men and disadvantage some women. Within this figured world, certain artifacts and practices can be elements of productive prestigious teacher selves for some teachers such as John while for others such as Tracy these same elements may contribute towards their departure from teaching.

The Figured World and Positional Identities of Career and “Professional” Teaching

Some foreign English teachers in Korea become deeply involved in learning about teaching, discussing teaching, teacher training, professional teaching organizations, writing about teaching, and everyday practices of teaching to the degree it becomes an organizing aspect of much of their life. To varying extents, these teachers see themselves as involved in such activities

\textsuperscript{19} Tracy’s experiences with this class and sexism more generally are further explored in this chapter in the section titled \textit{Gendered Positioning in Educational Institutions}.
and this becomes a figurative identity, an organizing narrative for much of their everyday activity, and a nexus for social activities. These figurative identities anchored in shared figured worlds in which teaching activities, teaching blogs, teaching organizations and more take on added meaning are referred to within this study as professional teaching figurative identities despite the contested discussion surrounding TESOL professionalization (Johnston, 1997; MacPherson, Kouritzin, & Kim, 2005; Phillipson, 1992; Thornbury, 2001; Wang & Lin, 2013), and some participants’ explicit discomfort with many of the discourses of professionalization in Korea. Nevertheless, this figurative identity is anchored in some notions of being a “professional”. This sense of being a professional, drawing upon scholarship concerned with defining teacher professionalism (Connell, 2009; Downie, 1990; A. Hargreaves, 2000; Hilferty, 2008; Hoyle, 1982; Whitty, 2000), involves a commitment to teacher autonomy, a belief or participation in an independent professional organization representing teachers, and an understanding of teaching involving teaching competence, as well as an orientation towards teaching as something that these participants will continue doing into the future. These notions provide a story of being a foreign English teacher that involves continuing to teach English and provides a guiding element to some foreign English teachers’ understanding of themselves in Korea and beyond.

Situations such as, for example, the KOTESOL20 International Conference are, for some teachers, sites of further developing as teachers but also social sites of pleasure, recreation, and identity making as professional teachers. This teacher organization and its conferences are places in which teaching and teaching research are presented and discussed, and are attended by many foreign English teachers with almost all events and presentations conducted in English, with

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20 KOTESOL or Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages is a teacher organization that was founded in 1992 and is focused on member development and further improving English language teaching in Korea (KOTESOL, 2016).
much of the agenda of this organization being set by foreign English teachers. Experiences at these conferences, incidents related to these conferences, and the later stories told and retold about these conferences in social situations ranging from dinners to weddings to widely varying social situations become elements of crafting a professional teacher figurative identity for some foreign English teachers. The experience of going to this conference, the stories that flow from this conference, and the social networks created and strengthened by such experiences, support a larger narrative of being a professional teacher that provides some element of guidance in seeing oneself as a teacher. All of this provides the rich material for some teachers to weave a story of continuing to teach into the future, staying in Korea, teaching elsewhere, learning more about teaching, and teaching others about teaching, all of which can contribute to a professional teacher figurative identity. While these individual stories may vary in ways, this professional teacher figurative identity shapes how these teachers can be teachers and see themselves as teachers. Importantly, some foreign English teachers craft professional teacher figured identities through other means than this conference such as continuing teacher development, online teacher professional development networks and a wide swathe of other experiences, and the KOTESOL International Conference serves here only as an example of how this identity development can be done.

Additionally, these notions of being a professional teacher can emerge in social situations in which discussions of teaching practices, teaching organizations, and professional teacher development arise and can be elements of fun amusing conversations, but also can constitute claims about how to teach, notions of some teaching being more valuable than others, and conflicts over related teaching issues. Likewise, these notions of being a professional teacher can emerge in work contexts over similar issues, and can involve access to information and places.

21 As of December 26, 2015 the KOTESOL website ‘Who We Are’ page listed 27 individuals holding positions within this organization, none of whom had names that appeared to be Korean.
conflicts over who has authority over decisions, and discussions of teaching practices. These claims, practices, and discussions can be productively understood as aspects of professional teacher positional identities through which teachers position themselves and others in various ways. This positioning of self and others in terms of being “a professional teacher” shaped several participants’ experiences in Korea, and several observations involved issues related to positioning the speaker or others as being or not being, in various ways, a professional teacher. However, one of the most important examples of this positioning comes from Nancy, a white, American, new-to-Korea teacher with experience teaching English as a foreign language in a Spanish speaking country and an educational background in TESOL who was in her late twenties when she joined this study. She wrote in her journal about an experience communicating with a friend who lived outside of Korea.

I sent an email to a friend on Skype because she said something about me being a tourist here. I said—please don’t call me a tourist! I was being oversensitive—but I want people to understand home and here that I am trying to create a normal life here and that I did come here to work.

Strongly rejecting the label of tourist is, I argue, one aspect of positioning oneself as being a more professional teacher, and crafting a professional teacher positional identity. Within this section, the professional teacher positional identity is acknowledged as one aspect of some foreign English teachers’ negotiations of teacher selves. Importantly, some teachers would only occasionally position themselves as professional teachers, while not strongly drawing upon professional teacher figured identities.

Professional teacher figured identities provide a guiding narrative for some foreign English teachers in Korea, allowing them to see themselves as teachers who continue teaching into the future. However, within this teaching narrative caution must be exercised given the
diversity of professional teaching identities within even only this study, and the overlapping multiple figured identities possible for some teachers. Arizona, a North American teacher of Color, discussed his commitment to issues of social and racial justice in TESOL in Korea, and this commitment, interwoven with other teaching related interests, shaped his understanding of himself in Korea as a teacher, and gave, alongside a more general interest in improving English education in Korea, a narrative that was intelligible to himself and others about who he was in Korea. Others discussed issues such as commitments to improving particular teacher organizations in Korea, and their interests in writing about teaching online. Some also explicitly discussed their skepticism about notions of professionalization in teaching in Korea. It must also be noted that some teachers who built social worlds around teaching, and according to this study, adopted professional teaching figured identities did not identify simply as teachers, but instead identified themselves as teacher trainers or adopted other terms for self-reference. Additionally, some teachers crafting professional teacher selves may be doing so against other discourses that posit English language teaching in East Asia as less-than-professional work or some instructors as less-than-professional teachers (See Pennington (1992) for an example of a scholar positioning some foreign English teachers as less-than-professional).

Much of language teacher identity scholarship on foreign English teachers in East Asia focuses on teachers who craft professional teacher selves, although often this focus in not critically examined or even acknowledged. Appleby’s studies (2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b) all focus on teachers who craft professional teacher selves, as did the studies of Nagatomo (2015), Simon-Maeda (2004), Trent (2012), with only Stanley’s (2013) work exploring the teacher selves of those who view teaching as something other than a profession or professional work. This section joins these other studies that have explored the teacher selves of those who see themselves as, to some degree, professionals.
Taking a Break, Going Abroad, and Not-a-Teacher Selves

Some foreign English teachers in Korea do not strongly identify as teachers, with some actively eschewing such teacher related identities in certain ways. Trent and Jess came to Korea as a couple, living together and teaching together in the same children’s hagwon. Jess and Trent are both white Canadians who were in their mid-to-late twenties when they joined this study. They joined this study shortly after arriving in Korea as new-to-Korea teachers, and had already been dating for a number of years before travelling to Korea. Before coming to Korea, they had both finished university undergraduate degrees and after working for a few years, desired a change from their routines in Canada. Jess originally discussed coming to Korea to gain experience teaching that, she felt, would help her better understand if she wanted to go back to university to pursue the necessary qualifications to become a teacher in Canada. Trent, however, before coming to Korea had already secured a desired job with extensive benefits such as being able to take a year of unpaid leave from his employment in order to live abroad and his position in Canada offered many possibilities for long-term career advancement. Having already begun a career in Canada, Trent viewed his year in Korea as simply a year abroad and a different experience than what he could have had at home. In interviews, conducted jointly in their shared apartment, they both discussed how they planned to live abroad immediately after finishing university, but had both found jobs locally in Canada immediately after university, complicating plans to move abroad. Teaching in Korea was one of several possibilities they considered, including living in Europe or New Zealand for a year, that emerged out of their continued desire for the experience of living abroad and a general feeling that they needed a change from their regular lives in Canada. Trent discussed his interest in moving abroad, his feelings of boredom in Canada, the choice to come to Korea, and his realization that teaching English in Korea would actually involve teaching in a classroom.
For a long time we were like we’re gonna do something. You know we’ll go, either like we’ll live in Europe for a year, [or] we’ll live in New Zealand for a year or we’ll teach in Asia, and I don’t know exactly how it came. It just seems to be the three things that people do generally; the three options. And I have, like, student loans and, um, I was living on my own working, but not saving a lot of money. So when we kind of crunched the numbers, [I] was like I can get another loan, and we can go live somewhere and work at a bar somewhere and do whatever, but then the more we just kinda explored the teaching, first it wasn’t even Korea, we’ll teach in Asia or whatever, and then the more we delved into that and talked to people who did it, or were doing it, the more we, um, Korea offered the best deal or the most bang for your buck: free plane ride free flight, hey you know what? We’ll go, it’ll be cool, it was never about making money, but I could still pay my loan, we could live well as opposed to being poor. Um, you know, we can travel, we could see a part of the world we would probably never get to, and it just sorta went from there. I never actually thought about teaching till I was in classroom, and “holy shit, I gotta figure out what’s up!”

Trent discusses the issues that shaped Jess and Trent’s collective plans to travel to Korea and teach English, and honestly says that the actual process of teaching children in a classroom was never a major consideration for him prior to arriving in Korea. In the narration of his journey to Korea, I argue, Trent is positioning himself as someone interested in travel and on an adventure, and almost avoids any reference to or construction of a particular teaching self. Trent would further describe his understanding of coming to Korea to teach English, referencing this act as an adventure set against the somewhat bland normalcy of his life in Canada, as something temporary,
at least for him, and Jess also discussed her desire to do something other than continue the work she had been doing in Canada.

Trent: I need to do something different. I just feeling kinda the same in my social endeavors: the same things, the same bars, the same people running into people from high school all the time. It’s just, I donno, it just became really stale. Just the idea of coming here and teaching kids, I’m, just like, not considering becoming a teacher. It’s not something I ever considered, but I like doing this now, it’s fun or whatever, um, so it’s just a kinda total 180 for a year. Everyone’s like, “oh great adventure”, it’s also like, so low risk high reward. You come here, you have an apartment, it’s a really modern country, you get a really cool experience without quitting my job and going to Cambodia, something like that is yea.

Jess: I kind of look at it like a pause button for me. My job was a contract job at home, and I got renewed once, so I worked it two years. I loved it and uh they offered me a full-time job and somewhat promoted me, and I was like, you know, I could do this job but then that’d be it. And I donno, I still wanna go back to school, but I have no idea what I wanna go back to school for. Well, I could go do this [teaching in Korea], and then at least I’m doing something. I’m working. I have something I can put on my resume, and it’s an experience teaching, and stuff like that, so, but. That at home my job was just ending, and my apartment was ending, and I was like alright [laughter] I gotta go do something.

Trent again emphasizes the adventurous aspects of travelling to and living in Korea while also emphasizing the convenience, ease, and benefits of teaching English in Korea. Further, he emphasizes his engagement in teaching as something done in order to be in Korea and explicitly states he has no engagement or interest in teaching as anything beyond something done in Korea.
as a job. Trent, in this first interview, I argue, very much positions himself as someone taking a break from his real career, and engaging in something that enables him to pursue his goal of being abroad. Jess as well discusses living and teaching in Korea as a “pause button”, much like Trent, constructing herself as embarking on a productive, experience-building adventure relatively distant from the more mundane reality of work in Canada. Jess and Trent would further discuss how they viewed their experience of living in Korea for a year.

Trent: I like the idea too of, rather than just go somewhere and go to a few different places and travel around, but rather actually come to a society or whatever, and like have an apartment have a stable job.

Jess: stable job

Trent: be really able to

Jess: for our first time

Trent : rather than screwing around for a year like we come almost like an immigrant for a year

Michael: yea yea yea

Trent: Rather than live out of a backpack for a year, I like the sedentary aspect of it, more of a way to get an authentic experience, not that we’re really you know.

Here, both Jess and Trent reference their ideas of living in Korea as something more stable and immigrant-like than a more chaotic and unstable travelling experience, suggesting that they understand teaching in Korea and travelling around various places as similar options they could have pursued during their year abroad. I argue this again positions them both as adventures, travellers, and even long-term immigrant-tourists, a position other participants such as Nancy explicitly avoided.
Jess and Trent’s understandings of themselves as adventurous travellers living and teaching in Korea for a year, mirrors the representations of teachers described by Ruecker and Ives (2014) in their study of recruiting websites that seek to attract potential foreign English teachers for employment in Asia and beyond. However, Jess and Trent did not discuss the websites they used a part of their job search, but seemingly drew upon larger discourses of travel and living abroad in their constructions of a figured world of teaching and positional identities within that world. This study then cannot speak to how these websites shaped their choice to teach English in Korea, and how much the recruiting websites shaped their understandings of teaching English in Korea. Nevertheless, Jess and Trent, at a minimum, are very much drawing upon the same discourses that shape some representations of living and teaching in Korea featured in teacher recruiting websites discussed by Ruecker and Ives (2014), showing the broad circulation of these discourses.

Importantly, Trent positions himself as someone other than a teacher via several variations of discussing his desire for something new, his desires to live abroad, his desires to live in Korea, and a narrative of coming to Korea and his sudden realization that he would be required to teach when entering a classroom for the first time. Likewise, Jess constructs coming to Korea, like Trent, as pausing her life and embarking on an adventure, although in parts she does explicitly discuss teaching English and the possibility seeing herself as a teacher in the future. Trent also went further explicitly saying he is not a teacher in discussing teaching as being something he never considered doing and referencing his return to his already existing career in Canada. Importantly, these acts of positioning themselves were not monolithic, and at times both Jess and Trent would shift and reposition themselves as knowledgeable about their students, successful in educating their students, and deserving of both rewards and acknowledgement of their success as teachers. These multiple positional identities are further explored later in this chapter, but within this section the key and relatively little explored not-a-teacher positional
identity is highlighted as it shaped how both Jess and Trent, at times, placed themselves within
the larger ecology of English education in Korea.

Additionally, I argue the Jess and Trent constructed figurative identities as two people
spending a year abroad that shaped and gave meaning to their time teaching English in Korea.
They told themselves a story of spending a year in Korea that made sense to them and gave
greater meaning to their time in Korea and their experiences teaching in Korea. These figurative
identities of “going abroad” or “taking a break” constructed a relatively specific and limited
narrative of spending one year in Korea teaching English followed by a return to Canada, and this
shaped their experience in Korea, with Jess and Trent aware of how much time they had left in
their one year contracts during their year teaching in Korea. This narrative guided them during
their time in Korea and made their departure an expected and normal part of leaving Korea and
returning to their lives in Canada. Many foreign English teachers follow the path of Jess and
Trent, shaped in part by similar figurative identities and figured worlds of coming to Korea to
teach for year, with many following this narrative, as Jess and Trent did, to their eventual
departure from Korea.

Interestingly, none of the language teacher identity studies of foreign English teachers in
East Asia that inform this study (M. Jeon, 2009; S. Kim, 2012; Stanley, 2013; Trent, 2012)
examined foreign English teachers who travel to Korea for one-year, teach English, and then
return to their home countries, despite this being a relatively common experience. Nor do these
studies examine teachers who view their experience teaching English in East Asia as “going
abroad” for a year. This is all the more remarkable given the degree to which some scholars
object to people such as Jess and Trent travelling abroad and teaching English for a limited
amount of time (Pennington, 1990; 1992). Ideally, this section is the beginning of further
exploration of how some people spend a year abroad teaching English and the way the craft
teacher selves.
Alternative Selves and Teaching as Required Work

Carly’s experiences as a foreign English teacher in Korea who became deeply involved in independent music in Korea, or Korean “indie bands”, illustrates the complex interplay of selves that circulate around hobbies for some teachers, although Carly may consider her work with indie bands something far more than a hobby. Carly, a white, straight, South African woman who was in mid-thirties when she began her participation in this study, has a passion for indie bands that stands in stark contrast to her disinterested but professional attitude towards teaching, which is the source of her income, housing, and work visa. Likewise, her enthusiastic desire to pursue full-time paid work related to music is contrasted by her lack of excitement over continuing to work for the foreseeable future as a university English teacher in Korea.

At the time of her participation in this study, Carly had been successfully teaching English at a university in Seoul for several years, often receiving awards for the quality of her teaching. She also was intensely interested in indie music, with her experiences centered around the music clubs located near Hongik University, the area widely known as “Hongdae”. As a part of her interest in indie music she had worked part-time as a roving reporter for an English language Korean radio program about Korean indie bands, wrote for and publicized a website devoted to Korean indie bands, and regularly attends performances, concerts, and music related events, often scheduling much of her life around these events.

Carly’s experiences with indie music can be productively understood as her engagement with a figured world of desire in which she takes a positional identity through which she can see herself and others in ways not available within figured worlds of teaching English in Korea or elsewhere in the lived worlds easily accessible to her. Carly’s figured world of indie music is made, for her, through artifacts such as permission from her university to work part-time as a music reporter, black leather jackets, Korean language lyrics, access to certain bands and band
spaces, knowledge of a band member’s phone number, language skills, and even simply being acknowledged with a head nod from notable musicians. While proper documentation for work, and seeking payment for services rendered, are, in some ways, wisely made decisions by a self-aware person, they are also artifacts of this figured world given new meaning as parts of a figured world of indie music in Hongdae in which they grant legitimacy to Carly’s story, told to herself and others, of being a legitimate player in world of Korean indie bands. In taking part of the figured world of indie music in Hongdae, Carly, and some other teachers engaged in hobby-like activities, have “achieved a perspective on themselves and their lives not otherwise offered in the texts and rituals of their daily lives. They achieve their standpoint, however, only by submitting themselves to another set of cultural forms that have their own particular limitations and constraints” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 64), and certainly a wide variety limitations and constraints shape Carly’s experiences as someone passionately interested in indie bands. Nevertheless, being a part of this musical world, or having a positional identity as a welcomed and known unique member of figured world of Korean indie bands, allows Carly to see herself as something radically different than a foreign English teacher in Korea, in essence to not be a foreign English teacher in Korea and be another person. Additionally, during the period of Carly’s participation in this study her role within the figured world of Korean indie bands remained relatively stable.

The figured world of Korean indie bands may seem far removed from language pedagogy and university classrooms, but I argue that this figured world allows Carly to construct a more acceptable and pleasurable story of who she is in Korea, and therefore is important to her wellbeing as both a resident of Korea and a dispassionate but successful foreign English teacher. Over time Carly has learned to take pleasure and satisfaction in this figured world of Korean indie bands. Similarly, other participants developed figured worlds of photography and NGO work which allowed themselves to create figurative identities with figured worlds in which they told
themselves stories of living in Korea that were far more acceptable to them than the figured worlds of teaching English that were available.

Carly would often discuss herself as “being professional” but always in the sense of treating her work seriously, adopting a mature attitude, and doing her work well, as opposed a sense of being a member of a profession (see A Hargreaves (2000, p. 152) for more on this distinction). Carly treated her work seriously, which, in Korea, happened to be teaching English, but she was quite explicit about her lack of interest in teaching, and had little concern regarding issues involving teaching, teacher development, or the status of her work.

Some English teachers engage in hobbies that create compelling pleasurable figured worlds in which they can see themselves in Korea as they desire to be seen, often in contrast to any possible positional identities or figurative identities available in the figured world of English teaching. Carly’s positional identity within the figured world of Korean indie bands created new pleasurable possibilities that made continuing in Korea as a foreign English teacher in Korea far more desirable. However, Carly importantly has never really considered leaving Korea. In discussions she said that even without any access to the Hongdae indie bands she would continue to live in Korea. Furthermore, the other participants who passionately pursued hobbies either left or intended to leave both Korea and English language teaching. No participant in this study continued to live in Korea teaching English solely in order to pursue a particular hobby or passion.

While indie bands are vitally important to Carly she would continue to live in Korea without access to the figured world of Korean indie bands. Others who found compelling figured worlds within hobby like activities eventually left Korea and teaching to pursue other careers. For the participants in this study the figured worlds of hobbies such as indie band fan, photographer, or human rights NGO volunteer gave access to figured worlds and made possible positional identities far preferable to those available in the figured worlds of English teaching, but none of
these hobby based identities were compelling enough to influence the decision to remain or leave Korea.

Carly has woven together widely varying discourses, artifacts, and stories in which she deeply believes in “being professional” in her work regardless of what that work is, has little interest in teaching, and has crafted a figurative identity within a figured world of Korean indie bands that provides a satisfying story of continuing to live and teach in Korea. Importantly, no language teacher identity studies informing this research have examined the complex identity negotiations of teachers who understand teaching primarily as a job that allows them to pursue other activities while residing in Korea or elsewhere, and therefore, this section represents a valuable contribution to this scholarship.

The Importance of Teacher Selves

This section has examined teacher selves primarily through positional identities and figurative identities with their related figured worlds. Importantly, this examination included a diverse selection of teachers, representing teacher selves that are relatively invisible in existing scholarly literature in TESOL. Examining these diverse teacher selves raises issues about the current focus of language teacher identity research in TESOL, critical issues related to the management of language teachers, issues related to teacher development, and demands a further discussion of positional identities, figured worlds and their accompanying figurative identities, and foreign English teachers in Korea.

Many of the new wave of language teacher identity studies examining foreign English teachers in East Asia focus on teachers who have adopted professional teacher figured identities to varying degrees (Appleby, 2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b; Nagatomo, 2015; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Trent, 2012). This means professional teacher selves are by far the most examined teacher selves
within scholarly literature, perhaps to an unproductive degree. The other teacher selves discussed in this section only appear in much of the scholarly literature tangentially, often in participants’ stories of what other “bad” teachers have done. Some participants in Appleby’s (2013a) study craft notions of themselves as professional teachers by arguing they are not unqualified, temporary, less professional travellers who only teach in Asia for one-year because of a desire to travel and take a break from home and careers. I believe it is critical then to bring those teachers who are positioned in these ways, but are not present or allowed a voice in those studies (Appleby, 2013a), into this research in order to further build understandings of the diverse teacher selves of foreign English teachers in Korea and East Asia more generally. The voices of teachers such as Jess and Trent contribute to larger discussions of TESOL by showing how some temporary, other-than-professional teachers understand themselves as teachers and residents of Korea. By bringing the experiences, understandings, and teacher selves of Jess, Trent, and other similar teachers into this study, I believe I am contributing to a more nuanced discussion of foreign language teacher identity and can open new discussions regarding how these teachers can contribute to English language teaching.

While teachers such as Jess and Trent may circulate in existing scholarly literature on language teacher identity as the bad teachers others use to construct themselves as professionals, the teaching selves of John and Carly are relatively less-discussed, with the teaching selves of those such as Carly essentially non-existent in scholarly literature concerning English language teachers. John, Carly, and others within this study position themselves and craft stories of teaching in Korea over several years that allow them to productively work as English language educators in Korea. However, their figured worlds and accompanying positional identities are substantially different from more common understandings of professional teachers who focus on teacher development, and this disjunction between their careers as teachers and the common discourses of teacher professionalization found in literature may explain why teachers such as
John and Carly are so underrepresented in scholarly literature. Only Farmer (2006) and Walker (2011, 2014) discussing issues of client-centered or market-oriented English language teacher professionalism, discuss issues related to John’s teacher selves, which is especially surprising given the focus on well-paid English language teachers in East Asia within popular media. The Wall Street Journal has reported on Korean English teachers earning million dollar salaries (Ripley, 2013), but the scholarly world of English language teaching has for the most part ignored the vast wealth some teachers receive through their English language teaching. John is a teacher who is very much focused on issues of wealth and power, and understanding how some teachers identify with teaching through these issues is critical to understanding these teachers, and working with these teachers in any activity. Researchers who may not share these perspectives may have unintentionally not included participants such as John within their research because, I speculate, researchers carry with them their own perspectives on teaching that often reify notions of teacher professionalization, and are incommensurate with John’s perspective on teaching. Likewise, it is a common trope that some teachers only work as teachers in order to support their other career goals, and yet there is little examination of this phenomenon in discussions of foreign English teachers in scholarly literature. Again, it may be that teachers such as Carly socialize in worlds less accessible to most researchers and do not fit within the expectations of many researchers concerned with language teacher identity, leading to Carly and other similar teachers remaining relatively invisible to scholars interested in this area.

The teacher selves of John, Percy, Jess, Trent, and Carly, shape how these teachers engage with issues related to their educational institutions and teacher development. Most programs and plans related to teacher development are, perhaps unknowingly, based upon teachers assuming some form of professional teacher self, but as this section highlights, teachers such as Carly and John understand themselves as teachers in radically different ways. Attempting to work with Carly in a teacher development program which requires her to understand herself as
a professional teacher may be doomed to failure, while a programs centered around an understanding of herself as someone who does professional, high quality work may be more successful. Likewise, any teacher training program aimed at John would have to take in account his prestigious teacher self in order to be successful. Already there is valuable scholarship discussing how teacher development programs can mediate the development of teachers (Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Golombek P. R., 2015; Johnson & Golombek, 2011), however, there is relatively little discussion of how the figured worlds and positional identities of teachers such John, Percy, Jess, Trent, and Carly can shape attempts to engage in teacher development. Teacher development programs and research in this area should examine how teacher development done with foreign English teachers in Korea can productively use understandings of the diverse teacher selves that exist among these teachers.

Additionally, prestigious teacher selves and professional teacher selves cannot be accomplished without material and discursive support. Meeting business leaders and wearing tailor-made suits are elements of a critical constellation of material and discursive elements that make possible a prestigious teacher positional identity for John. Some elements may be required for certain positional identities, such as having a departmental teaching position for Percy, while other elements may contribute to positional identities in important but fluid ways, such as participating in certain teaching organizations. No teacher in this study forged an identity through sheer force of will alone. Teacher selves emerged out of interactions with others and through claims such as applying for various jobs that were validated or invalidated. When, as in Percy’s case, required elements needed for a positional identity shift, in his case due to losing a particular teaching position, the positional identity that makes possible a coherent intelligible narrative of being a foreign English teacher can shatter, resulting in serious difficulties, both in the classroom and beyond.
Both Carly and John crafted figured identities in figured worlds that are gendered but also deeply related to their bodies, sizes, and clothes. Bodies matter for these teachers as they negotiate and craft figured identities in Korea, and this is an area that has been under examined by scholars in this area. Further, there is little talk among those who work with teachers of how bodies can be aspects through which teacher selves can be negotiated. John’s immersion into a world of wealthy Korean businesspeople allowed for the development of a particular masculine, business-English teacher identity that has rarely been examined by scholars, and is unlike the language teacher identities, discussed by Appleby (2014b) and Stanley (2012) respectively, of men who taught in higher education in Japan, and Shanghai. John was able to craft this teacher self through artifacts such as his suits, his pay, the material conditions in which he taught, the telling of stories of being a teacher to himself and to others, and his large athletic body. While a variety of scholars such as Appleby and Stanley have examined issues of gender and foreign English language teachers in East Asia, they have not examined how the bodies of individual teachers shaped these negotiations of teacher selves. Carly, like John, negotiated indie rocker selves that shaped important aspects of her life. She negotiated issues of language, whiteness, gender, and age but as these negotiations primarily focus on her negotiation of an indie rocker self and not a teacher self, they are not examined extensively in this section. However, her negotiations of selves related to indie bands, her clothes, and her gendered body are further examined in Chapter 5.

The experiences of temporary one-year teachers, such as Jess and Trent, and their teacher selves has been very much under examined, and further studies of these teachers, their contributions to educational institutions, their overall efficacy, and their role in English language education in East Asia is needed. In terms of this study, a critical issue is the transition some teachers make from a figurative identity as a temporary teacher who intends to return home within a limited amount of time to a figurative identity that tells a coherent narrative of remaining
in Korea for a longer period. No participant went through this transition during this study but several participants retrospectively discussed continuing to teach in Korea and seeing themselves in new ways, but this was only discussed to a limited degree. These experiences of transforming figured identities as teachers continue teaching English in Korea is an important aspect of foreign English teachers’ experiences worthy of further examination. While the data collected in this study does not allow for a detailed examination of this transition, the following section examines changes in figured identities that take place as Jerri-Lee plans to leave Korea and leave English language teaching.

This section has examined the positional identities, figured worlds, and figurative identities of foreign English teachers in Korea highlighting the diversity that exists among these teachers, the gendered aspects of some of these teacher selves, and how they rely on various artifacts to make these selves “real” for these teachers. Importantly, the figurative identities of the teachers discussed in this section, or put simply the stories these teachers told that shaped their understanding of who they were as teachers, remained relatively fixed during their participation in this study. However, the positional identities of these teachers were more flexible and in different contexts with different people around them the participants discussed in this section positioned themselves quite differently. This is an important distinction as these participants are further discussed in this study and, at points, position themselves in different ways than discussed within this section.

The Constriction of Teaching Narratives and the Freedom of Departing Korea

Foreign English teachers in Korea often experience stress, difficulties, and challenges because of their classes and issues related to their educational institutions. Further, these particular stresses and difficulties can shape and be shaped by the stories these teachers tell
themselves about being teachers in these particular contexts. This section examines how some teachers re-orchestrate “voices”, borrowing Holland et al.’s (1998) term, and other narrative elements in their self-told stories of being teachers as they experiences difficulties and challenges related to their educational institutions. This section further examines how use of diverse voices and the construction of stories involving teaching and teacher careers can mediate these teachers’ actions, classroom practices, and emotions, as when some teachers mitigate some of the stresses that arise in their educational institutions through the telling of these stories of living and teaching in Korea. The experiences of David and Jerri-Lee both serve to highlight the complicated and emotionally fraught experiences that can arise at education institutions and these two participants’ narratives of these experiences are extensively discussed in this section. Further, I bring my own challenging experiences and my own narrative elements into this analysis as they add a further complicating element to this discussion. This section draws heavily upon Holland et al.’s (1998) “space of authoring” to examine how teachers orchestrate varying elements in the telling of their narratives of themselves and their classroom experiences. Further, Holland et al. (1998, p. 64) provide a framework to examine how embracing particular teaching identities can, in some ways, grant control over certain actions and behaviors, a critically needed understanding for this section.

This section explores several distinct ways foreign English teachers’ narrate themselves through challenging school experiences, and in doing so implications emerge both for teacher training, discussions of larger globally circulating discourses of “being a teacher”, and the possibilities of foreign English teachers’ negotiating selves in Korea.

**David and Narratives of Teacher Authority in Times of Crisis**

David, an African-American teacher joined this study in his mid-to-late twenties when he was teaching in a public school in Seoul. David previously had taught in a rural area of Korea,
and had been in Korea more than two years when he joined this study. David actively participated in several aspects of this study, discussing hobbies related to music, and he was observed performing and being involved in this musical world. Additionally, David regularly went to the gym and participated in martial arts with a Korean instructor and the entirety of his outside-school activities created additional contacts with both Korean and foreign friends, acquaintances, and mentors. However, David also described himself as a homebody who enjoyed watching movies on his computer and not someone who needed to go out every weekend. David was also interested in both Korea and Japan, with more of a background and interest in Japan, Japanese, and Japanese culture.

David taught at a public school and the particular context in which he taught shaped several aspects of how David’s teacher selves would develop and the conflicts that would emerge within that place. There had been, in the years prior to David taking a position with his public school, increasing pressure on multiple levels of the Korean government to increase the quality of English education within public schools, and by doing so lessen the pressure on parents to send their children to expensive English language hagwons. Increasing the number of foreign English teachers in Seoul public schools was one response to this pressure. The addition of these teachers to schools was supposed to allow all students the opportunity to use, practice, and further develop their English language skills within public schools and raise the overall English language proficiency of students. However, within individual schools there was often confusion over how these teachers should be employed, and the addition of a foreign English teacher to an already-existent, often-minimally-changed school curriculum created further challenges for everyone working in these contexts. Further, these foreign English teachers hired for these positions could often be working as the only foreign English teacher in a school. Whereas in some hagwons and universities more senior foreign English teachers could mentor or guide new teachers in how to contribute and take on a role within their respective institutions, in many public schools there
often was no one who had previously experienced working within that school as a foreign English teacher who could act as a mentor and provide guidance on how to adopt appropriate or desired roles within these schools. Further, within some schools the roles of these foreign English teachers were sometimes unclear, and ambiguity surrounded certain aspects of their work and purpose within these schools. Additionally, Korean public schools can be under a variety of regulatory or disciplinary regimes, and Korean teachers and principals may need to negotiate a variety of complex issues while also constructing particular positional identities as public school teachers and public school principals. Lastly, as David joined this study concerns over government expenditures and school budgets had led to budget cuts and reduced amounts of funding for foreign English teachers, meaning some positions for foreign English teachers were being eliminated and some foreign English teachers were not having their year-by-year contracts renewed, essentially meaning these teachers lost their jobs.

