Learning Korean as an Act of Self-creation: Narratives of Foreign English Teachers in South Korea

Stewart James Gray

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우리 영원히 행복하자, 사랑해.

Abstract

Why are some people more motivated to learn languages than others? A person's motivation can be understood as a complex phenomenon, influenced by individual and contextual factors like identity and ideology. In the present study, I adopt this perspective on motivation to explore the language learning decisions of a group to which I belong: foreign English teachers in South Korea.

Foreign English teachers reside in a context where the Korean language predominates. Yet, research has shown that many do not invest much in learning Korean, while others learn it extensively. This disparity makes foreign teachers a prime candidate for motivational study, particularly as they operate in a context shaped by language ideologies: the English language education industry of Korea.

In this study, I employ a theoretical framework that relates self-development decisions to identities and value systems: Foucault's *ethical self-formation*. I present analysis of the long-term language learning narratives of six foreign English teachers, some of whom invested extensive effort into Korean, some of whom did not. I attend to the ways they variously saw Korean as a means to develop themselves or did not. I examine individual differences in motivation in relation to differing identities, values and goals, all in relation to the Korean ethnolinguistic context.

Results indicate that the desire to acquire Korean for meaningful self-development was the most compelling sort of motivation for participants. Social and economic motivations were less influential because, as English speakers, they can survive in Korea without learning Korean. Participants' narratives illustrate the ways that various identities – professional, ethnic, linguistic, etc. – influenced their language learning and use decisions. I provide details of these influences, and outline implications for stakeholders in the English education industry.

Contents

List of tables

List of figures

List of abbreviations

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDST	Complex Dynamic Systems Theory
Dip-TESOL	Diploma in TESOL
E2	The E2 language teacher's visa (South Korea)
ELT	English Language Teaching
EM	Extrinsic Motivation
EPIK	English Program in Korea (the public-school FET program)
F4	The F4 Korean heritage visa (South Korea)
FET	Foreign English Teacher
IM	Intrinsic Motivation
KIIP	Korea Immigration & Integration Program
L1	First language
L2	Second language
L2MSS	The L2 Motivation Self-System
MA-TESOL	Master of Arts degree in TESOL
NEST	Native English-Speaking Teacher
OB-GYN	Obstetrics and Gynaecology
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOPIK	Test of Proficiency in Korean

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. The experiences and ideas that lead me to write this thesis

This is a study of foreign English teachers (FETs) living and teaching in South Korea (hereafter Korea). The focus of the study is the decisions FETs make about learning Korean as a second language (L2).

I am writing this dissertation because I am an FET myself. I have lived in Korea for ten years as of 2021. I have learned Korean to a reasonable level of communicative confidence, and I have achieved the highest available level on the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) twice. I did not speak a word of Korean when I stepped off the plane at Incheon in 2011 at age twenty-two, but in some ways, I was advantaged in learning Korean over other FETs. I studied Japanese in university, and so I had no problem with the subject-object-verb word order. A lot of the vocabulary is similar, too, if you know what you are looking for. Even so, I barely learned any Korean in my first year of residence, committing to study it only after I decided to stay longer.

Early on in Korea, I had certain experiences that conspired to form a narrative of my position as a Korean-speaking English teacher. For one thing, I met many FETs who could not speak or understand Korean despite years of residence. I had seen something similar as a student in Japan, but in Korea things seemed more extreme. It was rare for me to meet a westerner who spoke passable Korean. For my part, I was determined that I would learn to speak it. I was uncomfortable with the idea of getting by with English, though it was clear from observation that I could if I chose to. Many services in Korea are available in English, and many people understand at least basic English vocabulary.

Once I began to speak Korean, I quickly found that almost everyone I used it with reacted to me with surprise. From the beginning, I was complimented on my use of the slightest Korean, often more than once per conversation. Moreover, it appeared to

me that most Korean people expected me *not* to speak Korean. My employers in particular made it very clear to me that I was not to use Korean with my students.

Over the years, I had numerous awkward language experiences (some of which I was moved to write about [Gray, 2017a]). I found myself growing increasingly bitter and anxious. It bothered me that I was treated forever as an outsider – a tourist, I thought – no matter how much Korean I learned. I found myself resenting other FETs to a degree, blaming them for establishing a standard of expected ignorance that I suffered under. Thankfully, I have largely overcome those emotions, though not entirely.

In 2014, when I was in graduate school in Korea, I happened to read a paper by Hennig (2010) about learners of German in Hong Kong. In this paper, Hennig employed the ideas of Michel Foucault (1984, 1985) to identify the ways that learning German added certain sorts of value to learners. This value depended on the ideas they had about the German language itself, and what it meant to be a German speaker in Hong Kong. I was struck by this paper, particularly the idea that language learning can be a process of self-transformation and that the value one can add to oneself is dependent on the social context. That is, we may be motivated to learn a language if we imagine that others will ascribe a certain value to us when we can speak it. As someone who was struggling fruitlessly to get the 'approval of others' (Hennig, 2010, p.308) for my Korean, this really resonated.

I went on to conduct a piece of MA research on FETs like myself who had invested a lot of time in learning Korean (Gray, 2017b), curious if their experiences resembled my own, if they were also treated perpetually as outsiders. I found that the FETs I interviewed had experiences that were very different from my own, and from each other. Their perspectives and emotions about their position in Korea varied considerably. What is more, their motivations to learn Korean were highly diverse: from simple social curiosity to cultural fascination.

In the end, I described these differences in my MA paper, but I felt I had not *explained* them in any substantial way. This research earned me my MA, but I came away from it feeling that I had barely scratched the surface. Moreover, I found myself increasingly

curious about FETS who had not learned much Korean. To omit them would be to omit the apparent majority, and there was no way I could understand the story while ignoring most of the actors.

As I considered how to proceed, ultimately towards writing the present thesis, I realised that Hennig's Foucauldian conception of language learning might be useful for explaining the decisions of people who choose *not* to learn languages. Simply put, if learning a language can add value to a person, then perhaps the choice not to learn reflects a perceived absence of value. Also, because value exists within a social context, maybe an analysis of the Korean language's value (or lack of value) for FETs would reveal something about what was going on in the Korean context – my context.

Therefore, in the present study, I examine the ways that different FETs make different decisions about learning Korean. I have chosen to do this in the hopes of improving understanding of how language learning motivation and demotivation work for this group in the context of Korea and the Korean English language teaching (ELT) industry.

1.2. Thesis structure

Throughout the rest of Chapter 1, I provide a description of the context of this research: Korea, the Korean ELT industry, and the position of the FETs employed within it. To understand language learning (de)motivation, it is necessary to take a 'person-in-context' view (Ushioda, 2009) that accounts for the interrelationship of the decisions of an individual and the systems of value operating in the immediate context and beyond. With this in mind, I provide this broad description of the context as a necessary foundation for the analysis of FETs' Korean learning motivations that follows.

Chapters 2 and 3 comprise a review of the theoretical literature on language learning motivation. In Chapter 2, I define motivation and provide a general outline of certain prominent theoretical perspectives that have been used to explain it. In Chapter 3, I discuss the role that identity plays in language learning motivation from the theoretical

standpoint employed for analysis in this study – Michel Foucault's *ethical self-formation.*

Chapters 4 and 5 describe the research methodology of this study. In Chapter 4, I outline my chosen methodology, narrative inquiry, and my reasons for selecting it. This chapter also includes a summary of my research aims, and participant recruitment and data collection procedures. In Chapter 5, I describe the data analysis instruments and procedures I used.

In Chapter 6, I present the findings of this study. This chapter is divided into two parts – one to address each of the two research questions of this project (the questions can be found in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.). The second part of Chapter 6 contains the six full participant narratives that form the core of this study.

In Chapter 7, I present a discussion of the findings. I compare participants' cases and draw on the wider literature as I lay out my analytical conclusions. In Chapter 8, I offer final summaries of the conclusions of this study, along with the contributions these make to the field. This chapter also includes a brief outline of the limitations of this study.

1.3. The context of this study: Korea and the ELT industry

1.3.1. Foreign English teachers (definition)

In the present study, an FET is someone who travels from their home country to teach English in another country. As English presently holds the status of the 'primary language of global communication' (TESOL, 2008, in Thompson, 2017b, p.487), the demand for English education in many countries is high. Concurrently, there is a belief that languages are best taught by 'native speakers', people who, it is assumed, were raised speaking the language in question, speak and understand it effortlessly, and have an intuitive understanding of its grammar (see Lowe, 2020, p.20). Although this belief has been extensively critiqued for decades (e.g., Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 2006a; Kumaravadivelu, 2016; Lowe, 2020), it still exerts a great influence on the

international ELT industry. The importation and employment of FETs from certain designated countries is one consequence of this.

In Korea, for example, the requirement that FETs be native speakers is enshrined in law. To obtain the standard language teacher's visa (the E2), an FET must be a national of Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the U.S., or the U.K. (Ministry of Justice, Korea Immigration Service, 2017). The only other basic requirement for this visa is that the applicant hold a bachelor's degree in any subject, though certain jobs require proof that a candidate was educated in English – notably, Korean public schools require this of South African and Québécois applicants (EPIK, n.d.). The exact number of FETs in Korea is uncertain[1], but the number of E2 visa holders is often used as a proxy measurement. In 2017, almost 13,000 people held this visa (Modern Seoul, 2019). Most FETs are hired on one-year renewable contracts (Goerne, 2013) and teach in private, English-medium academies (*hagwons*; often kindergartens), public elementary and secondary schools, and at universities in undergraduate English courses.

1.3.2. English fever in Korea

To understand the position that FETs are in and the context in which they make Korean learning decisions, we must consider the status of English in Korea. Since at least the 19th century, English has been characterised in Korea as the language of the wider world and of modernity (Cho, J. 2017). Its importance has been reinforced by South Korea's relationship with the U.S., the country that liberated Korea from decades of Japanese occupation (Cho, J. 2017). In the modern era, English is seen as the 'language of international business and science' (Mani & Trines, 2018), and thus ties into two related, long-term trends in Korean society: a strong emphasis on education, and a drive towards globalisation (Park, S.J. & Abelmann, 2004; Shin, 2016)[2].

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[1] It is possible to teach on other visas, for example the resident's visa (F2), the professor's visa (E1), or the visa for immigrants of Korean heritage (F4).

[2] I am conscious of the fact that I am beginning a study of a group people learning Korean by first talking about a different group learning English. It can be quite difficult to talk about language learning in the modern world *without* talking about English (see Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). This dissertation might be considered a confirming example of this point.

Korea has undergone a dramatic economic transformation since the middle of the 20th century. Lacking natural resources, it has instead focused on its human resources and the education thereof as an economic strategy (Shin, 2016, p.513). This strategy has become deeply embedded in Korea to the point that it is now characterised as 'the world's most educated society' (Mani & Trines, 2018). Even in such a context, the importance of English education stands out. The abstract notion of English as a global language is rendered concrete in the Korean college entrance exam (the *suneung;* 수능*),* and the employment practices of Korea's most prestigious companies (Park, J.S.Y., 2011; Kim, H., 2015). There is a belief in Korea that these things – especially the college exam – determine whether one will be successful in life or not (see Diamond [2016] for an example), and English skill is a basic requirement for all of them.

Consequently, Korean parents are under immense pressure to ensure that their children to learn English (Shin, 2016, p.515). Among these parents, the 'critical period' hypothesis – the idea that languages are best learned from the earliest possible age, or before a certain age (Brown, 2007, p.57) – has a lot of currency (Park, J.K., 2009, p.55). All Korean children learn English from the 3rd grade of elementary school, but many are made to start much sooner in private, English-medium kindergartens (Park, J.S.Y., 2009). It is also quite common for young Korean children to be sent abroad, often unaccompanied, to give them a chance to be immersed in English (Shin, 2016). All of this represents a large outlay for Korean families. Of the billions of US dollars spent on private education in Korea in 2016, more went towards English than anything else (Statistics Korea, 2017).

The Korean government is also heavily invested in English. One notable policy direction has been to provide training to Korean teachers of English so that they can teach classes through the medium of English (Choi, 2015). Meanwhile, the government is encouraging universities to transition as much as possible to English-medium classes to improve the international competitiveness of these institutions (Kang, H.S., 2012), as well as to attract international students (Kim, J., 2020).

The overall drive towards English has been famously termed the 'English fever' of Korea (Park, J.S.Y, 2009). Such is the desire for children to master English, that some

Korean parents are willing to have their children master it at the expense of mastering Korean (Lee, 2018). There have even been highly publicised (though likely rare) cases of extreme corrective interventions, such as surgical alteration to children's mouths to facilitate 'proper English' pronunciation (Choe, 2004).