The particular understandings and practices of David and his Korean co-teachers and principal would shape David’s experiences and the conflicts that would emerge within this school. David generally described himself as a hardworking and dedicated teacher, discussing how he chose to increase the quality of teaching at his previous school, and how that effort meant he had to work almost every evening during the week, curtailing almost any activity other than teaching and preparing for classes. Further, David discussed how he outperformed the previous foreign English teacher at his current school, noting that the teacher he replaced had often shown videos in class and outright refused to participate in certain activities while David accepted extra duties as a teacher. However, David also mentioned that at times he would agree to participate in activities or complete some work which, because of the limitations of time and the extra work he took on, he could not complete. He also discussed how he socialized less with Korean co-teachers than the previous foreign English teacher at this school, perhaps lessening the potential social bonds he could have forged within the school. David also mentioned that part of his goal in
teaching English in Korea was to “raise excitement for English with my students [and]
breakdown barriers with regards to Black people and foreigners in general” and he discussed his understanding that the reason behind his hiring and the government funding that allowed him and other foreign English teachers to be hired was the desire of the government to improve students’ overall English ability. Additionally, David mentioned that the Korean co-teachers he worked with referred to themselves as “public officers”, reflecting their status as public school teachers who are part of the larger civil service of Korea, and their generally respected social status.

Further, these teachers were often under pressure to manage English education in various ways, satisfying parents and meeting the demands of larger educational organizations through events such as open classes in which parents or other teachers would observe a particular class.

Monday to Friday David was present as his school from about 8:30 am till 4:30 pm, and he would typically teach four classes a day of fifty minutes each. David was partnered with about seven co-teachers who he would work with to varying degrees. Initially, he taught with Korean co-teachers who, they said, were required to be in the classroom with him, and while he conceded that novice teachers would benefit from this teaching arrangement he believed and argued to these teachers that he should teach alone and be solely responsible for the classes he taught.

While this did not result in a complete change in practice, David taught different classes in different ways with different co-teachers with whom he had different relationships, but was responsible for a large amount of lesson planning, the development of a curriculum for the classes he taught, and taught those classes relatively independently. David described his relationship with students as positive, discussing how students would call him “Obama teacher”, reflecting President Obama’s positive status as the highest profile African-American in Korea, and said “when I first got to the school I kinda expected some kind of reaction, but even guys were like, ‘teacher I love you’”, and described the general positive reaction to the enthusiasm he brought to his classes and the general close connection he felt with students. However, several challenges
emerged over David’s participation in this study that would lead to serious conflicts within his school.

David discussed several incidents that led to growing conflicts within his school involving his classes and the Korean co-teachers he worked alongside. In his second interview David discussed an open class which became a point of serious conflict between David and several Korean co-teachers. David was asked in this case to prepare a lesson plan about a month in advance, but given David was creating his own lesson plans and was developing his own curriculum he felt he could not or should not submit that material until closer to the date of the open class. Further, one Korean co-teacher would have to co-teach this class with David, meaning that he would have to plan a class that incorporated himself and a Korean teacher of English and that this Korean co-teacher would be teaching in front of an audience of other teachers alongside David. This co-teacher’s concern was so great she attempted to cancel the class, but was unable to do so due to a commitment to host this class already having been made. Ultimately the class was successful, with David reporting very positive feedback from those who observed this class, but the experience of preparing for this open class created or exacerbated serious issues between David and several Korean co-teachers, although David discussed repairing some aspects of his relationships with those he worked with after this open class in his second interview.

However, by the time of his third interview the situation at his public school had worsened, and in his third and final interview David wanted to almost exclusively discuss the difficulties he was facing at his public school. He described how, in his opinion, his relationship with his Korean co-teachers had broken down over issues of honesty, accusations of being less-than-diligent, conflicts over classroom practices, and related issues. This resulted in several meetings with school management, one of which ended very poorly and potentially endangered both David’s position with this school and any future work in Korea, and could have had negative consequences for the school as well.
In his third interview David discussed how several Korean teachers had criticized his teaching and made suggestions on how to change his classes that were considered by David, but ultimately rejected by him. Further, he discussed how some teachers had made corrections, improper in his judgment, in how he was teaching grammar and that all of these issues increased tensions between some Korea co-teachers, and him. A further concern was the next open class. While David believed the previous open class had gone well, David acknowledged that he needed to work further with the Korean co-teacher he would teach the lesson with, and attempted to approach this class in a different way. He discussed how he approached this additional open class.

So, I figured this time I would work with the Korean teachers maybe a month or two in advance to get the kids used to us etcetera. So, anyway the way the conversation started [at] the beginning of the year, my Korean teacher started kinda making suggestions that she never made before. I was kinda like, “thank you, you know I got this”, sorta thing in a respectful way, I wasn’t rude yet. Then one day I was walking to go buy my own lunch and she kinda asked to join and I respectfully said, “sure, why not”. We talked and she wanted to start asking about open class then, this was April mind you, open class was scheduled for November. Like I said last time, I had no idea what I was doing in April let alone November so (I said) “I’m sorry I can’t really do that” and then she was like “OK, then we should work together more often in class, and I can give you some suggestions on what you should be doing”. Well, once again “thanks, but no thanks”, I mean I’m sure I told you the system I work with; the 30 kids I work with are cut in half, so the teacher who does the other half, we actually started working much closer together, so we actually make the same lessons together and it’s been a really great relationship, so I was like that’s really all I need. I don’t need too many cooks in the kitchen you know, but I told her, “like I said
I’m willing to, you know, maybe start that a little earlier than the last open class”,
but I said “I’m sorry but it’s my show, that’s the way it’s always been”. So, when
I thought I was kinda compromising, she went behind my back and told other
teachers how bad I was and got the open class to be cancelled.

In this narrative concerning his open class, David gives an account of events he experienced, but
also narratively builds himself as a responsible teacher capable of teaching and managing classes
and having the authority to decide how to conduct his classes. Throughout his interviews David
would repeatedly construct himself through narratives as having the responsibility, capability, and
authority to manage his classes in this way. In this excerpt David orchestrates various voices,
including his own, in ways that assume David is responsible for the preparation of the open class,
he has the authority to make many decisions regarding this class and the other classes he teaches,
and he positions his classes as “his show” or his responsibility. Additionally, David, both during
this experience and in his retelling of this experience, has adopted a strategy of resisting some of
the attempts by others at his school to control his classes and his teaching. This strategy of
resisting encroachment on his authority as a teacher, resisting representation of his teaching as
flawed, and resisting representation of himself as a less-than-diligent teacher are deeply
connected to the narratives he told in this third interview. To explore this connection I draw upon
Holland et al.’s (1998) space of authoring.

Holland et al.’s (1998) space of authoring offers a means of examining how David and
other foreign English teachers weave together discordant voices in order to craft meaningful
identities, and productively mediate actions and emotion. Holland et al.’s space of authoring is an
understanding of identity that incorporates development, and how development is a social process
mediated by myriad elements, including people and their voices, and further how identity
involves an asking and answering process that draws upon multiple voices. Drawing from
Vygotsky (1978), Holland et al. define the space of authoring as a Zone of Proximal Development (Holland et al., 1998, p. 183), meaning that identities are something people are able to do, and able to do either independently, or with the support of others or other mediating elements, or something that cannot be done regardless of support. Drawing from Bakhtin, they define the space of authoring as being a process of asking and answering through dialogue in which identity is a constant re-orchestration of various voices, some of which are internalized and become elements of internal circulating dialogue. This space of authoring provides the means to examine David’s excerpt, see how he, to varying degrees, has internalized and reproduced notions of himself as a teacher and classroom authority, and how he is retelling himself these narratives as a means of mediating his own practices.

Further, Holland et al. emphasize how narratives can grant people degrees of control over their actions, allowing for a mediation of particular practices, actions, and emotions. They discuss examples such as flight attendants, drawing upon the pioneering work of Hochschild (1983), and how novice flight attendants learn to manage their own emotional reactions to obnoxious passengers. Holland et al. (1998, p. 37) discuss how these novice flight attendants are taught to tell themselves a story about these difficult passengers, imagining that these passengers had traumatic childhoods or are scared of flying, in order to generate sympathy for these passengers and make the process of serving them easier. Over time this process is internalized and more experienced flight attendants no longer need to explicitly tell themselves these stories and can simply provide high quality service to annoying and difficult passengers. Likewise, those in Alcoholics Anonymous who learn to tell stories of themselves as alcoholics according to the narrative set out in that program gain some control over their drinking in the telling and hearing of those stories of drinking alcohol (see Holland et al. Chapter 4). The capacity of narratives told by oneself to oneself to mediate action and emotion is a critical aspect of understanding the narratives discussed in this chapter.
During the preparation of the open class and its eventual cancellation further conflicts between David and his Korean co-teachers emerged and led to serious tension within his school, enough that David’s position at this school was in danger and he was greatly concerned about his continued employment and future job prospects in Korea at the time of his third interview. The exact details of these other conflicts offer little further insight into David’s teacher selves and the larger issues of concern in this study. However, the way David would discuss his position and elements of these conflicts during this third interview highlights the capacity of narratives to mediate action in critical ways, and how these narratives and narrative elements can incline some foreign English teachers towards certain actions.

David draws upon several iconic figures in discussing his school experiences. In the following excerpt, David discusses a meeting with the school leadership in which he felt his observations and criticisms were not being listened to or acknowledged.

Oh, I should mention during that meeting where I got the warning letter I invited him [a principal at David’s school] to come by the classroom to see what happens in the classroom for himself. He said he didn’t need to and that he didn’t want to, that he trusted the Koreans, that they’re professional etcetera and pretty much he told me he wasn’t willing to investigate my claims. But, he was totally, of course, willing to investigate theirs, not even investigate just hear them and give me a punishment based on what they said. So I decided to at that point, this was mid-September, that I had to finally get proof on these suckers, and it sucked that I had to go through all these measures, but I um it’s pretty much a Malcom X quote, um, I’ll have to paraphrase but, “If your government is unable or unwilling to protect you then you have to protect yourself”, and that’s pretty much what I did.
Further, in several excerpts in the interview David invoked other figures from popular culture and larger, widely circulating understandings of Black experiences in America.

It’s just, it’s amazing, how when I do something, when the foreigner does something, it’s just bad. You know, “he should do this, he should” you know? But, when a Korean does it, ahhh there’s always a reason why it’s OK or why we can give him a pass. Being Black in Korea is like being Black in America. When you get to the professional level you gotta be better than everyone everyone, and I was like that, I mean I would say I’m still like that but they don’t wanna see it that way.

In the following excerpt, David, having been watching episodes of The X-Files (Chris Carter, 1993) during these experiences at his school, draws upon figures from popular culture.

But I’m the kind of person like um I fear no man, like just like with The X-Files, truth’s all that matters, if it’s on your side then you shouldn’t have to be afraid.

In this last excerpt, David draws upon larger discourses of popular philosophy and his explicit understanding of his role and goals as a teacher in Korea as he tells the story of meeting a school manager who was trying to explain David’s position within this school.

So, I had to clarify. So, pretty much whatever the Korean teachers tell me to do, I have to do. And, he pretty much said a hundred percent yes, a hundred percent, a hundred percent. So, that was crazy, but um, like I said, I was never fearful this past time, or last year I was never fearful. Like the Socratic philosophy, a worse man cannot harm a better man even in death, like I came there to raise excitement for English with my students, break down barriers with regards to Black people and foreigners in general. I accomplished that so if I had to leave at that point I did my job.
Within all four excerpts David weaves together multiple voices and discourses to recreate and reinforce his notion of himself as a dedicated teacher committed to issues of truth, justice, and a more open world. He appropriates the voices of other teachers in his school to highlight his understanding that they are behaving inappropriately and in a discriminatory fashion. David plays with the diverse voices that surround him in his environment in a space of authoring to create and recreate a potential desired figurative and positional identity (Holland et al. 1998, p. 193) as a teacher, and in doing so shapes his practices and the ways he can engage his coworkers and school.

While all four excerpts from David’s third interview draw upon wildly different larger discourses of historical figures, current discourses of Black identity in the United States, and popular culture, their use in these narratives reinforces and helps make possible David’s teacher selves and his actions as a teacher. These self-told narrative elements reinforced notions of his authority and his teacher selves that were challenged by his experiences with both his Korean co-teachers and school management, as exemplified by the final excerpt in which David was told explicitly every Korean teacher had authority over the classes he taught and his teaching practices. The narrative elements in David’s excerpts and beyond helped make possible his continued resistance to some of the practices he felt were unfair and unjust. A critical insight of this section is an understanding that narrative elements of David’s speech, such as references to The X-Files and Malcom X, reinforced aspects of David’s identity and made possible certain actions that constituted resistance to a what was understood by David to be a lesser or diminished teacher self and teacher authority. Simultaneously, these narratives and narrative elements told by David to himself and me may have bound him to a path of resistance that limited his capacity to negotiate and compromise. Holland et al. (1998) discuss how narratives and larger narrative elements can grant those who take up those narratives control over some aspects of their actions, but that these same narratives also constrict and limit particular actions and practices.
By creating and embracing an identity in the world of Alcoholics Anonymous, the former drinker can achieve a modicum of control over his relation to alcohol, but in doing so he learns a kind of discipline, a way of looking and behaving that often condemns what his friends, and often his “other selves,” would have him do. Through participation in the women’s groups that create songs envisioning a new world of gender relations in Nepal, individual women find a place to stand, a perspective on themselves and their lives not otherwise offered in the texts and rituals of their daily lives. They achieve their standpoint, however, only by submitting themselves to another set of cultural forms that have their own peculiar limitations and constraints. (p. 64)

David understood the actions of his Korean co-teachers and the larger school he worked within to be unjust. He attempted to resist these unjust practices, and an aspect of this resistance was the telling himself and others a narrative of who he was within this institution, supplemented by narrative elements such as references to Socratic philosophy and the important history of Black resistance to white racism. However, the telling of these narrative elements did not just mediate action David wished to take, they simultaneously involved submission to “another set of cultural forms that have their own peculiar limitations and constraints” (Holland et al., 1998, 64) which bound David to a particular path of resistance. Narrative artifacts such as stories of Malcom X and The X-Files mediated action involving David’s resistance to perceived unjust practices, but this same mediation foreclosed or limited the possibilities of compromise and negotiation for David. The understanding that narratives simultaneously make possible action in some ways and constrain or eliminate the possibility for action in other ways for some foreign English teachers is a major insight of this study.
The telling of particular narratives of an educational institution may provide support for teachers who resist unjust practices or unfair treatment, but those same narratives carry with them “their own particular limitations and constraints” (Holland et al., 1998, 64). Teachers who engage in the telling of these narratives to themselves or others can be less capable of modifying their actions or positions, when compromise or adaptation could prove beneficial. Further, when such narratives of resistance and truth become the only teacher narratives that can be told by oneself about being a teacher, the opportunities for compromise and negotiation are further limited. Again, depending on the context, such resistance may be appropriate, but in other contexts this resistance may create greater conflict over issues that could be solved through negotiation and compromise.

David forcefully argued that his co-teachers and principal acted unjustly in their treatment of him, and certainly some foreign English teachers and African-American teachers face discrimination and unfair treatment. However, I never contacted any of David’s co-teachers nor visited his school and the data for this examination of David’s experiences is solely David’s interviews. Additionally, I did not extensively question David about the origins of his understandings about himself as a teacher. Further, the focus of this section is on the capacity of narrative understandings to mediate teachers’ actions, not the material reality of David or other teachers’ public schools. Nevertheless, this examination of David’s experiences in a Korean public school makes possible further, more-speculative discussion of the contexts of Korean public schools which employ foreign English teachers, and the different ways foreign English teachers can understand themselves within these contexts. One possible interpretation of David’s experiences and those of other foreign English teachers’ is that some foreign English teachers experience discrimination and unjust treatment in various ways and draw upon widely varying narratives to mediate action that resists or challenges discriminatory or otherwise damaging practices. In doing so these teachers may positively contribute to ending discrimination,
improving opportunities for teachers of Color, and create further possibilities for their students to encounter diverse, knowledgeable teachers who can contribute towards their English education.

An alternative interpretation of David’s experiences and those of other foreign English teachers is that the assumptions of knowledge, professionalism, and authority these teachers develop are rooted in discourses of American or Western knowledge being superior to all other form of knowledge, sexist discourses that inherently position men as more professional than women, and a faith in the superiority of the English native speaker, as well as a general unwillingness to learn about the practices, beliefs, and cultures of Korean schools. Therefore the conflicts these teachers experience are deeply connected to damaging neocolonial discourses that potentially harm the quality of education students receive and the overall teacher community in Korea. These two interpretations represent extremes and neither should be assumed to be sensible analyses of David’s experiences at his school. Given the limits of the data collected in this study, I cannot offer a singular reasonable interpretation of David’s experiences, but I believe these two interpretations offer insight into understandings, experiences, and contexts of many foreign English teachers who work in public schools and perhaps other contexts. In fact, these two interpretations are not incommensurate, and in some circumstances both interpretations may be reasonable understandings of what is occurring in educational institutions with some foreign English teachers. It is possible for Korean co-teachers in a public school to discriminate against a foreign English teacher and for that same foreign teacher to understand themselves to be superior to the Korean co-teachers they work with because of damaging discourse of sexism and Western superiority. Having explored David’s experiences in his public school to a productive-but-limited degree, this discussion of how these experiences can be interpreted should be understood as a speculative exploration of this topic that can further inform discussion of contexts similar to David’s and future research in this area. However, the focus of this section remains on the capacity of foreign English teachers’ narratives to mediate these teachers’ actions in different
ways. While David’s contribution to this study offers an example of narratives being told in the midst of a crisis, other foreign English teachers crafted narratives that changed more gradually as their English language teacher careers underwent significant transitions.

Jerri-Lee and Teacher Narratives of Career Transition and Leaving Korea

Jerri-Lee, a white American woman in her late twenties, taught, like David, in a public school in Seoul during the time of her participation in this study. She was also very interested in the arts, had studied photography, and was interested in pursuing a career in the creative arts that drew upon her photography and creativity, but was not interested in pursuing a continuing career as an English language teacher. Jerri-Lee at points told narratives of herself as a teacher and the public school she taught at that, in some ways, lightly echoed David’s narratives of authority and resistance. However, the narratives she employed emphasized not the need for resistance and fortitude, but the need to manage her own frustration and conflicted emotion.

Jerri-Lee: So Ms. Park had this big conflict with Hyunju, the really sweet new sweet English teacher Hyunju, and made Hyunju cry, and a lot of it was about my class actually. And so, like, I asked Ms. Park questions like, “you know, I don’t what’s going on, you need to tell me even if you don’t know something, like if you tell the students, I don’t know, but you need to tell me that too”. And then on Wednesday I didn’t realize I was in the middle of a meeting until like ten minutes had already passed and Hyunju looked over and she goes, “you know we’re having a meeting right now” and I was sitting there, but I thought it was teachers’ class. And so I had, instead of like a folder with my class information, I had like articles to chat with the teachers, and they’re all talking serious stuff and I was like, “Whaaat?” and she was like, “you didn’t know?” and I was “no I didn’t know at all” and so like if [she had] just uh one or two days prior [told me about the
meeting]. But, she’s not going to change and there’s just no, I’m just telling myself there’s no point in getting mad about it.

Michael: Yea

Jerri-Lee: But I just feel myself shut down whenever she’s around. Like, I don’t want her to like enjoy my company, like I don’t talk to her, and I think that’s terrible.

Michael: It sounds like a frustrating situation on, situation sounds like it’s difficult, to find a way

Jerri-Lee: There’s nothing I can do, and and I say that because I know. Because I tried to fight a similar situation and it just blew up.

Michael: Yea, fighting, I do not recommend, uh.

Jerri-Lee: But I’m pretty sure she’s aware of my feelings towards her and in a way that’s enough.

In this excerpt Jerri-Lee weaves together the discordant voices of some of her co-teachers and herself in a space of authoring. She crafts, using a variety of voices and elements, a limited positional identity as a teacher in a difficult position in which the structure of the school, being forced to work with and through the difficult Ms. Park rather than Hyunju, the more helpful teacher, creates difficulties for both her and some Korean co-teachers. Further, she discusses resisting and being in conflict with elements of school practices through a general reluctance to engage with Ms. Park, and her reference to previously having fought, unsuccessfully, some school policy or practice. However, I argue the mediating efforts of certain narrative elements in this excerpt are not directed towards resisting school policies and practices, but towards mitigating the frustration and emotional difficulties that arise from her work and aiding her in continuing to work despite these frustrations and other emotions.
This excerpt contains narrative elements that are relevant to examining how Jerri-Lee mediates and gains control of her own actions. In telling the story of meeting her Korean co-teachers and being confused, Jerri-Lee tells a story of events in the past that I believe still held emotional relevance to her at the time of the interview. At times she shifted from discussing events in the past to her current beliefs and understandings about her coworker, told in the present tense, and how “she’s [the coworker] not going to change”, “there’s no point in getting mad about it”, and “she’s aware of my feelings towards her and in a way that’s enough”. These expressions are narrative understandings that to varying degrees mediate Jerri-Lee’s actions and emotions during the interview and perhaps any time she again thinks about or encounters difficult situations with her coworkers. She, I believe, retells them at times to gain control of the frustration she feels with her teaching context and to be able to function as a teacher in a context she finds challenging. I argue these narrative elements attempt to mediate her emotional state, and help her continue working comfortably and efficiently in her school, in a manner somewhat similar to the flight attendants discussed by Hochschild (1983) and referenced by Holland et al. (1998). Like these flight attendants, the narratives Jerri-Lee tells herself about her coworkers mediate to varying degrees, the frustrations that arise in her work environment. However, her additional interviews show the limits of these particular narratives and highlight the other practices she engages in to further deal with these emotions.

In another excerpt Jerri-Lee discussed the frustration she felt when attending meetings with her Korean coworkers in which they almost exclusively spoke Korean. She also discussed her frustration with these Korean coworkers lack of concern over discipline issues in her classes. This excerpt also introduces another practice, which helped her mediate her frustration with her teaching context, and references her ambiguous feelings about this practice.
Jerri-Lee: Well, I’m really frustrated that, so I’m an English teacher and I work with Koreans who are supposed to teach English and I’m supposed to converse with them, but I have yet to have a meeting with them that is in English.

Michael: Really?

Jerri-Lee: Yea, it’s always in Korean. In the last meeting [I asked], “is it OK if we speak in English in this meeting, because it’s about English and not, and I’m an English speaker?”, and they honestly looked at me, like seven of them, and then continued in Korean.

Michael: So do you participate in Korean or do you just sit there and?

Jerri-Lee: I kinda pout to be honest, cause are you kidding? This is for the English class, and the students laugh at you when you speak English, cause you suck, cause you never practice, and this is good way to practice. And then, at lunch, one of the teachers is “I’m sorry we didn’t speak in English, but it would take so long” and I don’t and uh don’t you think you should reconsider your career? There are other teachers at my school who speak better English than the English teachers, so that’s kinda frustrating. And, I don’t have control over grades or partial grades, and so it’s frustrating to go into a classroom when I know that they don’t care, and I’ve stopped yelling a long time ago, and if the Korean teachers get annoyed enough then they’ll yell, but, you know, sometimes they’re just sleeping in the back of the classroom. And I get tests to proofread, and all of the directions are in Korean. I couldn’t even finish the test because it’s in Korean, and the kicker is that there is a [returnee] class, they are the most advanced students. They’ve studied abroad for several years [and returned to Korea, hence the term ‘returnee’]. Most of the time they’re like returnees, a returnee class, and they’re fairly fluent in English, unless they’ve studied in Japan or something. And I, uh, I think some of the questions are confusing on the test, and I don’t understand why they uh they make it tricky and I found out that, this is totally
like not officially finding out, that some of the teachers don’t like that the returnee students have such an advantage over the rest of the students, cause they have no control over that. So they don’t like [that], so they try to purposely make the test harder for the advanced students, and if there’s more than a ten percent difference in the advanced students’ grades and the rest of the students’ grades the teachers will be punished. Think on that!

Michael: Yea

Jerri-Lee: so I found that out the week before going to KOTESOL so what’s the point?

Michael: So how’s that, uh, how’s that, uh, come into, uh so, how’s that kinda expanded beyond the classroom, do you find that frustration anywhere else, or is not necessarily a big issue or?

Jerri-Lee: Anywhere else in school or outside?

Michael: I guess, how is that frustration of your job shaping other aspects of your life?

Jerri-Lee: It makes me want to get out of that job sooner, like I just, it really like, after learning about that, I get really angry at Korea as an entire country. And I called my [boyfriend] and I was like I can’t go to [my dance class] tonight, I need to have wings, and I need to have a beer, and like I can’t eat Korean food when I’m mad at Korea. I can’t speak Korean when I’m mad at Korea, like I just shut it all down which is really really immature.

This excerpt features several interesting narrative elements that circulate within this particular place of authoring and beyond. Jerri-Lee weaves together various voices, including different aspects of her own voice, to create different possible identities as a teacher and beyond. She constructs herself to a greater degree than in the earlier excerpt as a teacher limited by multiple elements including a problematic educational system, co-teachers who have limited interest in further developing their English skills, and a relatively unjust grading system that discriminates
against certain groups of students. This space of authoring also then, indirectly and to a limited
degree, constructs Jerri-Lee, in a somewhat similar fashion to David, as a diligent and good
teacher who wants to teach well as part of a well-run school in the manner of an idealized image
of an almost mythicized teacher.

Further, Jerri-Lee describes her practice of seeking out perceived-to-be American or non-
Korean experiences such as drinking beer and eating chicken wings, when frustrated by her
workplace and teaching. She would further describe often avoiding Korean food, Korean
experiences, and even refusing to leave her apartment on Sundays in anticipation of the
frustration that would arise in her upcoming work week in school. Holland et al. (1998) note that
not all those who learn and make use of narratives as mediating elements do so successfully, or
do so consistently. In their examination of members of Alcoholics Anonymous, they discussed
how some members learn to narrative themselves as alcoholics, but only to limited degrees or
only at certain times, shaping or limiting how this narrative mediates control of their drinking.
The narratives Jerri-Lee tells herself about certain co-teachers “not going to change” and “there’s
no point in getting mad about it” may only grant limited control of the complex frustrations she
feels in her work. When these mediating narratives are insufficient, this practice of having beer
and chicken wings may be another practice that helps Jerri-Lee gain control of her emotions and
actions that are shaped by being a teacher in this context.

During her early interviews, Jerri-Lee discussed the frustration she felt because of her
work and her routine of avoiding Korean experiences by staying in her apartment Sundays.
However, in her last two interviews she discussed a significant change to these practices as she
prepared to leave Korea and embark on a significant period of global travel, with no plans to ever
teach English in Korea again. As Jerri-Lee prepared to leave Korea, travel, and eventually pursue
a career in the creative arts she discussed her changing feelings. She discussed feeling more
relaxed and at ease in her job, but also the complex mostly negative emotions that swirled around seeing herself as being “checked out” as a teacher, meaning not engaged and serious as a teacher.

Michael: Last time you kinda talked about having a bad day, and then not wanting to have anything to do with Korea, but it sounds like those days are diminishing? Or you just don’t seem to have so many [of those days]? Or you’re less frustrated these days, or um am I, uh, can you talk about that?

Jerri-Lee: Yea, I think I’m less, and this is very recent, uh like a week or two ago, yea, I just went home that one afternoon, I think it was after the candy incident, I was kinda like, “Jim [Jerri-Lee’s boyfriend], I think I’m going through something [laughter]”. And I think I still kinda am a little bit, but I’m much more relaxed I think, or I don’t uh, or if I stay home it’s cause my focus is elsewhere. Like if I stay home, it’s because I need to use the scanner at my house, and I’m gonna try and bust out a lot of work. It’s more for like work than for hating Korea. Yea, cause I’m like, I used to, I used to make a point of staying home on Sundays just I didn’t want to deal, I needed.

Michael: Didn’t want to deal with?

Jerri-Lee: Korea, I guess. Yea, I just would not get dressed, and I would stay home all day and just do my own thing. And I still need a certain amount of alone time or down time if you will, but yea even on Sunday we were out, I was like “Woooa! It’s Sunday and I’m out, what’s going on?” [Laughter]. Yea, that’s different. I feel like you’re getting quite the arc from me or something.

This excerpt serves to highlight the emotional changes that came about as Jerri-Lee approached the end of her time teaching in Korea and the possible end of her career as an English language teacher. Her story of being more relaxed and comfortable on Sundays and her reference to the arc her experience has taken over the course of this study emphasize the newness and significance of
this change, at least to her. Jerri-Lee still references frustrating experiences like “the candy incident” in which a co-teacher gave out candy irrespective of the game and lesson plan, but overall Jerri-Lee states she feels better and more relaxed than in earlier interviews. However, this change and more relaxed and comfortable emotional state was accompanied by discussions of complex feelings about being a bad teacher, and being “checked out” as a teacher

Jerri-Lee: I’ve been such a bad teacher lately.

Michael: What do you mean?

Jerri-Lee: I’m just checked out, and my coteachers aren’t very helpful, so I’m just not as invested I think. And if they’re being crazy, I’m much more relaxed, I’ll just wait until you’re done being crazy before I try to yell or talk over you.

And Jerri-Lee continued:

Michael: You talk about being kinda checked out? That’s another thing? Kinda getting burned out on teaching? So, what’s up with that?

Jerri-Lee: I’m done. I just…like today, I went into one class, and then they just did not care that I was there, and my coteacher was not helping, she’s kinda like a wet noodle, just stands there or stands over there wet noodley there. I guess it’s frustrating because if they don’t care that I’m there, and if my coteacher doesn’t help, I just think of all the stuff I could be doing. Like I’m trying to plan a year of travel to places I’ve never been, like some places I’ve never been before. I’m trying to do this (redacted). Like, I have to stop myself from doing that because I just get so annoyed.

Michael: Sure. And when you say you’re done is it done, done with teaching, like never gonna teach again? Or is it getting a bit burnt out by Korea, or is it getting a bit burnt out by this one school, and students or teachers there?
Jerri-Lee: Definitely the teachers, but I don’t blame the students, because the system here is so terrible it’s mind blowing how bad it is, in my opinion. And I know it’s bad in America, I know it’s bad everywhere maybe but, and it’s probably very easy for me to be critical of it, but it just but it doesn’t make any sense to me at this point. Like, I’m supposed to go into a class of forty students of different levels and do a speaking class with them when one coteacher is sleeping in the back of the classroom and I dunno. It just doesn’t make sense, and like I really don’t blame the students even when they’re bad. I’m kinda like nothing’s gonna stop you, you can do whatever you want, the teachers aren’t gonna… Like it doesn’t affect their grade, even the badminton players who never come to class, they’re still going to graduate. So, I just like try to be, like ah, like I try to set a good example of what uh how a teacher should interact with students, and I try to respect them so they respect me, and to be a good example of America I guess too, instead of being like uh I worry more about that than I worry about being a good teacher in the literal sense.

Michael: and what does that? What does that ‘that’ mean exactly?

Jerri-Lee: Like making sure class starts on time, and disciplining or trying to discipline students who are being bad and trying to get my coteachers to participate more

Michael: I thought you were, I thought you mean being a good representative, or is that what you meant? You said I worry more about that [added emphasis]?

Jerri-lee: Ok, so that’s what I don’t worry about

Michael: Ok you don’t worry about Oh Ok

Jerri-lee: About being a good teacher in that sense but I try to be nice to students, and I dunno more level headed, and explain things to them in a way they can use in or outside the classroom.
There are several critical elements in these two excerpts from Jerri-Lee. There is the explicit discussion of how she sees herself as a teacher in Korea, her goals with students, and her concerns about representing herself as an American and being a good example of America that in some ways echoes David’s discussion of his explicit goals of being a good teacher in Korea. Additionally, there is Jerri-Lee’s discussion of being less concerned with being a “good teacher” and “checked out” alongside her worries over discipline and the lack of consistency with discipline that represent, to some degree, some ambiguity with her role in this school, saying she is less concerned with being a good teacher but also voicing explicit teacher concerns as well.

Jerri-Lee’s interviews, and the changes in her experiences and narratives, can be productively understood as the reworking of a diverse voices and discourses within a space of authoring. Preparing to move on from teaching to a hoped-for career in the creative arts brings forth further stories of focusing on arts funding, planning travel, and thoughts of future work, which are woven into and given prominence in her narratives of who she is and who she wants to be. As these voices and discourses focused on media creation and concerns of travel are adopted, the voices which emphasize the importance of being a “good teacher” fade to some degree or become less prominent, but remain and emerge as in the final section of Jerri-lee’s previous excerpt where she again discusses the perceived failures of her school and larger education systems. Nevertheless, these voices within this space of authoring which emphasize being a good teacher and emphasize a commitment to fairness and education have lessened. I argue the abandonment of some of these voices and discourses also reduced the burdens imposed by these voices and discourses, and made possible Jerri-Lee’s Sunday adventures in Korea in which she left her apartment, did activities she considered important, and no longer felt the need to avoid all aspects of Korea. Further, she discussed allowing students to act out and misbehave until they calmed down, something she hints her Korean co-teachers were comfortable with overall. The reworking of Jerri-Lee’s space of authoring in which she emphasized her artistic and travel
ambitions and lessened those of being a teacher, reduced the emotional burdens she felt because of her teaching, and allowed her to engage in teaching with a more relaxed attitude. In some ways her experiences teaching near the end of her time in Korea, and the diminished stress she felt as she saw herself less as a teacher and more as something else, mirrored my own experiences as I returned to Korea to both complete this research and teach in a Korean university.