This, then, is the context of FETs employment. We are hired by Korean education providers to help satisfy the demand for English education. Various stakeholders in Korean ELT, including the government, parents, and Korean schoolteachers, value FETs on the assumption that their English is 'standard' (Pederson, 2012) and 'authentic' (Jeon & Lee, 2017), and that we can deliver English-medium classes. This second point is particularly significant, as there is a commonly held belief in Korea that English is best taught in English, and that use of Korean hinders English acquisition (Jeon, 2012; Lee, 2018). Thus, *hagwons* hire FETs so that they can advertise their educational products as English-medium, going so far as to produce advertisements with images of attractive (and usually white) FETs in them (Jenks, 2019). Meanwhile, the Korean government preferentially distributes FETs to schools in rural areas of the country, on the pretext that this will give rural students access to English, and thus 'counter socio-economic disparities' between them and their urban peers (Jeon, 2012, p.240). As this all suggests, FETs' native speaker status and linguistic capital make us a desirable economic resource in Korea.

1.3.3. The Korean ethnolinguistic identity and the challenges it faces

While English is in demand in Korea, the relationship of Korean society to English, FETs, and indeed all people designated foreigners is complex.

Partly in reaction to the efforts of the Japanese Empire in the first half of the 20th century to assimilate Korea and suppress its culture, the modern Korean national identity was founded on the idea of 'one people' (Jenks, 2017) with a unique culture (Watson, 2012), united by shared blood and speaking a shared language (Jenks, 2017, p.72-73). As a result of this philosophy, Korean culture/society is often characterised as relatively exclusive, and hesitant to embrace those not already identified as Korean. This exclusivity manifests in myriad ways. For the present study, some key points are

the position of ethnolinguistic outsiders in Korea, and more specifically the perceptions held about the English language and FETs in Korea.

For immigrants to Korea, possession or lack of Korean ethnicity has legal and social consequences. For instance, those who claim Korean ancestry are entitled to a unique and relatively secure residency visa, the F4. However, the number of foreign residents in Korea, most of whom do not have Korean ancestry, is now at an historic high (Korea Immigration Service, 2019; Hong, 2020), and is constantly growing in proportion to the Korean majority as the domestic birth rate has dropped to the lowest in the world (Gladstone, 2021). This has posed a challenge to the idea of Korean ethnic exclusivity as, among other things, the number of children with one Korean and one foreign parent in Korea has dramatically increased (Yonhap News, 2020). This situation has engendered various tensions, to which the Korean government has responded by praising the new multiculturalism while, as Watson (2012) argues, tacitly defending the idea of Korean uniqueness, and encouraging immigrants to culturally assimilate through education programs (Lee, C. 2014). Meanwhile, accounts of discrimination and negative public sentiment towards immigrant and multi-ethnic groups are numerous up to the present day (Lee, J., 2010; Redmond, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2015; Jun, 2019; Cha & Smith, 2021).

As noted above, there is a linguistic as well as an ethnic dimension to the Korean identity. As the Korean language is so central to this identity, there exists in Korea what Chunhwa Lee (2018) calls a linguistic 'purism' (p.23), such that even ethnically Korean immigrants may suffer from alienation if they do not speak it (Jenks, 2017, p.72). Counterposed to Korean, the national language, English is thought of as the language of *others* (Park, J.S.Y, 2009); highly in demand, highly prestigious, yet not belonging to Korea, and in some (arguably real) ways a threat to the monolingual Korean identity (Lee, 2018).

1.3.4. The privileging of certain identities when hiring FETs

FETs are representative of the *others* to whom English is purported to belong. That is, most of them are white[3], and most are American (Modern Seoul, 2019). Nationality from one of the aforementioned seven countries is the basis for employment as an FET, which suggests that English 'native speaker' status is legally defined in relation to 'Inner Circle' countries (Kachru, 1996). These are the countries where English is thought to be the 'native' language – or, the 'norm-providing' countries, as Kachru (1996, p.138) terms them. Beyond this, however, the recruitment practices of Korean employers have repeatedly been shown to favour white and North American teachers (Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Jenks, 2017, 2019). Indeed, FET recruitment in Korean ELT is predicated on assumptions about racial and national identity to such an extent that it occasionally makes international news. FET job applicants have been overtly rejected for being black (Lee, T-H, 2014) and for being Irish due to associations with alcoholism (McCauley, 2014). Perhaps most commonly, it is FETs of Korean heritage who are ineligible for certain teaching jobs regardless of their nationality, language ability, or qualifications (Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Iams, 2016; Jenks, 2019)[4]. Of course, it is not possible to say what proportion of employers discriminate in these ways, and there are many non-white, non-American FETs working in Korea (see, for example, Charles, 2019). Nonetheless, the international discursive association between the English language and the white identity (Holliday, 2006a; Shuck, 2006) is reflected in the Korean ELT industry's employment practices.

1.3.5. Tensions surrounding the presence of FETs in Korea

Overall, FETs are hired in Korea on the basis of capital they possess due to prestigious identities: linguistic, national, and racial. This privilege extends into the positive perception held of FETs and other westerners in Korea compared to immigrants from other nations. As Prof. Kim Hyun-mee points out:

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[3] On the point about white FETs being the majority, I can speak only from experience, as to the best of my knowledge the ethnic proportions of the group are not recorded anywhere. I am convinced based on observation that most are white – and this includes myself – but I can offer no authoritative sources to support the claim.

[4] This claim is based on studies that have analysed job advertisements, which sometimes explicitly exclude ethnically Korean FETs (Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Jenks, 2019), as well as on anecdotal evidence (Iams, 2016).

'One of the most serious side effects of the country's rapid economic development is that its people started to hierarchize foreign nations according to their economic status. Collectively, they would perceive specific nations, mostly developed countries such as the U.S. and the U.K., as their superiors whom they should learn from…' (cited in Lee, C., 2014).[5]

However, the presence of FETs in Korea has also been a source of tensions. Given the *otherness* of English, and the continued presence of the American military in Korea (Van Volkenburg, 2018), some in Korea hold FETs to be part of an undesirable western invasiveness. Korean media have at times portrayed FETs as drug addicts and child abusers (Dawe, 2014; Lee, J.H., 2010). Perhaps relatedly, when the Korean government eliminated the requirement that applicants for various visas be tested for HIV, they chose to retain this requirement for E2 (language teacher) visas (Van Volkenburg, 2010).[6] There have also been occasional acts of violence against FETs in the past (Van Volkenburg, 2018), as well incidents of stalking by vigilantes (Lee, J.H., 2010).

1.3.6. The professional marginality of FETs

In the professional sphere also, the presence of FETs can be a source of tension, and our position can be somewhat untenable.

Research has been conducted into the perspectives of Korean teachers of English who work with FETs. Perspectives identified include the idea that FETs are closed-minded, ignorant of Korean culture (Kwon, 2000, in Kang, H.D., 2012, pg.72; Lee, H.S., 2020), uncommitted to professionalism as teachers (Sung, 2012), uncooperative with Korean colleagues (ibid.), and underqualified (Pederson, R., 2012). This negative

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[5] I have found it difficult to locate sources that explicitly confirm that western, or white foreigners experience relatively good day-to-day treatment in Korea. However, based on my experience, I submit that the view in C. Lee (2014) is widely perceived to be accurate. For example, two of the white FETs in Gray (2017b) noted that they had observed non-white friends being subject to less agreeable treatment than they themselves were used to.

[6] The HIV testing requirement has recently been abandoned, and negative media portrayals of FETs have declined numerically in recent years (Van Volkenburg, 2018). However, it is uncertain to what extent negative perceptions of FETs persist in Korea. As recently as 2018, FETs were explicitly instructed not to molest children at a large-scale training event (Ko & Dunbar, 2018).

perception may relate to the dependence of FETs who do not speak Korean on Korean colleagues for assistance with practical aspects of life. Indeed, in public schools that employ FETs, a Korean teacher is formally assigned responsibility for assisting the FET in this way. It is notable that the Korean teachers in Jeon and Lee (2017), while taking a positive view of FETs as a source of 'authentic real-life input', also lamented the 'burdensome chores for the settlement of (FETs)...' (p.60).

Meanwhile, research into FETs themselves has shown they can feel denied legitimacy as teachers (Jeon, 2009)[7]. A study by S. Lee (2020) found that 55% of FETs suffered from 'imposter syndrome", while 58% felt that they were not appreciated by their employers. Hired as they are principally for their nationality, first language, and in many cases phenotype (Jenks, 2019) rather than teaching skills, FETs may feel insecure in their jobs regardless of the qualifications and experience they do have. Participants in Gallagher (2018) believed that Korean employers saw them as 'interchangeable' with any other native speaker (see also Griffin, 2016). This makes it difficult for an FET to secure themselves professionally, and indeed many FETs see their employment as temporary (Gearing & Roger, 2019). On this point, the Korean government appears to agree: the English Program in Korea (EPIK) that employs FETs in public schools has been officially a temporary measure since its inception in 1995 (Lerner, 2020; Lee, H.S., 2020).

1.3.7. The Korean learning (de)motivations of FETs

A cursory consideration of the context as I have described it suggests several reasons an FET might hypothetically be motivated to learn Korean:

- To bridge the sociocultural gap between themselves and the Korean majority and acclimatize to their environment.
- To counteract the presupposition that they are culturally ignorant.
- To live independently and reduce the burden placed on their Korean colleagues.

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[7] It should be noted that the EPIK program (i.e., public schools) officially prohibits Korean teachers from giving FETs full responsibility for teaching classes (Yim & Hwang, 2018).

Indeed, research to date has shown that FETs who invest in learning Korean may express a desire to socially integrate (Gearing & Roger, 2019) and to demonstrate open-mindedness about Korean culture (Gray, 2017b; Gray, 2018). As to my own case, I tend to think a general love of languages and a desire to prove I could learn Korean despite the expectations of others were my primary motivators (Gray, 2017a).

However, as I mentioned previously, my observations tend to suggest that overall investment in Korean among FETs is somewhat low. As yet, no large-scale studies have been conducted, but recent research seems to align with this viewpoint. For instance, Gearing and Roger's (2019) study of 14 FETs found that 'most lacked the clear future (visions of themselves as Korean speakers) required to drive motivation' (p.122), and that their participants displayed 'no fear of future selves who were unable to use Korean to communicate in daily life, despite having lived in the country for several years' (p.130). Indeed, most extant research (conducted primarily by Gearing and Roger, and occasionally by me) attends primarily to *de*motivational factors among FETs. Identified factors include:

- 'Negative gatekeeping encounters' with native speakers (Gearing, 2019, p.214); the inability/unwillingness of Korean interlocutors to accommodate them as L2 Korean speakers, and the desire of Korean interlocutors to practice English (Gearing & Roger, 2019).
- The temporary nature of employment as an FET, re-enforced by the need to renew contracts each year (Gearing & Roger, 2017, 2019).
- The lack of concrete economic benefits that come from learning Korean (Gearing & Roger, 2017).
- Busyness with other, more profitable priorities (Gearing & Roger, 2017; Gray, 2018).
- The difficulty of the Korean language (Gray, 2018).
- The ability to get by without learning the language (Gearing & Roger, 2018), particularly when one has a Korean spouse who can manage practical tasks (Gearing, 2019).

Some of these demotivational factors are understandable in relation to the Korean context as I have outlined it so far. Other factors require further contextualisation. For instance, the idea that English-speaking westerners can get by without learning a local language is not unique to Korea (see for example Lan [2011] in the Taiwanese context).

Moreover, other immigrant groups in Korea may find Korean comparatively necessary to thrive. For instance, research has shown that international students in Korea may see Korean ability as essential to their future career prospects in the country (Kim, J., 2020). This suggests that the ability to cite a lack of necessity as a demotivator may reflect a privilege (i.e., an exemption from obligation [Minarik, 2017]) afforded to FETs as identified English speakers.

1.4. Research rationale

While research has begun to offer insights into the factors that may motivate an FET or demotivate them, many questions arise when we consider the existing list of factors. For example, if the fact that one can get by without Korean demotivates one's Korean learning, then why do any FETs learn Korean? Conversely, if a desire to socially integrate can motivate learning, then do unmotivated FETs lack a desire for social integration? Also, how is it that a desire to socially integrate can be a motivating factor for some while having a Korean spouse is a demotivating factor for others?

The present list of factors tells us why a given FET is motivated or not. What it does not tell us is why a given FET might be *more or less motivated than another FET*. This is a significant issue in our understanding of motivation, as a list of factors is of little use if we do not understand why different people respond to the same/similar factors in different ways. Indeed, since a great deal of research into language learning (de)motivation over the past few decades has effectively produced lists of situation-specific factors (e.g., Dörnyei, 1998; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Karaca & Inan, 2020)[8], a study that explores why individuals are differently motivated in similar situations promises to be enlightening.

This is a point made by Gearing (2019), who noted that the FETs in his study with 'sufficiently strong future L2 self-visions' (p.209) were able to manage their Korean learning motivation (i.e., to move past difficulties when learning), which leaves the question of why some FETs would have a strong vision and others would not. Gearing

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[8] I offer a more detailed examination of these and other studies in Chapter 2.

went on to suggest that: 'considerable practical advantage would be gained by knowing why some learners are more able to manage demotivating episodes, while for others amotivation results' (2019, p. 219).

I offer a response to this call with the present study. In it, I take a detailed look at the Korean learning motivations of several FETs, considering both individual and contextual factors. Using narrative data collected from these FETs, I illustrate a group of individuals making different decisions about learning and using Korean in their personal and professional lives over the course of years. Included in this study are FETs who invested heavily in learning Korean and FETs who did not. Based on my analysis of these narratives (presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis), and a comparison between them (Chapter 7), I offer some insights that explain why certain language learners may be more or less motivated than others (Chapter 8, section 8.2.1 and 8.2.2).

As well as making contributions to the field of language learning (de)motivation research, the present study also relates to a critical issue in the wider ELT industry – the belief that languages are best taught by native speakers using only the target language. This belief, the 'monolingual fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992), still exerts great influence on the industry, as the Korean case demonstrates. This belief is the basis for the unfair distribution of employment opportunities to teachers designated 'native'. Moreover, it has proven a difficult belief to expunge, despite the extensive efforts of critical actors in the field (Kumaravadivelu, 2016).

The present study relates to the discussion of this issue in several ways. Firstly, it presents the experiences of a group (FETs) that benefits from certain identity-based privileges that emerge from the preference in Korea for monolingual English teaching – privileged employment, and the privilege of not (necessarily) being obliged to learn a language. As Appleby (2016) notes, research on privilege is relatively rare, as studies that focus on distributions of privilege and marginalisation have tended to focus on the experiences of relatively disadvantaged groups. With the present study, I provide details of how linguistic and other identities may relate to privilege in the Korean ELT context from the perspective of those who experience that privilege

(Chapter 8, section 8.3.1). Based on examination of the ways that different identities and the advantages/disadvantages attached to them can influence language learning and use decisions, I offer some arguments as to why injustices such as the arbitrary hiring of native speakers should be addressed (Chapter 8, section 8.4.2) as well as several suggestions for stakeholders (employers, teachers, teacher educators) as to how this could be addressed (Chapter 8, section 8.6.2 and 8.6.3).

Secondly, the present study includes narratives of teachers making decisions about learning and using languages other than English, including teachers who made the decision *not* to learn or use the language in question. The idea that a teacher's language background shapes their pedagogy has come into vogue in recent years (Motha, Jain, and Tecle, 2012; Ellis, 2013, 2016). Concurrently, there have been calls to abandon the conception of languages as discrete entities (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) in favour of a more fluid conception of language repertoires **(**Creese & Blackledge, 2010, 2015), as this would work against such limiting notions as 'monolingual' and 'native speaker' and allow for the full employment of teachers' and students' diverse linguistic repertoires in education. In practice, this shift would involve abolishing the anathema against the use of languages other than English in English classrooms (Kang, D.M., 2013), recognising that English teachers' professional practice is inseparable from their language backgrounds and varied language practices (Ellis, 2013, 2016; García, 2014), and valuing teachers' 'plurilingual competencies' as a professional asset (Ellis, 2016).

However, as De Costa and Norton (2017) note, decisions about teaching practice are made in negotiation between a teacher and the demands of their context (employer, students, etc.). Given that FETs generally operate in a context that does view languages as separate (i.e., Korean vs. English), and in which they are often hired on the expectation that they will conduct classes in English, it is necessary to examine their language practices in context to understand how linguistic identities interact with context to produce pedagogical decisions. Furthermore, a full understanding of the role of linguistic identities in pedagogy requires accounts of English teachers who do not invest greatly in language learning. Such teachers exist, and their perspectives

must be accounted for if we are to assert that the 'monolingual fallacy' is indeed a fallacy.

With this in mind, in the present study I provide narratives of FETs choosing to make use of Korean in their classes, and choosing not to do so, to exemplify the contextual negotiation between a teacher's linguistic identities and the expectations of their contexts in the formation of pedagogy. Having done so, I outline what these narratives suggest about the role that Korean, the students' first language (L1) can play in the English classroom (Chapter 8, section 8.3.2).

Chapter 2: Language learning (de)motivation

The focus of this study is the Korean learning decisions of FETs, i.e., the motivation and demotivation of FETs. As a theoretical foundation for this study, I provide a general introduction to L2 motivation in this chapter and review the related literature to show what is already known and thought about it. I define some key terms in the first section, and then proceed to summarise several prominent theoretical perspectives.

Before beginning, I offer a caveat: the reader should be aware that a large majority of studies published on the topic of language learning motivation in recent decades have examined English learning (Boo, Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Therefore, although I am concerned with Korean learning, I must draw on the general insights found in the English-dominated literature for the present chapter.

2.1. Introduction to language learning motivation, and definition of terms

2.1.1. What is motivation?

To borrow from a dictionary, motivation is: 'the state or condition of being motivated or having a strong reason to act or accomplish something' (Dictionary.com, n.d.). This definition is simple, and easily transferred to the present study: an FET is motivated to learn Korean if they have a strong reason to learn it.

However, upon consideration, even this simple definition hints that motivation may be a complex phenomenon. Several components are identified: the actor, the 'strong reason', the act, and the aim ('something'). Understanding motivation, then, may require an understanding of what these things are and how they operate and interact.

2.1.2. What motivates people to learn a language?

What constitutes a motivator for a given person depends on what they desire, and because people desire different things, or the same things for different reasons, potentially motivating factors are highly diverse. Below, I offer a quick (and necessarily incomplete) list of things that have been said to motivate people – the reasons and

aims of L2 learning. To each item on the list, I append a related theoretical term, many of which I outline in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Commonly described motivators for language learning:

- Material reward and avoidance of punishment (extrinsic motivation [Ryan & Deci, 2000]).
- Personal pleasure, passion, and curiosity (intrinsic motivation [Ryan & Deci, 2000]).
- Practical need for the language (instrumental motivation [Gardner and Lambert, 1972]).
- Positive inclination towards the language, its speakers, and the associated culture (integrative motivation [Gardner and Lambert, 1972]).
- A desire to increase our employability and market value (neoliberalism [Kramsch, 2014]).
- A sense of obligation to learn even though we may feel personally indifferent towards the language (ought-to self [Dörnyei, 2005]).
- A desire to prove others wrong about us (anti-ought-to self [Thompson, 2017a]).
- A desire to become a better version of ourselves, one that speaks the language in question (ideal self [Dörnyei, 2005]).
- Fear of what will happen if we fail to become a better version of ourselves (feared self [Markus and Nurius, 1986]).
- A desire for increased social capital, and to have our voices heard (investment [Darvin & Norton, 2015]).
- A desire to participate in the globalised world (international posture [Yashima, 2009]).

2.1.3. Demotivation and amotivation

Although motivational factors such as those listed above are a significant part of a person's motivational profile, they provide only an incomplete picture. Scholarship in recent years has begun to factor in things that *stop* a person from learning as well. Two terms are of significance here: demotivation and amotivation.

Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) defined demotivation as 'specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action' (p. 139). In this view, demoralising experiences such as dislike of a teacher, poor school facilities, and standardised test scores (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) are balanced against a learner's motivational factors to produce their level of motivation in practice (Kikuchi, 2015). Much research into demotivation over the decades has taken this view (from Dörnyei [1998] to Karaca & Inan [2020]). However, the term 'specific external forces'

has proven contentious, as numerous researchers have identified 'internal' demotivational factors (Falout & Maruyama, 2004), for example the feeling of failure (Trang & Baldauf, 2007), negative attitudes (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009), etc., while others have shown that, at least in certain contexts, external factors may be more demotivating than internal factors (Kang, S.G., 2019; Karaca & Inan, 2020). Whatever the case, the essential point is that if a person is not motivated, it may be because the demotivational factors in play for them outweigh the motivational factors.

There is, however, another possibility. A person who does not wish to learn may in fact be *amotivated;* i.e., they lack motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Though this seems simple, there is some ambiguity in the literature on the meaning of amotivation. For example, Vallerand (1997) suggests that a person is amotivated when they feel that they are not up to a challenge, while Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) associate amotivation with a person's 'outcome expectations that are unrealistic...' (p.140). These things could also be considered internal demotivating factors, which makes the distinction between demotivation and amotivation somewhat confusing.

Ultimately, as I am studying a group of learners who often seem to lack motivation (FETs), I must make a clear distinction. Therefore, in the present study, a demotivated person is someone who has motivations to learn but is prevented from learning by a predominance of demotivations. Meanwhile, an amotivated person is someone who lacks the motivations to learn in the first place.

2.1.4. The role of motivation in language learning

So far in this chapter, I have outlined some of the basic reasons a person may or may not be motivated to learn a language. The question remains: how important is motivation for learning success? We might consider the following quote:

> Let us say therefore that, *given motivation*, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he (*sic*) is exposed to the language data. Study of language aptitude does in some measure support such a view since motivation and intelligence appear to be the two principal factors which correlate significantly with achievement in a second language. (Corder, 1967, p.164, emphasis in original)

This quote, famous in the language education field, provides a good starting point to discuss the role of motivation in successful language learning. There is much in this quote that is controversial ('inevitable') and vague ('intelligence'). Yet, the core point being made is an important one, if somewhat reductionist: motivation, exposure, and aptitude are all components of successful L2 learning.

It makes intuitive sense that L2 learning requires motivation. In contrast to children learning their first language, who appear to need only exposure to the language in a 'normal developmental environment' (Brown, 2007, p.24) to completely succeed, many L2 learners struggle and give up before achieving high proficiency. Indeed, the insufficiency of exposure for L2 learning is plain when we consider groups such as FETs in Korea who, in many cases, manage not to learn much Korean despite living in an overwhelmingly Korean-medium society (CIA World Factbook, 2014) presumably with Korean-speaking students, colleagues, employers, friends, and spouses. It therefore stands to reason that those who voluntarily invest themselves in learning must be 'motivated'.

This is not to say that we can predict which L2 learners will succeed based only on observations of motivation levels. Some studies using the L2 Motivation Self-System as a framework (see section 2.2.3. in this chapter) have identified no clear relationship between reported motivation and achievement (e.g., Ölmez, 2015; Moskovsky, Assulaimani, Racheva & Harkins, 2016; Li & Zhang, 2021). However, motivation has been repeatedly linked to effort. L2 learners with apparently compelling motivation may report greater 'intended learning efforts' (Moskovsky, et al., 2016, p.643), and are 'likely to use a variety of (learning) strategies' (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989, p.295). Conversely, learners who have invested actual effort in learning often have retrospectively identifiable strong motivations (e.g., Thompson, 2017a; Gearing & Roger, 2019). Motivated learners have also been shown to be less vulnerable to certain demotivational experiences (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Gearing, 2019), which supports the argument that overall motivation is a product of balanced factors (Kikuchi, 2015).

While there is ambiguity here, if we grant that the effort necessary to learn an L2 is predicated on motivation, and that it is desirable for learners to be resilient against demotivation, it is in our interest as language teachers and researchers to understand what motivates learners. Decades of research has already gone towards finding this out in various contexts, and theoretical explanations have proliferated. In the following sections of this chapter, I outline some prominent theoretical perspectives that have been taken on L2 learning motivation in order to situate my chosen theoretical perspective for the present study (ethical self-formation; see Chapter 3) in the wider academic context.

2.2. Theories of language learning motivation

Though many studies have examined the specific motivations and demotivations of a given learner or group of learners, it has long been the aim of academics in the language learning field – a microcosm of the wider education, psychology and sociology fields – to go beyond describing motivation and to theorise it in a way that can inform the decisions of practitioners, such as teachers. The more specified and simplified a theory is, the easier it is to grasp and use. Therefore, unsurprisingly, various theories have described motivation in simplified, categorised, often dualistic terms, with the most obvious of these dualisms being 'motivated' and 'not motivated'. However, motivation is a complex phenomenon. As suggested earlier in this chapter, the motivation of a given learner may be the product of numerous internal and external factors interacting. Consequently, theories of motivation have, in recent years, tended towards complexity in an effort to capture the nuance that is necessarily excluded from simplified models.

From this point on, I describe several L2 motivational theories, beginning with some of the most simplified, in order to demonstrate the importance of a complex theoretical viewpoint, and to provide justification for my own framework selection for this study (described in Chapter 3).