**My Experiences Teaching and Emotional Management through a Researcher Narrative**

My teaching position is in almost every way the ideal teaching position for foreign English teachers. I teach responsible, hard-working students, alongside understanding Korean colleagues and staff, and have the freedom to teach how I wish. However, this position also involved extremely frustrating experiences in which schedules were unfairly changed, rewards and pay were abruptly changed or withdrawn, and unclear or unstated policies constrained both my social world and teaching. More seriously, I also witnessed and was a part of acts of discrimination in terms of department development. In hiring, but also elsewhere, unstated policies and practices favored the hiring of white American men over almost all others, and at times this policy resulted in far more qualified personnel being overlooked in the hiring process. Further, the school favored a relatively antiquated teaching policy focused on American English, and the United States more generally, that limited students’ opportunities to expand their education and explore more pluralistic understandings of English in the world. Although, at points I was able to maneuver within the constraints of the rules governing my educational institution I found these experiences incredibly frustrating. At times, I lost sleep over these conflicts, felt myself losing control of how angry I was at various situations, and questioned my ability to continue successfully in this position, but fortuitously this study provided an alternative narrative of these experiences. “This is amazing data” or “this could be a great study” was a
mantra that allowed me to gain control over my response to these workplace experiences that would, at times, almost cripple me with frustration, and profoundly limit my ability to work with my colleagues. Telling myself a story of myself in which I played the role of a researcher learning about foreign English teachers, rather than a foreign English teacher seemingly stuck in a frustrating position, allowed for those feelings of frustration to dissipate and for me to resume working in situations I would have found incredibly frustrating otherwise. This alternative narrative was supported by artifacts such as published articles, my own work on this dissertation, and those around me who also saw me as a researcher, including participants. I doubt I would have believed this narrative without such artifacts.

My experience with frustrating and morally challenging situations in my educational institution and my self-told narratives that mitigated much of this frustration can be understood through Holland et al.’s (1998) spaces of authoring. I believe I wove together narrative and material elements of teaching and research that recreated these experiences as less frustrating researcher experiences instead of incredibly frustrating teacher experiences. These supporting elements were the required mediating elements of Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development that made a researcher identity possible and allowed me to believe myself when I said, “I am a researcher and this is amazing data.” However, it is important to note that this researcher identity and my self-told story of being a researcher, while providing great emotional relief, also may have allowed me to avoid conflicts I perhaps should have fought. There may have been times that I should have embraced the frustration and anger I felt over discriminatory hiring practices and worked towards a better outcome for my department. This narrative of being a researcher granted some greater emotional control, but it was not without potential consequences beyond my emotional state, and my continued employment.
Narratives as Mediation and Conflicts between Reality and Figured Worlds

This section has explored the teaching related experiences and narratives told by David, Jerri-Lee and myself and examined these narratives and experiences through Holland et al.’s (1998) concept of the space of authoring, highlighting how various voices were re-orchestrated in order to craft identities that were productive in various ways. Further, this examination can illuminate the origins and limitations of teacher identities created by foreign English teachers in Korea, the origins and explanations of conflicts between some teachers, and productive and counter-intuitive strategies teachers and educational institutions can consider pursing.

Importantly, Jerri-Lee’s experiences at the end of her time teaching English in Korea allow for the examination of a transition between different figured worlds and their corresponding identities. Jerri-Lee, at the time of her last two interviews, is moving away from identifying with the figured world of English teaching and the corresponding professional teacher figurative identity, and is adopting an alternative, still unsettled, figurative identity of world traveller, artist, and digital creative person. Exploring Jerri-Lee’s post-teaching figurative identity is beyond the scope of this study, but her transition away from a professional teacher figurative identity is important. Her move away from a professional teacher figurative identity is accompanied by, and perhaps accomplished partially through, a reweaving of voices within a space of authoring. This transition from one figurative identity to another alongside the reweaving together of voices within a space of authoring touches on key issues of teacher professionalism and Jerri-Lee’s understandings of herself as a teacher. The adoption and abandonment of professional teacher selves shaped Jerri-Lee’s experiences in Korea as a teacher and these issues of professionalism are more fully explored in the Chapter 6, the Discussion Chapter.

David and Jerri-Lee never discussed receiving any particular or explicit training that identified who they were as teachers in their educational institutions. In fact, teacher training was
rarely mentioned throughout this study and when discussed was focused more on classroom practices rather than discussions centered on issues of identity or roles or who or even what a person was in an educational institution. Based on the interviews collected in this study, I argue foreign English teachers in Korea are rarely involved in professional or institutional discussions of who they are as teachers, or, in other words, discussions of teacher identity. With this lack of discussion over identities and roles, foreign English teachers often craft teacher selves through their own experiences with teachers, larger media discourses of teachers, and whatever other artifacts are available. David, Jerri-Lee, and I at various points embraced professional teacher figured identities that valued honesty, an uncompromising search for fairness, and productive learning that may be more related to North American shared collective fantasies of what schools and teachers should be, rather than a reasonable consideration of either personal experiences with schools or foreign English teachers’ places within the Korean education system. While the interviews in this study can only highlight that these are aspects of teacher identity, and not the origins of these issues necessarily, educational studies focused on the United States highlight how related discourses circulate there. Taubman argues that

corporate media, politicians, businessmen, and some educators fomented a sense of shame, fear, and guilt among teachers, and, at the same time, provided teachers and educators with seductive images of heroic saviors, who through teaching and caring could save kids’ lives, solve racial and class problems, keep our democracy thriving, and most of all make sure our kids were competitive in the global market. (p. 126).

Taubman highlights multiple elements that have shaped how teachers imagine who they might be, and these same discourses shape many foreign English teachers’ identities when these teachers are placed in Korean schools. In David and Jerri-Lee’s spaces of authoring a cacophony of voices
circulate, but the focus of these voices on honesty, truth, and “just caring for the children” hints at large scale circulating discourses of education in North America as their origin.

David highlighted and discussed particular conflicts centered on his teaching and educational institution. Partially this was a result of his third and final interview taking place during this ongoing difficulty and partially this was a result of his particular experiences, but this interview offers insight into David’s understanding of school conflicts as they happened. I drew upon Holland et al.’s space of authoring (1998) to examine how David re-orchestrated various voices in order to craft a particular identity but Holland et al. offer figured worlds as a further means of understanding larger collective organizing ways of seeing oneself and others. Holland et al. discuss Alcoholics Anonymous with its collectively shared narratives and means of collectively reshaping worldviews as a figured world, and the artifacts, such as plastic poker chips symbolizing time spent sober in Alcoholics Anonymous, that open up those figured worlds. Holland et al. discuss how artifacts such as these plastic poker chips have their meanings remade in these figured worlds but also the possibility that artifacts can be misunderstood by those who are part of different figured worlds. Holland et al. write, “asking if the Pope is a bachelor is akin to trying to redeem one’s poker chips for money at an AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] meeting. The questioner and would-be redeemer have both mistaken the relevant figured world,” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). Holland et al.’s example of someone at a gathering of Alcoholics Anonymous members attempting to redeem poker chips for money is an example of someone misunderstanding a figured world and acting in a way that undoubtedly would produce confusion, although perhaps little long term conflict. However, based on the interview data from David I argue he may have critically misunderstood the figured world of his particular educational institution including the possible overarching narratives and characters that made up that figured world such as principal, teacher, and foreign teacher. I believe that the conflict David experienced is related to how his re-orchestrations of various voices produced a figurative identity for himself
that was in many ways incompatible with the figured world of school constructed by those he worked with. While it may seem relatively simple to discuss people’s roles in a work place, this section should highlight the highly complex identities and shared understandings that circulate in workplaces such as schools and how differing assumptions about these identities and roles complicate any attempt to mitigate conflicts such as those David experienced.

Additionally, the figured worlds of schools are connected to material artifacts such as pay, employment contracts, and regulations concerning employment. Therefore, conflicts involving mistaken artifacts and incompatible figured worlds can have deeply profound material consequences. Further, conflicting figured worlds may have more or less relevance to material resources and material artifacts. Regardless of the figurative identities David, I, or other foreign English teachers construct through narratives of resistance to unjust practices or narratives of being some type of researcher, the material reality of most foreign English teachers is that they will be dependent on goodwill of Korean supervisors and Korean colleagues for continued employment. The figured world of those Korean supervisors is the figured world with access to material elements such as continued employment, resources, and regulatory authority. When narrative elements that compose figurative identities mediate or perhaps incline foreign English teachers to take actions that lead to conflict with Korean supervisors and colleagues these conflicts can have serious material consequences. David’s figured world and corresponding figurative identity or larger story of being a professional teacher had extremely limited connection to the material resources of job contracts, legal protection, and the larger institutional resources within his school. Mistaking or misunderstanding artifacts within figured worlds can have serious material consequences and often one relevant figured world affords far greater access to material resources than others. Continuing the example Alcoholics Anonymous from Holland et al., a member of Alcoholics Anonymous who enters a casino, picks up a poker chip off a poker table to symbolize her or his time sober, and attempts to walk away from the table will
not just be mistaking one figured world for another, they will be assuming the material world around them functions in a way it does not, with potentially dangerous consequences. Foreign English teachers who craft figurative identities with accompanying figured worlds that are radically different than the figured worlds of their Korean co-teachers and Korean supervisors may find that the conflicts that spring from these incompatible figured worlds have serious, damaging consequences.

The experiences and development of teacher selves discussed in this section highlight the limited options for foreign English teachers in terms of constructing identities for themselves as teachers. In examining how David, Jerri-Lee, and myself have re-orchestrated various elements in order to craft some form of professional identity both Jerri-Lee and myself benefitted from having possibilities for identities further afield from teaching, that nonetheless were a part of who we were as teachers. I argue that foreign English teachers more generally would benefit from having greater options in terms of identities they can “play with” as teachers. In my own case, being able to tell myself I was a researcher and not a teacher, at times, allowed me to look at myself and my work from another perspective. Similarly, Jerri-Lee’s understanding of herself as a creative artist and world traveler lessened the pressure she felt in her school and classrooms. Other teachers may benefit from having alternative stories and voices available so they can weave together a re-orchestrated story of who they are in educational institutions. However, without mediating artifacts such as research projects or plans associated with travel and art, reworking these stories can be challenging. It may be possible for educational institutions or teacher training programs to create possibilities for teachers to develop alternative stories of who these teachers are, not just as teachers but as novice teacher assistants, foreign language interlocutors, global culture learners, or even simply “learners” intent on doing the best they can while learning as much as they can about another educational context. This section has highlighted how foreign English teachers placed into educational institutions gravitate towards self-told stories of being a teacher who must
be concerned with justice, honesty, fairness, and helping students and how this teacher identity story can create considerable burdens emotionally and in classroom practices. I believe making alternative notions of who and what teachers can be, especially for foreign English teachers in Korea, can productively aid these teachers as they attempt to work within their educational institutions.

This section has examined how three foreign English teachers negotiated some challenging situations in educational institutions and how varying voices and elements were re-orchestrated by these teachers as they negotiated their identities through these experiences. Critically, these negotiations of identity were deeply connected to the practice of teaching on a daily basis and the possible career aspirations of these teachers. I believe further research should explore how these re-orchestrated identities can better be a part of educational institutional discussions and teacher training so that further options can be made available to teachers in terms of how they see themselves as teachers, and work within diverse institutions. Additionally, future research examining a context such as David’s, drawing on the perspectives and understandings of everyone involved in such as educational institution, would allow greater insights into some of the issues discussed in this section.

**Conflicting Discourses in Figured Worlds**

Within the figured world of foreign English teachers in Korea a number of conflicting discourses collide, change, and come to profoundly shape some teachers engagement with teaching in Korea. Certain large scale, widely circulating understandings of different concepts such as “professionalism” and “profit” shaped some teachers in critical ways. These concepts emerged, for the most part unlooked for, in this study as important themes worth greater
consideration and discussion. The following two sections examine two particular collisions of discourses and teachers identities, examining how these large-scale understandings of different concepts influenced participants’ positional identities, figured worlds, and spaces of authoring.

Teacher Selves and Desired Bodies

In this section, I examine the conflict some teachers felt between attempts to see themselves as teachers in ways they desired and these teachers’ belief that managers in the English language teaching industry in Korea desire attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies. I use the term attractive to reference and emphasize the complex discourses of beauty, handsomeness, and exoticism all centered on physical appearance that were relevant in some participants’ experiences of employment in Korea. I use the term native-speaker to explicitly reference and emphasize the idea of an ideal and perfect, life-long speaker of a language that has become a deeply influential and naturalized discourse in the English language teaching industry in Korea, despite the vast amount of scholarship showing the problematic nature of this native speaker concept (Cook, 1999; Doerr, 2009; Paikeday, 1985). However, as Kumaravadivelu (2014) highlights, much of the scholarship criticizing the term native speaker and the ideologies and hiring practices associated with this term has done little to abate the ongoing demand for native speaker teachers of English in Korea and beyond. Newer, ongoing, more grassroots efforts such as those by TEFL Equity (TEFL Equity, 2016) may start shaping discussions of this term more, however, in Korea the idea of the native-speaker remains foundational to many language programs and tremendously influential in the lives of foreign English teachers in Korea. I use the term body to emphasize that some participants felt managers and others in the English language

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22 See (Kubota, 2009) for a review of much of this literature.
teaching industry desired foreign teachers not as unique individuals possessing certain developed qualities, but as interchangeable people possessing certain physical, innate, or embodied qualities. The use of the term body follows the term native-speaker emphasizing the non-developed or innate qualities some foreign English teachers perceived to be desired by some educational institutions in Korea.

Several participants discussed their experiences and feelings regarding being sought out as teachers because of a desire for attractive, native-speaking bodies. Tracy, a white, American woman who joined this study in her late twenties, discussed the frustration she felt over the value placed on her appearance and her body, rather than the qualities she believed made her valuable to any educational institution.

It is that sexism is so entrenched in business especially towards bosses towards me. Like, in some ways you’d think it’d be good, but I actually find it like insulting. Like I know that if I go to an interview I’ll get it, because I’m blonde haired and blue eyed and (pause) I’m pretty. Like I don’t have to try, like I could walk in in ripped up jeans and a t-shirt and they’d be like, “done, you’re hired”. I’ve never once had to show any kind of qualifications, I’ve never once had to answer any interview questions, they just look at me and say the parents will like how you look, which is why they hired me at my last job. They like flat out told me. Of course, so, when his [her former manager] hagwon closed I was like haha maybe I sucked [laugher]. But, it’s actually really insulting because I like to think I’m good at what I do and I have a strong work ethic, so the fact I don’t have to, like um, they don’t really want anything from me other than how I look. That to me can, can grate just as much. Just cause they’ll be like, “Oh we want you to be on uh the photo we send home to the parents” and like [I say] “well what about my friends?”, [and the Korean staff will say] “Oh no, no, she doesn’t look
western”. Like I have a friend who’s native, like she’s ethnically Persian but she’s Canadian, speaks English just as fine as you or I, but they always shove her to the back of things because she’s not white and she’s not blonde.

Tracy further commented on the issues of her appearance in her second interview. She discussed initially her shock at how she would receive comments such as “you’re so beautiful” on the subway from Korean people she did not know when she first arrived in Korea and further elaborated on her experience being hired. She begins in this excerpt by explaining how she felt when hearing unexpected compliments about her appearance.

Tracy: It doesn’t make me feel like I’m any more attractive than I was back home, it’s just because I look different.

Michael: So if you could kinda put into words how does it make you feel, like, what is that experience like?

Tracy: Um, it make me more aware of how I look. Like, I think since I’ve come to Korea I make sure I look better when I leave the house. Especially, now that I’m teaching adults, like I have to be more put together, but it’s also made me feel like I have to make a bigger effort to be better at my job.

Michael: OK can you explain a little bit I’m not sure if I follow that um.

Tracy: Uh, yea because I think I was hired at my last job and he straight out said to my face like, “I hired you because you’re blonde and pretty and the parents will like how you look”.

Michael: umhum

Tracy: And to me I found that incredibly insulting. And it makes, you know, I like to think I have a good work ethic, and I put effort into my teaching, and I want to be good at it. And so, to be told that no matter what I do, what I look like is all that matters. That to me
is um the worst thing, because it says to me that no matter what you do, you’ll never be taken seriously.

Michael: Oh, I see.

Tracy: Or you’ll always be considered a Russian prostitute (laughter) and so that’s also a big thing here is that I do stand out here. I’m a minority here, and a minority that is often misunderstood to be a sex worker.

Tracy here makes explicit the discomfort she felt with the value she believed the English language teaching industry places on her appearance and her body as a pretty, white, thin, blue-eyed, blonde haired, woman. Further, Tracy described feeling insulted by the lack of value placed on her knowledge and work ethic, emphasizing the importance of these personal developed qualities to herself with the expression in the first excerpt “I like to think I’m good at what I do”, and references to her self-developed qualities. Moreover, in her first interview she describes the value placed on whiteness, which grants her access to further English language teaching opportunities and marginalizes teachers of Color. Additionally, being a white, blonde woman was associated with being a sex worker, an aspect of her understanding of Korea that may have again contributed to a sense that she was not regarded as an accomplished educator more generally. Tracy further discussed her belief that she would be hired for most university English language teaching positions because of her appearance. Tracy at the time of both her first and second interviews was considering plans to continue teaching English in Korea, possibly in a university. It was during this time she engaged in further educational work including teaching Korean businessmen English part-time. However, before her third and final interview, she would abandon plans to work at a university in Korea and instead make plans to leave Korea. Tracy also expressed the frustration she felt over the value placed on her appearance in stronger terms than any other participant, although others expressed similar feelings in some ways. Underlying much
of Tracy’s statements, and circulating among other foreign English teachers, is a desire for recognition of one’s deliberate, willful, and intellectual accomplishments such as demonstrable teaching skills, a strong work ethic, and a commitment to work. Further, there is a disregard or distrust of recognition for aspects of work related to one’s own body such as being told one’s appearance is important to students’ parents. These desires align and co-construct a notion of being a professional teacher that Tracy and other foreign English teachers drew upon when constructing their desired if often unrealized figured worlds and positional identities of foreign English teachers in Korea. However, some foreign English teachers constructed alternative narratives of being teachers with accompanying different figured worlds and positional identities.

Jess and Trent expressed feeling valued by their hagwon because they were white, foreign people in the classroom, rather than any quality they in particular had as teachers. A white Canadian couple in the early-to-mid-twenties who came to Korea to take a break from their lives in Canada and “hit the pause button” on the careers, they taught in an English hagwon for elementary school age children, and their positional identities are further discussed earlier in this chapter. They discussed how they felt hagwon management and parents primarily valued the presence of white or foreign bodies in their school over anything else. Trent discussed feeling frustrated that often very little learning seemed to occur in his classes and said, “as long as the parents think there’s a white person in the class and [laughter] getting it done [mumbled] then I guess I’ll take my money”. Further, Jess discussed how the director of their hagwon struggled to decide between hiring a more qualified African-American woman and a white woman who had difficulties at her last school with Jess saying, “appearance is everything here and especially in the hagwon system”. Ultimately, the director choose to hire the more qualified candidate for the position to the relief of Jess and Trent, but seeing their director look upon this choice as a serious dilemma shaped their understandings of themselves and their place in Korea. Further, Trent
discussed his understanding of how white people are viewed in Korea, and his own general understanding of his supervisors and his position.

Well, yea it’s funny like, all different types of racism or whatever. Caucasians are subjected to racism too, but it’s good racism like, “All white people are good English teachers”. Like they uh yea, part of the reasons I find it hard to get motivated is just cause like the people I work [for], the supervisors, they’re really not teachers, like they [don’t have] teacher training and like they’ve never, they’ve never once been like, “you should be doing this or that with the kids”. They just give us some books I’m pretty sure they just pick arbitrarily off the internet and they’re like, “do this”. They only thing they care about is, like being there on time, your appearance, stuff like that.

These excerpts make clear Jess and Trent felt valued primarily as white foreigners in a for-profit educational enterprise, and this feeling emerged in discussions of their classroom practices, the hiring of new teachers, and in discussions of the potential of hiring an African-American teacher. Further, they regarded themselves, at least for their time in Korea, as not particularly engaging in professional work and they did not seem particularly concerned by this issue. At points Jess in particular discussed feeling incredibly stressed over her classes, classroom management, and teaching young learners. However, she did not, in interviews, object as strenuously as Tracy did to being valued for her appearance and her status as a white foreign native-speaker English teacher, rather than being valued for the effort she devoted to improving her classes. Overall, Jess and Trent seemed less troubled than Tracy by the idea they were valued as attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies and that they could find numerous other teaching opportunities in Korea.
The experiences of others, including myself, further illuminate the complicated aspects of the negotiations that surround these issues of professionalism and understanding how one is valued in the English language teaching industry in Korea. One particular story, told by me in interviews with participants and more generally as an amusing story, illustrates a further engagement with professionalism and my own understanding of my value in Korea. In 2005, I moved from a position in a hagwon to a university position elsewhere in Korea, and in the interview for this position provided several references, including a Korean professor I had worked with as an English teacher. After beginning work, I started MA TESOL classes and found a community of teachers interested in teaching, and in examining connections between language, culture, society, and power. Walking down the hall during the start of my time in this university, I spoke with my manager, an American middle-aged man, and he mentioned calling the Korean professor I had given as a reference. My manager told a story in which he tried repeatedly to call the Korean professor I had given as a reference, eventually contacting him and asking about my abilities as a teacher. Apparently, my reference simply said something similar to, “Michael looks like Mel Gibson, he’ll do fine”. This story, told to me in an attempt at humor was first received by me with laughter, and happily retold by me many times, including in interviews with participants. In the telling of this story in interviews and in my own recollection, this was not a point of frustration, but was an amusing story I told for humorous purposes.

The experiences and understandings of Tracy, Jess, Trent, and me can be examined as aspects of conflict between discourses within figured worlds. Tracy’s experiences and feelings of frustration can valuably illuminate issues of teachers’ bodies, understandings of masculinity and femininity, and desired teacher selves. Tracy struggled with conflict between her understanding that her employers valued her because of their desire for attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies and her desire to be valued for developed qualities such as her work ethic, the quality of her teaching, and other professional qualities. In essence, Tracy wanted to be able to
tell a story about herself of being a teacher in Korea who is valued because of her achieved accomplishments, but this story was interrupted, challenged, and ultimately made unbelievable by artifacts demonstrating that her employers valued attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies. In Korean educational institutions that valued attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies, teachers such as Tracy struggled to achieve desired teacher selves and this difficulty led teachers to move away from English language teaching careers in some cases. Tracy’s experiences, issues of professionalism, and related literature are further explored in Chapter Six’s discussion of professionalism.

Jess and Trent felt less concern about being offered teaching positions based on their appearance and bodies because discourses of developed qualities such as knowledge of teaching, a strong work ethic, and teacher professionalism were less relevant to them and their self-told narratives of taking a break from their lives in Canada via teaching English in South Korea. For Jess, Trent, and those teachers who craft a figured world in which they tell themselves a story of teaching in order to go abroad, rather than engaging in a career as a teacher, developing an understanding that they were hired on the basis of a desire for attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies may be amusing, but it may not be particularly frustrating, challenging, or something that leads to considerable concern. The experiences and understandings of Tracy alongside those of Jess and Trent illustrate different possible ways foreign English teachers can negotiate conflicting aspects of a managerial desire for attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies and the multiple figured worlds of foreign English teachers.

My experience of hearing a Korean supervisor value my appearance over my work ethic and knowledge must be understood in the larger teaching context of friends and colleagues who created an alternative community of teachers who positioned ourselves as alternatively professional teachers through discourses of study and academic achievement. Already at my new position, I knew I would be taking MA TESOL classes and would have a chance to work with
others in pursuing further education. I believe these artifacts allowed me to construct at least a modicum of a story of being an alternative professional English language teacher, or a figured world of being a professional English language teacher. This figured world allowed me to view the story told by my manager of being valued by my former Korean supervisor because of my resemblance to Mel Gibson as something humorous rather than as a threat to a nascent figured world. Re-orchestrated in a playful manner and in a place with enough artifacts such as MA TESOL classes and friends taking those classes, this story became an appropriated element in the construction of larger figured world of teaching English in Korea. I argue others in this study do likewise, especially those who adopt in various ways “professional teacher selves” in which artifacts such as KOTESOL and networks of like-minded friends serve to mediate and support professional selves. I believe these artifacts make possible aspects of desired teacher figured worlds that, in my case and others, lessen the frustration that Tracy felt.

The experiences of Tracy, Jess, Trent, I, and others highlight the conflict between the characters and positions available in figured worlds of English language teaching in Korea, especially the desire for attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies that is a critical aspect of that figured world, and some teachers’ desires for a figured world of teaching that acknowledges their work ethic, developed skills, and other professional qualities of those teachers. Further, I argue that artifacts available to some teachers can be coopted as a means of re-orchestrating voices, narratives, and discourses in the establishment of figured worlds which include stories of alternative professional teachers that have limited connections with particular jobs as teachers. For others, without such artifacts, the experience of doing a job in which a focus on whiteness, appearance, and the body rather than developed, achieved, or professional aspects of oneself can bring forth frustration, and raise barriers to continuing to teach in these contexts or even continuing to teach more generally. Alternatively, some teachers engage with narratives of their time in Korea that remain detached from these issues, and so are little troubled by the idea
they were given their job because of their appearance, body, and status. Importantly, no participant in this study described a teaching context or teaching institution that supported notions of her or him being a professional doing professional work. This institutional lack of support for professional selves, when it is desired, can have consequences on classroom practices, and on the career paths of teachers. At a minimum this means further discussion and research should be done regarding these issues.

**Conflicts between Idealized Teaching and a Sense of Profit**

Large discourses regarding education circulate in the lived worlds of young people from early childhood to high school and beyond, shaping future teachers’ beliefs, understandings, and deeply felt desires about the organization and operation of schools and education in general. A variety of scholars (Catherine Carter, 2009; Mac & Blum, 2013; Taubman, 2009) detail a discourse that positions teaching as a somewhat selfless and noble enterprise in which concern for the wellbeing of children and honest care by teachers for students allows for young people to develop. Importantly, these widely circulating discourses position schools and teachers as concerned with students’ well-being and development, and not concerned with these students’ satisfaction as customers nor their potential role in profit making enterprises. Based on my interview data I believe these discourses of idealized teachers shape many foreign English teachers orientation to teaching, despite these teachers often having no contact with teacher training programs, nor, in some cases, a particular interest in teaching. These discourses positing that teachers should be selflessly concerned with learners can be in conflict with the perception by foreign English teachers in Korea that many hagwons are driven primarily by the capitalistic pursuit of profit. Jess and Trent discussed their concerns regarding their hagwon in their final interview before finishing their first and only one-year contract teaching English in Korea.
Trent: I think like the biggest problem I have with teaching, other than being just stressed out with the kids, is just like I feel like an instrument for the owner of my school to make money, I don’t feel like an educator.

Michael: Yea, yea, sure.

Trent: And at the end of the day, that’s just like, I’m not like a very [pause]. Like, I don’t have a lot of, like, principles [laughter], that you can really put your finger on, but like, it just leaves me feeling not good, when things happen that, I’m like this is wrong because this is not in the kids’ best interest at all.

Michael: Yea.

Trent: And that’s just the only thing I don’t like about.

Jess: Plus classes getting [mumbled], teachers’ hours getting cut, lots of lying going on at our school, nothing involving us, involving other teachers but it kinda just makes you take a step back, and be like, well you know I like you people, but.

Trent: I woulda liked to try out a public school job and just to see the differences and stuff like that, cause I hear people have trouble with that too, you know, so.

Trent explicitly discusses his discomfort with his hagwon’s for-profit nature and how, he feels, the academy often adjusts policies and behavior in order to ensure profitability, rather than students’ educational development. Further, he acknowledges that this profit seeking activity is related to for-profit hagwons, contrasting them with public schools in which different sets of issues emerge. Importantly, Trent discussed at length how he considered his time in Korea a break from his career and life in Canada, and how he never considered education as a career. Nevertheless, this excerpt highlights the conflict between his sense that he should be a teacher with everything that can entail, and not an employee focused primarily on the success of a profit-making enterprise. Wendy, a Korean American woman in her mid-twenties who joined this study
shortly before leaving Korea, also discussed feeling discomfort with the for-profit nature of hagwons. Wendy discussed how in her experience hagwon management focused on retaining students much as how a business attempts to retain customers, rather than focusing on education.

When students drop out our boss calls us in and is like, “alright, we’re losing too many students you need to do X, Y, Z so we stop losing so many students”. It was more like hagwons are a business and not really a place for, like, real education.

Further, Wendy would discuss giving homework and engaging in teaching that put further pressure on students in order to meet the expectations of parents, something she understood was done because hagwon management believed it necessary to ensure parents’ continued satisfaction. Wendy’s sense that the hagwons and the hagwon system is geared towards profit often at the expense of education and students’ happiness made her uncomfortable with her role as a teacher and she described this feeling as one of many elements contributing towards her desire to find work other than teaching.

The conflict between a sense that teachers should be selflessly focused on education and development while hagwon management is focused on profit as discussed by these teachers can be productively examined in two ways. First, this conflict can be understood as doing further positional identity work for some teachers. Second, this conflict can imply much about the scope of teaching discourses in the English-speaking world.

First, notions of capitalistic for-profit academies managed by Korean owners who consider foreign English teachers and Korean English language learners as elements of a business are, for some teachers, characters and elements of narratives shaping figured worlds which are shared among other foreign English teachers and through which they can see themselves to varying degrees as well-meaning, good people. Positioning themselves relative to seemingly less
scrupulous hagwon owners is one way some teachers can view themselves as somewhat ethical and moral people and teachers, although, of course, how and to what degree varies widely. Second, it must be again emphasized that many of the participants who expressed ambivalence and discomfort with the capitalistic nature of academies had no experience with teacher training institutions in their homelands, but came to feel such discomfort just through their experiences in schools as students and through widely circulating discourses about teaching and teachers. That such discourses can shape those who do not consider themselves teachers, do not intend on teaching beyond one year, and have no training on how to teach highlights the incredible identity making potential of simply walking into a classroom and taking on the job of a teacher. Further, this hints at the pervasiveness of teacher discourses throughout these teachers’ home countries.

This particular conflict between idealized teaching and profit making must be further examined in terms of limitations of this study, and the need for further examination of contextually bound issues. While this section has explored how some foreign English teachers negotiate teaching selves through notions of selfless teachers and capitalistic hagwons, this study cannot comment on the practices of English language hagwons, the practices of hagwon owners, and their role in the education in Korea. In fact, this section may have more relevance to pre-service teacher education and K-12 teacher training in the English speaking West than education in Korea given the importance of teacher discourses circulating within the English speaking West to many foreign English teachers’ experiences in Korea. Additionally, this discursive conflict fractured and split at times even for those participants who explicitly voiced discomfort with the profit seeking nature of certain hagwons. Trent, at points, questioned the value of his presence as a white Canadian man in the classroom but also said “I’ll take the money” embracing the discourses he also sometimes felt discomfort with. This highlights the negotiated, complex, fractured, and ongoing making of positional identities and is a vital aspect of this complicated figured world.
Gendered Positioning in Educational Institutions

Several participants discussed aspects of working within educational institutions in which their gender was referenced, discussed, and was felt to be critical in how particular activities were done within that institution. This study examines this data in two distinct ways. First, much of this data is examined in the following chapter alongside data concerning shopping for clothes, discussions of one’s body, and the general sense that one’s body is or can become different in Korea. I shift this discussion into the following chapter because for many participants in many contexts their educational institutions are simply one more place in which gender is refashioned and remade. Therefore, these experiences in classrooms and offices with co-teachers and students should be examined alongside experiences of shopping for clothes and going to the gym as these are all experiences in places in which gender is made, remade, and negotiated. Second, in this section I highlight and examine how gender is an element of positioning oneself, positioning others, and being positioned by others within educational institutions given this chapter’s focus on teaching selves. I argue this positioning and the possible subsequent reframing and rebuilding of selves is critical to understanding how some foreign English teachers negotiate gendered teaching selves, and how they craft or fail to craft desired teaching selves. Further, I argue this negotiation of gendered teacher positioning has implications for teaching practices and the careers of some foreign English teachers.

David, an African-American teacher extensively discussed in this chapter, discussed his attractiveness being referenced when he first arrived at his middle school in Seoul. “When I first showed up I was a celebrity, I still am, sometimes, I told you the story that I got [humorous] marriage proposals [from students], still do some of the time”. Several other men participating in this study including me discussed being told in schools and classes that they were handsome or good-looking in a variety of ways. John, an American participant who primarily taught in
business contexts and whose experiences as a “prestigious teacher” were extensively discussed in this chapter, also discussed how the business people he taught, including both men and women, would comment positively on his appearance and large size. For the most part these comments by these men participating in this study were not extensively remarked upon by them or when remarked upon were discussed as funny curiosities. None of the men participating in this study discussed feeling uncomfortable because of these comments. These comments, overall, were elements of positioning these participants as desirable men in their work contexts, but this positioning of selves within larger figured worlds was relatively uncontested or perhaps unnoticed in some contexts. This stands in contrast to Appleby’s studies (2013b, 2014a) which found that foreign men teaching English in Japanese higher education constructed professional, academic teacher selves through erasure of their gender and sexuality (Appleby, 2014a) and that marriage and discourses of successfully marrying could counter discourses that position foreign men teaching English in East Asia as sexually promiscuous. David, John, and other foreign men teaching English were less concerned with being positioned in ways that referenced their bodies and masculinity, unlike, to some extent, the men in Appleby’s studies. It may be that other foreign men teaching English in Korea are positioned in uncomfortable or challenging ways through references to their bodies and masculinity, but within this study, there was not enough data to examine this possibility.