2.2.1. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

Perhaps the most widely known motivational theory is the dichotomy of intrinsic motivation (IM) and extrinsic motivation (EM). This dichotomy is often associated with Deci and Ryan (1985), but it has been researched for many decades in one formulation or another. Indeed, IM and EM were studied in monkeys in the 1940s (Pink, 2011). As to what these two forms of motivation are:

> The first type of motivation (IM) deals with behaviour performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction, such as the joys of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity[9]. The second (EM) involves performing a behaviour as a means to some separable end, such as receiving an extrinsic reward (e.g., good grades) or avoiding punishment. (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.23)

In the L2 motivation field and elsewhere, the general contention related to IM and EM is that IM is more desirable than EM. It has been argued that EM may help to move an otherwise unmotivated learner (Deci & Ryan, 1985), but a reward/punishment approach suffers from diminishing returns and fails to foster the internal drive that may move a learner to continue on in their learning in the absence of the source of EM. Entire popular psychology books have been written to advance this perspective (e.g., Pink, 2011). And indeed, studies in education and language learning often support the idea that IM is preferable. It has been shown in some cases that intrinsic motivation correlates with language learning achievement, while extrinsic motivation does not, or correlates negatively (Logan, Medford, & Hughes, 2011; Busse, 2013). The argument that IM leads to superior outcomes applies not only to language learners, but also to teachers based on the belief that those who enjoy teaching for its own sake bring greater creative energy to the classroom. As Pinner (2018) puts it, 'teachers who are passionate about their subject and are intrinsically motivated to cultivate learning are often easy to spot'. Meanwhile, studies have shown that EM can crowd out IM (Lepper & Greene, 1978, in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). For example, if one is forced to learn a language to pass a test, that pressure may exclude one's natural interest learning the language, as shown by Li (2020).

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[9] To take another perspective, Vallerand (1997) offers a subdivided definition of IM that includes the desire for knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation.

Speaking as a language teacher, it would be pleasing to believe that motivational factors can be divided into two types, and that one type (EM) should be used sparingly as a pedagogical strategy while the other (IM) should be prioritised. However, the literature also suggests certain issues with such a viewpoint. For one thing, there are extrinsic factors that are widely recognised to exert a strong influence on learning motivation, notably the desire to perform well on tests. Furthermore, not all studies of L2 motivation have found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are mutually exclusive. It has been shown that EM can sometimes contribute to the development of IM (Wang, 2008; Paige, 2011). Meanwhile, the relative value of IM for some students has been questioned, with Chen, Warden & Chang (2005) noting that Chinese learners may have such a compelling sense of obligation to learn that IM is of less significance.

The possibility that IM and EM may interrelate in complex ways and that they may mean different things to different learners in different contexts undermines the simplicity of the original dichotomy. Consequently, Ryan and Deci (2000) incorporated the dichotomy into 'self-determination theory' (SDT). This theory holds that extrinsic goals – behavioural controls with origins outside oneself – can become internalised, and thus become part of one's 'self-concept' (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.24), i.e., one's internal behavioural regulation. This aligns with other theories of self-concept development, notably Girard's (1976) theory of 'mimetic desire', which suggests that individuals acquire their desires from others in their social contexts.

Thus, SDT offers an example of a motivational theory growing more complex in response to the insight that motivational factors are dynamic and individual-specific. What begins as an external imperative can be incorporated into the individual's own guiding desires. But then, this does not always happen. Different people in different contexts respond to motivations in different ways for different reasons. There may be averages. IM may tend to amount to more for a learner than EM. But firm proclamations about what will motivate a person more are difficult to make. For a thorough understanding of motivation, therefore, we need to go beyond an internal/external dichotomy and consider how each relates to, influences, and transforms the other.

2.2.2. Integrative motivation

Another long-standing motivational theory – this time, specific to the L2 motivation field – is Gardner and Lambert's (1972) notion of integrative motivation. Unlike SDT, in which motivation is divided by source (intrinsic, extrinsic), Gardner and Lambert divided it into two types of goals. These are instrumental (a practical need for the language) and integrative. Integrative motivation refers to the desire of the learner to approach a community that speaks a language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Such a learner may have favourable attitudes towards the people, society, and culture with which a language is associated, and so desire to learn the language to integrate themselves (Gardner, 1985). In this view, the more favourable a person's attitudes are, the stronger their L2 motivation (Lerner, 2020).

The original concept of integrativeness, conceived in reference to immigrant groups in Canada, (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985) has undergone some criticism and revision in the intervening years. Notably, the fact that many people learn languages in a context far removed from the community of speakers poses a challenge to its usefulness. English – likely the world's most learned language – is a good example of this, as countless students learn it as a foreign language (EFL) in their home countries. Moreover, as English has become the global language (TESOL, 2008, in Thompson, 2017b, p.487), it is not easily associated with a single culture or community, which raises the question of whether the prospect of 'integration' has any influence on the motivations of most English learners. Finally, because of its focus on the community level, integrativeness originally provided a poor lens to examine the experiences of individuals operating in smaller-scale contexts (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

However, what integrativeness offered even in its earliest conception was a view of motivation that considered how a person's learning decisions might relate to their values and to their context, specifically their social context. Here was the idea that a person might learn a language to change their sociocultural circumstances; to access a community whose identity is defined by language by demonstrating competence in that language; to *acquire a new identity* by acquiring a language. The idea that identities (those one has, and those one desires) underlie L2 motivation was not popularised until some years later, when Norton Pierce (1995) argued that:

(language is) constitutive of and constituted by a language learner's social identity. It is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak… (p.12)

Yet, implicit in the earlier concept of integrativeness is the idea that language is related to identity, and that one can acquire access through the acquisition of a language and the social capital (Bourdieu, 1993) that comes along with it. This core notion of L2 learning as an act of self-identification has been retained in the more recent formulation of integrativeness. Redefined as an individual's motivation to change their social identification on whatever level – local or international (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Yashima, 2009) – integrativeness is still being used as a theoretical lens to explore and explain L2 motivation in research at present. Indeed, research suggests that positive inclinations towards a language/culture/society, and positive social encounters with representatives thereof can improve L2 motivation for both FETs (Gearing & Roger, 2019) and their Korean EFL students (Lerner, 2020).

2.2.3. The L2 Motivation Self-System

While integrativeness is a useful concept, it is concerned foremost with social and cultural motivations. Naturally, there are other ways one might wish to transform oneself, besides socially – e.g., personally, professionally, spiritually. A framework for understanding an individual's motivations must be flexible enough to analyse various dimensions of a desire for self-transformation. With this in mind, we can consider Zoltan Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivation Self-System (L2MSS). Judging by the number of motivational studies that use this framework[10], the L2MSS can safely be described as one of the most influential theories in the past two decades.

The L2MSS is founded on an earlier theory of possible selves proposed by Markus and Nurius (1986), according to which people's behaviour is guided by certain images

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[10] For example, cited in the present thesis: Lamb, 2012; Ölmez, 2015; Moskovsky, et al., 2016; Thompson, 2017a; Kim, Kim & Kim, 2017; Gearing & Roger, 2019; Li & Zhang, 2020. See Boo, et al. (2015) for more.

that they have of themselves in the future. These include an ideal self (who one wishes to become), an expected self, and a feared self (who one wishes to avoid becoming). Building on this, Dörnyei (2005) proposed that L2 motivation could be understood with reference to the self. To quote Kim, Kim, and Kim (2017): 'The main assumption of this system is that learners put effort into learning an L2 in order to decrease the gap between their current status and their desired future self' (p.398).

The L2MSS as Dörnyei proposed it includes two sorts of possible selves. The first and more motivating is the *ideal L2 self*. This is the self a learner dearly wishes to be, and it is a self that speaks the language in question. This ambition can be socially integrative in nature, but it need not be. As Thompson (2017a) puts it, the ideal self has a 'promotion focus' (p.39). Motivation is driven by a desire to acquire through language learning whatever 'attributes an L2 learner would like to possess' (Gearing & Roger, 2019, p.123).

The second self in the L2MSS is the *ought-to self*. This is the self that a learner may feel obliged to become, regardless of their own preferences. A learner with this self is a victim of circumstance, submissive to the demands of the context (Thompson, 2017a, p.38), under pressure to learn. There may be an outcome they wish to prevent, a feared self (Markus & Nurius, 1986), a future in which their life is unpleasant because they have failed to learn the language. Thus, the *ought-to self* is a mirror image of the *ideal L2 self*.

Arguably, it is preferable that learners would be motivated by an *ideal L2 self*. It is easy to imagine such a self might spark and sustain motivation better than an *ought-to self*, and ideal-self motivation is almost certainly a more pleasant experience for the learner. However, not every learner will have or acquire an ideal self. A learner may have an ideal self-image if they have a positive attitude towards the language, a belief that it is possible for them to learn it (MacIntyre, MacKinnon, and Clément, 2009), and a sense that knowing it would make their lives more ideal in some way. Such a condition is not pre-given, and can be fostered, for example through 'social contact with respected others who have acquired the L2' (Lamb, 2012, p.1001). To account for the fact that motivation is shaped by such outside influences, including the learning environment,

'the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, or the experience of success' (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.86), Dörnyei includes a third component in his explanatory model: the L2 learning experience.

In terms of complexity, the L2MSS is a quantum leap beyond its predecessors. It draws on several pre-existing L2 motivation theories and incorporates them into what Dörnyei called 'a broader frame of reference with increased capacity for explanatory power' (2005, p.104). This framework focuses on L2 learning as the same sort of identity work (Norton Pierce, 1995) that I have ascribed to integrativeness, but it is not limited to focusing on the social dimension of life, and so allows for a nuanced examination of L2 motivation that takes some account of the relationship between an individual's desires, identity-related ambitions, and the influence of their context. The L2MSS has been successfully used in many studies, including studies of FETs in Korea, which have shown for example that FETs with 'robust visions' (strong ideal self-images) of themselves as future Korean speakers may be more resilient against demotivation (Gearing, 2019, p.211).

However, the L2MSS is quite restrictive in several respects. Due to the specificity of the two possible selves, gaps and weaknesses have been identified in the framework. Thompson (2017a), for example, has argued that learners who learn as an act of resistance against undesirable positions are not covered by either of the two selves in the standard L2MSS. As a corrective, she proposes that an *anti-ought-to self* be added. Meanwhile, others have noted that the original definitions of the *ought-to self* contain elements that are obligatory and extrinsic, yet also somewhat idealistic and promotion focused (e.g., 'I must learn English, so that people around me will respect me more' [Teimouri, 2017, p.685]). That is, a learner's idealistic desires cannot necessarily be separated from their social obligations. For this reason, some commentators suggest the L2MSS selves be further subdivided into *ideal* and *ought-to self* (own) and *ideal* and *ought-to self* (others) (Teimouri, 2017; Papi, Bondarenko, Mansouri, Feng, & Jiang, 2019).

Also, the 'explanatory power' of the L2MSS has been questioned. The focus of the L2MSS is on possible future selves, and so it may not account for the influence of

identities a learner already has (Lamb, 2017; Gearing & Roger, 2019), which can also be motivating and demotivating[11]. Perhaps relatedly, several recent studies have found that a high degree of motivation according to the L2MSS correlates with intended learning effort, but not necessarily with realised learning effort (Ölmez, 2015; Moskovsky, et al., 2016; Li & Zhang, 2021). Moreover, studies have shown that different components of the L2MSS may be more or less influential in certain groups of learners. For example, Lamb (2012) found that the ideal L2 self may be less influential in compulsory study contexts, or among younger students with 'less realistic' future visions (p.1015).

Finally, conceiving of the context's influence in terms of 'experience' is arguably an oversimplification. There are potentially influential contextual factors which are not 'experienced' in the same way as one experiences a feeling of success or a classroom interaction. An example of such a factor would be an ideology (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Perhaps the learner is situated in a context where one must speak a certain language if one wishes to be heard (Norton Pierce, 1995). Or, perhaps the learner belongs to a 'more collectivist culture' (Papi et al., 2019, p.339), and thus may be more motivated by a sense of social obligation. The L2MSS is not necessarily designed to account for these sorts of cultural and ideological factors.

Thus, while the L2MSS allows for more complexity than many previous models, it may be necessary to employ frameworks that allow for even more complexity if we intend to analyse L2 motivation.

2.2.4. Complex dynamic systems theory

The full complexity of L2 motivation is difficult (or impossible) for any theory to account for. So many factors may play into it (desire, aptitude, philosophy, experience, etc.) that any L2 motivational framework that makes clearly specified predictions is vulnerable to being undermined by examples of learners who defy those predictions

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[11] As a brief example, consider heritage language learners. Their (de)motivations can relate to factors such as their identities as the children of immigrants, their parents' attitudes, and societal pressures to use English (Shin, 2010). These are issues with past and present identities rather than future ones.

and by factors unaccounted for. It is therefore understandable that Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) has grown in popularity among researchers in recent years.

CDST was introduced to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by Diane Larsen-Freeman (1997), but it has its origins elsewhere. CDST is a framework used to analyse the operation of any complex system. It has been observed that dynamic, nonlinear systems – for example, weather systems, flocks of birds, or human cultures – come about through the interaction of diverse and disparate elements, and this is true also of SLA. As Larsen-Freeman (1997) argued, 'it is futile to expect… that we can build a theory of SLA that will hold when all factors are combined' (p.159), and so, 'we need a way to focus on an individual aspect while respecting the complexity of the whole' (p.159), one that treats motivation as 'a process rather than a state' (Gleick, 1987, in Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p.142). CDST represents one way of doing this.

For example, if we wish to ask whether/why a person might become motivated or not, we can first examine their *initial conditions.* Are they in such a state that they might begin to invest effort in learning, or not? For example, do they have an *ideal L2 self*, or a 'vision' of themselves as a speaker of the language (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013)? A person whose initial conditions are right may go through a *phase transition,* a radical change in behaviour (Thompson, 2017a). That is, they may start to learn a language, or stop learning if they already are.

What determines whether one continues to learn or stops learning? The answer has to do with *attractor states* and *repeller states* (de Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2007; Li, 2020). Systems of all sorts are chaotic, and made up of countless elements, but there are overall states they settle into comfortably, and there are states that are uncomfortable and liable to change. There is another factor that limits how much a system might grow (or a person might learn) – the *carrying capacity* (de Bot, et al., 2007), meaning the resources within that system that can fuel change and growth.

For a hypothetical L2 motivation example, we can imagine a person who, for whatever reason, dreams of learning a certain language. They are therefore at a tipping point, with initial conditions that are ripe for change. Some stimulus happens to tip them over

into action (the butterfly effect [de Bot et al., 2007]) and they begin to study regularly (phase transition). They find studying initially enjoyable and continue to do so (attractor state). Eventually learning becomes more difficult and unpleasant as the learner tackles harder grammar (repeller state). The learner's rate of progress slows. They find that they do not have the energy to sustain active study for so little gain (carrying capacity). And so, the learner stops studying, having advanced their language ability to a more satisfactory level (attractor state).

There are several advantages to CDST as a framework. First and most obviously, it is extremely flexible, open to any sort of data. Whether a person wishes to learn a language for career advancement, for personal pleasure, or to prove that the teacher who doubted them was wrong to do so, CDST can be used to analyse their motivation. CDST is so open that it has been used not only to examine L2 motivation in a range of contexts (e.g., Henry, Dörnyei, & Davydenko, 2015; Thompson, 2017a; Li, 2020), but also other elements of SLA, such as variability in L2 skills development between students (Chang & Zhang, 2021).

Another advantage is that CDST gels well with other theories in psychology, notably Csíkszentmihályi's (1990) idea of *flow*, according to which a good alignment of conditions can allow a person to engage effortlessly in highly focused work. Anyone who has ever found themselves so deeply engaged in a project that they have lost track of time or missed a meal without noticing will have a sense of what the *flow* experience is. In language learning, also, people sometimes experience periods of heightened motivation in which they can study and practice for hours without conscious effort. Indeed, if the conditions are right, learners can sustain an overall high degree of motivation for extended periods, for weeks and months. Taking a CDST perspective, Muir and Dörnyei (2013) describe such longer-term experiences as a 'directed motivational current' – episodes in which the conditions for L2 motivation align well, resulting in a 'motivational surge of energy' (p.359).

One final advantage of CDST is that it is suitable to examine motivational changes over time. By taking a view of L2 motivation as a dynamic system, it may be possible to gain insights that would be invisible in studies that take only a snapshot view. For

example, Li (2020) used CDST in a study of the longitudinal motivation of an English learner and was able to determine that the learner's extrinsic and intrinsic motivations conflicted with one another as circumstantial demands (such as tests) arose and passed. Thus, there is a case to be made for studying motivational changes over time, and for using a theoretical framework that conceptualises motivation as a changeable, circumstance-dependent system.

2.3. Taking a grounded view of complexity in L2 (de)motivation research

Any theoretical frame used to examine L2 motivation must be open enough to capture the complexities that go into a person's learning decisions. However, it is also true that with increased openness, a researcher loses the grounding that a comparatively specified theory provides. If a framework like CDST is suitable for examining L2 motivation *and* the behaviour of computer-generated flocks of birds (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p.143), it is a very open framework. There is some risk that L2 motivation studies that employ such a framework will reach conceptual conclusions that are so broad as to be of little pragmatic use. For instance, while a teacher can shape their practice around concrete ideas such as that course books can be a source of demotivation (Dörnyei, 1998), it is less clear what a teacher might do with the idea that learning is influenced by 'attitude, personality factors, cognitive style, hemisphericity, learning strategies, sex, birth order, interests, etc' (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p.151). It is therefore understandable that the drive towards concrete theorising in L2 motivation research continues.

However, too much concreteness also leads to results of limited usefulness. This is especially noticeable in the field of L2 demotivation research. Barron and Hulleman (2014) have called for researchers to take a broad view of demotivation by characterising it as 'cost', one of three components in the motivational calculations of individuals, the other two being 'expectancy' (belief I can succeed) and 'value' (what learning is worth to me). Such a theoretical viewpoint would allow for a nuanced examination of individual (de)motivation, but to date, few L2 researchers have adopted it. Many demotivation studies – perhaps most – continue as they have for decades to build and refine lists of context-specific demotivational factors (e.g., Sakai & Kikuchi,

2009; Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2017; Karaca & Inan, 2020). Much of this work builds on an initial list compiled by Dörnyei:

L2 demotivational factors (Dörnyei, 1998):
- The teacher.
- School facilities.
- Lack of self-confidence due to experiences of failure.
- Negative attitudes towards the language.
- Compulsory nature of study.
- Interference from other foreign languages.
- Negative attitudes towards the community of speakers.
- Attitudes of group members.
- Course books used in class.

Such lists of factors may be useful for some in the field, but they are too specific to be useful for many others. For example, the insight that teachers, school facilities and compulsory study can be demotivating is of use only for understanding students in formal learning contexts. Admittedly, there are many such students in the world, but the group of learners at the heart of the present study – FETs in Korea – may not be among them.

One strategy taken by researchers recently has been to add elements of specificity to complex frameworks. Boo, et al. (2015) note that numerous studies have combined CDST with other theories, such as the L2MSS (Thompson, 2017) and SDT (Li, 2020), trying to get the best of both worlds. Meanwhile, there have been efforts to ground CDST for L2 motivational research by detailing the conditions that will lead to a directed motivational current. Muir and Dörnyei (2013) suggest that such a current is predicated on an ideal self, or 'vision', and that this vision 'must be elaborate and vivid', and that it 'must be sufficiently different from the learner's present self', etc. (p.362). By offering these details as general principles, academics run the risk of making claims that will prove erroneous[12]. However, the desire to provide predictive insights is

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[12] For example, is it true that a vision 'must be elaborate' to sustain motivation? When we consider quite vague motivations such as 'international posture' (Yashima, 2009), it seems realistic that a learner might be committed to learning for a goal that is not clearly specified.

understandable, and these efforts at description illustrate the point that any attempt to explain motivation must allow for complexity whilst being grounded in such a way that the results will offer useful insights.

2.4. Theoretical requirements of the present study

Given what I have outlined in this chapter, the present study on the L2 (de)motivation of FETs requires a theoretical framework that allows for complexity. As Gearing (2019) noted, a 'robust vision' may be a significant component of persistent Korean learning among FETs, but how is it that some FETs come to have such a vision and others do not? Any framework employed to answer this question must be open and flexible enough to analyse a diversity of experiences and perspectives.

As the same time, the chosen framework should be grounded in some specified theory. As to what this theory should be, existing research on FETs suggests a direction. For instance, there are the demotivational factors affecting FETs found by Gearing and Roger (2017), summarised in this list:

- Privileges, security, and comfort associated with being a native English-speaking teacher (NEST).
- Temporary nature of stay in Korea.
- Perceived ideologies and power structures.
- Other, more profitable priorities.
- The L2-speaker identity is the only benefit of learning.

Certain concepts stand out in this list: ideology, power structures, profit, and privilege. This makes sense considering the context. As I describe in Chapter 1, the employment of FETs in Korea is both a result and a cause of ethnolinguistic and economic struggle. Given this, and the fact that Gearing and Roger (2017) have already drawn a link between this struggle and FETs Korean learning demotivation, the theoretical framework for the present study should be one attends to such things as identity-related struggles in the analysis of L2 motivation. In the following chapter, I discuss

the relationship between identity, ideology, and language learning (and teaching), and outline the framework employed in the present study: Foucault's *ethical self-formation.*

Chapter 3: Identity, language learning, and teaching

A central assumption of the present study is that identity and language learning (and language teaching) are closely related. In this chapter, I explain this assumption and outline the case that supports it.

I begin by providing a definition of identity and an explanation of how identity functions in general. I interweave relevant ideas of Michel Foucault and related theorists into this explanation. I go on to describe Foucault's notion of *ethical self-formation,* which is the theoretical framework for the present study.

I also provide a review of the literature that describes the role of identity in language learning/teaching. I include studies that have previously employed *ethical self-formation* in this field*,* as well as others focused on identity and language ideology in order to lay out the intellectual foundations of the present study.

A note on terminology: in this chapter and throughout this thesis, I employ two words that must be defined: 'identity' and 'self'. As I use these words, they both refer to the position one occupies, and both are a way of categorising and understanding a person. The difference, as suggested by Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), is that a 'self' is a person's own understanding of themselves, while an 'identity' is an understanding of a person held by others.

3.1. Identity

As noted in Chapter 2, the desire to achieve a particular identity by learning a language has been theorised in the field of L2 motivation. Learners may learn to pursue a possible future identity, to pursue a 'vision' (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013), to become an 'ideal self' (Dörnyei, 2005), to avoid becoming a 'feared self' (Markus & Nurius, 1986), etc. A learner might also learn because of identities they already have. Identities such as 'prolific language learner' can themselves be part of motivation (Ellis, 2016, p.613). To

understand why people might want to achieve a certain identity by learning a language, it is necessary to consider what identity is and how it functions.

3.1.1. What is identity?

An identity is a position someone occupies relative to others (Connolly, 2002; Hemmi, 2014, in Gearing and Roger, 2017, p.9). All people occupy various identity positions, which are indexed by 'membership categorisation devices' (Zhu Hua, 2015); identifying features such as skin colour, or behaviours that are associated with a given identity (Butler, 2009).

In general discourse, people are commonly identified by their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, nationality, and age, among other things. Identities can also emerge in specific contexts and relationships: e.g., sister, immigrant, teacher, superior officer. They can also be highly individualistic: e.g., prolific language learner, marathoner, film buff.

In short, identities are meaningful labels assigned on the basis of identifying features/behaviours, and used by people to describe others, and to describe themselves in ways that are comprehensible to others. These two descriptions are related, as we draw on external discourses for our self-identification (Clarke, 2009). As we live in society and interact with others, we learn what is expected of us, and this shapes our self-image, our behaviour, and our values (Girard, 1976; Butler, 2009). Thus, identity is not a fixed quality, but comes about in a social context.

3.1.2. How does identity function?

3.1.2.1. Identity reduces chaos

Due to its context-dependent nature and its diversity, identity is highly complex. If our identity is what we are, then we are different things to different people in different places, even on account of a single identity position. Being a speaker of Tamil may mean one thing in Sri Lanka while meaning something quite different in Canada (Canagarajah, 2010). Furthermore, an individual's identities are intersectional (Collins, Bilge, & Bilge 2016), meaning they relate to each other to create a complex, overall

subject in society. In Korea, the identities 'FET', 'black', and 'American' all carry certain implications, some of which are contradictory (e.g., FET often implies white [Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Jenks, 2017, 2019]), so a person who claims all three of these identities occupies a unique and paradoxical position (see Charles, 2019 for examples).

Despite this, identities are still a simplified representation of reality. They unavoidably gloss over human nuance. It is common sense that no matter how many identities two people have in common (gender, age, etc.), they are still different people. As Connolly (2002) puts it, we are 'not exhausted by... identity' (p.120). However, while we might wish to know other humans in their fullness, we cannot. Even knowing oneself is not entirely possible. Internally, everyone is influenced by thoughts, ideologies, and experiences that they do not consciously recognise and may not be able to articulate (Clarke, 2009).

Thus, a key function of identity is to reduce the chaos of the social world. Identities offer a practical heuristic for understanding ourselves and others in somewhat generalised terms. Moreover, because identities are often associated with certain actions and values, they also provide guidance for behaviour. For example, teachers use their own identities – their backgrounds, their beliefs, their professional role as they understand it (Farrell, 2011, 2016) – as a frame of reference to organise and direct their pedagogical practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, in Yazan, 2018, p.2).

3.1.2.2. Many people and institutions are invested in identity conformity

The usefulness of identity for reducing chaos depends on the degree to which the associated generalisations are accurate. For example, the identity labels of 'man' and 'woman' can be used to neatly divide the world (designate bathrooms and sports teams etc.) so long as they are widely accepted. However, the greater the diversity in how 'man' and 'woman' are understood, and the more people reject the label when it is applied to them, the less useful the label will be. With the aim of avoiding the comparative chaos that comes with uncertain identity definitions, people and institutions not only ascribe meanings to identities, they also often work to enforce those meanings by pressuring people to behave in line with identity-based expectations.