Additionally, some men participating in this study discussed the women they worked with in particularly gendered ways. These discussions positioned in various ways both the women being discussed and the men speaking, with gender being a critical element in this positioning. David discussed his feelings towards the Korean women who taught at his school and what he felt was the excess emphasis placed on their own appearance by them. He discussed his Korean coworkers applying cosmetics in their shared office and further said “I’ve walked in on my manager, [I mean] my old manager, she’s like curling her hair, like they brought curling irons, hot
ironing their hair, and I’m like, ‘am I the only one who wants to work?’.” In this excerpt, David positioned some of the women he worked with as less professional and less concerned with teaching, and positioned himself as someone more professional and more concerned with teaching. In doing so, he drew upon larger globally circulating discourses of femininity and masculinity that posit concerns with appearance as being less significant, feminine, and less professional, and a focus on “work” as being more professional (see Black and Sharma (2001, p. 100) for a brief review of femininity, masculinity, and beauty). However, I must further add that David would also positively discuss some of the women he worked with in a variety of ways at times, and during the interview in which he made these comments he was in the midst of a serious dispute with coworkers.

John, notably, discussed some of the women he met teaching Korean businesspeople and often focused on their appearance, and the respect they showed certain businessmen and him. His discussion of some women, such as the secretaries who work in certain companies he visited, position these women as desirable and sexualized by focusing on their appearance, clothing, and the respect they show both these businessmen and John. In positioning these women in such a way, I argue, John is contributing to his own positional identity as a professional, masculine, business English teacher. Critically for this section, he is doing so by drawing upon large-scale discourses of masculinity, femininity, beauty and desire that emphasize the sexuality and femininity of women who work as secretaries and masculinity of men who work as businesspeople.

David, John, and other men teaching English in Korea, I argue, at times draw upon large-scale discourses of masculinity and femininity to contribute to positioning themselves and others in various ways. This act of positioning and being positioned caused relatively little challenge for David, John, and some other men participating in this study. Understanding oneself as masculine and others as feminine in their educational institutions were not issues these
participants felt the need to extensively discuss nor did they emerge as critically important topics of analysis, partially because of the limited relevant data collected. These elements shaped David, John, and others, but they were not aspects of teaching and working in Korea that created challenges or difficulties for these men. Importantly, the positioning of some women through discourses of masculinity and femininity by some foreign men teaching English in Korea may marginalize some women involved with English language teaching. Those seeking to better understand the marginalization of women in English language teaching in East Asia (Kobayashi, 2014) may benefit by further examining how some foreign men teaching English in Korea position and work with women within their educational institutions.

Several women participating in this study extensively discussed aspects of gender and their work contexts, emphasizing the gendered aspect of several challenges they faced. Nancy discussed how university-age men in her for-credit university English classes caused her some difficulties in her class, respecting her less, she suspected, because she was a younger, American woman.

I feel usually that the problems I have with my students are usually male and older or Gyopo [Korean American] or they’re in a class that’s too low for them. Cause I usually have the lower classes. Or they’re older and they’ve been in the army, they’re men now and it’s not every student. They’re the ones that are not sure about me.

Nancy’s emphasis on these students being men, and on the completion of their mandatory military service, required only of men in South Korea, reflects her understanding of some of the attitudes of her male students and the origins of the difficulties and challenges she experienced in class. Nancy also discussed experiences with men she taught in which her behavior, leaning over to help a male student or touching the shoulder of a male student, led to these students reacting, in
Nancy’s view, with discomfort, which led to Nancy feeling uncomfortable generally, and concern over how she was perceived by students. Within these moments of Nancy leaning over a male student or touching a male students’ shoulder are a cascade of reactions that position Nancy, as well as different students, in multiple gendered ways that left Nancy, and some of the men she taught, uncomfortable and less certain about their place in their classrooms. Further, Nancy and other women participating in this study were told they were beautiful, tired, and had their appearance discussed in their classrooms in particularly gendered ways, again positioning these women in their classrooms, and raising questions for these teachers about their status as English language teachers.

Tracy provided a further example of how gender and interaction with her students positioned her as a teacher within one educational institution. Tracy taught Korean businessmen part-time as an English instructor and experienced sexual harassment during her time teaching at that institution.

Tracy: Well, kinda the thing I deal with all the time is sexual harassment.

Michael: OK.

Tracy: Like, I’ve been groped on the street a couple of times. I teach businessmen who think it’s funny to joke about like sexual positions and faking orgasms and talk freely about using prostitutes, which back home we would never allow. But my boss is just like, “oh they’re just ajeossi [Korean for older married men]”, they’re just old men, so the worst thing for me here that I deal with on a daily basis is just the sexism.

Michael: Oh OK.

Tracy: And the sexual harassment, but most of the time I just don’t notice it, only when it becomes overt, like at drunk guy on the street tries to grab me or somebody offers me money for sex [laughter], which has happened a couple of times.
This particular gendered experience teaching businessmen can be understood as these students positioning Tracy as someone they could laugh with or at, as someone less serious and less professional, and more generally as someone working in a place in which highly sexualized talk is permitted and women may be disrespected because of their gender. Further, this experience should also be understood as an experience that contributed to further reshaping her gendered selves in Korea more broadly, reshaping her figurative identity to some degree, as do all the experiences discussed in this section. This excerpt highlights how Tracy’s experience teaching businessmen in Korea is simply another element of a multitude of experiences that shaped her understandings of gender and her gendered selves.

The experiences of Nancy and Tracy highlight how classrooms are places in which women and men position themselves and others through gender, and the complex ways in which students and teachers draw upon various subject positions such as woman, man, teacher, student, businessman, veteran, American, and more. While teachers are in some ways authorities in their classrooms, as the person charged with leading students to greater ability and knowledge, Nancy and Tracy were positioned by the men they taught in ways they felt deeply uncomfortable with, which disrupted self-understandings and self-told stories of who they were as teachers. Gender has been a major focus of research within the limited number of studies of foreign English teacher identities in East Asia (Appleby, 2013a; 2013b; 2014a; 2014b; Nagatomo, 2013; 2015; Simon-Maeda, 2004; 2011; Stanley, 2012; 2013), but these studies, despite often focusing on classroom practices and classroom identities, have not examined issues of gendered relationships between teachers and students. Even more general examinations of gender in the English language classroom have failed to discuss this issue (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). Given the concern of scholars such as Kobayashi (2014) over the marginalization of women in TESOL in East Asia, further research is needed examining gendered relationships between students and teachers as these relationships can contribute to some women’s marginalization in TESOL.
In addition, the business classes Tracy taught are potentially some of the most financially rewarding classes available in Korea, and can be artifacts through which teachers build narratives and figured worlds that support continued English language teaching, as in the example of John. However, as Tracy’s experiences show, some women and men may find the experience of teaching businessmen in these classes deeply uncomfortable if these students engage in sexist talk or other sexist practices. This may incline some teachers to avoid these classes, substantially limiting their English language teaching careers. Scholars concerned with the dominant position of men in English language teaching in East Asia (Kobayashi, 2014) would be well served by further exploring issues within these business English classes, and the complex gendered relationships between foreign women teaching English in East Asia and their students.

Nancy, additionally, experienced challenges with her colleagues involving issues of gender. She wrote about a particular experience with a white, male coworker who taught in a similar position to Nancy in a journal she shared with this study.

Another professor seemed very nice and always asked how I was and made quite a bit of effort with small talk to get to know me a bit more. It was sometimes difficult for me not to be irritated though, because he always makes these commentaries about me. It seems very related to me being a woman. At first, he kept making jokes about how I must be enjoying my new party lifestyle, comments about how I must watch a lot of TV, comments about how I must really like shopping and something about designer clothes, comments about how I must have been a cheerleader, comments about… he was so nice to me but it was driving me crazy. It was driving me crazy because [he] has these ideas about me that weren’t true, but it was really driving me crazy because I worried that he was vocalizing the stereotypes that others had about me too. I wanted to shake him and say—what have I done to make you think that I’m a frivolous person?
Was it really only that I am a young, blonde, female? No--- I wasn’t a cheerleader. No, I don’t really like to shop. No, I’m not a party girl. I’m serious about my work and my classroom. In the end, I left it because I know that he was trying to relate to me, he was just going about it the wrong way. However, though we’ve gotten together a few times for lunch or dinner, I worry that he’ll continue these comments in front of the other professors and they will start to believe these things about me. I’m so new here that I don’t have any way to counteract rumors that I’m here for the wrong reasons. I am ignorant here. I don’t know how to navigate these waters yet. I am in a completely different teaching environment than I’ve ever been in before. I have few resources to help me to figure out my next steps. I don’t feel comfortable yet. Even though I moved here and know very little about this place, I don’t want people questioning my intentions for being here.

Nancy in this journal entry written shortly after arriving in Korea and beginning to teach English alongside her colleagues discussed the discomfort she felt with the way one foreign man spoke to her and the concern she felt over how this colleague could be discussing her with other colleagues, the majority of whom were other foreign and Korean men. Nancy participated extensively in this study, including participant observations of shopping and social activities, and I became familiar with the context of her educational institution allowing for a greater understanding of Nancy’s initial construction of her teacher selves, the development of these teacher selves as she continued teaching in Korea, and the context in which this development of teacher selves took place. Nancy, her colleague discussed in her journal entry, and other colleagues positioned themselves and others through speech that drew upon discourses of masculinity, femininity, professionalism, educational qualifications, experience, and more. Nancy’s excerpt related a story in which one
colleague, unintentionally or not, positioned her through his talk in ways that emphasized her femininity and relative youth, and associated these qualities with interests and practices unrelated to English language teaching and disciplined engagement with work. At this time, Nancy was new to Korea and attempting to establish for herself and others a professional teacher self by drawing upon her qualifications, the seriousness with which she takes her work, her dedication to her classes, and other artifacts. The conflict some women may face between being positioned as a young, frivolous, “party girl” potentially tempted by the metropolis of Seoul or other Asian cities and positioning oneself as a professional English teacher has not been discussed by other scholars concerned with the marginalization of women within English language teaching in East Asia (Kobayashi, 2014; Simon-Maeda, 2004). In fact, Stanley finds that for some foreign women in English language teaching, and especially those involved in English language teaching management, “there is an opportunity, and perhaps an expectation, for Western women to focus on career in Shanghai” (2013, p. 187) given that, according to Stanley’s research, these women have limited opportunities for romantic partnerships (Stanley, 2013, p. 180). This study adds to Stanley’s work by highlighting how, in some cases, some foreign women teaching English in East Asia can be positioned in ways not already discussed in existent literature. This positioning potentially can harm some foreign women who could see their career development threatened by being unwillingly positioned as a “party girl” who is less hardworking, and less dedicated to students, something fortunately that did not happen to Nancy.

Additionally, Nancy was constrained by the male homosocial networks of friendship, which limited the ways she could talk about herself with others, and construct for others a positional identity as a dedicated teacher. Appleby (2014b) and Nagatomo (2015) have identified these networks of male friendship as an element that helps some foreign men in finding work as English language teachers and potentially limits some foreign women in these same job searches. Additionally, these male friendship networks can contribute to isolating foreign women teaching
English in Korea, as in Nancy’s case, and contribute to other challenges, such as adding to the difficulty of combating existent sexist practices. This study mirrors the findings of Appleby (2014b) and Nagatomo (2015), and hopefully contributes to greater understandings of this troubling issue.

There were additional instances of gendered practices that shaped this study’s examination of gender. Jess who taught alongside her partner Trent in a hagwon also reported that her hagwon’s administration would sometimes approach her, rather than Trent, when they had to deliver bad news, in Jess’s estimation because they viewed her as less likely to cause difficulty or challenge hagwon management because she is a woman. I argue Jess felt herself positioned by hagwon management as someone more pliable, easier to deal with, and less resistant, and this construction of her was done using large-scale, widely circulating discourses of femininity. While this was only briefly mentioned by Jess, I believe similar experiences and understandings are held by other women teaching English in Korea as this type of discussion emerged at several points in this study. I believe many foreign women teaching English in Korea are positioned by management, colleagues, and students in the same way Jess was positioned by the managers at her hagwon. These practices, while not directly credited with causing any woman participating in this study to leave teaching, contributed in different ways to some teachers’ inclination to move away from English language teaching in Korea, and perhaps teaching in general.

This section has highlighted how some foreign English teachers in Korea, and their colleagues, students, and managers, draw upon large-scale, widely circulating discourses of masculinity and femininity to position themselves and others within educational institutions. This positioning can have important consequences immediately after it is done and on the longer term career paths of teachers. Within the limited number of men participating in this study, this positioning had relatively little damaging impact on these men, and contributed to the professional teaching selves of some foreign men teaching English in Korea. For some men
participating in this study, gendered and sexualized constructions of some Korean women contributed to figured worlds through which these men understood themselves as teachers in desirable ways. However, for some of the women participating in this study, the immediate and more long-term impacts of this positioning were more damaging, with frustration, anger, and disgust being some immediate consequences. Within the figured world of foreign English teachers in Korea, the positioning of some foreign women teaching English in Korea as less serious teachers, and less deserving of respect, along with the limited access to means of redressing these issues subtly and grossly reshaped some foreign English teachers’ identification with this figured world. This positioning led some teachers to, perhaps, identify less with work and careers teaching English in Korea and reshaped aspects of the stories they told themselves about living and teaching English in Korea, contributing to some women questioning their career paths as English language teachers in Korea. Further studies, heading the call of Kobayashi (2014), may wish to further examine the issue of gendered practices of foreign English teachers within educational institutions in East Asia.

A Discussion of Teacher Selves and More

This chapter has examined foreign English teachers’ experiences and understandings of various educational institutions and classrooms, highlighting a variety of elements that emerged primarily from participants’ interviews, as well as participants’ journals and observations. The findings discussed in this chapter are of relevance to a number of fields of study and challenge some prominent perspectives on teacher identity in similar contexts.

This chapter, following the work of Holland et al. (1998) and Hochschild (1983), has emphasized the capacity of self-told narratives to profoundly shape emotion, understandings, and a person’s ability to resist certain acts or change certain values. For David and Jerri-Lee self-told
stories of being teachers in Korea shaped how they engaged in their teaching and their complex changing relationships with coworkers. I believe this study has contributed to a greater understanding of foreign English teachers’ use of stories in understanding who they are as teachers and in their daily teaching practices. However, especially in the case of David, I found myself wondering if it would have been possible for someone to intervene and contribute positively to his development as a teacher and his school by discussing his context, his role in the school, and the stories he was telling himself about himself in that place. Future research exploring teacher development programs that explicitly discuss stories of being foreign English teachers could prove productive in helping manage some of the challenges teachers describe in this chapter. Although potentially difficult, creating a pilot program or a workshop and examining the practices of such a program would be an extremely productive way of continuing this research. In the absence of any intervention, I fear that many foreign English teachers when confronted with frustrating experiences or challenges in teaching may find the most readily accessible narrative available to them, which often can be one of herself or himself as honest and hardworking, and Korean co-teachers as less honest and less competent.

**Concluding this Exploration of Teacher Selves**

At a minimum, the findings of this chapter, especially the experiences of Percy but also others, should inform the decisions of those managing educational institutions. As shown in this chapter certain teaching positions and even classes can be needed elements of vital figurative identities and the transformation or elimination of these teaching positions can remove needed elements from these identities. This loss of identity or inability to see oneself in a desired way can lead to job dissatisfaction and a move away from a career as a teacher. Although this study in no way focused on the management of educational institutions, both teachers and educational
institutions would benefit from greater consideration of the role teaching positions play in various
teachers’ identities.

Classrooms and educational institutions are radically different places to different foreign
English teachers in ways often unrelated to distinctions of level of instruction, institutional
prestige, and position within that institution. Further, teaching itself can be part of a critically
important figurative identity for some teachers but for others teaching remains only a limited
element of their larger selves and relevant figured worlds. Some teachers experience classroom
events which shape their gendered and desiring selves, highlighting classrooms as not only places
of learning but places in which incommensurate figured worlds intersect and gendered selves are
restructured sometimes in very uncomfortable ways. Critically, the stories foreign English
teachers tell themselves and others about their teaching and educational institutions can bind them
to certain courses of action, limit possibilities for compromise and negotiation, and allow for the
control of action and emotion. It is these narratives that offer the possibility of renegotiating
actions in classrooms and within educational institutions; further research should explore how this
can be done. I believe this chapter has hinted that further research in this area may create more
productive possibilities for teacher development by exploring and contributing to the stories
foreign English teachers tell themselves about who they are in this place.
Chapter 5 Dress, Bodies, and Remaking Gendered Selves

This chapter examines the complex shifts of selves that relate to issues of bodies, clothes, physical appearance, and teachers’ understandings of these aspects of their lives as they live and teach English in Korea. Although most studies of teacher identities, and especially language teacher identities, do not focus on issues of bodies and dress, a few such as Costley’s (2015) do begin discussions of how clothing can contribute to teacher identities in classrooms. This chapter expands these initial discussions by examining how foreign English teachers’ gendered selves are moved, policed, changed, and renegotiated through issues of clothing, issues of bodies, and issues related to how these teachers understand themselves through their appearance and feelings of their bodies. Nancy, a key participant in this study, contributed a journal to this study which was written within a few months of beginning to teach in Korea. This journal illustrates many of the critical issues examined in this chapter and serves as a productive, participant-produced introduction to this chapter. Further, Nancy’s journal excerpt is worth examining in its longer form as it raises several key issues regarding her understanding and feelings of her body and clothes in Korea, but also conveys some of the challenging emotional aspects of Nancy coming to understand herself in Korea.

Being a woman in Korea

When I was first here, I was overjoyed because I didn’t feel awkward. I thought I would be a giant. I thought people would stare. I don’t know what I thought. In the US I feel moderately attractive. In Central & South America I felt different. I felt less womanly than the females there. Almost all women in Central & South America spend a ton of time and money on clothes/hair/makeup. They dress quite provocatively—lots of breast and very high heels. I lost weight in Central & South America so began to feel at least a
bit more attractive. I still felt like a different species though because I’m not as feminized
socially as the women are there. Even though I didn’t feel that attractive there, I still
received a lot of attention for being different (and foreign). Men are so aggressive there,
so I would get shouted at and hooted at and picked up. Here though, I feel unattractive.
Here people notice me because I’m different but again I don’t think I’m different in the
right way. At first, I thought I wasn’t so much larger than the other people. But I’m
feeling bigger and bigger all the time. I think it’s not just a weight issue. I think my body
type isn’t appreciated here. Someone told me that Koreans are obsessed with youth. I
thought, so is the US. I’m still young—no problem. It’s different here though. The
women try to look like girls. That is why thin is so in. They look prepubescent. That is
why there are bows and ruffles on everything, and short skirts are the way to be sexy and
why nobody wears anything that enhances their breasts. When I realized this it was a
little bit shocking for me. For the US I think I look young for my age. For here, maybe I
look old because I think I look like a woman. I have hips. I have breasts. I’m not a stick.
Some of the shirts I brought here aren’t all that appropriate because they are too low.
Women don’t show off any part of their chest—usually covered up to their necks. One
time, I went to a department store in a normal shirt I would wear to the US and I think I
embarrassed a couple of people, including myself. It was awkward to be in that situation
and I have no idea what the people were thinking. It’s strange that in the US I felt like
there were fewer differences between men and women. In Central & South America
there were many more differences. Platonic man/women relationships weren’t as
common. Women weren’t supposed to walk around by themselves or travel by
themselves and they were valued for their looks above all else. Men and women are
socialized to act very differently. That is the case here as well. In Korean, there is still a
huge value placed on looks, but there is also a high value on innocence/purity/girlishness
and that perhaps unmarried women act more juvenile because of it. I can’t stand it when a couple specific female students give speeches. They don’t just talk to the audience. They flirt and use a childish shy voice and have this false modesty. Giggle giggle, bat eyelashes, flip hair, giggle again. This isn’t a problem with all of them, but I have a couple students that are pretty bad. I want to shake their shoulders and say, yes you are adorable---but you are giving a speech---act like an adult! Use your grown-up voice!

I do know it’s easier for me to connect with most Korean women then it is for me to connect with Korean men. I feel like I have a rapport with the girls in my classes. The boys are one big blank for me. I feel like I can tell the women’s perspectives and ideas. I keep getting more and more questions about the guys here…it’s hard for me to define what the situation is. It’s the man/woman dynamic from about the 1960s America I think and I’m not sure how evolved the guys are that I’m dealing with. I’m not sure what they think of me either.

Anyway. Being a woman. There are a few realities that exist here because of body type. Here I will only be able to find a few clothes that fit me. I won’t be able to find many shoes. The fact that little fits here is another reminder that I don’t fit in here. Maybe I could use to lose a few pounds, but I don’t want to be a stick. I have to remember that there isn’t anything wrong with me. I’m allowed to be like I am and I should own it instead of feeling apologetic for it. Right now though, it’s a bit depressing. I don’t really know what I’m complaining about though. I don’t like male attention. I hate dating. Foreign women are usually seen as easy and I don’t like it when people stare at me. I hated getting shouted at in Costa Rica. I distrust men that are too forward. I think it’s just something hard when perceptions around you are so different, even though you are the same. It has something to do with confidence and I’m lacking that right now anyway.
In this long excerpt Nancy touches on a number of issues that are further examined in this chapter. She discusses her expectations of Korea, her experiences before coming to Korea, her changing feelings regarding her own body and size in Korea, her understandings of and experiences with Korean clothes and fashion, her interactions with the women and men she teaches, and her experiences shopping for clothes in Korea. Nancy’s excerpt illustrates the emotional, context-bound, and highly gendered experience of some foreign English teachers and it was echoed by some women participating in this study. However, other women participating in this study had very different experiences and this chapter explores a multitude of experiences and understandings related to issues of bodies and dress. Nevertheless, Nancy’s excerpt highlights how her experience circulated around her understanding of herself as a woman in Korea, and this focus on gendered experiences continued in other participants’ data and emerged in this study as a key division.

This chapter focuses primarily on the women participating in this study as they contributed the vast majority of data about dress, shopping for clothing, and issues of the body. This is a product of several different elements of this study, including the limits of my own subjectivity as a researcher. Peshkin (1988) discusses how a researcher’s own subjectivity can direct attention to and away from certain topics, and in this study my own experiences as a foreign man teaching English in Korea may have naturalized a lack of interest regarding foreign men’s engagement with bodies and dress. For me, a foreign man teaching English in Korea, issues of bodies and especially dress have been relatively less significant both during my initial arrival in Korea, as best I can remember, and during the time I have continued living in Korea. Further, when I began this study and I started interviewing foreign men teaching English in Korea they did not raise issues of bodies and dress in ways that attracted my attention. However, issues of bodies and dress arose in numerous interviews with women participating in this study, with participants often indicating the importance of these experiences to them. In this way I allowed
my own tendencies and naturalized awareness to direct me towards issues of bodies and dress centered on those women participating in this study, and away from issues of men, bodies, and dress. Only later, upon further examining the data collected in this study and after data collection had ended, did I see the limits of this study, and my failure to further pursue issues of men, bodies, and dress. Peshkin (1988, p. 21) discusses how one’s own subjectivity shapes both what a researcher sees and notices, and more critically in this case, what a researcher does not see, and in this study my own naturalized understandings of foreign men who teach English in Korea created a tendency for me to focus elsewhere and overlook critical issues involving foreign men teaching English in Korea that I should have further pursued as part of data collection.

Additionally, in doing this study I pursued several strategies in recruiting participants and gathering data, as discussed in Chapter 3, and these strategies unintentionally shaped this study. I recruited six participants who were new-to-Korea teachers, five of whom were women with the only man, Trent, arriving in Korea with his long-time partner. Trent’s experiences, while valuable to this study, reflect his romantic relationship and I argue this important relationship may have mitigated some of the disruptions to gendered selves that other foreign men arriving in Korea may have experienced due to issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes. The contribution of these new-to-Korea participants is a vital aspect of understanding foreign English teachers’ initial disruption of gendered selves and so the participation of only one man limits this study in many ways, and is further addressed later in this chapter. Because of these limitations, this chapter primarily focuses on foreign women teaching English in Korea, but does, in the end, discuss the limited data collected regarding foreign men, and their engagement with issues of bodies and dress.

This chapter begins by discussing the larger figured world of foreign English teachers’ bodies and clothes. Within this section both issues of place and key discourses are examined and discussed in order to contextualize later discussions of bodies and dress. The next section then
examines the disruptions in gendered selves some foreign women experience when they first
arrive in Korea to teach English. This is followed by a discussion of how some foreign women
teaching English in Korea, after their initial experiences arriving in Korea, negotiate gendered
selves within foreign English teachers’ figured worlds of bodies and dress. Following these
discussions of foreign women teaching English in Korea, this chapter then examines the limited
data collected about foreign men teaching English in Korea and their experiences of bodies and
dress. Finally, this chapter concludes by discussing the implications of teachers’ experiences with
bodies and dress, the potential for teacher training to make use of this chapter, and the great, as-
of-yet unrealized potential of future studies in this area.

The Figured World of Foreign English Teachers’ Bodies and Clothes

Dress, clothing and shopping for clothes are such a ubiquitous aspect of industrialized life
that they have attracted interest from a variety of scholars in a variety of fields.

What is it about the dressed body that has prompted so much recent
anthropological scholarship to approach it as a site of convergence for
transnational, global, urban, and local forces? Because it both touches the body
and faces outward toward others, dress has a dual quality, as Turner (1993 [1980])
noted when he coined the notion the social skin. This two-sided quality invites us
to explore both the individual and collective identities that the dressed body
enables. The subjective and social experiences of dress are not always mutually
supportive but may contradict one another or collide. The contingent dynamic
between these two experiences of dress gives rise to considerable ambiguity,
ambivalence, and, therefore, uncertainty and debate over dress. Dress readily
becomes a flash point of conflicting values, fueling contests in historical
encounters, in interactions across class, between genders and generations, and in recent global cultural and economic exchanges. (Hansen, 2004, p. 372)

Hansen highlights the capacity of dress to hold meaning for the wearer and contribute to the wearer’s selves, associations with others, and I would add even the wearer’s sensations and material presence in the world, but also that this meaning can be in conflict, with others understanding certain dress in ways unintended by the wearer. This section surveys the large, widely circulating, narrative-filled figured world of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes that is shared among many foreign English teachers in Korea. Importantly, this is the shared and storied figured world of foreign English teachers in Korea, and so is distant in some ways from other shared understandings of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes that, for example, Korean college students or expatriate engineers know and experience. The figured world (Holland et al., 1998) discussed here is a narrative world populated by figurative identities, generic characters with particular positions within this figured world, who hold some significance within this figured world. This particular figured world tells a particular story about the bodies of foreign English teachers, the bodies of Korean people around these teachers, the attitudes people have towards bodies, the actions people take because of bodies and clothes, and the availability of clothes in Korea and home, wherever that home might be. These stories interweave and connect in supporting and contradictory ways that give shape to this figured world which exists among foreign English teachers in Korea. This section explores some places within this figured world, including physical locations of some stores and streets, and two important discourses that shape this figured world: first, the discourse that foreigner teachers are “bigger” and second, the discourse that in Korea women’s shoulders and chest are seen as very sexual while women’s legs are not. This survey of places and discourses concerning bodies and clothes situates this chapter and allows for the later sections to examine the complicated relationships and interconnections
between foreign English teachers negotiations of selves through issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes.

Importantly, different foreign English teachers may or may not agree with aspects of the geography and understandings discussed in this sub-section, and may say they have never travelled to particular places such as Itaewon or wanted to engage in shopping in the manner discussed in this section. However, I believe most foreign English teachers will acknowledge that within discussions, either real or imagined, with other foreign English teachers the understandings presented here will be discussed and assumed to be true by some foreign English teachers, even if individual foreign English teachers position themselves in opposition to these understandings and discourses.

A Geography and Understanding of Shopping for Clothes in Korea

Figured worlds connect to artifacts and places through history, discourses, stories, and more. Understanding the different figured worlds of different foreign English teachers in Korea requires an understanding or particular material artifacts and particular places, and understanding the figured world of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes in Korea requires a discussion of cities, neighborhoods, malls, global clothing retail companies, individual stores, and individual items for sale.

Seoul lies at the center of retail in Korea, and offers foreign English teachers greater opportunities than any other city in Korea to find larger sizes, different styles, and products not often offered in Korea. Within Seoul, Itaewon, the neighborhood located outside a major American Army base that is a particular foreign place in Korea (E. Kim, 2004; Schober, 2014), offers speciality stores that can offer larger sizes and custom tailoring but for many the variety is limited and quality may be less than desired. Again within Seoul but beyond Itaewon, Zara, the
Spanish clothing retailer and other larger global chains such as H&M offer a wider variety of sizes and are recognized as places where more difficult to find clothes are available. These chains exist outside of Seoul in some cases, but some foreign English teachers travel to Seoul for the larger versions of these chains, the greater possible selection of items, and as part of a routine of visiting and shopping in Seoul. Smaller clothing retailers pepper Seoul and are a common site inside subway stations, underground shopping centers often built beneath large intersections, and newer, American-style shopping malls. Some of these clothing retailers are branches of larger retail chains but many are small independent shops, and they often only sell smaller typically-Korean sizes. Tailors are relatively common in Korea and it is possible to have bespoke suits made for relatively little money or less than the cost of a regular suit in North America. Further, online shopping offers a vast array of services from both retailers in Korea, who offer a wider variety of sizes, and global retailers who can ship to Korea. Lastly, foreign English teachers and those they spend time with discuss issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes. These discussions can range from collaboratively and pleasurably discussing new insights into finding certain desired items to discussing how such talk is boring, wasteful, and an avoidance of experiencing life in Korea. Talk about issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping is also a part of this figured world alongside places and material items such as pants, shirts, blouses, and other items of clothes. These places, ranging from Itaewon to small independent clothing retail shops, alongside discussions of these places are, for some teachers, important elements that shape how they negotiate gendered selves in Korea.

**Practices and Discourses of Foreign English Teachers are “Bigger”**

Within the figured world of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes one of the most influential discourses is that foreign women and men who teach English in Korea are too big for
Korean clothes. This discourse, explicitly voiced by many participants in this study, posits that foreigners, meaning foreign English teachers, generally are physically too large, wide, and tall to comfortably wear Korean clothes, shoes, and other items. This discourse that foreigners are bigger emerged in interviews and observations in a variety of ways. Mandy, an American woman teaching English in Central City discussed an experience of a friend of hers when asked about recent shopping stories.

Michael: Have you had any interesting shopping stories or heard any interesting shopping stories?

Mandy: Oh, the usual. One of my friends got chased out of a shoe store when they found out she wore, my size actually, a nine and a half, “Oh aniyo aniyo [‘no no’ in Korean]”, they were going like this [crosses her arms].

In this excerpt Mandy relates the story of her friend being told aggressively that the store did sell shoes in her size. In saying “Oh, the usual” Mandy suggests that experiences of foreign English teachers being too big for shoes are common and routine.

Importantly, foreign English teachers are of a wide variety of sizes and Morraine, an American woman of Color who was in her mid-twenties when she joined this study was small enough that she could easily fit clothes purchased in Korea, saying “I could perfectly blend into the Korean women’s body shape”. She discussed how in the United States she had to purchase children’s clothes because American adult sizes were too large, but in Korea she could find adult sizes that fit her well, making shopping for clothes in Korea far easier than in United States. However, in referencing this situation she said, “Yea really I’m probably the only one”, and “it’s kind of the opposite from [other foreign English teachers], I don’t have trouble finding clothes here [Korea] at all, but I have my entire life [in America]”. Morraine, a woman who could happily and easily navigate purchasing and wearing clothes in Korea, still referenced the larger
discourse that foreign English teachers are bigger and too big for Korean clothes, highlighting the wide circulation of this discourse among foreign English teachers in Korea.

The Sexualization of Clothes and Bodies in Practice and Discourses

Alongside the discourse of foreigners English teachers being bigger, another key discourse regarding dress and sexuality circulated within foreign English teachers’ figured world of dress. This discourse concerned issues of appropriateness and inappropriateness, in terms of perceived sexuality, of clothing that covers or does not cover women’s shoulders, chest, and legs. Emerging out of interviews, observations, and further data collected as part of this study, this discourse, circulating among foreign English teachers, holds that within Korea among Korean people “showing” women’s bare shoulders and chest is seen as inappropriately sexual while showing legs is seen as appropriate and stylish, rather than sexual. The term *showing* is used here despite issues with the concept of displaying one’s body for view as this term was used repeatedly by multiple participants in recounting and describing experiences in which issues of shoulders, legs, and chest were critical.

Nancy would explicitly discuss this discourse and the challenges this discourse presented her in her journal, writing “Some of the shirts I brought here aren’t all that appropriate because they are too low. [Korean] women don’t show off any part of their chest”, and Tracy in her sole interview as part of this study explicitly discussed appropriate clothing in Korea saying, “in Korea you don’t expose your shoulders and chest”, explicitly stating her understanding of dress and bodies in Korea.

Jerri-Lee also discussed a similar understanding, again explicitly stating the discourse being discussed in this section.
I dress more conservatively here up top, you can’t wear anything too low, at home I don’t have a huge chest so I don’t mind wearing something a little lower cut, because I’m not really showing that much, but regardless of what I’m showing or not showing, if the cut is too excessive here you’re looked at, even though I can see random strange women’s private parts when I’m going up an escalator because their shorts are that short, and I think if you have to cover up your bum with a purse, because your skirt is that short, chances are you shouldn’t be wearing that skirt like that like, um, and yea um, I’m immune to a lot of things at this point.

Jerri-Lee, much as others in this section and others beyond this study, restates that in Korea showing her shoulders or chest is seen as overly sexual while legs and wearing short skirts or short shorts by women is seen as appropriate.

The discourse concerning shoulders, legs, and chest within foreign English teachers’ figured world of dress is important in shaping how some foreign English teachers come to understand themselves in Korea, and influences how some struggle to find comfortable ways of navigating discourses of clothes, bodies, sexuality, and more. This particular discourse contributes to some teachers’ sense of discomfort in Korea, within larger understandings of their lives in Korea. Understanding what and how to wear clothes is a process of learning and identification with figured worlds of bodies and dress. When this learning is mastered and one understands and identifies with a figured world of bodies and dress, some people learn how to take great pleasure is dressing in certain ways, the reactions of others to the ways they dress, and the overall experience of wearing clothes. However, moving to a new place with a different figured world of bodies and dress, including new relevant discourses, can disrupt previously comfortable understandings, and radically disrupt previously unquestioned assumptions. This
disruption can be a critical part of some foreign English teachers’ experiences in Korea, and is worth further examination.

Disruptions Entering the Figured Worlds of Dress and Bodies

When Americans, Canadians and others decide they will teach English in Korea, complete all that is required to secure employment, and finally arrive and begin living in Korea they sometimes experiences disruptions in who they feel they are in a variety of ways. Within this study several women extensively discussed feeling bodily different after they began living and teaching English in Korea. This section examines the disruption of selves that some foreign women teaching English in Korea experienced shortly after arriving in Korea. This disruption manifested in different ways such as Nancy’s experience of feeling bigger and becoming more aware of her body, and for other women certain experiences with particular items of clothes shaped their understandings of bodies in Korea and certain practices regarding bodies and clothes.

I again draw upon Holland et al.’s (1998) figured worlds to conceptualize the complex place these teachers enter when beginning their experiences in Korea, and those who explore the collision of figured worlds in different contexts (Rush & Fecho, 2008). There are overlapping figured worlds of bodies and dress in Korea originating in the United States, Korea, Europe, and global fashion capitals which often incorporate different but widely circulating discourses regarding women’s bodies and dress. Rush and Fecho (2008) argue:

We are never part of just one figured world, but slide among them constantly.

The worlds of which we have long been a part transact with new worlds we encounter and for which we either seek or are thrust into entry. (p. 127)
Especially important for this section is the understanding that figured worlds can collide in discussions of clothes, shopping for clothes, choices regarding how one dresses, and a wide variety of daily activities. As foreign English teachers travel to Korea to begin teaching English they, at least potentially, step out of one figured world of bodies and dress and begin to encounter another figured world, substantially different than others they have encountered before. Further, within these overlapping and colliding figured worlds various people position themselves and others while also being simultaneously positioned by others in various ways. This positioning done within figured worlds, for some new-to-Korea foreign women, can disrupt long-told stories of who these women are and how they see themselves. This section examines several different aspects of some women’s lives in Korea as they begin living and teaching English in Korea.

This section extensively discusses the gendered selves of foreign English teachers in Korea, demanding a deeper examination of this concept. *Gendered selves* is the term used in this study to refer to holistic understandings and senses of gender developed over a lifetime. These include figured worlds involving gender, these figured worlds’ corresponding iconic gendered characters, familiar gendered artifacts corresponding to particular figured worlds such as types of dress, and the knowledge and capacity to position oneself and others through positional identities within gendered figured worlds. These gendered selves differ from person to person, with some foreign English teachers intimately comfortable with their gendered selves and possessing the capacity to adroitly navigate particular gendered figured worlds and others more uncomfortable with their gendered selves. Nevertheless, foreign English teachers arriving in Korea have a lifetime of immersion within particular gendered figured worlds, familiarity with gendered artifacts within these figured worlds, and experience positioning themselves and others through gender that gives rise to some naturalized understandings of gendered selves. In different ways for different teachers much of this is challenged when first arriving in Korea.
Encounters that Disrupt Gendered Selves

Several women who joined this study shortly after arriving in Korea discussed experiences in which they were surprised or shocked by the reactions of Korean people to aspects of their bodies or dress. These stories featured foreign women who taught English in Korea wearing clothes, often a slightly low-cut top or dress, in public and the reaction of various Korean people nearby. These experiences and the storied retelling of these experiences are elements both of disruptions of selves that come from moving to and living in a new place, and one aspect of these teachers beginning to understand themselves within this place.

Mary, a multi-ethnic woman of Color from the Antipodes was in her late twenties when she joined this study, less than two months after arriving in Korea. She discussed wearing a particular dress in General City, Korea, within her first few months of living in Korea, the subsequent reactions of Korean people she encountered, and her understanding of these experiences at that time.

Michael: I started to play around with questions like, how do you think you’re perceived here in moments like, that, where you’re walking around the track barefoot in a place where people are jogging, and then in other places as well?

Mary: I think uh in general, like crazy foreigners, or foreigners are strange or something like that. You know, there’s also, like I have this dress, it’s like a summer dress. It has like spaghetti straps, it’s like the kind of thing you’d wear back home in the summer and it’s not at all what, like, nobody would think of it as sexy style or whatever right? But, you know how here, the woman’s showing her shoulders, like that’s kind of sexy style, err, like I don’t get it, because they [Korean Women] can wear like ten centimeter, um, ten centimeter long skirts, or whatever, and that’s not sexy, but I show my shoulders and that’s sexy style. Ummm, but anyway, I was wearing this dress like a couple of weeks
ago cause it was really really hot, right? And the guy at the corner store, he was like, oh
what’d he say? He made some comment about “sexy style” and he thinks I look like
Brooke Shields for some reason [laughter] which I just don’t get, cause, like I get that
we’re both foreigners, but I have a different skin color to her [laughter]

Michael: Brooke Shields yea?

Mary: and different hair color, I don’t know where he got that from. Apparently I look
like Brooke Shields when I wear this dress [laughter]. I, uh, was like, we were walking to
MolaDong, I was wearing this dress, like it’s so not sexy style, one of my students, umm,
was driving past and she apparently saw me and my boyfriend, and I was wearing this
dress, and when I saw her, she was like, “hey you can’t, you can’t wear dresses like that
out! Korean people will stare! it’s too sexy style!” Ok, yea, and she’s probably like the
most conservative student I have. Like she’s, she comes from the countryside and is very
religious, and she wouldn’t wear the little short skirts that all my other students wear, but
still it was pretty funny. Yea, like it’s a little black dress, and it has spaghetti straps, and I
think it is the spaghetti straps that make it sexy style. It’s very bizarre.

Michael: So, so, can you kind of, can you, so how do you make sense of that?

Mary: Umm, like, for me, I guess I, um, it does make me think twice about wearing the
dress again. Umm, see, like, when in Rome do as the Romans. I don’t really want people
staring at me like, “look at that skanky foreigner” [laughter]

Michael: Sure sure

Mary: Like, I wouldn’t want that to be people’s impression of me, and it’s not
something I really thought about before, because it’s the type of thing that you’d
wear because it’s a really hot day and summer dress is cool, so I, like, didn’t even
think about it in a sexy style way, you know?
Within this excerpt Mary discusses two experiences in which the dress she was wearing became a critical element of her experiences and directly influenced her understandings of clothing and dress in Korea. Further, in a later interview she would say she did not wear that dress again after these experiences.

Mary’s excerpt involves complex representations of race, ethnicity, desire, beauty, sexuality, exoticism, and dress in ways that invite scholarly examination through diverse approaches. This study primarily examines Mary’s experience, the retelling of her experience in this narrative, and her developing understanding of bodies and dress through an understanding of colliding figured worlds. Mary, travelling from the Antipodes to Korea, carried with her a figured world of bodies and dress that naturalized understandings regarding clothes, and the meanings or purposes associated with clothes. This figured world that Mary carried with her also naturalized understandings of the body, including understandings of who can be said to resemble who, and the different contextual meanings and purposes associated with covering or not covering parts of the body. This figured world that Mary shared with others from her home country allowed her to know her summer dress was appropriate to wear in hot weather, and know that she cannot resemble Brooke Shields. However, based on Mary’s contribution to this study and further data collected from other participants, it is reasonable to assume the figured world of bodies and dress in Korea is substantially different, and that Mary’s summer dress, to some degree, falls within the category of “sexy style” clothing, so much so that this dress, perhaps only for one shopkeeper, makes her resemble Brooke Shields. Mary’s reaction is the product of an Antipodean figured world, which does not give this dress such a sexualized meaning, and posits the appearance of Mary and a white woman such as Brooke Shields as radically different. This experience, with Mary immersed in an Antipodean figured world of bodies and dress, and this shopkeeper and Mary’s concerned student immersed in a Korean figured world of bodies and dress, is a product
of these two figured worlds colliding, with confusion, frustration, attempts to intervene and assist, and desire for better understanding of these experiences all products of this collision.

A key aspect of Mary’s narrative is her summer dress. This dress can be understood as an artifact that makes real a figured world, much as how the plastic poker chips of Alcoholics Anonymous make real that particular figured world (Holland et al. 1998, p. 51). In Alcoholics Anonymous plastic poker chips symbolize time spent sober, and the meanings associated with poker, gambling, and money have been replaced with that of sobriety, so that for members of Alcoholics Anonymous these small plastic chips open up and make real their particular figured world. However, in Mary’s narrative, two competing figured worlds are drawing upon this single dress as an artifact, much as if suddenly in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting an non-member entered the meeting and attempted to begin playing poker with his or her plastic chips. The figured world of bodies and dress in which Mary’s student and local shopkeeper are immersed posit her dress as artifact that is associated with sexy style clothing in opposition to the figured world Mary carried from the Antipodes which posits this dress as something to be worn while hot. Mary’s experience highlights how, for some new-to-Korea foreign English teachers, immersion into new figured world of bodies and dress can imbue artifacts such as dresses, shorts, or taking off one’s shirt while hot and sweaty with new meaning, essentially remaking such artifacts, and giving these remade artifacts the capacity to bring these teachers into contact with new figured worlds. This remaking of artifacts is one important aspect of how gendered selves can be disrupted for some foreign English teachers.

An additional key aspect of this Mary’s story is the introduction of new artifacts. Artifacts can be material such as the poker chips of Alcoholics Anonymous, but also elements of

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23 There are multiple meanings associated with any form of dress and different aspects of sexuality are, in varying ways, imbued in all forms of dress. However, it is beyond the scope of this current study to examine the less-explicit sexualities that are attached to a summer dress in the Antipodes.
narratives or iconic characters that populate figured worlds. Mary echoes her student when she uses the term “sexy style” and this may have been an emerging narrative artifact for Mary, and perhaps others, that both disrupts gendered selves originating in more familiar, home-country figured worlds, and over time brings Mary further into a new figured world of bodies and dress. Mary also says she does not want Korean people to see her and say “look at that skanky foreigner”, and the character of “the skanky foreigner” may be a new character or artifact within a new figured world of bodies and dress. The iconic character of the foreign women who dresses too sexually would emerge in other discussions with other participants, but this new character or artifact, which did not exist in the figured world of bodies and dress Mary brought with her from the Antipodes, is one element that may have both disrupted her gendered selves, and brought her further into a new figured world of bodies and dress.

Other women participating in this study offer narratives that grant further insight into encounters that disrupt gendered selves. Nancy’s experience, recounted in her journal excerpted at the beginning of this chapter discusses her experience wearing a “normal shirt” to a department store and feeling that she both embarrassed others and herself through the wearing of that shirt, echoing much of Mary’s narrative. Nancy would also relate a classroom experience, briefly discussed in Chapter 4, in which her gender, clothing, and concerns over miscommunication would shape her experiences.

Um, one of the days in class I leaned over to help a student in class and he moved away from me and it was really obvious I would say, and then a couple of other times when I touched a guy’s shoulder and he flinched and again I wasn’t sure if he was like [shocked, but I wanted to say to this student], “I’m not hitting on you, that’s a normal gesture for me”, you know and I know people here aren’t as touchy feely but then again it happens. I donno if it is an opposite sex, touchy-feely thing, and so yea.
Both Nancy’s experience with the men she taught and Mary’s encounter with her student while out walking highlight that disruptions to gendered selves can be experienced both within and beyond classrooms and educational institutions. The collision of familiar home-country figured worlds with the figured worlds of bodies and dress in Korea takes place in teachers’ classrooms, and also in department stores, and while out on walks. Mary and Nancy’s experiences show that similar encounters can occur within and beyond educational institutions and so this study makes no special distinction between schools and other places in examining bodies, and dress. Further, the ubiquity of these collisions between figured worlds shows their importance, as they can easily take place in educational institutions with students, and can potentially shape classroom practices.

Notable in Mary, Nancy, and other participants’ discussion of these gendered encounters is the emotion involved in these experiences and present in the retelling of these experiences. Feelings of confusion were evident in expressions from Mary such as “I don’t get it” and questions to me regarding her experiences, and from Nancy with expressions such as “I wasn’t sure” and “I donno”. Mary also felt amusement at this encounter, laughing at points during the retelling of this experience, but she also perhaps felt frustration with a seemingly ridiculous experience. Other participants told similar stories with deeper feelings of frustration, and Nancy too discussed frustration, a loss of confidence, and generally acknowledging issues of gender as “a bit depressing”. However, Nancy would also add in her journal “I have to remember that there isn’t anything wrong with me. I’m allowed to be like I am and I should own it instead of feeling apologetic for it” and in doing so was attempting to mediate her own emotional development. For Mary, Nancy, and other foreign English teachers there was great agency in mediating their emotional understandings of these experiences, and these teachers must be understood as taking an active role in developing understandings of these experiences and their related emotions. Importantly, these were emotionally laden encounters, and disruptions of gendered selves involved issues of emotion in ways that potentially were difficult for some foreign English
teachers. The emotionally laden nature of these disruptions highlights the importance of examining these issues, and both their genesis in classrooms and their potential to shape classroom practices make the emotional consequences of disruptions of gendered selves particularly relevant.

While Mary and Nancy’s excerpts reflect collisions between different figured worlds of bodies and dress that create disruptions of gendered selves, they are also beginning to improvise and position themselves and others in order to see themselves in the ways they wish to be seen. This improvised positioning is done several ways. Mary and Nancy both emphasize their intentions with their choice of dress, and the legitimacy of their understanding of their clothes or artifacts. Mary and Nancy both emphasize that they did not intend to dress in a manner that would lead to the experiences they recounted for this study, positioning themselves through their intentions. They also emphasize, through comments, such as Mary’s comment about her dress: “it’s not at all, what like, nobody would think of it as sexy style or whatever right?” the legitimacy of their understanding of their clothes, over others’ interpretation of their clothes. Additionally, Mary and other participants in this study are beginning to position others amid this collision of gendered figured worlds. Mary positioned some Korean women through comments about Korean women’s fashion: “I don’t get it because they can wear like ten centimeter um ten centimeter long skirts or whatever and that’s not sexy but I show my shoulders and that’s sexy style”. Mary, in this excerpt and drawing upon widely circulating discourses regarding skirts and sexuality, positions some Korean women and perhaps Korean people more generally as incapable of legitimately judging her clothing as Korean people illegitimately understand and judge what she considers shorts skirts. Importantly, Mary, Nancy and other foreign English teachers are improvising their understandings of and reactions to experiences grounded in new figured worlds. Holland et al. (1998) argue, “in our view, improvisations, from a cultural base and in response to the subject positions offered in situ, are, when take up as symbol, potential beginnings of an
altered subjectivity, an altered identity” (p. 18). In improvising responses to gendered experiences of bodies and clothes which are grounded in colliding figured worlds Mary, Nancy, and other new-to-Korea foreign English teachers are moving into new figured worlds of bodies and dress, and towards, in some cases, altered gendered selves.

Mary in recounting her experiences also discusses the skirts, evaluated by her as short, worn by some Korean women, and Nancy in the long journal excerpt at the beginning of this chapter discusses the clothing worn by some Korean women, including her students, that feature bows, and ruffles. She further wrote that Korean women “try to look like girls. That is why thin is so in. They look prepubescent” and “when I realized this it was a little bit shocking for me”. For Mary, Nancy, and other new-to-Korea foreign English teachers in Korea, the more mundane encounters with Korean men and especially women in which fashion and dress are used in unexpected ways can further contribute to the disruption of gendered selves. The collision of figured worlds and the reconstruction of artifacts such as skirts and bows as artifacts within a new figured world can disturb the long cultivated understandings of bodies, dress, how to understand large collective shared understandings of being women and men, and how to position oneself and others as women and men. While these more mundane experiences of seeing Korean people wear clothes in somewhat unexpected ways may be less notable Mary’s experience with her dress, seeing others wearing clothes in unexpected ways still has the capacity to disrupt gendered selves.

A lifetime of experience and immersion in figured worlds of bodies and dress has given Mary, Nancy, and the other participants in this study, to varying degrees, a naturalized understanding of clothing, shoes, how one should cover parts of the body, and how one should uncover parts of the body. These figured worlds of bodies allow Mary, Nancy, and other participants in this study to know how to dress for sports, a job interview, a coffee date, and a wide variety of other activities in their home countries. In their home countries participants and foreign English teachers more broadly may have felt confusion, uncertainty, and doubt over their
choices regarding bodies and dress, such as when considering what to wear for a job interview or for a date, but they almost certainly would be relying on naturalized understandings of bodies and dress developed over a lifetime when making these decisions, and their fundamental assumptions would rarely be questioned. Mary, before coming to Korea, would know if she was wearing a sexy style dress or not, acknowledging that even in one’s own home context decisions regarding gendered clothing can be laced with tension, uncertainty, and gendered power relations (Holland et al., 1998, p. 144). Nevertheless, a lifetime of immersion in figured worlds of bodies and dress made possible gendered selves for Mary and Nancy, granting some degree of certainty regarding what gendered positions are available in figured worlds, and how one can position oneself and others as a woman or man within these figured worlds. In Korea these gendered selves are disrupted. Mary’s experiences disrupted her understandings of how to be seen and not be seen as someone wearing sexy style clothes. Nancy’s experiences, likewise, disrupted her understandings of how to wear clothing and engage in practices such showing concern to students in ways that would let her be seen in the way she desired. Likewise, seeing Korean women wearing clothes that in Mary’s view should be seen as sexy style, but in the view of Korean people do not seem carry any sexual meaning, further disrupts these formerly shared understandings, and larger former certainties about how to be seen as a woman. Both in the midst of these experiences and shortly after Mary and Nancy were already improvising reactions to the collision of long familiar home-country figured worlds and new figured worlds, and were perhaps entering and constructing a new, mixed or perhaps hybrid figured world; the figured world of foreign English teachers’ bodies and dress.
Shopping for Clothes as Disruptions of Gendered Selves

For some foreign women teaching English in Korea their first attempts to find suitable clothing to buy, often shortly after arriving in Korea, were challenging in a variety of ways, disrupting these women’s gendered selves. Mandy explicitly discussed shopping and was vocal about the challenges she and other foreign women teaching English in Korea experienced with shopping for clothes in Korea. Mandy came to General City, Korea to teach for one year and left at the end of her contract. An American woman in her very early forties Mandy discussed her interests in language, culture, and society more generally as well as her previous world travels and work on the West Coast of the United States. She also frankly discussed both her positive and negative experiences in Korea, asked about my own experiences both as an English teacher and as a graduate student, and would discuss her own theoretical understandings of foreign English teachers in Korea. She extensively discussed her experiences shopping in Korea in both her second and third interviews.

Michael: So, shopping in Korea what’s that kinda like?

Mandy: It just isn’t. One of the best ways to save money is to move here and don’t wear a size four, and you’re going to save a lot of money.

Michael: Sure.

Mandy: I just got these in the mail, and I was so excited I was like “Oh I gotta pair of jeans I just gotta wear them”, but yea shopping just isn’t a thing. I have really good makeup and accessories. Right when I came to see you my purse broke, so I bought this [gestures to her purse], genuine leather, and yes amazing, and it like it was only ninety dollars, and in the US [pause]. On the one hand it is amazing, and on the other, the clothes and shoes, it’s beyond depressing.
Michael: And just to get clear, the clothes and shoes issues? Is that it is difficult to find sizes?
Mandy: Yes, yes, I wear a size nine and a half shoe a European forty and they do not exist [in Korea] I went to Seoul and found three or four places that do sell them, and they’re a hundred dollars for the shittiest pair of flats.
Michael: And you used the word depressing, can you kinda help me understand?
Mandy: Well this is gonna sound kinda shallow but as a well, as a western female you shop because it’s what you do, it’s fun, if you’re sad you go shopping, you know if you’re feeling really exciting you go shopping, you cannot do that here, you cannot. I shopped all the time in Metro City USA, that’s just what you do, I love to go shopping but you can’t here. So think of something you love to do so much and then having it taken away, you know, and if you want to try and look attractive and make yourself presentable, good luck. Like you coble together these makeshift outfits, “I’ll wear my nice sweater with my stretch pants”. The lack of shopping opportunities means you cannot present yourself and dress yourself as you normally would do, and that is depressing, on bad days it’s depressing, on good days you don’t care.

Mandy explicitly says in this excerpt that shopping for clothes is almost impossible because the available clothes are simply too small for her, that the experience of shopping alongside the lack of opportunity to shop negatively impacts her emotionally, and that as a consequence of this she has limited opportunities to present herself in public through clothing the way she desires. Many others such as Nancy would echo her comments describing similar experiences and understandings of being unable to shop for clothes because the available clothes were too small.
Nancy in her journal excerpt specifically discussed shopping, clothes, and the challenges of being unable to buy clothes because the sizes available to her in Korea were too small. Further, she noted that these experiences had an emotional weight to them that influenced her; to some degree she credited these experiences shopping for clothes and her growing understanding that she would not be able to purchase clothes easily in Korea, with a sensation of feeling bigger in Korea. She would also write “the fact that little fits here is another reminder that I don’t fit in here [in Korea]” linking the unavailability of clothing to a larger sensation of having no appropriate role or place in Korea.

Nancy, perhaps more than any other participant in this study clearly articulates connections between the challenges of finding clothes that can fit her body in Korea, her own understanding of herself and her body, and her own emotional well-being. She both explicitly argues and illustrates how the difficulties some women experience finding clothes to purchase in Korea when they initially arrive in Korea can challenge their understandings of themselves and disrupt long-established gendered selves, including feelings, and sensations of who they are as people. Within Holland et al.’s (1998) understanding of figured worlds, artifacts have the capacity to open up and “make real” figured worlds, and for some people particular items of dress are artifacts that can make real gendered figured worlds. The removal or disappearance of a particular figured world’s artifacts may disturb or disrupt that figured world and arriving in Korea and being immersed in a world of dress and fashion that does not offer clothes these teachers can wear can disturb some long familiar figured worlds of bodies and dress. The material limitation of having far fewer available clothes that fit one’s body in Korea shapes some women’s initial experiences in Korea in a variety of ways. As Mandy highlighted, for some, shopping for clothes can be an act of recreation and that act can be curtained, or even transformed from a pleasurable activity into something frustrating and lacking any recreational element during initial experiences in Korea. This section has shown how initial experiences shopping for clothes in Korea can disrupt the
gendered selves of some foreign women teaching English in Korea. This disruption in gendered selves is shaped by initial experiences with bodies, dress, and shopping for clothes, but can also include opportunities for these teachers to tell new stories about themselves and who they are in Korea in terms of bodies and dress. Importantly, within this disruption of gendered selves is the potential for improvising and mediating new figured worlds and positional identities related to bodies and dress.

**Disruption of Gendered Selves through Talk of Bodies and Appearance**

Many participants discussed a variety of experiences and even routine practices in their educational institutions that featured discussions of their bodies and appearance in ways that initially surprised them. Generally, these were experiences in which teachers were told either they were beautiful or handsome, or they were told something about their weight, height, or body that was generally interpreted negatively.

Several women participating in this study discussed the discomfort they felt when told they are beautiful, pretty, or hearing other similar comments on their appearance by students in their classes. Nancy discussed some of these issues.

I donno I felt like in the US gender wasn’t a prime identifier in terms of me as an identity. And, so it was just, I was one of a group and here no matter what I do I’m the girl [Emphasized followed by laughter]. You know, I’m always the girl [laughter]. And I feel like that factors into everything, and I don’t know exactly how I’m getting that perspective from other people, but I’ve gotten enough feedback, I think, that I know it’s not just in my head. Even from, like, students you know I’ve had a lot of them like, “oh you’re not the only foreign professor I’ve had, but you’re the only foreign professor that’s a woman that I’ve had”, and
so I feel like they don’t know what to do with me. You know it keeps popping up in weird places. You know, having them talk about my looks all the time, which is weird. And then you know, it’s just, like some of the girls and compliments, “we think you’re so beautiful”, and I’d be like, “oh, an ‘A’ for you haha”. And then in one of my classes, I’d be like give me an example of, we were doing opinion papers so we were doing fact versus opinion, “[give me] three examples of an opinion”. In all three of my writing classes, a guy raises his hand and says that you’re beautiful for an opinion [laughter]. And, I say “yes, you’re right, that is some people’s opinion”. It was kind of like, um you know like [the male student said], “I don’t think that [you’re beautiful], other people have brought it up” um, and I’m like, “OK”. I donno, it’s just like it’s really strange here. I donno I feel like guys here are really valued, even the foreign guys are really valued, and I feel like the foreign women they don’t know what to do with, so donno.

Nancy, addressed several issues in this excerpt including repeatedly being told she is beautiful by students, and her general feeling that foreign men are more valued than foreign women. Mary discussed some similar experiences and similarly questioned the meaning of these experiences in interviews.

Mary: People always say “beautiful”. All the time. I’m not used to it. Like all my students.

Michael: Like, uh, your students?

Mary: Yea.

Michael: Your appearance?
Mary: Yea, all the time [mumbled] like, “so and so says your beautiful, my friend thinks you’re beautiful”, all the time. Like, I’ve never ever, like would you say that to a teacher in the US or?

Michael: I would if I was trying to do something.

Mary: Yea, no, like girls say it, like they say it a lot like, they’ll even say, “like my other teacher, so and so, says you’re beautiful”. It’s weird. Do they like, do your students say you’re handsome?

Michael: Yea, I used to get, this is gonna be kinda sad, I used to get that a lot.

Yea I’ve tried to write about this, uh yea I’ve tried to write about some of the first things that happened when I got off the plane here. Yea, I think it was twenty-four hours and I heard, “you look like Mel Gibson”, several times.

Mary continued, and discussed some comments from some of the men she taught in her university English language classes.

Michael: Can you elaborate on, uh, how you make sense of that [referring to comments about beauty]? It’s weird, umm, when you hear that? Does it make you uncomfortable?

Mary: Um, sometimes. Like it depends, depends on the person I think. Guys in class sometimes say that and I'll [say] “yea, that’s a nice compliment, but don’t be getting any ideas”. And, uh, one of my students, I always forget his full Korean name, he told me just to call him Won so I’m ticking off the role: Kim Bong Nam, Lee Gun Hee, and then “Won”. And he’s like, “What’s my full name, teacher?”, and I’m like, “I don’t remember it, I’m sorry”. And he’s like, “I’m so sad”, after that, “I’ll forgive you because you’re beautiful”, and in that situation it’s kind of funny, but it can be weird. Like, the uh if the amount of people
comment on your appearance and I’ve even noticed like with Korean friends if we meet up, first thing, they comment on appearance, “Oh, you’ve lost weight”.

Mary in this excerpt, echoes Nancy in discussing the discomfort she felt when students explicitly discussed her appearance with her, and questioned my own classrooms experiences as well. Further, she drew connections between her classroom experiences with her students such as Won and her Korean friends, who, like her students, would often comment on her appearance. Nancy, Mary, and others discussed these experiences as uncomfortable, unusual, and sometimes humorous classroom experiences, but these discussions also referenced uncertainty regarding their students’ behavior, their status in the classroom, and their larger understandings of themselves in Korea.

Further, some participants also found their appearance commented on in ways that were more critical. Often size or weight and “looking tired” were discussed and these types of comments were discussed by participants with varying degrees of frustration and negativity.

Mandy discussed her weight being a common topic at her school.

Mandy: I’m still such a novelty people will still simple stop and stare and comment, “Well, she’s lost a little bit of weight, but she could still go to the gym” and oh yea, “she says your calves are really large, so there’s hope”, [and I respond], “Oh, Ok thanks Mrs. Kim. See you later”, and I’m just Aaahh! And because I’m kinda older, I don’t care about that, but my coworkers, I mean my friends, cry because those comments are just every day, like on your way [mumbled]. Like I had, this is a true story, like every day, this is a-once a week [occurrence] somebody I’ve never met, have no idea who this person is, will come in and be like, “yee, I heard that she’s gained a lot of weight recently, and then lost it really quickly. I wanna know how”. And I think this was the, um, I
think it was the science teacher for the fifth grade boys whom I’ve never met and he was like, “Yea, ask her”. And [I thought], who the fuck are you, and how do you even know this, and why do you think it’s appropriate to ask. And then, I have to stop myself [and say to myself], Mandy you are not home, you are a guest. Do not ask questions. You smile and nod. “Well, you know, diarrhea: the weight just flies off with the fucking kimchee, but thanks for asking”, and I’m just Argg! It’s a constant balance of being tactful and enraged, so you have to take rage and then get your tact.

Mandy in this excerpt discussed her experiences with coworkers and outside of school in which her body and weight are discussed openly in front of her with coworkers or others translating and aiding in communication. Mandy clearly expresses her frustration with being asked about her weight in such a direct manner, and discusses how other close friends, foreign women teaching English in General City, found this experience incredibly frustrating. While Mandy gives special emphasis in this excerpt to her school, she also discussed people stopping, staring, and commenting more generally in her everyday routine such as at the gym.

Discussion of appearance, one’s size, beauty, and the body can be significant for many people, including many foreign English teachers in Korea. This section has shown that many foreign women who teach English in Korea, shortly after arriving in Korea, find themselves involved in casual talk in which they and their appearance are topics of conversation, and further, some of these women find their appearance commented on by students and others in unexpected ways. This talk can also be confusing, distressing, and can be the genesis of complicated, challenging emotions. These experiences can be productively understood as the collision of different figured worlds of bodies and dress. Mandy, Nancy, and other foreign English teachers travelling to Korea bring with them figured worlds of bodies and dress that contain
understandings, routines, and expectations of talk regarding bodies, dress and appearance. The figured worlds of bodies and dress they encounter in Korea, with colleagues, students, and others immersed in those figured worlds, have different understandings, routines, and expectations of talk regarding bodies, dress and appearance, leading to these experiences recounted in this section.

Importantly, some of this gendered talk about appearance involved students telling women participating in this study they were beautiful, and this can be partially understood as an aspect of a particular Korean figured worlds of body and dress in which appearance is discussed in ways that substantially differ from the expectations of these participants. However, other prominent elements may also be shaping this talk as well. Stanley (2013) argues that English language classes in Chinese universities are enmeshed in discourses that position these classes as “fun” shaping students perceptions. It may be that in certain contexts, the students of some of the women participating in this study view their English language classes taught by foreign instructors as “fun classes”, with the fun nature of these classes making possible less serious comments about appearance and beauty that would not be made in other “less-fun” classes. Importantly, this talk and references to beauty also took place outside of classrooms, and so other elements must have also shaped this talk as well.

To some extent, talk regarding beauty, by students or others, may draw upon larger discourses of whiteness, exoticism, and an exotic or different occidental West that circulate in Korea and elsewhere. These discourses may shape perceptions of these teachers in Korea, and make possible comments about beauty and appearance by some Korean people that these teachers hear, as described in this section. Within the figured worlds of Korean bodies and dress the subject position of different white women and some women of Color may draw upon discourses whiteness, exoticism, and beauty in ways that the subject positions of Korean women and men do not, creating possibilities for this talk to occur. An additional element is the novelty or rarity of
foreign women teaching English in Korea, and the seemingly unusual experience of having a foreign woman teaching English may also contribute to this talk in varying ways. It is important to examine the varying elements that can shape the talk discussed in this section, but within this study the focus must remain on how this talk disturbs and disrupts the gendered selves of some new-to-Korea foreign women teaching English in Korea. Travelling to Korea from elsewhere in the world these teachers carry with them figured worlds that naturalize ways of speaking about appearance, bodies, size, and beauty. Further, these teachers carry with them the capacity to position themselves and others through talk about appearance and bodies within these long familiar figured worlds of bodies and dress. In Korea they encounter new forms of talk about bodies and size that are incomprehensible, or incompatible in many ways with their understandings of talk about bodies and dress. This talk challenges assumptions about where bodies and dress should be discussed, how people interact when discussing these topics, and fundamental understandings regarding beauty, size, and bodies. This talk, and the ensuing disruption of gendered selves, carries with it a variety of emotions and can directly shape teachers’ engagement with classroom practices, highlighting the need for this talk to be examined and discussed by researchers and teachers. Additionally, this talk is part of some teachers entering or crafting new figured worlds of bodies and dress as well as new figured worlds of classrooms as well, with these teachers improvising their way into these figured worlds.