Foucault (1995) refers to this pressuring as 'discipline' – the systematic effort at all levels of society to normalise its members. The imperatives driving this normalisation are ideological. Belief systems of all sorts rest on established understandings of identity, and so are invested in maintaining these understandings. For example, nationalism requires that a country's people be clearly distinguishable from those of another country. Meanwhile, from the perspective of governments and other institutions that must deal with diverse masses of people, clear identity categorisation is necessary to assign people the right positions and resources to maximise their economic productivity. Unity is more manageable than multiplicity (Foucault, 1995, p.219). Even individuals are often invested in the normalcy of themselves and others. Because identity depends on difference (Connolly, 2002), a person's self-image may rely on the marginalisation and exclusion of contrasting identities and behaviours – consider, for example, homophobia.

3.1.2.3. Identity is used as a basis for apportioning privilege

The preference for identity conformity has many social consequences. Among them, there is the fact that privileges – i.e., professional opportunities, social access, exemption from undesirable obligations (Minarik, 2017) – are generally apportioned to those whose identities are preferred depending on the context and the ideologies at work therein (Butler, 2009). This is plain to see with FETs in Korea, who are employed for their linguistic, national, and (unofficially) racial identities. To use Bourdieu's (1993) term, these identities are a substantial source of 'capital' in the Korean ELT market, more so even than professional qualifications in many cases (Ruecker & Ives, 2015).

It must also be noted that the right to claim an identity is itself a privilege, and certain identities may qualify or disqualify a person for others. For example, the identity of 'Korean' is often defined in relation to two pre-requisite identities: 'ethnically Korean' and 'Korean speaker'. In Korea, the 'ethnically Korean' identity alone provides an immigrant access to a secure visa (the F4), but the 'Korean speaker' identity may also be necessary for seamless social inclusion (Jenks, 2019). At the same time, 'ethnically Korean' implies 'Asian', and 'Asian' is seen by some as a disqualifier for the identity of 'native English speaker', thus complicating employment as an FET (Javier, 2014; Ruecker & Ives, 2015). In examples such as this, the complex ways that identities

relate to privilege (and the denial thereof) can be seen. Everyone occupies various identity positions, any one of which may be a source of advantages, disadvantages, or both depending on how the relevant identities are valued (Park, G., 2015).

3.1.3. Identity-based privileges reflect larger ideology discourses

As to the valuation of identities, if a person's appearance and behaviour conform with their assigned identity, they can be said to be 'normative'. Identities that are considered normative in a context may be 'invisible and unmarked' (Kubota and Lin, 2006, p.48). That is, people with these identities may be presumed legitimate, while those with other identities are treated with suspicion (Minarik, 2017, p.56). There are several examples relevant to Korean ELT. Notably, non-White FETs may find that some students and employers doubt their status as 'native speakers' (see Javier, 2014). However, white foreigners in Korea can also be subject to what Foucault calls 'normalizing judgment' (p.177). Killick's (1995) experiences exemplify this:

> Koreans seemed to find it funny when I came too close to (behaving like a Korean). In their eyes, the appropriate way for me to behave was in accordance with their clear if over-generalized notions of western culture. (p.88)

Examples such as these show that individual experiences of identity-based privilege and marginalisation reflect larger ideologies. In the above cases, these are ethnolinguistic and national ideologies in Korea and the Korean ELT industry. These ideologies comprise a 'pre-given power structure' (Hennig, 2010, p.308), a disciplinary system of identity management. It is notable that this structure takes a linguistic form, expressed interpersonally as in Killick's (1995) case, or written into policy like the E2 visa regulations (Ministry of Justice, Korea Immigration Service, 2017). The linguistic circulation of ideology is what Foucault (1972) refers to as 'discourses', and it is when these discourses are expressed that the meaning and value of different identities are reified and reinscribed.

3.2. Language learning as identity formation

So far in this chapter, I have presented what might be called a victimic view of identity. People are categorised according to identity, compelled to conform to established identity expectations, and given or denied access to resources on an identity basis. However, it is crucial to note that people are not passive in the face of disciplinary forces. Rather, we can and do exercise agency with respect to our identities and, in so doing, seek to improve our social positions (Clarke and Hennig, 2013). As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) contend: 'individuals are agentive beings who are constantly in search of new social and linguistic resources which allow them to resist identities that position them in undesirable ways...' (p.27). I elaborate on this point and relate it to language learning and teaching in the following subsections.

3.2.1. Identity is negotiated and performed in reference to value systems

In many respects, identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but rather a performance. Even though many identities are predicated on apparently objective features – e.g., skin colour – Butler (2004) has argued that all identities are performative. That is, people make decisions about how to behave based on the identities they wish to claim or reject, and they do this by referring to the normative understandings of those identities.

Identity has several qualities that make it negotiable. First, identity is discursive. The definition, meaning and value of identities are established through sociocultural discourses in which many people participate (Hall, 1997), meaning that all participants have a role in defining and redefining identity[13]. Second, identity evolves. People naturally acquire new identities over time, either organically (e.g., old) or intentionally (e.g., gold medallist). Third, identity is behavioural. Indeed, some identities are principally defined by behaviour (e.g., athlete). Therefore, some identities can be claimed or rejected through behavioural management.

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[13] Or, as Norton and Toohey (2011) put it: 'L2 learning is not entirely determined by structural conditions and social contexts, partly because these conditions and contexts are themselves in states of production' (p.415)

Thus, there is scope for a person to define, acquire, and perform identities with agency. Moreover, there are compelling reasons to do this. The fact that certain identities are a pre-requisite for access to various resources (Butler, 2009; Minarik, 2017) gives people motivation to perform/acquire these identities and thereby 'become eligible for recognition' (Butler, 2009). Conversely, if one is denied access due to an identity, or if one dislikes the definition of an identity, they can decline to perform it as an act of resistance (Butler, 2004). Thus, one's identity can be considered a 'site of struggle' (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p.36).

A person's identity practices, whether conforming or resisting, self-affirming of self-transformational, are performed in reference to the ideologies/value systems to which that person is subject. As participants in discourse, individuals occupy what Bourdieu calls a 'habitus' (Lizardo, 2004), meaning they are aware of their position in their social context, aware of generally accepted identity norms, and aware of the ways identities are valued in their context. This awareness allows them to predict how others will evaluate their identity and make decisions of how to act and to transform themselves 'with the approval of others' (Hennig, 2010, p.308). Seen in this way, a person's decisions about claiming, rejecting, and acquiring identities are an outcome of that person's assessment of their existing identity positions, contextual values, and hopes for an improved position. As Darvin and Norton (2015) describe it:

> (A person's) habitus, shaped by prevailing ideologies, predisposes them to think and act in certain ways, but it is through desire and imagination that they are able to invest in practices that can transform their lives. (p.46)

3.2.2. Language ability and its associated socioeconomic benefits

Given all the above, it makes sense that a desire for identity transformation would motivate language learning. Though the acquisition of any skill may change one's identity in desirable ways (e.g., dance, coding), the identities associated with language ability often have significant social consequences. Most basically, one may need competence in a language to be admitted to a group that uses that language or values competence in it (Bourdieu, 1993; Wenger, 1998). However, the value of language goes far beyond straightforward communication. Language ability is often associated

with race, ethnicity, and nationality (Shuck, 2006), and for this reason, it is commonly used to determine who is welcome to position themselves as a group member. For a newcomer to a group (e.g., an immigrant), inclusion, respect, and the right to speak can hinge on one's competence in the dominant language (Norton Pierce, 1995). As noted previously, there is reason to believe that the Korean language might play a gatekeeping role in Korea. Indeed, it has been shown that foreign spouses in Korea may learn Korean to integrate with their Korean families and Korean social circles, despite being ethnic outsiders (Jun & Ha, 2015)[14].

Also, the identities that come with language ability are often a source of economic advantage. The case of English in Korea provides an excellent example (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.2.). English in Korea has discursive associations with prosperity, with the rich western world, and with globalised modernity. In this sense, acquiring English is as much about transforming identity – e.g., from provincial to global (Cho, 2014) – as it is about acquiring a usable communicative skill. It is notable that 'authentic' English and 'proper' pronunciation are highly valued (Choe, 2004; Jeon & Lee, 2017), and that English skill is assessed for admission to university regardless of one's field of study, and for employment even in cases where English is unlikely to be necessary for a given job[15]. In this sense, economic advantage in Korea is thought to depend at least as much on being identified as 'a person who speaks English well' as it does on a demonstration of communicative English ability.

Thus, a learner acquires not only a practical skill when they learn a language, they also acquire symbolic forms of capital (Kramsch, 2009). The possibility of acquiring this capital, and thereby becoming eligible for access to desirable social and economic resources, may motivate a person to learn. This is a socially situated view of motivation, referred to by Norton as 'investment' (Norton Pierce, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Darvin & Norton, 2015). That is, learners invest time and effort in learning a language in anticipation of acquiring capital in a given social context. This perspective uses identity and ideology to explain not only L2 learning motivation, but also demotivation.

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[14] It must be noted that the foreign spouses in Jun and Ha (2015) were not FETs, but rather 'from less developed Asian countries' (p.128), including, 'China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Russia/Uzbekistan' (p.129).

[15] Here, I speak from experience as a teacher working with undergraduates in Korea.

Even if a learner is motivated to learn on the level of individual psychology (à la Dörnyei's [2005] *ideal L2 self*), they may still not invest effort in certain learning practices. They may dislike the learning practices of a given classroom because they judge those practices to be unlikely to help them acquire the capital they desire (Norton, 2000), perhaps because those practices are boring or irrelevant (Karaca & Inan, 2020, p.10), or because they reflect 'racist, sexist, or homophobic' ideas (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p.37). Or, demotivation may occur because the learner doubts that they will receive capital even if they learn successfully due to other, perhaps less malleable identity-related barriers to capital acquisition – e.g., the learner's non-Korean ethnic identity marks them as an outsider (Killick, 1995; Gearing & Roger, 2017; Gray, 2017b). Alternatively, a learner may be unmotivated if they recognise that a given language (or a particular skill) is not highly valued – e.g., English writing skill is not consequential for school exams (Karaca & Inan, 2020, p.10).

3.2.3. The 'other' values of language learning

A desire to acquire concrete social and economic advantages can certainly motivate language learning. However, there is considerable nuance in the ways that individuals assign value to languages, and not all assigned values are entirely captured by the categories of 'social' (in the small-scale, interpersonal sense of the word) or 'economic'.

The value of a language is determined in part by what Bailey (2007) terms 'sociohistorical associations' (p.257) made between the language and various identities and values in a given context. A person who learns or speaks those languages may take on the relevant identities/values. For instance, there is the desirable association in Korea between English and a 'global character' (Cho, 2014). In contrast, for Sri Lankans in Canada, the Tamil language may have an undesirable association with the Sri Lankan caste system (Canagarajah, 2010). The prospect of acquiring identities/values such as these may (de)motivate a learner. However, while identities such as these may have social/economic consequences, that does not imply that social/economic motivations are primary. A person might wish to acquire a 'global character' for self-satisfaction rather than economic advancement, and a person might be unwilling to learn Tamil because they wish to avoid its negative associations, even if Tamil speakers are not socially excluded in their context.

Though identity can be a 'site of struggle' (Darvin & Norton, 2015), and L2 learning can therefore be a sort of vying for position, there are L2 learners for whom this characterisation is excessively combative. Desire drives L2 learning (Motha & Lin, 2014), and desire is diverse. Some learners learn because they identify as learners (Ellis, 2016), or for leisure (Kubota, 2011), or out of a longing for the exotic (see Takahashi [2013]: *akogare* desire), or as part of their development and expression of sexual identity in a foreign country (King, 2008). These examples show that L2 learning can fulfil desires related to identity and ideology, and these desires can be deeply personal.

As for how learning a given language might satisfy someone's desires, this may have to do with the aforementioned 'sociohistorical associations' (Bailey, 2007, p.257) the language has for the learner. Hennig's (2010) study provides an example. The participants – Hongkongers – chose to learn German due to the associations they had with it. For example, they thought of it as a tough, strong language, and associated the language with famous German musicians and scientists. This association gave them 'a positive disposition towards leaning the language' (Hennig, 2010, p.312). Hennig's study demonstrated that the learners imagined various things about German. One imagined it would help her feel strong. Another imagined moving to Germany and learning mathematics in which his German 'idols' had learned it (p.318).

To reiterate an earlier point, desires such as these (appearing strong, moving to Germany) may have economic and social consequences, but they also illustrate a nuanced, personal desire on the part of learners. It is significant, also, that these desires relate to discursive associations made with the German language, and that these include qualities such as strength. This suggests a person's learning motivations might relate to abstract rather than concrete possibilities of self-transformation, and to remote rather than immediate cultures. This ties into the reconceptualisation of integrative motivation (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2) away from a limited focus on immediate social integration, towards an expanded sense of culturally re-orienting oneself.