**Judgment of Talk regarding Gendered Bodies as Disruption of Gendered Selves**

Disruptions of gendered selves for some new-to-Korea teachers sometimes took place through other forms of talk as well. Discussions and references to other people’s bodies, which could include these new-to-Korea teachers voicing their opinions or understandings of issues involving gender, bodies, dress, and emotion, also could provoke unexpected and confusing
reactions from others, including other foreign English teachers, contributing to further disruptions of gendered selves. Nancy discussed one experience with an older, more senior, foreign man who taught English in the same university as she did. She discussed being “shut down” by this colleague, the experience of interacting with this man, and her understanding of this experience.

Nancy: I think, I think he seems like a nice guy, but I think he’s like blunt in the way that rubs you the wrong way. It’s not that it was that bad or anything, it’s just that the thing is he’s married to a Korean woman, so if someone asks about something Korean women [do], like gesture[s] or something, like that that American women won’t do, and, so I was talking about, like, how [Korean] women when they’re posing, they stand pigeon posed, and you don’t see American women ever doing that. And so in a lot of the pictures, you see kinda, a jaunty shoulder thing, and women from the US would usually stand front, um completely the opposite, so I said, to me it looks a little bit more girlish, like legs apart, it’s a little bit more sexualized, and then the toes in, I said, I, um, I don’t think I said um, but I did I think it looks a little bit more childish. And then, “maybe it looks childish to you [emphasis, and said with an older man’s voice], well yea that’s what I just said [emphasis, Nancy’s own voice], so it wasn’t a big deal, uh I think I think it’s a little bit tough for me to be open, and yea, so I get a little discouraged, and then again it could just be personality [long pause]

Michael: Mm [long pause]

Nancy: It is a little bit interesting to talk to a westerner, married into a Korean family, there might be [pause] more sensitive to something (pause) and I don’t know if that’s one of his trigger issues, [I] don’t know if he’s sensitive to westerners judging but, yea.
In this excerpt Nancy related the experience of talking about issues of gender that she was curious about and, in her opinion, being rebuffed by her more senior colleague. Nancy’s experience, and her retelling of this experience, can be productively understood in several ways, again drawing upon Holland et al.’s (1998) work. At the time of this interview, less than five months after arriving in Korea, Nancy is beginning to craft or enter new figured worlds of bodies and dress through improvising her reactions to the unexpected and different encounters she had experienced since arriving in Korea. This nascent figured world contains new tentative understandings and weaves together discourses of Korean women’s bodies, appearance, clothing, posture, gender, and sexuality. This emerging figured world of bodies and dress is one in which Nancy can possibly see herself intelligibly, or at least understand who she might be in Korea, perhaps through distinctions between Korean women and American women. Nancy is also crafting and discussing multiple elements of this new figured world. She is both discussing distinctions between Korean women and American women as well as theorizing about some foreign men teaching English in Korea who are married to Korean women, and how their romantic relationships may shape how they interact with foreign women and react to discussions of gender in Korea. By telling herself and others, including both her older colleague and myself as part of this interview, about these understandings Nancy is mediating her development of these understandings and entering or crafting a figured world of gender and bodies with iconic characters such as Korean women, foreign women, foreign men married to Korean women, and many additional characters. This nascent figured world is part of Nancy and other foreign English teachers’ efforts to improvise their way into being able to understand themselves and others in an intelligible way in Korea. However the development of this figured world and related understandings is still subject to the mediation and disciplining of others, such as Nancy’s colleague.
Nancy’s experience of discussing her understandings of Korean women and gender, and the subsequent response of her colleague can also be understood as an attempt at disciplining her entry to a figured world and the mediated curtailing of a still emerging figured world. Holland et al. (1998) draw upon Vygotsky to examine development and how development is facilitated through mediation. However, “Vygotsky was himself guilty (as are we all, more often than not) of focusing too exclusively upon the facilitation of skills and abilities” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 176) while ignoring that development can also be the extinction of different types of behavior, and “the shaping and inculcation of only those skills and actions ‘fit’ for the social position the neophyte was accorded” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 176). The talk between Nancy and her colleague can be understood as an effort towards diminishing or extinguishing Nancy’s developing understandings of bodies and dress. This effort towards disciplining Nancy’s understandings suggests that among foreign English teachers in Korea there are multiple possible conflicting figured worlds of bodies and dress and further that within shared figured worlds differing foreign English teachers may position themselves and others in highly contested ways.

This particular experience of Nancy, related in an interview, can only be examined to a limited extent, but other foreign English teachers engage in similar conversations about gender, bodies, dress, sexuality, and related issues that can mediate developing understandings in various ways, and potentially position speakers and listeners as well. Importantly a multitude of discourses circulate within this excerpt, and Nancy, through this discourses of posture, youth, bodies, and sexuality is crafting a new understanding of herself as an American woman in Korea and a new understanding of Korean women. She is improvising new understandings out of disruptions in gendered selves through this talk with other foreign English teachers, but in the midst of this development she is also being disciplined and positioned by others. Importantly, Nancy in the telling of this story, is already bringing this experience into a larger narrative of being a foreign English teacher in Korea, supplying an explanation for her colleagues behavior.
and drawing upon discourses of psychology through terms such as “trigger” to further improvise her understandings of this talk and further construct and enter a nascent figured world of bodies and dress. Nancy would also discuss at points other foreign women confirming her understandings of issues of bodies and dress, furthering the codevelopment of the nascent figured world of bodies and dress she was positioning herself within. This section has highlighted how talk involving criticism or judgment of one’s opinions regarding gender, bodies, and dress can potentially further disrupt nascent or emerging understandings of some foreign women teaching English in Korea, but the experience described by Nancy involving her colleague seemed to have been coopted by her into an emerging figured world of bodies and dress.

Discussion and Implications of Disruptions of Gendered Selves

A myriad of elements shape how different foreign women teaching English in Korea negotiate gendered selves when first living and teaching in Korea, and this section is only a limited, if hopefully important, initial exploration of this phenomenon. For some foreign women coming to Korea to teach English, the process of initially beginning to live and teach in Korea carries with it profound changes in the sense of one’s body. Most notably, Nancy experienced a visceral sensation of becoming “bigger and bigger” during her first few months in Korea and I attempt to understand this changed feeling of one’s own body as a disruption in gendered selves that originates in conflicting and colliding figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998).

Foreign English teachers, long before intending to teach English in Korea, are immersed in figured worlds of gender, dress, bodies, and talk about these topics that create shared, mutually supporting understandings and practices which make these understandings and practices seem natural. These figured worlds are shared and supported by others in these teachers’ home communities and so challenges and disruptions to these figured worlds are often rendered non-
threatening through webs of mutual support and understanding. Importantly, within these figured worlds of bodies and dress conflicts occur over how people are positioned, but these shared narrative understandings themselves are often seen as natural, and relatively stable. These figured worlds, shaped and supported by the communities these foreign English teachers live in before leaving for Korea, imbue these teachers with understandings of dress, bodies, and practices related to dress and bodies, and allow these individuals to position themselves and others in relatively understandable ways. However, when these teachers move to Korea they carry with them their understandings of dress and bodies, but leave behind the webs of mutual support those communities provide and are instead immersed in new figured worlds of dress and bodies in Korea. The understandings and practices that exist and construct the figured worlds of dress and bodies in teachers’ original communities can be radically different than those that exist in the figured world of dress and bodies in Korea, creating new situations involving warnings from students regarding “sexy style clothes”, difficulties shopping, unexpected and surprising talk about appearance, and harsh judgments from others. Removed from their home communities, accompanying supportive friends and family, and so much that supports the figured worlds of dress and bodies in foreign English teachers’ original communities, these foreign teachers’ understandings and practices are disrupted by being immersed in a new figured world of dress and bodies in Korea. This disruption can be understood as previously stable, relatively coherent, and intelligible understandings and sensations being made less stable and less coherent and less intelligible. Importantly, figured worlds not only create understandings and practices, but also figurative identities such as those of a businessperson and positional identities such as someone dressing in stylish manner suitable for a job interview. These figurative and positional identities can be disrupted alongside the figured worlds they are a part of. This disruption of figured worlds and gendered selves reshapes long learned ways of being and feeling, and for some teachers gives rise to new sensations such as feelings “bigger and bigger”.
The disruption in gendered selves experienced by some foreign women newly arrived in Korea are shaped by experiences within and beyond classrooms and educational institutions. Experiences of students commenting on a teacher’s appearance or reacting to a teacher’s body may be easily understood to have great relevance to classroom practices while experiences such as feeling embarrassment in a department store because of one’s dress may seem to have little connection to classrooms and students, but all of these are relevant to the overall development of these teachers. This section has shown how a wide variety of experiences inside and outside educational institutions involving students, colleagues, and others contribute to disruptions of gendered selves. Therefore, understandings of teacher development must examine these disruptions of gendered selves holistically, looking at the myriad of experiences that shape these teachers. Only by doing so can scholars hope to understand how living in a new place can shape gendered selves. Further, and perhaps more controversially, teacher development programs and practices may also benefit from considering how to better incorporate understandings of disruptions of gendered selves that are shaped by experiences beyond the classroom.

Foreign English teachers arrive in Korea with many expectations of life in Korea, and, as Nancy discusses, some teachers can be relieved, or just surprised, by how much or how little their expectations and assumptions are confirmed by their experiences. However, it may be the less-expected aspects of gendered experiences that tend to be more disruptive. Nancy was somewhat pleasantly surprised to find she was not unusually tall in Korea, but other aspects of her gendered experiences proved more stressful and challenging. Those organizations involved with foreign English teachers moving to Korea to teach English may benefit from addressing the already existing expectations of foreign English teachers, and the less-expected challenges some foreign English teachers experience.

It may be that experiences and understandings that are perceived to be somewhat self-contradictory can be more disruptive in some ways. Several teachers discussed their exasperation
over the perceived contradiction that shoulders were seen as overly sexual, while legs were not and I argue this perceived contradiction is an additional aspect of frustration and confusion that shaped some foreign women’s disruption of gendered selves. Beyond just entering a new figured world that disrupts previous understandings of gendered dress and bodies, certain aspects of different figured worlds that intermix within the already existent understandings of some foreign English teachers may create especially disruptive experiences and understandings. For some foreign English teachers, seeing the highly sexualized dress of some Korean women, at least as it appears to these foreign English teachers, alongside warnings about dress they understand to be less-sexualized, may have created conditions for more radical disruptions of gendered selves. It may be that the contradictory aspect of these understandings of bodies and dress are the genesis of further disruptions of gendered selves, however, this is mostly speculative. Ideally, future comparative research can further explore this area of inquiry and related issues.

This section has examined how gendered selves can be disrupted through people’s reactions to bodies and dress, through shopping for clothes and the challenge of finding clothes that fit some teachers’ bodies, through talk about bodies and dress, and discussions of dress and bodies in which some women’s opinions are judged negatively or made to feel less legitimate. These disruptions in gendered selves are not limited to these particular practices or experiences and many foreign women teaching English in Korea experience other events that disrupt their gendered selves. Likewise, other foreign women teaching English in Korea may have experiences similar to those of participants discussed in this study, but experienced little disruption in gendered selves. Personal histories, a lifetime of gendered experiences, the subject position of individual teachers, and myriad of other elements influence how different foreign English teachers experience and understand issues of bodies and dress. It is critical that this study contributes to an understanding that disruptions in gendered selves involve dynamic, changing
elements including the personal histories of teachers, and therefore is an individual aspect of development that can greatly vary from person to person.

Crafting and Positioning Oneself within Figured Worlds of Bodies and Clothes

Some foreign women, after initially arriving in Korea to teach English, experience important disruptions in gendered selves, but over time and through improvisation develop new understandings of themselves and others as well as bodies and dress. These teachers, over differing lengths of time, construct and enter new figured worlds of bodies and dress, and learn how to position themselves and others within these figured worlds. This section examines how some foreign women teaching English in Korea come to understand themselves, others, and associated practices involving bodies and dress, within these new figured worlds.

This study followed several new-to-Korea participants over relatively longer periods of time, the longest being over two years, and had participants join this study who had already been living and teaching in Korea for several years. This allows for the examination of new-to-Korea participants’ growing comfort and familiarity with issues of bodies and dress as they adapt to their lives in Korea, and the examination of participants who lived in Korea many years before joining this study and their understandings and routines regarding bodies and dress which had been developed over many years teaching and living in Korea. Primarily this section examines foreign English teachers’ experiences of bodies and dress after initial disruptions of gendered selves have been renegotiated, and new gendered selves have developed.

This section begins by exploring how some women come to understand themselves as bigger in Korea in various ways, including less-aware assumptions about oneself, and understandings of one’s body driven by agency and particular choices. This is followed by a discussion of clothes and shopping for clothes, and how different participants used clothes and
practices related to clothes as recreation and means of identity making within new figured worlds. This section highlights how some foreign women teaching English in Korea craft and enter new figured worlds of bodies and dress, how these new figured worlds shape their understandings of themselves as well as practices related to bodies and dress, and how these figured worlds shape larger issues of identity making in Korea for these teachers.

**Being Bigger in Korea**

Nancy’s journal entry, which began this chapter, detailed her sensation of feeling bigger and bigger in Korea during her initial few months in Korea. Nancy would later discuss feeling bigger in Korea as part of her regular life during the two-and-a-half years she spent living and teaching English in Korea. Other women participating in this study felt likewise, and described experiences in which their understanding of themselves as bigger shaped their experiences. Jerri-Lee, a white American woman, joined this study in her late-twenties when she was teaching English in a Seoul public school. Over several interviews, she discussed shopping for clothes, issues related to dress, and told one story of ordering clothes online from the United States but upon receiving them in Korea finding them far too large.

Jerri-lee: I just ordered a bunch of stuff from back home, GAP, Banana Republic, because they were on sale, and so I ordered a bunch of stuff, and all of it, all of it is too big because I ordered a medium or a large; thinking even these sweatpants, these sweatpants, and I held them up Avery and Alice our other roommate they just died laughing, um well, [I thought] I’ll just shrink them, [but] I’ve shrunk them three times and I roll them down, and they’re still too big.

Michael: Why, um, so why did you, um, why did you order those sizes?
Jerri-lee: Well, that’s what I would order here, like when you walk into a store you’re like “Large-eee juseyo” [give me a large-size in Korean in exaggerated speech]

In this excerpt Jerri-lee tells the humorous story of ordering clothes far too large for herself because she understood herself to be someone who required large sized clothes. Jerri-Lee, in Korea, has crafted and entered, alongside many others, a figured world in which she inevitably requires large clothes and is, to some extent, a large person. Through shopping, various encounters with others, and other engagements with fashion and dress, Jerri-Lee’s fundamental assumptions about herself have changed. In the past, immersed in home-country figured worlds of bodies and dress, Jerri-Lee considered herself someone who wears medium sized clothes and is generally of medium build, but her experiences in Korea have reshaped this understanding so that she sees herself as someone who inevitably needs the largest size of clothes available. In essence, a series of disturbances to Jerri-Lee’s gendered selves shifted her from identifying with one figured world to identifying with another, resulting in her understanding of herself as being bigger and requiring larger sizes. This may be the most explicit example of a foreign woman feeling bigger and understanding herself as bigger in Korea, but I believe many other foreign women teaching English in Korea experience a similar reconceptualization of their own bodies as larger, and often inappropriately large, meaning they require the largest possible sizes available or may simply be too large for any available products.

Tracy, a white, blonde-haired American woman in her mid-twenties who lived in Central City, discussed her complicated understandings and feelings regarding her body both before and after coming to Korea to teach English.
Tracy: Because I came here, and like, before I was very uncomfortable back in the States, not only uncomfortable with myself, cause I always felt bigger, like most people of the people who came here
Michael: Oh, OK
Tracy: and then I came here, and looking around and realizing that, like, there are Koreans who are fatter than me [but] because I’m foreign, I’ll always be big
Michael: Yea
Tracy: I stopped caring. I will always be big to them, it doesn’t even matter actually, like what size I am. I stopped caring, and since I came here I felt so much better, cause I don’t care anymore, because they will always just look at me and think “foreign”, the women in the shops will always hold up the XXL and I’m clearly not an XXL so
Michael: Yea
Tracy: after that I realized it didn’t matter what I actually am, people just have this image, it doesn’t matter.

In this excerpt Tracy explains her understanding of how she became more comfortable with her own body size because of the realization that regardless of her physique and ability to wear Korean clothes, she would be viewed as bigger by Korean people. Importantly, in making this argument she drew upon the understood notion that foreigners are too large to easily shop in Korea. Tracy negotiated a new and more comfortable understanding of herself and her body during her time in Korea, but she did so within and most importantly against a figured world of dress and bodies in Korea that still posited her as bigger and too large for most Korean clothes, despite that fact she could comfortably wear some Korean clothing items.

Importantly, this excerpt can be understood in several ways. It can be understood as an account by Tracy of her changing understandings of her body during her time in Korea, but it can
also be understand as a story mediating the development of a gendered positional identity. Tracy, in beginning to tell herself this story long prior to participating in this study, and then through the telling of this story again in the midst of this interview, is mediating her understanding of herself in Korea, recreating again her understanding of herself and her body in the fashion she described in this excerpt. She is positioning herself against understandings and discourses of foreigners being bigger, arguing this view is a stereotype and that essentially all such views are stereotypical and invalid. In doing so she is positioning herself as moving beyond these concerns and as having found comfort in that realization. Further, much like the flight attendants discussed by Hochschild (1983) and the member of Alcoholics Anonymous discussed by Holland et al. (1998) Tracy, through telling this story to me, herself, and others is mediating her understanding of herself and her body from one state to another, with this process having begun long before this interview.

Tracy’s excerpt highlights both how widely this discourse of foreigners being too large for Korean clothes circulated and the diverse ways foreign English teachers engaged with this discourse over time within this larger figured world of shopping for clothes. However, caution must be exercised in examining this excerpt. Tracy only participated in three interviews and did not participate in any other part of this study and so it is impossible to further examine her experiences renegotiating her own understandings and sensations of herself and her body in Korea. Further, a number of other elements in her larger social world including athletic hobbies and specific social practices contributed to her newly developed understandings and sensations of her gendered selves. Regardless, it is critically vital to recognize the agency of foreign teachers in negotiating understandings of their bodies as they live and teach in Korea. I believe Tracy’s experiences and understandings highlight the potential of stories and larger discourses to be used by teachers to renegotiate their understandings of themselves in Korea.

Mary, as discussed earlier in this chapter, initially experienced disruptions in gendered selves through encounters centered on a dress she wore, more mundane encounters with Korean
women’s fashion, and other experiences. However, these disruptions led, over time, to Mary crafting and entering a new figured world of bodies and dress in which artifacts such as dresses and clothes took on new meanings and opened up new figured worlds. Through this process of identifying with a new figured world, Mary’s understandings, feelings, and visceral sensations, to varying degrees shifted and changed, sometimes in subtle and indirect ways. More than a year after her experience wearing a summer dress in Korea, Mary would travel to a Spanish speaking country for a holiday as part of an effort to further develop her Spanish language skills, taking lessons in a small language teaching institution. Mary would remark after returning to Korea that her Spanish language teacher dressed incredibly casually and that Mary found this teacher’s presence in a loose fitting, low cut, t-shirt almost uncomfortable. Given the limits of this study, I do not think it is possible to directly connect Mary’s experiences with dress and clothing in Korea to her experience in a Spanish language classroom in a Spanish speaking country, but I argue her reconceptualization of dress and immersion in a figured world of dress in Korea shaped her understanding of herself and others in subtle but sometimes important ways, with her experience studying Spanish being one possible example.

The words of Nancy, Jerri-Lee, Tracy, and Mary serve to highlight how some women teaching English in Korea experience a sensation of their bodies changing during their time in Korea. Nancy discussed an uncomfortable, alienating of feeling bigger and bigger during her first months in Korea while Jerri-Lee told a humorous story that showcased how naturalized and, to some degree, comfortable she was with understanding herself as being bigger in Korea. Alternatively, Tracy explained how understanding that she will always be viewed as big in Korea led her to feel much better about her size and body. Mary’s experience highlights how immersion in a new figured world of bodies and dress, for some foreign English teachers, can shift understandings, sensations, and perceptions in ways that shape how these teachers understand others, as well as themselves. This data demonstrates that sensations, feelings, and understandings
of oneself and one’s body as big, small, athletic, fit, and even healthy are created through social and material work and this study highlights how these sensations, feelings, and understandings can be disrupted and then remade as people move to and live in a new place.

For some teachers, such as Nancy during her initial experiences in Korea, this experience of feeling bigger in Korea can be unpleasant and uncomfortable, creating difficulties in both their life in Korea and their work as a teacher. Feeling uncomfortable with one’s own body, and aware that being in a place makes one feel less comfortable due to feeling bigger can contribute to reconsidering remaining in that place. While no teacher in this study said they left Korea because they felt bigger in Korea, I argue some of the sensations of feeling bigger in Korea contributed to general feelings of being uncomfortable that did contribute to some foreign women teaching English in Korea eventually leaving Korea. Importantly, some participants who experienced sensation of feeling bigger agentically maneuver within and against these sensations and understandings. Tracy’s experiences and understandings showcase the possibilities of transformation through these sensations and understandings of feeling bigger. Tracy’s contribution highlights the agency of teachers to challenge not just discourses, but sensations and experiences and reinterpret them in new and more desirable ways.

**Being and Becoming Comfortable in Shopping and Dress**

As some foreign women arrived in Korea for the purposes of teaching English they found difficulty shopping for clothes and engaging in shopping activities that were both part of acquiring needed clothing items and, for some, a pleasurable means of recreation. However, other women teaching English in Korea quickly found shopping for clothes an easy and pleasurable recreational activity. Stacy moved to Korea from her home in South Africa shortly after graduating university to teach in a hagwon. As a young, white, thin women of medium height she
discussed having little difficulty shopping for clothes in Korea, and found shopping in general an amusing means of recreation and a way to avoid spending time inside her extremely small apartment.

Michael: Shopping, uh, shopping, has come up a couple of times with other participants. Can you, um, what goes on with shopping here, is that, uh?

Stacy: Ughhh it’s so strange to me, like back home you have these huge like department stores, these franchises, which are great, but, ummm, I’ve never seen so many, like, small little individual stores as I have in Korea, and I am actually OK with sizes. I’m pretty tall and my feet are pretty big, but I get by and it’s just, well, the clothes are not that different from what you can get back home, and they’re just, well, for me at least, they’re a lot cheaper, and there’s so much more variety. Like you can get so excited, like walking into a shoe store, and there’s like seven rows as far as the eye can see. You just go a bit crazy. Also coming straight out of university suddenly you have this huge paycheck.

With the pay available from teaching English and the wide selection of clothes available, shopping became a pleasurable aspect of Stacy’s time teaching English in Korea, and a variety of elements made this so. Stacy’s physical size, her interest in clothes in general, her experiences in South Africa with a higher-priced, more limited selection of clothes, and the greater income provided by teaching English created opportunities for her to engage in pleasurable shopping for clothes in Korea. Stacy crafted and entered a new figured world of bodies and dress in Korea with relatively little difficulty, in terms of shopping for clothes, while still acknowledging and being shaped by some unique discourses such as those that posit foreign English teachers are larger, and being challenged by other gendered experiences. However, Stacy’s experience highlights the myriad of elements that can shape how different foreign English teachers can engage with an act
of recreation such as shopping for clothes. As already discussed, other women participating in this study had more challenging experiences with issues related to clothes and shopping for clothes.

Mandy, more than most other participants, discussed the frustration she felt during her first few months in Korea because of her inability to find clothes that fit her. This, to some degree, disrupted understandings, sensations, and feelings of gendered selves and was an element of discomfort Mandy felt during her initial few months in Korea. However, after eight months in Korea, the time of her third and final interview, her experiences of shopping had changed.

Michael: So, justa to kinda go back, [and] revisit some of the things we’ve talked [about], anything new on the shopping front? Uh, last time we talked there was some difficulties shopping, and some fun, uh you weren’t finding some cool stuff?

Mandy: Uh yea that’s a really good point cause shopping has been a huge topic with my girls [fellow foreign women teaching English in Korea] too, it’s always the same things, we have themes but shopping has actually gotten better.

Michael: Sure.

Mandy: We’ve all discovered Korean sites that cater to people with large feet and pant sizes, we’ve found western sites that deliver free to Korea, so we can, um, and that’s sort of a non-issue now.

Michael: Oh wow, OK.

Mandy: Which is really good, and H&M in Seoul, if you’re ever interested, carries all Western shoe sizes now so if you’re desperate for a pair of heels or flats or a really nice dress and even if you’re up to, I think up to a US size 16, um you can get it in Seoul now, so yea if you need clothes or pants go to H&M yea that’s really good.
This discussion continued with talk of high quality of cosmetics and was quickly followed up and concluded by the following less positive idea.

Michael: So it sounds like shopping’s a lot better then?
Mandy: Yea, so much better now that I gave up on shoes and pants, and know where to go and then just let it go, you know.

Mandy’s experience of learning over time how to shop in Korea is an example of, I believe, a common path many foreign English teachers follow as they learn how to shop in Korea as foreign English teachers. She discusses how by the time of her third interview, after about eight months of what would be her only year teaching in Korea, she had learned far more about how and where to acquire needed items through online sources and certain stores such as H&M in Seoul. This idea would be echoed by others who discussed, often after a certain number of months in their first year in Korea, finding international clothing retailers such H&M and Zara which offer a wider selection of sizes available. Others would discuss eventually finding stores that offered the particular items they wanted whether it be items of food, electronics, or pharmaceuticals. These stores then became part of a figured world overlying a material world of places in which certain products were available and could be bought or browsed. For some teachers who lived in Korea long enough, this figured world was engaged with as part of a regular routine in which he or she regularly visited stores, shopped or browsed, engaged with shop owners, with some participants crafting a social routine with friends based upon these activities.

Importantly, Mandy also stated she “gave up on shoes and pants”, a critical notion that deserves further examination. In this brief statement is evidence that Mandy and many foreign English teachers in Korea learn to give up looking for and even desiring to shop for certain items in Korea. Several participants who had lived in Korea for more than two years expressed slight bewilderment at being asked about shopping for clothes and some other items in Korea. They
seemed to have eliminated the concept of shopping for clothes in Korea from their understanding of possible activities that can be done in Korea. Instead, they returned to their home country or another country as part of a travel routine and bought significant amounts of clothing or other products there, and then returned to Korea. This, I argue, is a naturalization of a figured world of bodies and dress in which some items or artifacts are permanently removed from this figured world. While not incredibly damaging, I argue this limitation of the figured world of bodies and clothes, to varying degrees, can shape and limit some foreign English teachers’ negotiation of possible selves in Korea. Holland et al. (1998) highlight how artifacts can have their meaning remade in certain figured worlds, adding meaning to their shared narratives and making such a figured world more real in some ways. Likewise, the lack of such artifacts can limit or constrain the possible figured worlds one can enter, and limit both the stories one can tell about oneself, and the positions one can occupy within those figured worlds. The limitations on available clothes and sizes did not dramatically constrain any participant in this study, but, I argue even for those teachers more settled in Korea, these limitations on shopping for clothes, with dress being such an intimate and bodily connected item, may have still shaped and constrained some teachers’ possible gendered selves in Korea.

Holland et al. (1998) argue that development is mediated by various elements, but also understand that development is not always the increasing of capabilities. Development, as they understand it, can also be a place of the reduction or extinguishing of behavior and desires (Holland et al., 1998, p. 176). I argue that some foreign English teachers develop gendered selves through the figured world of bodies and dress in Korea in a way that involves the curtailing of desire for certain unavailable items of clothing. This curtailing of desire for activities and objects involving shopping for clothes is a form of development, but one in which the limitations of the figured world of bodies and clothes involve the ending or reduction of desire for activities such as shopping for clothes, shoes, and other items which could constitute artifacts of previously
significant figured worlds. In some ways this aids the further crafting of some foreign English
teachers’ selves as frustrated desires for activities and items no longer annoy and irritate these
teachers, and instead, as in Mandy’s experience, shopping for clothes and other activities are
looked on mostly positively, only vaguely noting some items are difficult or impossible to find.
However, I also believe that this muting of desire for shopping, clothes and other desired pursuits
is also only partial, and that frustrations and interests may continue or return in some ways,
subtlety troubling these teachers’ understanding of themselves in Korea, and challenging certain
aspects of their self-told story of being in Korea as when Mandy mentions giving up shopping for
certain items. I argue that, for some foreign English teachers in Korea, the figured world of
bodies and dress they craft and enter contributes to a sense of self in Korea that can be intelligible
to themselves, but may also somewhat incomplete, with certain elements continuing to interrupt
self-told stories of themselves in Korea.

Foreign English teachers come to Korea and over time enter into a figured world of
bodies and dress which features particular places, stores, items, and characters. These figured
worlds over time reshape desires regarding shopping and various products that influence these
teachers’ lives and understandings of themselves in Korea in various ways. For some, shopping
becomes an amusing recreational activity with far more opportunities than in their previous
experiences elsewhere because of the greater variety of shopping opportunities in urban Korean
contexts and the relatively large income accrued from English language teaching. For these
teachers shopping can be a pleasurable aspect of their ongoing lives in Korea. For others,
shopping can develop into something that is capable of being done, but is in some ways limited
by a myriad of factors. For these teachers, shopping may be an aspect of living and teaching in
Korea that becomes better over time, but remains, to varying degrees, curtailed and limited, but
such limitations are rarely noticed or are simply part of a larger routine of shopping that involves
tavel to other countries to make purchases. Regardless, bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes
retain the capacity for some teachers to be important aspects of crafting figured worlds just as plastic poker chips function in the figured world of Alcoholics Anonymous and handcrafted suits are artifacts in John’s figured world of business English teaching, as discussed in Chapter 4. For John, the handcrafted business suits he wore while teaching were an important aspect of his teaching self, and other teachers, long immersed in figured worlds of bodies and dress, also drew upon particular aspects of bodies and dress in their lives as well.

Carly is perhaps one of the most settled participants in this study and her experience with fashion and shopping further illuminates both the practices of being comfortable shopping for clothes in Korea, and also the continuing challenges of this activity. Carly is a white, South African woman who joined this study in her mid-thirties and was a friend long before joining this study, and her figured world of “indie bands” is extensively discussed in Chapter 4, but is reexamined in this section through a focus on bodies, clothing, and shopping for clothes. Carly focused much of her energy and time on her life in Hongdae, the artistic neighborhood of Seoul near Hongik University, among the independent musicians or indie bands who played and socialized in that area of Seoul. Following a dinner and interview with Carly in Hongdae we walked around that neighborhood and she asked if I wanted to stop by a clothing store managed by a member of a popular indie band. We stopped by and then later the following day I wrote fieldnotes about that experience. I later shared those notes with Carly who added further details and clarified aspects of this experience. These notes provide insight into how Carly negotiates the routines of shopping for clothes and other items, how these practices are part of crafting a positional identity as a member of this indie band community within a figured world of indie bands, and some of the persistent challenges that continue to be part of these shopping practices. The following fieldnote is an account of an evening shopping with Carly in which she navigated the interconnected figured world of indie bands and the figured world of bodies and clothes.
After dinner we left the restaurant and had dessert at a nearby café started by a friend of Carly’s. After that she said she wanted to pick up a gift for a friend and show me a neat store that sells rock music related items. We wandered down various back alleys to The Rock Shop. We walked through the open air patio area in which numerous shirts, blouses, boots, shoes, stickers, and more were displayed. Underneath a graffiti-style sign the small shop which was maybe 10 feet by 10 feet contained a center row of shelves and racks of clothes and items along the four walls. As we entered the sole person in the place in the rear left corner stood up and greeted Carly, shouting her name, and starting a conversation. Carly introduced me, and we briefly introduced ourselves and I went looking about the store. Carly showed me several items such as a shower curtain with skulls and roses on it that she said she had bought and was used in the store as a divider for the changing section. She directed me to a small shelf with Rock and Roll baby items and we looked through several items. She repeatedly talked about how most items were imported from the US and were therefore very expensive but that she was addicted to buying them as they were cute and hard to find in Korea. She also said the owner/manager was also a well-known rockabilly musician in Hongdae. Off to the left side of the shop was a sliding glass door. Looking through the glass I could see music sheets, music stands, guitars, music related items, and eventually a small cat peering out, this was the guitar repair shop whose premises are shared by rock shop. The cat stared back and eventually came forward looking at a few small insects flying around inside the studio. The owner/manager said the cat was almost dead last winter when they took him in and Carly said they have several cats in the shop which they have saved from the street. Carly continued looking and found a small switch-blade looking object
that when flicked open produced a comb not a knife. She decided to purchase that as a gift for her musician friend. Carly spoke Korean with the owner/manager but he spoke English with me briefly explaining the rescue of the cat. She continued looking around at different shirts and items. She found a red choker-collar and tried it on in front of the mirror asking the owner/manager his opinion and commenting that it might be too “yahae” or “sexual” and might be too “young”. Carly continued looking through t-shirts and exclaiming a few times “S” meaning that they were small sizes and could not fit her. She said to me that whenever she found something she liked she would have to ask them to special order it for her from the US as they normally only stocked size small shirts and jackets. I looked at a corset item and asked her about it and she said it is too small for anyone human and Carly said she had noted in the past that even some of the Korean fangirls have complained about the sizes so he’s started getting in bigger ones. Carly decided to buy the choker, the gift for her friend, and a wallet, with Carly getting a special “Carly Discount” but with Carly noting she is under no illusions that she is the only VIP. We slowly left and looked at several more items as we were walking out with Carly again jokingly saying “S” to the owner/manager and asking why he only stocked small-sized items and him adding his own oft-repeated joke to her “you like it? We have your size!”

As detailed in this fieldnote, the act of shopping for clothes contributes to Carly’s larger sense of self as a member of the indie-band community in Hongdae. It further shows the comfort Carly felt engaging in the act of shopping for items such as a chocker and wallet, and the persistent challenges smaller sized clothes present her in Korea. Carly, after more than eight years of living in Korea and becoming familiar with the routines of her life involving shopping for clothes and
dressing appropriately for various activities, is comfortable shopping for a small gift in this particular shop, and even takes pleasure in the welcoming and flirtatious multilingual banter that takes place between her and the shop manager. However, the persistence of difficulties with sizes, challenges with negotiating what styles might be appropriate for a western, white woman in mid-thirties, and ambiguities over what might be perceived as too sexual for her desired appearance all persistently challenge Carly’s self-told story of who she is within this indie band figured world and her larger self-told story of being in Korea. Carly is permanently settled in Korea, and routinely navigates complex figured worlds of bodies and dress as well as figured worlds of indie bands, but she experiences challenges with some aspects of bodies and dress, highlighting how these challenges can persist for even the most settled of foreign English teachers in Korea.

Discussion and Implications of Living within a Figured World of Bodies, Clothes, and Shopping for Clothes

This section has examined how some foreign women living and teaching English in Korea come to craft new gendered selves through issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes as part of a more settled and established life as residents of Korea. These new gendered selves are the product of crafting and entering new figured worlds of bodies and dress, and developing the means to position oneself and others within these figured worlds. As this section has shown, these issues shape the experiences of living and teaching in Korea for some foreign women and so deserve greater discussion and examination.

Disruption in gendered selves was eventually followed by adaption and development within figured worlds of bodies and dress. Following Holland et al. (1998), I argue, in some cases, there is the codevelopment of ability and identification for some teachers in this figured world of bodies and dress, with some women teaching English in Korea developing greater identification
with these figured worlds while also developing greater capability of maneuvering and positioning within this figured world. As Stacy highlights, the material world of clothes and shopping for clothes can become a point of pleasurable recreation for some foreign English teachers and it is remiss of scholars to ignore the pleasurable aspects of foreign English teachers’ lives in Korea, especially when they contribute to some teachers overall comfort. It may be that researchers have elided issues of bodies and clothes, and the pleasure available through issues of bodies and clothes, as these topics can easily be regarded as trivial and less important, especially when discussions involve an applied field such as TESOL. Nevertheless, both the disruptions and recrafting of gendered selves through a figured world of bodies and clothes shaped some foreign English teachers in profound ways and is deserving of further scholarly interest.

Additionally Stacy, coming to Korea from South Africa, had a different perspective on the figured world of bodies and clothes than other participants. Different participants travelled to Korea with different personal histories, occupied different subject positions, and were physically different with bodies that differed in multiple ways, and these elements tremendously shaped these teachers’ engagement with the figured world of bodies and dress. The contribution of Stacy and others such as Morraine, who was able to wear adult-sized clothes in Korea unlike in the United States because of her smaller size, highlight the incredible diversity among foreign English teachers in Korea, and the diverse ways they engage with figured worlds of bodies and dress.

This section has highlighted the substantial difference that can exist between those new-to-Korea foreign English teachers who experience a disruption of gendered selves and those more settled teachers who are comfortable navigating figured worlds of bodies and dress. For some teachers such as Jerri-Lee their comfort and familiarity with this world may render some understandings less-noticed, such as her understanding that she inevitably needs the largest size available. However, for some new-to-Korea teachers a variety of experiences can make them very
aware of potentially hurtful self-understandings of bodies and dress. This study did not extensively examine interactions between new-to-Korea teachers and those teachers who had more experience living in Korea, but the substantive gap between the understandings of some teachers, with some not always aware of how immersed they are in figured worlds of bodies and dress in Korea, hint that there could be challenges in interacting and mentoring. Additionally, Nancy’s difficult experience speaking about gender in Korea with a foreign man who taught alongside her suggests that substantially different understandings of gender can powerfully shape personal relationships between teachers within educational institutions. Based on this section and Nancy’s experience, further research examining how new-to-Korea teachers work with foreign English teachers who have more experience living in Korea could be productive in understandings issues of mentoring, development, and personal relationships within educational institutions.

This section has examined foreign English teachers who, after a certain amount of time in Korea, have crafted and entered new figured worlds of bodies and dress. These teachers have become familiar with this figured world, developing intimate understandings of how to acquire desired products such as clothes, and have developed the capacity to position themselves and others within this figured world. These new foreign English teacher figured worlds of bodies and dress, improvised through the actions of different teachers, weave together discourses and artifacts from Korea, various home-countries, and beyond into something new. These figured worlds have discourses of foreign English teachers being bigger, discourses positioning the covering and not covering of different parts of men’s and women’s bodies as being seen as sexual to different groups, discourses of Korean fashion regarding items such as skirts which differ from other Korean figured worlds of bodies and dress, shared collective understandings regarding the availability and unavailability of certain products, and a wide variety of further artifacts, discourses, and practices. These figured worlds are shaped by and shape foreign English teachers
through a process of codevelopment (Holland et al., 1998, 270). Teachers initially improvise various reactions to encounters involving gender, bodies, and dress, as when Mandy initially arrived in Korea, but over time and through the collective development of shared understandings, assumptions, attitudes, and more these teachers develop both figured worlds and their capacity to act within these figured worlds.

This section has examined the development of shared figured worlds of bodies and dress, and the growing capacity of some teachers to navigate these figured worlds and acquire desired items and engage in pleasurable practices. However, alongside these developing practices is the reduction or ending of certain desires and interest in some types of clothes for some teachers, such as in Mandy’s “giving up” finding jeans and other types of clothes. Further, even for those shopping in intimately familiar places for clothes and items that are deeply connected to them, such as Carly, there can be aspects of discomfort and confusion alongside feelings of comfort and belonging. Many foreign women teaching English in Korea successfully immerse themselves within foreign English teachers’ figured worlds of dress, but even for these teachers who typically find these figured worlds comfortable and pleasurable, there often remain aspects that are awkward, challenging, and aspects of these figured worlds that suggest they do not fully fit in within the worlds of shopping and dress in Korea.

There are multiple foreign English teachers’ figured worlds of bodies and dress and the figured worlds of, for example, Mandy and Carly are different in encompassing different physical geographies, a limited number of different artifacts, and drawing on some limited different discourses. However, they share important similarities in terms of key physical locations such as international clothing retailers and larger discourses. The similar nature of these figured worlds creates opportunities for teacher trainers and those involved with foreign English teachers to use the knowledge of these figured worlds of bodies and dress, a topic further discussed in the Discussion Section of this chapter. However, before addressing how this knowledge discussed in
this chapter may productively serve foreign English teachers, issues of foreign men and their relationships with bodies and dress, excluded from much of this chapter, must be addressed.

**Bodies, Clothes, and Shopping for Clothes and the Men Participating in this Study**

This chapter has focused primarily on the women participating in this study as they contributed the vast majority of data about dress, shopping for clothing, and issues of the body. However, the men participating in this study did, to a limited degree, discuss issues of bodies and dress in interviews and this data, alongside limited participant observation and my own experiences as a foreign man teaching English in Korea, does allow for a limited analysis of bodies, dress, and foreign men teaching English in Korea. Therefore, this section examines, to a limited degree, the negotiations of gendered selves of foreign men teaching English in Korea through issues of bodies and dress.

Drawing upon my own experiences, and comparing my experiences interviewing women participating in this study to men participating in this study, I believe some foreign men teaching English in Korea did not experience a significant disruption to their gendered selves, but perhaps experienced a somewhat exaggerated or aggrandized masculine self when engaging with issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes, mirroring to some extent the findings of Stanley (2013) and Appleby (2013a). For some men, such as John who is discussed extensively in Chapter 4, the issue of being too big for Korean clothes, having others discuss his large size, and generally being seen as athletically large may have been a pleasurable aspect of having already existing masculine positional identities further reified within a figured world of bodies and dress that already positioned foreign men as bigger. In such circumstances some men participating in this study may have been less interested in discussing these issues, and the complicated but pleasurable emotions and sensations that come from a more aggrandized masculinity. Further,
discussions of how desired forms of masculinity can be further developed through living in a particular place may threaten a cherished ideal of masculinity as natural and organic. However, much of this argument is speculative, and further importance should be given to the limited data collected as part of this study.

David, an African-American participant in his mid-twenties who lived and taught in Seoul during his participation in this study and whose experiences with his public school employer are extensively discussed in Chapter 4, mentioned his clothing during a discussion of discrimination and racism in Korea. David discussed his experience of waiting for an elevator, seeing a Korean woman approach the elevator, and seeing her wait rather than get in the elevator with him alone.

I’m listening to something soft, like Radio Head going up [the elevator], and I could be like in my polo shirt, looking fine, nothing thuggish. That happened not all the time, but it happened a noticeable amount of times. She [the Korean woman waiting by the elevator] was walking the dog, adorable dog, [the] woman was waiting there and it was like [pause]. She saw me, and decided to go to the other elevator, and I’m like [I say to myself] “it’s here and I’m fine, it’s right here, I’m fine, like it’s an elevator ride, what am I going to do with you?” It’s incredible, and of all the things, crime never happens in my area.

In this excerpt David tells the story of a Korean woman with a dog who avoided taking the same elevator as him because of issues of racism and discrimination. Within this story he references his dress, a polo shirt, and the fact he was not wearing anything “thuggish”. While this excerpt was part of a larger discussion of racism in Korea, this brief reference to dress and clothing is also evidence that David navigates the figured world of dress in Korea drawing upon large-scale discourses of clothing style that circulate in the United States. Underlining David’s mention of a
polo shirt and thuggish clothes is the assumption that a polo shirt should naturally indicate a relatively safe and less-threatening person while thuggish clothes should, perhaps mistakenly, indicate someone, potentially, less safe. David has brought these fundamental assumptions regarding clothing and dress from America to Korea, and continued to navigate issues of dress and clothing based on his earlier understandings. To the limited extent this data allows, David can be understood to be immersed in a figured world of bodies and dress in Korea that is very similar to the figured world he navigated in America. Artifacts such as polo shirts and other clothes hold, at least to David, meanings that are unchanged from the figured world he was immersed in before arriving in Korea. Additionally, his experience with the Korean woman described in this story seems to have had little impact on this figured world and offers little disruption to his gendered selves related to bodies and clothes, and has contributed little to the formation of any new improvised understandings or nascent figured worlds related to bodies and dress.

David also discussed shopping for clothes as well and some of the challenges he experienced with finding clothing that fit and clothes that met his expectations in terms of style. In terms of sizes, David discussed the challenges of finding jeans that were stylish and yet not “skinny-jeans”, a style he wanted to avoid, and his confusion over Korean men’s fashion and gender.

I’ve literally seen guys wear shirts here that girls would wear in America. Like no guy would wear that, like, um, there was a guy who wore a Superman shirt with the logo, with the blue in the middle, but the red the red was in, like, sequins.

This excerpt highlights David’s view of Korean men’s fashion as inappropriate for him because it does not follow the gendered rules of fashion he is accustomed to and attempts to follow. David in discussing his sense of fashion said, “I’m a not a flashy guy at all”, in terms of fashion and style, and he described having some difficulty finding clothes that met his expectations in terms
of style. Overall, David discussed not buying much clothing in Korea because of issues with
overall style, issues of gender with Korean men’s fashion, and issues of how Korean clothes
physically fit.

David discussed bodies, clothing, and shopping for clothing in his second interview, but
it is still difficult to deeply examine his negotiation of gendered selves through this data alone. I
argue, David, overall, drew upon discourses of masculine fashion in order to negotiate his
gendered selves in Korea, and that his sense of his own body and masculinity was relatively less-
changed by his experiences with bodies, clothes and shopping for clothes. David does not seem to
have experienced the disruption of selves some women participating in this study experienced;
his gendered selves seem to draw upon the discourses of western clothes and masculinity in a
relatively unchanged fashion. David is aware of fashion and style in Korea, and is at times
perplexed and perhaps annoyed by some of the clothes worn in Korea and available to purchase,
but these challenges seem to have only shaped his narrative of who he is in Korea to a very
limited extent. The figured world of bodies and dress David navigates in Korea is relatively
unchanged from the figured world he was immersed in while living in America. Experiences
involving bodies and clothes, including his experience with a Korean woman and her dog in front
of an elevator, and general experiences shopping for clothes, has left his gendered selves
relatively undisrupted. However, this must be only a tentative conclusion. In some ways more
subtle transformations of masculine selves may have taken place, but the limited data collected in
this study hinders any further exploration. Additionally, the lack of data from other men
participating in this study further narrows the possibility of this discussion.

Only a limited number of other men participating in this study did discuss bodies,
clothes, and shopping for clothes. William, a white, Irish teacher who was in his late twenties
when he joined this study and taught English in Seoul discussed not being “a big guy” so having
less difficulty shopping for clothes, again referencing the discourse that foreign English teachers
are “bigger”. However, he, like most men participating in this study, did not further discuss bodies, clothes, or shopping for clothes.

Ultimately, this study can show how some men teaching English as a foreign language did not speak at length about issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes. The men participating in this study did not discuss feelings of frustration or transformation relating to these issues, but this does not mean such issues did not occur among participants in this study or among other foreign men teaching English in Korea beyond this study. For some men, as discussed in Chapter Four’s examination of John’s experiences, bodies and fashion did shape some workplace experiences and understandings, aggrandizing masculinity and contributing to particular teacher selves, but within the scope of this chapter’s focus on larger issues of gendered selves only tentative conclusions can be drawn. David’s experiences highlight how some foreign men teaching English in Korea draw upon North American or Western practices and discourses of fashion and masculinity as well as personal style in negotiating issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes while William’s experiences shows how discourses of foreign teachers are “bigger” shape some foreign men as well. This section can mostly serve as a call for further research that can more deeply explore the rich intersection of foreign men teaching English in Korea and issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes. Ideally, future studies examining foreign English teachers’ negotiations of gendered selves should recruit new-to-Korea foreign English teaching men in order to follow these men as they negotiate issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes. These future studies should provide greater insight into how foreign men teaching English in Korea engage with these issues.
Discussion and Conclusion Examining Bodies and Dress

This chapter has examined issues of bodies and dress, discussing topics not commonly within the scope of language teacher development or teacher training. Regardless, the insights from this chapter should be considered by researchers concerned with these areas, practitioners involved with teacher development, and teachers themselves. These issues, while somewhat removed from classroom practices, are important to the career paths of teachers and their overall development, broadly conceived.

The figured worlds of bodies and dress in Korea can reshape the selves of foreign English teachers in important ways, and this can impact these teachers’ engagement with educational institutions. As highlighted by Nancy and Mary, disruptions of gendered selves occur with students both inside the classroom and through encounters beyond educational institutions, and these disruptions shape teachers’ engagement with teaching and places of learning. Likewise, encounters with colleagues within educational institutions have the capacity to disrupt gendered selves or developing understandings of oneself in a new place. Even when experiences that disrupt gendered selves occur exclusively outside of educational institutions the subsequent feelings, sensations, and discomfort can still impact how teachers feel about themselves and their students, and these complex feelings can shape classroom practices. This study has shown how feelings and understandings of oneself as bigger and understandings of how one’s own body can be seen as more or less sexual can shape how teachers engage in teaching practices and view their students. Programs involved in teacher development and movement to new places, such as those focused on foreign English teachers in Korea, may want to attempt to craft programs based upon these understandings and perhaps explore ways of discussing these issues with teachers. How these programs can engage with the findings of this study may be an area of worthwhile further research.
This chapter has discussed a disruption in selves that comes from moving to Korea, and trying to purchase clothing in Korea. This experience is not unique to Korea and many teachers leave industrialized countries, and travel elsewhere in the world to places where they cannot purchase clothes, and many products are unavailable. However, the situation in Korea exacerbates the disruptive potential in several ways. Korea is an industrialized nation with a massive retail sector and is a center, to some degree, of fashion and clothing. For foreign English teachers in Korea there is contradiction between a societal focus on fashion and clothing, and their opportunities to engage with fashion and clothes. The paradox of seeing fashion heavily marketed, being able to visit large numbers of clothing stores, and general sense that fashion is important in Korea, and some teachers’ experience of not being able to engage with this world of fashion is one element that may have created more of a challenge to some foreign English teachers’ gendered selves. Teachers more generally moving from one place to another may experience more or less feelings of disruption depending on these new places’ engagement with fashion and dress. Further studies, examining these issues with other teachers travelling to other places may be able to better examine issues of place, clothing, and disruptions of gendered selves.

Like with clothing in Korea, the apparent contradictions regarding sexualized perceptions of women’s bodies in Korea may contribute further to some foreign English teachers’ disruptions of gendered selves. To many foreign English teachers, Korean can appear as a somewhat sexualized place, with media featuring sexualized representations of men and women being commonplace, motels available for romantic meetings, and other elements contributing to some teachers’ understanding of Korea. Further, some foreign English teachers repeatedly commented on the dress of Korean women being somewhat sexual, from their perspective. These elements may then contradict these teachers’ understandings that in Korea displays of women’s shoulders and upper chest are too sexual. For some women teaching English in Korea, the apparent contradiction between calls to manage and police displays of their bodies and a general sense that
Korea is, to some degree, a sexualized place may add a further element that disrupts previously longstanding gendered selves. I argue that these apparent contradictions that exist in Korea for some foreign English teachers may be a powerful disruptive element that disorders some teachers’ understandings of conservative and more liberal rules of dress, and renders these teachers unsure of how to manage formerly naturalized understandings of dress and others’ expectations of dress. Further research may explore foreign English teachers who travel to places with explicit and expected codes of conservative dress to compare how foreign English teachers negotiate gendered selves through issues of clothes, bodies, and shopping for clothes in those places.

This chapter has examined issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes and in doing so discussed issues of appearance and size, as well as style and fashion, but has left several key issues unaddressed. This chapter examined David’s experiences with bodies, clothing, and shopping for clothes alongside his understanding of how, potentially, Black masculinity shaped an encounter between him and a Korean woman at an elevator and further discussed the experiences of John, Mary, and Morraine, all people of Color. Morraine in particular discussed some experiences regarding being a woman of Color in Korea and her negotiations of ethnic and racial selves and relational identities in Korea. However, other participants such as John and Mary only briefly discussed their experiences and understandings that may relate to being people of Color living and teaching in Korea. Ultimately, I believe this study cannot adequately examine how issues or race and ethnicity shape issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes in Korea but that this area of research should be further developed and more research is needed to begin this conversation.

This chapter has examined how foreign English teachers negotiate gendered selves through issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes. Importantly, this chapter has shown how arriving in Korea and beginning to live and teach in Korea can disrupt previous notions of gendered selves in sometimes uncomfortable ways, and how those gendered selves are
renegotiated, developing into new practices, new figured worlds of bodies and dress, and new understandings of gendered selves. Further, this chapter has shown how some foreign English teachers take pleasure in practices and understandings related to bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes and how these practices can be part of alternative stories teachers tell themselves and others about living in Korea. Finally this section has addressed its failure to properly examine the interaction of foreign men who teach English in Korea and issues of bodies, clothes, and shopping for clothes, and begun an initial discussion of how some men negotiate gendered selves through bodies and dress. Ultimately, this chapter is, hopefully, the opening gambit of a fruitful discussion of those who travel to new places to teach and issues of bodies and dress.
Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusion

Throughout this study, several critical issues emerged that deserve further discussion and examination, with the goal of contributing to larger discussions beyond this study. Additionally, this study has focused on certain topics to the neglect of others, and this chapter is an opportunity to examine and reevaluate some topics and research paths that were not pursued in this study.

This chapter begins by examining professionalism both in this study and within TESOL scholarship more generally, as professionalism was a major theme within several areas of this study. This is followed by a discussion of the figured worlds of Korean managers, recruiters and co-teachers who work alongside of foreign English teachers. Following this discussion of certain Korean figured worlds, this chapter examines theoretical orientations and methodologies in language teacher identity studies, including a call for language teacher identity research within TESOL that is productive for teachers. Next, this chapter discusses how this study can contribute to teacher training and my limited plans to work with foreign English teachers based on this study. This chapter then discusses the choice to recruit a diverse group of foreign English teachers for this study, and the issues that emerged and were ignored because of the diversity among those who participated in this study, with this section discussing future research which may further the unexplored threads touched upon by this study. Lastly, this chapter concludes this study by reviewing the findings of this study’s regarding foreign English teacher selves, and how some foreign English teachers negotiate the figured world of bodies and dress.
Professionalism in TESOL

A major analytical thread that emerged, initially unlooked for, in this study is the concept of professionalism. Discussed as a possible teacher self for some foreign English teachers in Korea, professionalism emerged elsewhere as a mediating element that shaped teachers’ classroom practices, relationships with colleagues, and TESOL careers. This prompted a more thorough examination of how professionalism as a discourse shaped scholarly discussions of English language teacher development. Professionalism even emerged as a major topic of discussion with other scholars as I presented different elements of this study at various conferences (Chesnut, 2011; 2015). This section examines professionalism as it emerged in this study, the role discourses of professionalism play in participants’ negotiations of selves, and how this study can contribute to existing TESOL scholarship on professionalism.

Scholars in education have shown that *professionalism* is a highly contested and mutable term (L. Evans, 2008, p. 315), with various teachers, government bodies, and others using *professionalism* and related terms to position themselves and others in conflicting ways (L. Evans, 2011; Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting, & Whitty, 2000; Hall & Schulz, 2003; Hargreaves D. H., 1994; Locke, 2004; Sachs, 2001; Whitty, 2000; Yeom & Ginsburg, 2007). A limited number of scholars have discussed how teachers understand and discuss professionalism (Hargreaves A., 2000, p. 152; Helsby, 1995), generally finding that teachers often discuss professionalism in two distinct ways. Put simply, teachers may discuss “*being professional*, in terms of the quality of what they do; and of the conduct, demeanour and standards which guide it,” (Hargreaves A., 2000, p. 152) and “teachers will also talk about being *a professional*.” This normally has to do with how teachers feel they are seen through other people’s eyes—in terms of their status, standing, regard and levels of professional reward,” (Hargreaves A., 2000, p. 152). Exemplifying these
different meanings, Carly, the South African women passionately interested Korea indie bands, believes in being professional in the sense that she wants to work well, have a mature attitude towards management, and conduct herself in a way she finds respectable, but she has little concern with status or standing of teaching. Other participants such as David, at points, regarded themselves as a professional, focusing on the multiple issues of status, standing, authority, and reward that is related to being a member of a profession. This section primarily focuses on the second meaning of professional, drawing upon this understanding as a means of examining and discussing discourses regarding status, standing, authority, and reward. This examination of being a professional, involves definitions of a profession, teachers understandings of themselves that draw upon notions of being a professional, and how these understandings can shape teacher development and teacher practices in sometimes counter-intuitive ways, following in the path of other studies that focus on teachers’ negotiations of identities through understandings of professionalism (Edmonda & Hayler, 2013; Helsby, 1995; Popa & Acedo, 2006; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014).

Given some teachers discussion of professionalism as relating to being a member of a profession, this section requires a definition of a profession to focus on particular aspects of work and status. Drawing upon scholarship concerned with defining teacher professionalism (Connell, 2009; Downie, 1990; Hargreaves A., 2000; Hilferty, 2008; Hoyle, 1982; Whitty, 2000), this study defines a professional as a person with an occupation having a recognized and highly regarded body of knowledge and skills, autonomy in acceptable work related practices, and an altruistic or special relationship with clients and those the profession serves. While other definitions of a profession included institutional representation and control over entry into the profession, these cases do not apply to foreign English teachers in Korea given the lack of institutional representation for these teachers, and government control over who is granted a language teaching visa in Korea. Further, this is a somewhat classical definition of a profession
(Locke, 2004, p. 113), that is being challenged and perhaps superseded by government efforts to professionalize teachers (L. Evans, 2011; Hall & Schulz, 2003; Hargreaves D. H., 1994; Locke, 2004; Sachs, 2001; Whitty, 2000; Yeom & Ginsburg, 2007) and scholars efforts to conceptualize a post-modern professionalism better suited to teachers immersed in current contexts (Hall & Schulz, 2003). Nevertheless, this limited definition of a profession is a useful means of beginning to examine teacher selves and professionalism in this context as foreign English teachers often pursue diverse paths to teaching, and therefore a wider and more fundamental definition of professionalism better serves this study.

Professionalism, as an element that shaped teacher selves, may have contributed to the challenges some foreign English teachers experience in their educational institutions. David drew upon elements of thinking himself a professional as he narrated a figured world in which he had autonomy over his classes, some pedagogical knowledge and skill, saw himself as having a certain degree of respected status, and a special duty and responsibility to his students; fulfilling some of the common definitions of a profession. As discussed in Chapter 4, when other teachers attempted to discuss his classes and, in his view, encroached on his autonomy as a teacher, his figurative identity as a professional teacher created a tendency to resist this perceived interference and maintain this understanding of himself as a teacher. Additional attempts to position David as anything other than a professional teacher in which he had large degrees of autonomy and authority over his classes, through discussion of his subordinate status relative to Korean co-teachers, were resisted partially because of David’s understanding of himself as a professional teacher. However, the data collected in this study limits the scope of this discussion, and so the challenges present in David’s school are beyond the scope of this current study, but this study can speak to the capacity of narratives of professionalism to mediate action. For some teachers, a self-told story of being a professional teacher, within a figured world of teaching, can mediate and support a teachers’ resistance to unjust practices within an educational institution, valuably
contributing to change within that institution. However, this same self-told story of being a professional teacher may provoke feelings of deep frustration among some teachers in perceived unprofessional contexts in which they are unable to effect change. Further, and potentially more damaging, a self-told story of professionalism may bind teachers to paths of resistance and conflict with colleagues and management who infringe on elements of professionalism such as autonomy or teacher knowledge, when, in some contexts, compromise and negotiation could better serve both institutions and teachers.

It may be that for some foreign English teachers in Korea professional teacher selves create tendencies or shape practices that are unproductive in a number of ways. Understanding oneself to have autonomy over classes, knowledge about English and English pedagogy, and a wider degree of respect in a larger community may be incorporated into figured identities shaping larger stories of who foreign English teachers are in Korea. However, these understandings may create large conflicts with colleagues who operate with different assumptions, understand foreign English teachers’ roles in different ways, and who view themselves, and not foreign English teachers, as having control and authority over educational intuitions, for example. It is easy to imagine conflicts erupting over issues of pedagogy and autonomy if elements of professionalism are incorporated into the larger figured worlds of some foreign English teachers while the figured worlds of those managing related educational institutions understand foreign English teachers to have entirely different roles. If these different understandings are bound to figured worlds and positional identities, attempts at negotiation and compromise may be fraught with difficulty.

Other participants add to this examination of professionalism as their experiences highlight the productive changes possible as foreign English teachers move away from teacher selves rooted in notions of professionalism and being a professional. For both Jerri-Lee and myself, finding a notion of identity somewhat removed from being a professional teacher lessened some of the emotional burdens that came with teaching, allowing for a more relaxed
engagement with classroom practices, and creating further opportunities to work closely with coworkers. As Jerri-Lee prepared to end her English language teaching career and leave Korea she felt, in sometimes conflicted ways, more relaxed in Korea, and more at ease in her classroom and educational institution, at times. Her focus elsewhere, and seeing herself less as a professional English teacher and more as a creative artist and world traveller may have allowed her to more productively engage in some teaching activities. Likewise, being able to think of myself as a researcher and not as a teacher allowed me to more productively diminish the frustration I felt that arose because of certain problems in my educational institution.

Similarly, Jess and Trent, the two participants who most clearly adopted teacher selves that often avoided notions of professionalism, were not adversely impacted by understanding themselves as teaching in Korea in order to spend a year abroad. In some ways and at some times, their understanding of themselves as temporary teachers may have helped them negotiate and compromise with their employer as their compromises and changes could be understood as part of their experience of being abroad for a year, rather than a threat to their professional teacher selves.

Counter-intuitively, this research suggests that, for some teachers, a more professional teacher identity may result in a more difficult teaching experience while an identity only tangentially related to teaching may allow for a more productive negotiation of institutional policies and classroom practices. Drawing upon Holland et al.’s (1998) understandings of mediation, narratives that incorporate discourses of professionalism can mediate teaching practices, sometimes in productive ways as when artifacts related to professionalism support teachers who resist unjust practices in educational institutions. However, this study has also shown that narratives of professionalism can mediate action in potential damaging ways, creating tendencies towards conflict, greater emotional challenges, and limiting opportunities for negotiation and change. Additionally, an understanding that one is not a professional can mediate
action and emotion as well, allowing for some teachers to work successfully in educational institutions that engage practices that could be seen as less professional. These findings are a nuanced understanding of how discourses of professionalism can mediate practices in educational institutions, career development, and the emotions of foreign English teachers in sometimes counter-intuitive ways, and are an important contribution given the often uncritical way professionalism is discussed in TESOL.

Discussions of professionalism in TESOL are complicated by the diversity that exists among English language teachers which includes teachers focused on the private sector, certified English language teachers working in compulsory education (often K-12), and those who live and work in other countries as foreign English teachers. This diversity complicates discussions of English language teacher professionalism as these different contexts may have radically different teachers, managerial regimes, and demands for examples of professionalism (Maley, 1992). Nevertheless, TESOL scholars have discussed concerns over the professional status of English language teachers (Johnston, 1997; MacPherson, Kouritzin, & Kim, 2005; Pennington, 1990; Pennington, 1992; Wang & Lin, 2013), appropriate definitions of TESOL professionalism (Farmer, 2006; Walker, 2011; 2014; Thornbury, 2001), and proper relationships between TESOL teacher education programs and professionalism (Liyanage, Walker, & Singh, 2015).

Several scholars have expressed concern with the professional status of English language teachers (MacPherson, Kouritzin, & Kim, 2005; Pennington, 1990; 1992; Wang & Lin, 2013), with some advocating strategies for positioning English language teachers as professionals (Pennington, 1992) and others examining possible threats to teacher professionalism (Wang & Lin, 2013). Pennington strongly voiced concern over the professional status of English language teachers (1990; 1992) writing “the ELT field suffers, to put it bluntly, from not being professional enough” (1992, p. 12) naming this as a cause of low status and low pay for English language
teachers, and advocating for a professionalization agenda through “qualification, career structure, accountability and power base,” (1992, p. 15). Pennington (1990) further advocated further restricting access to English language teaching, one of the classical attributes of a profession.

I submit that TESOL has a very long way to go towards being recognized as a viable field rather than as an auxiliary service or stop-gap form of employment. TESOL is still very much plagued by the problem of untrained or minimally trained nonprofessionals billing themselves as “ESL teachers”: there are still college students going overseas and “teaching ESL” to help support themselves; still community volunteers offering “ESL instruction” for free. On the other side, there are still many people with PhDs and even MBAs billing themselves as “ESL program directors” who know little if anything about TESOL or about directing programs. As long as we are willing to accept large numbers of such unqualified people in the field, we will continue to have problems being respected and rewarded for the specialized information we possess. (p. 565)

Pennington argues for an explicit agenda on behalf of presumably professional English language teachers, but it appears there has been little development along her advocated trajectory given the continued recruitment of teachers Pennington decries (Ruecker & Ives, 2014). Importantly, others echo her views with MacPherson, Kouritzin, and Kim worrying that without further professionalization “TESL will remain burdened by a (sic) ambiguous professional status”, (2005, p. 1). Wang and Lin also argue “another common understanding of teacher professionalism is to acknowledge the importance of it”, (2013, p. 6) highlighting how some view teacher professionalism as a naturally important aspect of good teacher development. Additionally, some scholarly research can also reflect more teacher led desires regarding professionalism, such as Sakanoue’s (2013) self-examination of teacher development titled, I am NOT just an English
teacher: I am a professional educator, which acknowledges the classical definitions of professionalism while examining the author’s own journey towards being a reflective professional who blends teacher development and mentorship. However, Sakanoue does not fully explain the critical difference between an English teacher and a professional educator, reflecting the widely held belief that both teacher professionalism and being a professional teacher are intrinsically positive.

The findings of this study of foreign English teachers in Korea suggest, at a minimum, more scholars should critically examine how understanding oneself as a professional and discourses of professionalism shape teachers’ engagement with classroom practices and educational institutions. It may be that the many efforts to further professionalize TESOL may contribute to some teachers in some contexts experiencing more challenges and more difficulties, counter to scholars and teacher trainers’ expectations. Those pushing for a more professional English language teaching community and for the professionalization of the English language teaching field should be cautious of the possible consequences of certain teachers coming to view themselves as professional teachers. There is a definite need for a more nuanced and cautious discussion regarding the professionalization of English language teaching, centered on issues of identity and the relationships between identity, classroom practices, and careers.