All of this suggests that it can be beneficial for a researcher to employ a framework that characterises L2 learning as a process of identity formation and allows for a variety of personal desires, identities, and ideologies to be considered. The possibility that the learning process is a struggle for capital should be allowed for, but not presumed. This may be especially true for the present study. Research on FETs has already shown that they may expect little in the way of hard economic capital as a reward for learning Korean (Gearing & Roger, 2017) and that they can get by without learning the language (Gearing & Roger, 2018). Given this, it is reasonable to explore the possibility that other, perhaps more personal motivations may be influential for FETs who do choose to learn Korean.

3.3. Theoretical framework: Ethical self-formation

In this section, I will outline the theoretical framework used for analysis in the present study: *ethical self-formation*, a theory introduced to the L2 learning and teaching field by Clarke and Hennig (Clarke, 2009; Hennig, 2010; Clarke & Hennig, 2013).

Ethical self-formation is a theory of agentic decision making conceived by Michel Foucault in the last years of his life. In his earlier work, Foucault took a historical perspective to argue that societies have sought increasing control over citizens to maximise economic utility and political docility (Foucault, 1995). Foucault suggested that this is achieved by techniques such as confinement and separation (Foucault, 1988), ever-increasing assessment and classification, the extension of disciplinary demands into all domains of life (Foucault, 1995), and an ever-developing, ever-deepening scientific knowledge of individuals (Foucault, 1995, 2003) – for instance, by making human sexuality an area of scientific/medical study (Foucault, 1978). In his last works, *The History of Sexuality* volumes 2 and 3 (Foucault, 1984, 1985), Foucault took an alternative perspective; that of the individuals who are subject to these external forces of control. He articulated a theory to explain how people respond with agency to the disciplinary demands of the context they find themselves in, whether by conforming or resisting to pursue a more ideal life: the theory of *ethical self-formation*.

In explaining the drive of each person to improve themselves, Foucault suggested that the sociocultural context subjects our lives to *problematisations* (Gutting, 2005, p.1586). That is, the context invites us to make our lives more ideal by engaging in certain self-transformational behaviours, which Foucault referred to as *technologies of the self* [16] (Foucault, 1997). These technologies:

> …permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves. (Foucault, 1997, p.225)

This process of transforming oneself as one is 'permitted' to do is *ethical self-formation.* In *History of Sexuality vol. 2: The use of pleasure,* Foucault (1985) identified four components to the process[17].

(1) The *ethical substance:* This is the part of the individual (their self/identity) that makes them subject to a problematisation, and it is the part that is to be acted on/transformed.

(2) The *mode of subjection*: This is the authoritative system of contextual values (norms, attitudes, ideologies, discourses) that assigns value to certain behaviours, and defines how an individual is to behave/transform themselves.

(3) *Self-practices*: These are the self-transformational behaviours the individual is called on to engage in.

(4) *Telos*: This is the goal; the ideal end; the socially desirable outcome for the individual's life.

Foucault originally exemplified these four axes using classical attitudes to sex, though the framework has since been employed to study language learning and teaching. As illustration, I will use one of Foucault's own examples of ancient sexuality (1985) and language learning examples from Hennig (2010).

In Foucault's description, the ancient Greek attitude to sex was essentially that men should have it only as much as was believed healthy; not less or more, and certainly

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[16] Foucault used the word 'technologies' as others might use 'techniques' or 'operations'.
[17] Note: The definitions of the four axes presented here are my own words.

not so much that one was controlled by desire. Therefore, the problematisation was in this wise:

- *Ethical substance*: The *aphrodisia*; the sexual impulses of men.
- *Mode of subjection*: The rules governing the right time, right amount, and right attitude towards sex.
- *Self-practices*: Self-rule; the battle against the desire for excess.
- *Telos:* Freedom from control by desire; sexual moderation.

Taking this view, ancient Greek men were invited to achieve an ideal life (as defined by ideologies of the time) by moderating their sexual expression. It must be noted that a problematisation such as this requires an agentic response. The results depend on one's willingness and ability to participate, and presumably some men were unwilling or unable. Moreover, not all ancient Greek lives were problematised in this way. Women's lives were not (Foucault, 1985), and slaves' lives, by definition, never are (Gutting, 2005). Hence, Foucault's use of the word 'permit' in reference to *technologies of the self* (1997, p.225). In an ideological context, not all self-transformational activities are valued in the same way, and not all individuals are (necessarily) invited to achieve the same *teloi.* That is, the 'pre-given power structure' (Hennig, 2010, p.208) provides space for a person to create themselves, but it is a limited space defined by identities and values.

As a comparison in the domain of L2 motivation, we can consider examples from Hennig (2010) who studied learners of German in Hong Kong:

- *Ethical substance*: '…the learners' past learning experiences, their feelings and emotions, their imaginations held about the language and their self-perceptions as learners of an 'unusual' language' (p.311).
- *Mode of subjection*: '…values and beliefs they had attached to learning German' (p.313); e.g., it is a 'strong' language (p.312), it is associated with mathematics (p.318) and music (p.311), and learning it makes one 'special' because few in Hong Kong choose to do so (p.313).

- *Self-practices*: '…out-of-class activities... preparing their homework, surfing German websites, reading German books, listening to German music and/or attending German film screenings' (p.315).
- *Telos:* Goals were often vague ('guided… by an intuition' [p.317]); goals shifted over time as German proficiency improved and external factors emerged (employment opportunities, financial constraints, etc.) (p.317).

These results demonstrate that the framework of *ethical self-formation* supports analysis of both individual and contextual factors affecting L2 motivation. In the above case, we can see factors ranging from emotion to language ideology are represented. It appears that these learners' lives are problematised in such a way that they feel a desire to improve themselves. They selected German as a means of self-improvement (presumably from among options) due to discursive associations between that language and certain aspects of themselves (e.g., an interest in music) and certain values they might acquire by learning it, either generally (e.g., strength) or specifically within the Hong Kong context (e.g., specialness).

On cursory examination, we might suggest that the guiding ideology for Hennig's learners is neoliberal; a pervasive, ongoing imperative to add market value to themselves (Kramsch, 2014). However, this is not a conclusion that Hennig reaches. Indeed, when she asked one of her participants what employment they hoped to gain through learning German, the participant replied: 'No idea, no idea. I just want to learn German' (Hennig, 2010, p.317). This illustrates the fact that a learner's motivation need not be founded on a concrete expectation of capital acquisition. Even factors such as a vague intuition, a love of music, and a general desire to be special can motivate learning. This is why Clarke and Hennig (2013) recommend the use of *ethical self-formation* as an analytical framework, because it enables researchers to:

> ...capture the ways in which learning is perceived as meaningful for learners' lives... (and) focus on how learning can support learners in their self-development and the formation of their 'selves', in ways not necessarily linked to necessity, struggle, and survival. (p.79)

Hennig's (2010) study provides further insights about the self-formation process. She observes that the learners' chosen *self-practices* may relate to their identities. In one

case, Hennig notes that a learner whose interest in German connects to its association with classical music: 'employed her German skills for writing the lyrics for the classical piano pieces she composed in her free time' (Hennig, 2010, p.315). Examples such as this suggest that *ethical self-formation* through language learning is an integrated process in which self, action, and goal relate directly to one another to create a desired version of the self in the present (through one's daily practices) and in the future (achievement of one's goals). This gels with Norton's idea that learners invest in practices that have a 'meaningful connection (with their) desire and commitment to learn a language' (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p.415).

Another insight from Hennig's study is that one's self-formation (or, 'self-creation' [Infinito, 2003]) does not have to be entirely in line with the expectations of others, nor does it necessarily have to be approved of by others. Consider the following quote from one of her participants:

> Others may think I'm crazy! 'English is difficult enough! How can you teach your brother German?!' Well, the experiment has proved that I'm not crazy, my brother can really understand and also speak German. And now we are so happy speaking an 'ET' language at home! (hahaha...). (Hennig, 2010, p.316)

This quote demonstrates that a person can exercise the agency inherent to self-creation to go against the flow. One can claim and perform identities in such a way as to take on personally preferable positions, rejecting or resisting undesirable positioning by others[18]. That is, if the goal of self-creation is to 'give one's life a certain kind of individuality and special shape' (Hennig, 2010, p.308), then both conformity and resistance may help to achieve this, depending on one's position in relation to contextual values.

Overall, Hennig's (2010) study suggests that *ethical self-formation* can be used to examine a wide range of language learning motivations and relate these to identity and ideology. As I noted in Chapter 1, reading Hennig was my original inspiration for choosing this framework for the present study. My hope has been to capture the ways

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[18] Thompson (2017b) also notes that an L2 learner might learn to prove others wrong.

that FETs' Korean learning decisions might relate to their desires for meaningful self-transformation. I made this choice on the assumption that more concrete motivations such as economic advantage might be less significant for FETs[19]. I also had in mind the fact that the context FETs occupy is steeped in ideology (linguistic, ethnic, economic, educational, etc.), and that the position FETs occupy within these ideologies is one of tension, privilege, and marginalisation (see Chapter 1, sections 1.3.2 to 1.3.6). I was curious to learn more about how individuals are subject to, and respond to, these ideologies, and how learning Korean (or not) might be a decision that positioned FETs in relation to these ideologies – i.e., whether choosing to learn Korean (or not) might be construed as an act of conformity or resistance.

3.4. Identities and ideologies of language teaching

3.4.1. Language teaching is identity work

In a sense, teaching is an especially Foucauldian job, with a clear 'disciplinary' function. Teachers inculcate in students the values of society and prepare them for lives of economic productivity. This work is enormously consequential, and so the question of who teachers are and how their identities and behaviours affect students is of great importance.

As with all identities, the identity of 'teacher' is shaped by both individual and contextual factors. Farrell (2016) identifies several sorts of individual contributors, including a teacher's philosophy (i.e., background), principles (i.e., beliefs about education), and practice (i.e., the pedagogical methods one uses to realise one's principles in the classroom). In terms of context, the Douglas Fir Group (2016) suggest that teachers are subject to various pressures at the micro (i.e., classroom), meso (i.e., school, institution) and macro (i.e., society, policy) levels. Ideology permeates all these levels, impressing upon teachers a sense of what is expected of them. This may or may not accord with a teacher's own beliefs. Indeed, early in-service teachers often find the realities of practice so different from their own imaginations that they experience 'praxis shock', a negative emotional response so strong that it may be

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[19] An assumption grounded in experience and affirmed by Gearing and Roger (2017).

partly responsible for the high rate of turnover in the teaching profession (Farrell, 2016).

Early-career shock exemplifies the central *problematisation* of teaching. That is, teachers are called upon to adapt themselves to the job. This adaptation takes place in several domains relating to identity. It involves taking on a variety of roles that may or may not come naturally to a given teacher – e.g., motivator, communication facilitator, entertainers, and socialisers, etc. (Farrell, 2011). It also involves a delicate positioning of oneself in relation to the students, building sufficient rapport to facilitate teaching, while maintaining an appropriate professional distance for the same purpose (Pinner, 2018). This requires a degree of emotional management. Indeed, teaching has been characterised as a form of 'emotional labour', in which teachers tend to intentionally display positive emotions like excitement, curiosity, and confidence (Ahmed 2004; Benesch, 2012) while hiding unacceptable feelings like anger, frustration and disappointment (Holt, Anderson, & Rouzie, 2003; Gallagher, Gray, & Lee, 2021) on the belief that a positive emotional profile will encourage students. Also, in the case of FETs, other sorts of emotional/identity display may be expected – for instance, enthusiasm for and expertise about famous elements of their own (presumed) western culture (see Rivers [2019]: 'Christmas tree decorating, the story of Halloween, festivals in America etc.' [p.385])[20].

In this way, teachers engage in self-formation (Foucault, 1984, 1985), shaping their identities in response to the ideological demands to which they are subject. As to what those ideologies are, neoliberalism has been frequently cited (e.g., Benesch, 2012; Kramsch, 2014; Jenks, 2019), with teachers in various contexts under pressure to 'keep the customers happy' (Farrell, 2011, p. 59; see also O'Reilly Hayes [2020]). It has been suggested that the modern education system takes as its ideal teacher the 'disembodied professional', lacking their own passions, serving the interests of their students and employers (McWilliams, 2000, in Gallagher, et al., 2021).

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[20] Author's note: Living in Korea, I am invited to conduct paid workshops on western culture with surprising frequency, given that my only academic expertise is in language education. I ran a two-hour session on 'British culture' one year before the time of writing, and I am slated to give a talk on 'Global manners' in a few months' time. As to what 'global manners' are, I have yet to find this out.