More critical views of teacher professionalism in TESOL have been expressed as well, with Phillipson (1992) arguing discourses of professionalism marginalize teachers and teacher education based outside of United Kingdom and the United States, and Pennycook (1990) critiquing teacher professionalism as masking injustices arising from issues of gender, class, race

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24 Pennycook is responding to a discussion of teacher evaluation by Pennington and Young (Pennington & Young, 1989). Pennington and Young’s initial discussion of teacher evaluation (Pennington & Young, 1989), Pennycook’s comment on that article (1990), and Pennington’s response (1990) are examples of multiple perspectives on English language teacher evaluation, professionalism, and their relationship.
and societal inequalities. The critiques made by Phillipson and Pennycook have been taken up, echoed, and reinterpreted by others (Canagarajah, 2012; Kubota, 2011), enriching the limited discussion of professionalism in TESOL. However, these critiques of professionalism in TESOL do not reflect the problematic issues with professionalism that emerged from this study. These critiques, while important, do not address the how understanding oneself as a professional can potentially shape actions in problematic ways. Therefore, this study adds to the existing limited critical scholarship on teacher professionalism, contributing to more nuanced and critical discussions of English language teacher professionalism. Most importantly, these existent critiques of professionalism seem to have had little effect as both the term professional and discourses of professionalism as naturally good remains almost ubiquitous within TESOL scholarship (see Appleby (2013), Canagarajah (2016) and Cohen (2010) for examples).

Also concerned with English language teacher professionalism, Wang and Lin (2013) argue government led English native-speaker teacher recruitment programs in East Asia, which emphasize native-speaker status and recruit “unqualified and inexperienced native speakers” (p. 11), damage local teachers’ professionalism by positioning these foreign English teachers as authorities on English. They argue these government policies “have not achieved the intended consequence of improving students’ English proficiency, but have instead caused the unintended consequences of damaging the quality of English instruction and jeopardising the professional identity of local NNESTs in these countries,” (Wang & Lin, 2013, p. 11). While their argument is obviously relevant to participants in this study, examining their conclusion is beyond the scope of this study. However, Wang and Lin show that dynamic relationships are possible between various government policies, subject positions such as native-speaker, teacher identities, and teacher professionalism. Therefore, the negotiations of identities discussed in this study may impact other foreign English teachers, Korean teachers of English, students, and others, highlighting the importance of examining identity and professionalism. The work of Wang and Lin (2013)
highlights the need to further explore identity and professionalism, and also the relationships between professionalism and all those who work in educational institutions, their different selves, and the relationships between all these elements.

Liyanage, Walker, and Singh argue that “TESOL outside compulsory school education is largely marked by an absence of professional standards and industry regulation,” (p. 488) and, given the diverse contexts English language teachers work in outside of compulsory school education “any force for the development of professional standards within the emerging international TESOL community has come from practitioners rather than from external employing authorities,” (p. 489). This highlights the value in examining foreign English teachers’ crafting of teacher identities in terms of common notions of professionalism, as these understandings may shape development of larger collective understandings of professionalism within the emerging international TESOL community. Future research may productively examine how understandings of teacher professionalism are emerging among different groups of English language teachers, with this study contributing more micro-level understandings of teachers’ negotiations of teacher selves and professionalism.

Ideas of professionalism also emerge in language teacher identity studies, although no language teacher identity reviewed as part of this study critically engaged with ideas of professionalism. Nevertheless, the concept of professionalism is vital to Appleby’s (2013a) examination of masculinity among white, straight Australian men teaching English in eikaiwa or English language conversation schools in Japan. In these schools, the students comprise adults, and very often women, shaping a particular gendered, desiring, and semi-romantic context of teaching. Appleby conducted in-person and Skype interviews with Australian men who were or had been teaching in eikaiwa and analyzed these interviews through Foucaultian discourse analysis. Appleby argued these men left teaching in these contexts because of their inability to achieve a masculine professional identity.
In the accounts of these men, excessive embodiment eventually became a burden and then an impediment to the attainment of a masculine professional identity. Ironically, in the long run, it was the value placed on the White masculine body, at the expense of pedagogical qualifications and expertise, that constrained the professional aspirations of the male teachers. (Appleby, 2013a, p. 144)

Appleby’s study relies upon an understanding of masculine professional identity that posits professional identity as the product of intellectual, achieved labor and not as a product of one’s body. She argues the value placed on the white masculine body greatly constrains the development of “an acceptable masculine professional identity” (p. 122) among white foreign men teaching in the context she examined, linking masculinity and professionalism. However, Appleby’s findings are mirrored in this study by Tracy who, as detailed in Chapter 4, discussed great frustration over being valued as a teacher because of her appearance as a pretty white, thin, blonde woman. Tracy also discussed how whiteness shaped her experiences with teaching, telling of an experience in which her picture was used in promotional media, but a Persian friend’s image was not needed for such material. Tracy desired to be valued for the quality of her teaching, and other achieved acts, but was reminded through discussions with managers, other forms of talk, and experiences that demonstrated the value of whiteness that she was often valued for her appearance, not the qualities she developed that contributed to her work. This conflict between Tracy’s desire to be recognized as a professional, according to Appleby’s implied definition and to some degree the definition used in this chapter, and her understanding that she was valued for her appearance and whiteness mirrors some of Appleby’s findings (2013a). Like the men participating in Appleby’s study, Tracy turns away from teaching English partially because of the challenge or, perhaps impossibility, of achieving a professional self; however, Appleby identifies this professional self, within the context she examines, as “an acceptable masculine professional
identity” (p.122). Importantly, Appleby successfully identifies how a gendered desire for white male bodies by Japanese women, often students in her context, can be a threat to some white, Australian men’s notions of masculinity or “to be seen as an object of the Occidentalist gaze, a decorative accessory, or a victim of aggressive and indiscriminate sexual conquest, was damaging to one’s identity as properly masculine” (p. 138). Appleby further identifies how desire for white male bodies by Japanese women can be a threat to notions of professionalism. However, in combining these concepts in a discussion of “an acceptable masculine professional identity” (p. 122) Appleby may be conflating ideas that deserve to be further examined in more nuanced ways, and eliding English teachers such as Tracy, who in limited but important ways mirror the teachers discussed by Appleby. Tracy also taught Korean businessmen, as discussed in Chapter 4, and in these classes these students discussed experiences related to sex and prostitution. This experience may have been a threat to a form of desired acceptable feminine identity, as this talk would be seen as something that should not be said in front of respected women who are colleagues, friends, or family members. Simultaneously, this experience may have been a threat to a desired professional identity as this talk would be seen as unrelated to work and the goals of this class, and seen as something that should not be said to a respected professional. However, examining Tracy’s experiences as conflicts with an acceptable feminine professional identity, borrowing and changing Appleby’s terms, risks conflating multiple issues and losing an understanding of how these issues both intersect and divide. Appleby’s study focused on white, straight Australian men, and the focus on these participants as a category may have led to an emphasis on “an acceptable masculine professional identity” (p.122), beyond what was warranted in the data, and an eliding of issues related more to professionalism and whiteness. Issues of methodologies in language teacher identity studies, including Appleby’s study (2013a) and others, are further discussed later in this chapter. Critically for this section, Appleby’s (2013a) study illuminates the experiences of Tracy, but researchers examining language teacher identity, gender, and professionalism must
ensure they critically examine the concepts of identity, gender, and especially professionalism, given that professionalism may be under-examined in some language teacher identity studies. Kobayashi (2014) has called for greater research into the marginalization of women in English language teaching in East Asia and the conflict between some women’s desires for professional teacher selves and the desire of others such as managers for attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies may be an important element in illuminating this issue. This study does not examine the context of Appleby’s study, but Tracy’s experience highlights that a focus on teachers’ bodies as elements that qualify them to be English language teachers can limit and constrain foreign women teaching English as a foreign language in Korea. Appleby’s study of straight, white, Australian native-speaker men gives greater emphasis on the role of the male body rather than straight, white, native speaker body; an emphasis that deserves greater examination and scrutiny in light of Tracy’s negotiation of teacher selves.

The limited scholarship examining TESOL professionalism has primarily focused on those teachers whose teacher selves exist within the rather limited understandings of teacher professionalism defined by autonomy, teacher knowledge, and special relationships with students, with alternative understandings of professionalism less explored. However, the work of Farmer (2006) and Walker (2011; 2014) examines an alternative notion of teacher professionalism focused on teaching in the private sector and on issues of client-satisfaction and accountability that mirrors in many ways John’s prestigious teacher selves, discussed in Chapter 4. This study then adds to that literature through the examination of a teacher who crafts a figured world and positional identity which draws upon understandings of client-satisfaction, accountability, and related elements in a manner similar to that discussed by Farmer and Walker. Further research examining teachers who craft similar professional teacher selves may add much to the work of Farmer and Walker’s thread of research, and perhaps contribute towards how this understanding of teacher professionalism can shape teacher development.
While there is some literature discussing alternative professionalisms, there is very limited research on those English language teachers who do not think about themselves as being professional teachers and are explicit about teaching in order to travel abroad and accomplish other activities. While a limited number of studies may briefly examine some teachers who are in some ways conceptualized as non-professionals (Stanley, 2013), there are few studies that explicitly focus on foreign English teachers who teach English only for a limited amount of time as non-professional and non-career teachers, and how they understand themselves as teachers. This is especially troubling as many studies assume these teachers are both ineffective teachers and damaging to TESOL teacher’s status as professionals (Pennington, 1990; 1992; Wang & Lin, 2013). Given these claims, this study is a necessary addition, showcasing how some of these teachers craft non-professional teacher selves while also drawing upon larger discourses of teaching during their limited time teaching English. Further research, perhaps examining these teachers’ classroom practices and contributions to their educational institutions, would be a valuable addition, allowing for a more informed scholarly discussion that, at the present time, assumes much, perhaps unjustly, about these teachers.

The belief in the value of professional training and the need to professionalize TESOL is quite strong among some scholars interested in teacher training and teacher identity and my own experiences reflect encounters with this belief. During the question period following a presentation I did regarding this study (Chesnut, 2011), one audience member argued that the challenges experienced by participants in this study, focusing in that presentation on negotiating foreign femininities in figured worlds, was caused simply by a lack of professional inter-cultural training. According to this audience member, the challenges and difficulties of negotiating identity were simply an effect of these teachers lack of training and overall professionalism. This audience member also discussed how the overall goal of teacher training research and development was the professionalization of TESOL. While one audience member cannot
represent TESOL as a whole, it is reasonable to assume many scholars believe that professionalization is the natural goal of various teacher organizations and that a lack of professionalism among teachers is a serious problem. Based upon data examined in this paper I believe English language teaching researchers need to further examine discourses of professionalism, as myriad as they may be, and attempt to better understand how they can productively and problematically shape identities and actions in educational institutions.

At a minimum, this study has shown that viewing oneself as a professional teacher, in all the ways one can understand the term *professional*, can dramatically shape aspects of working as a foreign English teacher in ways that are not necessarily productive or desired. Teachers who understand themselves as professionals may be more capable of taking certain actions as the story of being a professional teacher has the potential to shape and mediate actions in significant ways. David was more than willing to oppose his entire school, supported by a narrative of being a professional autonomous teacher and its associated elements, but there may be alternatives to being a professional teacher that have been relatively unexamined by scholars. Jess’s narrative of hitting a pause-button on her life and teaching in Korea is one such alternative, but there is no reason that other alternative identities cannot be constructed. The Teach and Learn in Korea program or TaLK program (TaLK, n.d.) describes itself as a program about learning as well as teaching, and alternative understandings of those who teach English as both teachers and learners may create figured worlds and positional identities that are far more open to negotiation and collaboration than some who develop a notion of themselves as professional teachers. There may be valuable alternative stories of being something other than a teacher for those who choose to travel to Korea and teach English. These alternative stories of being a learner, assistant, scholar, or something else may create new opportunities for classroom practices, negotiation, flexibility, and productive relationships within educational institutions.
TESOL as a field has not fully considered the potentially damaging effects of promoting professionalization as a goal, and the global community of TESOL scholars should further discuss the interconnections between identity and professionalization before further promoting professionalization as the goal of organizations such as TESOL and other regional English language teacher organizations. While many organizations may wish to further develop the capabilities of English language teachers in a variety of ways that benefits learners, at a minimum greater caution should be exercised before teacher organizations, teacher trainers, scholars of education embrace the idea that teachers must be professionals and professionalism should always shape English language teaching.

The Figured Worlds of Korean Recruiters, Co-Teachers, and Managers

This study has examined various figured worlds of foreign English teachers in Korea, but a critical aspect of these teachers’ lives are the intersecting or colliding figured worlds of those Korean teachers and managers who work with foreign English teachers in Korea. Many foreign English teachers have experiences and develop understandings whose origins lie in the figured worlds of those Korean businesspeople who recruit foreign English teachers, those Korean co-teachers who teach alongside foreign English teachers, and those Korean authorities who manage foreign English teachers. This section engages in some limited speculation regarding these Korean figured worlds based on my incidental interactions with Korean colleagues and friends as well as relevant scholarship examining related contexts (Kubota, 2011; Ruecker & Ives, 2014).

Some foreign English teachers such as Tracy, Jess, and Trent come to understand they are valued primarily as attractive, native speaker, English teaching bodies. This understanding challenges teachers such as Tracy who want to understand themselves as professionals, and can also create tension and be the genesis of a variety of complex emotions for others. The origin of
the experiences of Tracy, Jess, Trent, and others, to a large degree, lies in the figured world of English language teaching of those hiring and managing foreign English teachers in Korea. The figured world of those managers who hire foreign English teachers in Korea is, I believe, populated by characters and storylines, one of which is the character of the idealized, native-speaker, foreign English teacher. In this story, native speaker teachers come to various educational institutions with an intuitive understanding of English, and interact with students in a way that facilitates communication and through that communication, English language learning. In this figured world, foreign English teachers are succeeding in their work if they are pleasant enough that students continue interacting in English in class or become even more interested in English conversation or related activities. This figured world draws heavily upon globally circulating discourses that position certain idealized native speakers as appropriate language teachers in classes focused on conversation. Critically, the figured world of English language teaching managers, recruiters, and co-teachers with its character of the idealized, native-speaker, foreign English teacher, conflicts in varying forms with some foreign English teachers’ desired professional selves. It is this conflict between stories, characters, and figured worlds that may be the origin of many difficulties for those within some educational institutions, but again I want to emphasize this section is only speculative. This study did not collect data regarding Korean recruiters, managers, co-teachers and others involved in educational institutions. In order to further develop, refine, or perhaps discard, the speculative ideas presented in this section, further research should focus on those Korean personnel involved with foreign English teachers in order to better understand their figured worlds. With further research and a greater understanding of these figured worlds, scholarly discussion can move from speculative discussion to more productive work.
Language Teacher Identity Studies in TESOL: Methodologies, Theory, and Productive Knowledge

There is now a wealth of studies examining foreign English teacher identities in East Asia (Appleby, 2013; 2014a; 2014b; Nagatomo, 2012; Simon-Maeda, 2011; Stanley, 2012; 2013; Trent, 2012) affording new opportunities to examine how research methodologies and understandings of identity can productively serve teachers and scholars in TESOL. This section reflects upon this study to ask how different approaches to language teacher identity research can productively contribute to TESOL as a field. Essentially I am examining in what ways language teacher identity studies are about teachers and what ways these studies are for teachers. Ultimately, I argue that within TESOL, language teacher identity studies should primarily attempt to contribute to teacher development and the agency of teachers, and in doing so these studies should also, to varying degrees, contribute to the effectiveness of English language education. Further, I believe the methodology and understandings of identity used in this paper create greater possibilities for understanding teacher development and teacher agency than those of other studies.

Studies that rely on relatively limited immersion in contexts, and focus on Foucaultian (1979) discourse and subject position, can productively identify challenging and problematic discourses, as in Appleby’s (2013a) study25, but also may miss the informative identity negotiations of teachers such as John who are less likely to participate in such studies, and may elide the agency of teachers overall. I acknowledge that within fields such as sociolinguistics, geography, and interdisciplinary fields represented by scholarly publications such as Gender and Education, foreign English teacher identity research26 need not contribute to the development of

25 I must note Appleby’s (2013) important study valuably began needed discussions regarding heterosexuality and masculinity in TESOL.

26 Stanley (2012), Cho (2012), and Appleby (2014b) are examples of studies examining foreign or
teachers or teacher agency, and can still valuably contribute to knowledge of identity generally, raise awareness of problematic and damaging discourses, and enrich discussions through conceptualizing identity in multiple ways. However, I argue TESOL scholarship should attempt to nurture and use theoretically rich understandings of identity that more easily afford understandings of teacher agency and facilitate teacher development. Identity studies relying upon limited immersion in contexts and Foucaultian discourse analysis may be more likely to posit teachers as subjects of discourse, while studies drawing upon longer, more ethnographic immersion in contexts that follow teachers (Marcus, 1995) and a theorization of identity that encompasses development and agency, such as the work of Holland et al. (1998), may more easily develop knowledge of teacher identity that encompasses agency and development, and ideally can show how teachers negotiate damaging discourses, productively informing TESOL more generally. There are now multiple understandings of teacher identity circulating within TESOL, and while I do not believe scholars should attempt to fix one or another as right or correct, I believe TESOL scholars should begin discussing how teacher identity studies create knowledge that is productive for the field of TESOL. There is a growing consensus that greater attention must be paid to how scholars examine language teacher identity with a 2016 call for papers from *TESOL Quarterly* (Varghese, Motha, Trent, Park & Reeves, 2015), concerning language teacher identity asking prospective authors to consider, “theoretical and methodological frameworks used in language teacher identity” as one of four areas to be examined. This call for papers suggests that growing numbers of scholars are concerned with how different approaches to examining language teacher identity can shape the research produced about this topic. At a minimum, I firmly believe the quantity of identity research produced regarding English language

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Asian-American English language teacher identity in East Asia published in geography, sociolinguistics, and interdisciplinary scholarly journals respectively.
teacher identities in East Asia demands a more serious discussion of methodologies and frameworks used to examine language teacher identity in TESOL.

**Teacher Development and this Study**

This study has highlighted the role narratives play in mediating teachers’ actions in the immediacy of a crisis, in more gradual transitions from one career to another, and as a stabilizing and needed element for some teachers to understand they are engaged in long term career activities. This study has shown how these narratives mediate development in various ways, drawing upon Holland et al. (1998) who in turn drew upon Vygotsky (1978) for these key insights into mediation and development. Critically for those involved in teacher development these narratives may be an aspect of these teachers’ understandings and experiences that makes possible new and productive teacher development programs.

These narratives may be one area through which teacher trainers and educational institutions can productively contribute to teachers’ work as teachers and their engagement with coworkers and classrooms. Teacher trainers and teacher development programs may be able to make these guiding narratives that mediate the practices and understandings of some foreign English teachers a discussion point for some teachers, allowing some teachers to examine the narratives that shape their practices and understandings. This in turn may allow some teachers to reconfigure their narratives and take alternative, possibly more productive, actions to those they were taking before. Johnson and Golombek (2011) have already discussed how becoming aware of narratives can allow for teachers to engage in self-regulation of their understandings and actions, with their work focusing on classroom practices and pedagogy. This current study of foreign English teachers in Korea suggests conflicts in educational institutions and related issues
can be shaped or mediated through engagement with teachers’ narratives of teaching English in Korea.

However, teacher trainers and teacher development programs should be cautious in any attempts to work with foreign English teacher’s narratives. These stories, as this study has shown, contribute to and shape the careers of teachers and can be critical aspects of identity. Intervening in these stories or bringing them forth for examination and review may involve conflicts, hostility, and a myriad of other reactions that make such programs challenging. Those involved with such a program or workshop should be aware of the possible negative consequences of reviewing and examining these narratives and any provisional programs should be cautious, tentative, and guided by a view that the wellbeing of those participating in such a program should be safeguarded.

As this study came to its conclusion I began exploring the possibilities of contributing to foreign English teachers’ development through the findings of this study. I intend, alongside an experienced teacher trainer familiar with this context, to offer a limited number of workshops regarding teacher development through the examination of teacher narratives within an organization that has a large number of foreign English teachers. This program is intended to have workshop attendees examine narratives of foreign English teachers collected as part of the study, examine and discuss these narratives in order to understand how these narratives may have shaped certain issues with these teachers, and the examine some narratives that may be shaping these teachers in a variety of ways. This teacher development workshop would also be a follow-on research project to this current study designed to understand how the insights of this study could be productively used as part of teacher development. I believe it is vital that this project contribute back to the community of teachers who contributed to this study and this provisional teacher development research project, modeled on the work of Johnson and Golombek (2011) is one means of doing so.
Additionally, this study has discussed issues of bodies and dress among foreign English teachers. One of the most significant issues to emerge out of this examination of bodies and dress are the disruptions to gendered selves some foreign women experience when they first arrive in Korea. As Nancy’s journal entry, featured at the beginning of Chapter 5, showed, Nancy came to Korea with some limited expectations of bodies and dress, including concerns over being seen as tall in Korea, and for the most part these expected issues caused few challenges and difficulties for Nancy. However, other experiences were unexpected and these unexpected experiences proved more challenging and disrupting to Nancy’s gendered selves. It may be possible to use knowledge developed through this study to better prepare foreign English teachers planning on teaching in Korea, and as a means of aiding newly arrived foreign English teachers in Korea. Data such as Nancy’s journal, read by teachers and discussed in a group, could be a means for some foreign English teachers to reflect on their expectations or experiences of living and teaching in Korea, and their own experiences and understandings of bodies and dress. Importantly, these issues can be sensitive and teacher training programs should be cautious when discussing these issues and introducing these topics into teacher training. The discussion of these issues may be fraught with potential challenges and dangers, and a poorly developed attempt at such a discussion could itself become a damaging or difficult experience. Nevertheless, this study has shown how some foreign women teaching English in Korea find their initial experiences with bodies and dress challenging in ways which disrupt long-held understandings and sensations of gender. The data collected in this study, used in a teacher training program, could potentially mediate the development of some foreign English teachers’ understandings of themselves in Korea, and in doing so mitigate some of the more damaging aspects of this disruption of gendered selves. I believe any attempt to use the knowledge developed in this study regarding bodies and dress must be approached cautiously, but ideally this study should contribute to teacher training that lessens the challenges some teachers face as they initially negotiate issues of bodies and dress.
in Korea. Additionally, future research should correct this study’s shortcomings and further explore how foreign men teaching English in Korea experience and understanding issues of bodies and dress, so those findings can contribute to teachers’ development as well.

**Participant Diversity, Unexplored Issues, and Future Research**

This study has examined the experiences and understandings of a diverse group of foreign English teachers, discussed how different teachers negotiated teacher selves in a variety of ways, and explored how these teachers engaged with issues of bodies and dress. However, this study also overlooked some key issues regarding the men participating in this study, as already discussed, and to some degree this study failed to examine additional issues of great importance involving issues of race, ethnicity, nationality, and ideologies that position English native speakers as the only legitimate users of English.

Including an eclectic group of foreign English teachers in this study allowed for productive comparisons and analytic connections that otherwise would not be possible. The inclusion of David and Jerri-Lee allowed for insights into narrative and mediation that would not have been possible if the focus of this study was on white, straight, male Canadian teachers. However, questions should still be raised about what was lost by adopting this open participant recruitment strategy. David’s experiences and understandings reflect his engagement with a school and with Korea as an African-American man that deserve further examination and discussion. His experiences and understandings of being Black in Korea, drawing upon experiences and understandings of being Black in America are a generous contribution to this study and point of entry into worlds of foreign English teachers that are not discussed in the existing, widely circulating literature, unlike those of white foreign English teachers or Korean-American foreign teachers. Exploring the experiences and understandings of African-American
women and men teaching English in Korea or East Asia may offer great insights into understanding native-speaker ideologies, teacher development, teacher selves, and issues of global African-American identity, and so I believe further research in this area is warranted. Although I have no plans to contribute to this area myself, my hope is that I can support other scholars interested in further exploring this neglected area of research.

Additionally, this study recruited participants from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, and the Antipodes; contributing to the diverse voices included in this study and allowing for a number of participants to shape this study who would have been excluded if this study had focused on participants from one nation or one region. However, in recruiting participants from seven countries, issues of identity and nationality were very much elided. As part of the data collected in this study, several teachers from Ireland and South Africa discussed the challenges and difficulties they experienced as Irish and South African teachers in Korea, the challenges they experienced in Korea with English being seen as a primarily American language in Korea, and the unexpected challenges they experienced of adapting to a community of foreign English teachers dominated by American cultural discourses of Thanksgiving, tacos, and socializing in particular American ways, according to these teachers. While I wrote about these experiences and developed an analysis of these experiences and understandings to a limited degree, I found that the limited data I had and the overall focus of this study pushed me to exclude that focus from this study. Nevertheless, issues of nationality among foreign English teachers globally, outside of the discourses of native-speakers, have been relatively unexamined by scholars interested in foreign English teachers in East Asia and beyond. Even the research by Appleby focused on white, straight, Australian English teachers (2013a) did not engage in an examination of how being Australian shaped these teachers constructions of masculinity despite recruiting 11 Australian men as participants. Future research, both raising awareness of issues of nationality among foreign English teachers and analyzing how nationality shapes negotiations of
identity, would be of value to teachers from South Africa and Ireland who are not always aware of these issues when coming to Korea and may offer insight into a variety of greater issues as well. Likewise, but moving further beyond the scope of this current study, additional research on foreign English teachers from countries such as the Philippines, India, and other countries whose citizens are not eligible for Korean English language teaching visas but nevertheless are able to teach English in Korea through a variety of means, would be invaluable. Already there has been valuable research on Filipino women teaching English in Korea (Shin, 2007) and further research is needed to develop a more complete understanding of how migrating or sojourning English language teachers live and teach in Korea. There is a danger that this study and other research like this study renders teachers from the Philippines, India, and elsewhere who live and teach in Korea and East Asia invisible to scholarly communities concerned with these issues. This is made an even greater danger given recent scholarship on advertisements that recruit foreign English teachers in East Asia (Ruecker & Ives, 2014) that, while critiquing these advertisements for focus on recruiting white native English speaker teachers, ignores teachers from the Philippines and elsewhere who live and work in Korea and elsewhere in East Asia. There is need for further, widely disseminated research on these teachers and how they negotiate the complex realities of living and teaching in Korea, including the serious material, institutional, and discursive barriers that they must confront.

A critical issue foundational to foreign English teachers’ careers in Korea, but not discussed in this study, is foreign English teachers’ status as English native-speakers. Several participants discussed being a native speaker of English with some of the most interesting points being made by some teachers of Color discussing themselves as being recognized as authorities on English because of their native speaker status, and one participant who, aware of the scholarly critiques of native speaker ideals, argued that his particular teaching position demanded an American native speaker as a teacher. Nevertheless, the discourses surrounding native speaker
teachers and how they were taken up by individual participants did not intersect with the emerging focus of this study and were not critical in the individual figured worlds and positional identities of participants in this study, beyond the general discourses of native speakers of English being idealized speakers of a language. With the plethora of general scholarship in this area and a well-argued critique of native speaker ideology already in existence (See (Mahboob (2007; under review) for discussion of these issues), I believe this study has little to offer larger discussions of native speaker issues as discourses and ideologies. The participants in this study, of course, are in Korea because of native speaker ideologies and are the embodiment of this idea in many ways, but ultimately their negotiation of selves has little to contribute to scholarly discussions of native speaker ideologies and issues. In fact, it seems that as part of this scholarly discussion more academics are beginning to ask why, given that academics have essentially reached a consensus that native speaker ideology is damaging, has the scholarly community had little impact on the hiring policies of many schools and government policies regarding which citizens are granted visas for teaching English (Mahboob, 2007; Mahboob, Under Review). Therefore, I believe other research projects could contribute more to this discussion than this current study of language teacher identity. Studies involving the actual hiring practices and negotiations of educational institutions, as well as studies examining the government officials in Korea who mandate that only certain citizens of a limited number of countries can teach English would be far more productive than revisiting issues of native speaker ideologies in this study.

Conclusion

This study has explored two primary issues: first, the teacher selves of foreign English teachers in Korea and second, foreign English teachers’ engagement with the figured world of bodies and dress. Further, this study has discussed the critical, if under-discussed, role
professionalism plays in both the practices and research of English language teaching, and discussed the future of language teacher identity studies, advocating for research that ultimately benefits the teachers involved in this area and informs these teachers’ negotiations of teacher selves. Further, this study has examined several issues of interest to particular groups of researchers, teacher trainers, and teachers themselves.

This study has identified and discussed several figurative identities of foreign English teachers that have not been discussed by earlier studies. The experiences, understandings, and teacher selves of John, Percy, and Carly highlight how some teachers craft unique positional identities and figured worlds that aid them in continuing to teach English in Korea. John, in particular, highlights how money, power, gender, and sexuality can shape certain types of business English teachers in ways that the vast majority of language teacher identity scholarship ignores. For too long much of language teacher identity scholarship has ignored issues of wealth in the crafting of language teacher identities and this study, ideally, should begin new conversations regarding this topic.

This study also examined the capacity of narrative elements to mediate actions, and the role figured worlds and positional identities have in shaping some teachers’ engagement with classroom practices and educational institutions. The role self-told narratives have in shaping some foreign English teachers’ engagement with educational institutions is a key finding of this study. Scholars interested in teacher development or teachers who are struggling with their professional duties may find this discussion particularly informative.

Discourses of idealized schools, capitalism, desired bodies and professionalism were also discussed and these conflicts are important elements in some foreign English teachers’ experiences in Korea and in some cases their dissatisfaction with teaching in Korea. Examining and developing limited understandings of these conflicts is a key achievement of this study. The role discourses of idealized teachers play in shaping how some foreign English teachers with no
experience or interest in teaching position themselves as teachers, as discussed in Chapter Four’s focus on Jess and Trent, shows the great strength of these discourses, an issue of interest for some researchers examining how pre-service teachers in their home countries adopt particular teacher selves. This study highlights how easily even those who have little-to-no professional interest in teaching can suddenly take up aspects of teacher selves, develop conflicts with larger discourses of capitalism, and struggle with idealized notions of teachers and schools all the while never intending to teach after their one year contract. This study, at minimum, shows how pervasive some teacher related discourses are in North America and beyond.

A major aspect of this study is the exploration of the figured world of bodies and dress, with this section having several important aspects of concern to both teachers and researchers. This section highlights the disruption that can occur when even highly informed and trained teachers move to new places and the sometimes challenging process of positioning oneself in a new figured world of bodies and dress. Teacher trainers or those involved with foreign English teachers in Korea may wish to consider these issues when developing programs for these teachers. Additionally, the agency of some teachers in codeveloping understandings of this figured world and themselves should be of interest to any scholars interested in issues of people migrating and sojourning in different places and their changing understandings of bodies and dress.

Ultimately, I see this study as only the beginning of a much longer and more nuanced scholarly discussion concerning issues of foreign English teachers in East Asia, and larger issues of English language education globally. I believe one of the great challenges I face after completing this study involves finding ways to productively disseminate this study, in accessible forms, so that foreign English teachers, prospective foreign English teachers, Korean co-teachers, and other teachers concerned with issues discussed in this study can make use of this study, challenge its findings, and contribute to this hoped for future discussion.
Bibliography


Selvi, A. F. (2010). All teachers are equal, but some teachers are more equal than others: Trend analysis of job advertisements in english language teaching. *WATESOL NNET Caucus Annual Review, 1*, 156-181.


Appendix

Participant Descriptions and Data Collected

Descriptions for every participant recruited for this study are contained in Table 1. The initial example details the information regarding each participant. In some cases the information is withheld, made more general, or was not learned as part of this study. Notably, the table’s final category is relationship with me and in this case the category of “participant” is used for those who I only met through this study and “friend” is used for those I often met socially outside of this study.

Details regarding every participant’s participation in this study are contained in Table 2. The column titled Number of Interviews Reviewed and Transcribed lists the total number of interviews that had detailed notes made regarding their contents and relevant sections transcribed.
Table 1-1

*Participant Descriptions*

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| Neil | White  
      | British  
      | Early thirties  
      | Straight  
      | Unmarried  
      | Hagwon instructor  
      | More than four years  
      | Industrial City  
      | Friend         |
| Carly | White  
      | South African  
      | Mid-thirties  
      | Straight  
      | Unmarried  
      | University instructor  
      | More than five years  
      | Seoul  
      | Friend         |
| Emily | White  
      | American  
      | Mid-thirties  
      | Straight  
<pre><code>  | Unmarried |
</code></pre>
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General City

Participant
## Table 2-1

*Data Collected*

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Curriculum Vita
Michael Chesnut

Education

The Pennsylvania State University – University Park, PA.
Ph. D. Curriculum & Instruction
Graduation date August 2016

Woosong University – Daejeon, South Korea
M.A. in TESOL-MALL
Completed in 2007

University of Manitoba – Winnipeg, MB.
B. Sc. General
Completed 2000

Professional Experience

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, College of English
Assistant Professor
2010-Present

Dankook University, Graduate School of TESOL
Part-time Instructor
2013

The Pennsylvania State University, College Assistance Migrant Program
Language and Literacy Education Coordinator
2009-2010

Woosong University-SolBridge International School of Business
Student Services Manager
2007-2008

Woosong University
English Language Lecturer
2005-2007