However, as noted earlier in this chapter, self-formation is not a passive process. Whether they choose to conform or to resist, teachers are driven by emotion and desire as they form their identities (Motha & Lin, 2014; Wolff & De Costa, 2017). Miller, Morgan, and Medina (2017) provide an example of a teacher on the conforming side. Their participant did not ascribe much value to standardised test scores originally, but ultimately came to value them as an easy means to satisfy a desire for predictability and validation. In contrast, there are the teachers in Gallagher (2018), who pursued higher qualifications in reaction to their positioning as teachers hired only for their native-speaker status. There is also Morgan (2004), who used 'strategic performance' of identity to 'counteract stereotypes held by… students' (p.172). Thus, identity in teaching is resource for adaptation, resistance, and transformation. A teacher's identity position is negotiated between them and the various other stakeholders in education. This identity tends to solidify over time (Clarke, 2009) as the teacher develops a sense of how to organise their practice in relation to what they believe and to what is expected of them (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Yazan, 2018).

As to what this has to do with the present study on FETs learning Korean or not, the possibility that their identity positions as teachers may have some bearing on their learning decisions must be considered. As noted in Chapter 1, FETs are hired into a context in which their existing language identities are valued, as is a monolingual approach to English education (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.2). Indeed, in previous research, FETs have directly cited their professional position as a reason not to learn Korean, either because employment is temporary (Gearing & Roger, 2017, 2019), or because their position is a comfortable, privileged one (Gearing & Roger, 2017), or because Korean colleagues may dissuade them from using Korean (Gray, 2018). The last point is particularly significant, as it relates to a prominent area of ideological tension in the wider ELT field: whether or not English teachers should use languages other than English in the classroom.

3.4.2. Monolingual vs. plurilingual English teaching

The linguistic identities/resources of English teachers are a point of contention in the ELT industry due to conflicting beliefs about how teachers can best facilitate students learning. At one extreme, there is the 'English only' (McMilllan & Rivers, 2011) position

that favours 'maximal' English use (Macaro, 2014). The Korean government is among the educational stakeholders that adopts this position.

As part of its commitment to English education as a global economic strategy (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.2.), the government has enacted numerous policies to support students' development of communicative competence in English. The method of *communicative language teaching* (CLT) was first enshrined in the Korean curriculum in 1995 (Shin, 2007). In the same year, the EPIK program began to hire FETs into public schools (Lee, H.S., 2020), and over subsequent years, the government has invested in training Korean teachers to 'teach English through English' (Choi, 2015). The aim has been to foster an English-medium pedagogy that 'emphasizes learning to communicate as opposed to learning a set of (grammar) rules' (Yoon, 2004, p.4), with a focus on 'exchanging information, solving problems, asking favors, expressing feelings, etc.' (Yoon, 2004, p.7).

As McMillan and Rivers (2011) note, 'exclusive use of the target language is promoted as a key feature' (p.251) of this sort of pedagogical philosophy[21] – exclusive, in that the students and teachers must not use other languages. The students' L1 in particular is conceived of as a crutch; a resource used *instead* of the target language; a 'habit' that must be overcome (Howatt, 2004, p.221). Within such an ideological context, the role of an English teacher is to ensure that students use only English or as much English as possible in class. FETs are employed to fulfil this role, and as O'Reilly Hayes (2020) demonstrates, may be explicitly aware of this:

> My students' parents are working hard to pay taxes to fund these lessons. If they were to see their children using Korean in the classroom, they may grow angry or even question my worth as an educator. As well as being embarrassing, this could endanger my employment status. (p.10)[22]

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[21] Note: McMillan and Rivers (2011) were describing a Japanese university context.

[22] I have had related experiences myself. In one of my first teaching jobs, after using some Korean to speak with a student, a Korean colleague told me outright that they hired me to speak only English in class. Relatedly, Gearing and Roger (2019) found that various experiences in Korea – the obligation to renew work contracts, the pressure to use English at work – can impress upon FETs that 'their own Korean proficiency (is) secondary to the host society's acquisition of English' (p.130).

However, in wider academic circles, the English-only position has been subject to criticism for some years. On the one hand, there is the argument that this position underwrites exclusionary ideologies. The preference for monolingual education leads to the privileged hiring or 'native speakers' as teachers on the belief that such people are monolingual (a questionable assumption [see Ellis, 2016]) and are therefore ideal teachers (Lowe, 2020). Moreover, in an English-only setting, teachers and students who use other languages are defined as deficient. This has various negative social and psychological effects. In some contexts, parents may deny their children the chance to learn a heritage language to prioritise learning a contextually predominant one (Higgins & Ponte, 2017). In Korea, many Korean students are characterised (including by themselves) as failures at learning English [23] (Byean, 2017), and pressure to speak English in class has been associated with student stress and even suicide (Kang, H.S., 2012).

Furthermore, the idea that teachers should use only the target language has been criticised. Ellis (2013, 2016) has argued that a teacher's language identities and learning experiences have a large impact on their professional identity, and that language students 'are best served by a teacher who has experience of becoming plurilingual and of plurilingual language use' (Ellis, 2016, p.605). Indeed, research into teachers' perspectives and practices has repeatedly found that they favour judicious use of the students' L1 for various pedagogical purposes, including rapport building, supporting lower-proficiency students, and modelling multilingual communication practices (Forman, 2011; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; S'ad & Qadermazi, 2015; Zheng, 2017; Chu, 2019; Inal & Turhanlı, 2019). Song and Lee (2018) also showed that young Korean students may welcome a teacher's L1 use. Thus, the expectation of a monolingual pedagogy represents a substantial limitation on teachers – a reality reflected in the sentiment expressed by FETs in Jeon (2009) that they were employed as 'performing monkeys' (p.238) rather than teachers.

All of this makes an English teacher's language practices a potent site for identity work in Korea. A teacher can conform to the demands of the ideological context by limiting

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[23] Such learners are identified by a Korean neologism: *yeongpoja* (영포자), meaning a person who has given up on English (Byean, 2017).

their own language use. Alternatively, they can resist by employing diverse linguistic resources and encouraging students to do the same. This second approach, referred to as 'translanguaging', has been advanced by numerous theorists as a way for teachers to engage with, and show respect to, their students' linguistic identities (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; 2015). A translinguistic pedagogy may offer a means to undermine ideologies of monolingualism that separate and hierarchise languages (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; García, 2014), assign ownership of languages to certain groups of people[24], and devalue the complex linguistic identities of teachers and students (Higgins & Ponte, 2017).

3.5. Looking forward to the present study

As I have suggested in this chapter, language learning and teaching can be understood as a process of self-creation. They can be construed as an attempt to add value to oneself and improve one's position in relation to an ideology. Indeed, both using and not using a language can be self-creational acts, as conformity and resistance are both means of positioning oneself.

In seeking to understand why FETs do or do not learn Korean, it is therefore reasonable to ask how their decisions might reflect identities they claim or wish to claim based on their values and those of their context. Since, as Hennig's (2010) study shows, the relevant identities/values can be highly individual, this study requires a methodology that can capture the nuances of individual experience and understanding. I present such a method in the following chapter: Narrative inquiry.

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[24] Examples: The Korean ethnic and linguistic identities are related (Jenks, 2017; Lee, 2018); English is 'thornily intertwined' with whiteness (Motha, 2006, p.496)

Chapter 4: Research methodology

In this chapter, I outline the research methods and procedures I employed for the present study. My chosen methodology was narrative inquiry. I describe what this methodology is and the reasoning that led me to select it, and I detail the research process from research question formulation to participant recruitment, data collection, and the initial steps of data analysis.

4.1. Narrative inquiry

4.1.1. What is a narrative?

At the level of social interaction, a narrative is a story that encapsulates and reconstructs experience and is told to others so they can share in that experience (Kelly, 2018). As simple as this concept may appear on the surface, narratives are in fact a complex and essential aspect of human cognition and culture.

It has been argued that humans think in narratives (Widrich, 2012) and that most of a person's knowledge, including their self-knowledge, is tied up in narratives (Ricoeur, 1984; MacIntyre, 2007). As we have evolved to understand the world linguistically, narratives represent a means to construct and hold complex notions in our minds. Moreover, it has been suggested that the human brain cannot easily distinguish actual experience from visualised experience (Cox, 2012, in Muir and Dörnyei, 2013, p.358), making narratives a potent means of conveying experience to others even if they have not had the experience themselves. In this way, narratives have been tremendously useful for us as a social species for sharing practical information and for the transmission of culture (Bruner, 2004; Kelly, 2018). It has been empirically demonstrated that information conveyed in narrative form is more memorable than the same information presented in a traditional lecture format (Oaks, 1995), and that emotionally resonant narratives are particularly effective at inspiring action in those that hear them (Zak, 2015). Indeed, as narratives are by no means limited to real experiences but also include imaginations (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), they can

serve to make the as-yet-unreal into something mentally tangible, and thus something towards which people can strive.

Understandably, the efficiency of narrative as a tool for communication depends on commonalities between the teller and the listener. All humans share a narrative cognition, but beyond this it is helpful if teller and listener share certain pre-given understandings of the meanings of narratives. This is why the narratives found in a given culture are related to one another and share common characteristics (Craig, 2007). A culture's narratives comprise a constellation of stories that rest on a shared discursive foundation – a deep structure (Bruner, 2004). This cultural structure, reflected in all narratives, helps ensure that one person's stories are comprehensible to another person in the same cultural context.

Thus, the study of narrative offers a means of examining not only the (reconstructed) life experiences of others (Sarasa & Porta, 2018), but also, by referring to the way their narrative is constructed, the culture-specific understandings that underlie the representation of those experiences (Georgakopolou, 2006). That is, if I tell you a story from my life, analysis of that story may reveal to you not only what happened to me, but also what I value and believe and, in a sense, where I come from.

4.1.2. Identity is constructed through narration

As the present study attends to identity, narratives are a particularly promising form of data to collect. According to Bruner (2004):

> In the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives. And given the cultural shaping (of narratives), we also become variants of the culture's canonical forms. (p.694) (Emphasis in original)

One implication of this is that a person's identity is not merely represented in narrative but is constructed and reconstructed in it. Indeed, some commentators have defined identity in narrative terms, including Sfard and Prusak (2005), for whom identities are 'narratives about individuals that are reifying, endorsable, and significant' (p.16). Identity, then, is not so much something one *has* as something one *tells*. It is

something one performs, revises, and negotiates with others (Georgakopolou, 2006) in the process of sharing narratives, a process Bruner (2004) describes as 'authoring' oneself. Moreover, it is by repeated narration that our identities become more concrete for us. Bamberg and Georgakopolou (2008) note that people conduct 'identity work' in their everyday practices, and that 'continuous and repetitious engagements ultimately lead to habitus (plural) that becomes a source for a continuous sense of who we are – a sense of us as 'same' in spite of continuous change' (p.379). This line of thinking suggests that narrative forms of data are ideal for studies of identity, as it is precisely in narrative that one might be able to observe this complex process of identity reproduction.

Of course, taking such a process-oriented view of identity means that it cannot be understood as fixed or finished, but rather as in flux. Indeed, it is notable that Bruner (2004) suggests we 'become' our narratives, not that we 'are' our narratives. This is an essential point to bear in mind when studying identity in narratives: the object of analysis is not *real* identity, but rather the very process of constructive representation that makes up identity.

4.1.3. Individual narratives reflect the broader context

Since narratives are told to others (or to oneself), and because they must rest on a mutually comprehensible deep structure, they are culturally contingent, reflecting the ideologies of both the teller and the audience (Baynham, 2000). The content of a narrative must draw on discourses (beliefs, values, principles; 'social scripts' [Goodson, 2006, p.15]) shared by the parties, or at least understood by them, because otherwise there is a risk that the narrative will be misunderstood. Thus, any single narrative is shaped by the forces of its context (Antikainen, 1998; Gouthro, 2014), and therefore reflects the value discourses of the context in which it is produced (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Bruner, 2004).

Consequently, analysis of narrative data can examine not only identity, but the ideological context as understood by narrator and audience that lends meaning and ascribes value to that identity. To understand the motivational impact of identity, whether it is an identity someone claims or wishes to claim, the value that the identity

has or might have for a person can be considered (Hennig, 2010). This makes consideration of ideology a profitable undertaking for studies of motivation, and further recommends narrative research as a methodology for such studies.

4.1.4. Narratives are co-constructions through which identities are claimed or rejected

To understand how ideologies and identities are related in narrative, a researcher can consider how the narrative is constructed, and what discursive strategies are involved in its construction.

The various systems of cultural values that we all inhabit define the limits on our freedom to claim or reject certain identities based on the features (or membership categorisation devices [Zhu Hua, 2015]) we display. People have a degree of agency over what features to display, and indeed, over whether to respect the definitions and valuations of identities imposed by others or to 'to resist identities that position them in undesirable ways' (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 27). However, the process of identity narration is ultimately one of positioning oneself within and in relation to larger, sociocultural discourses (Davies & Harre, 1990; Clarke, 2009). Furthermore, an individual's identities are sources of various advantages (privileges) and disadvantages (marginalisations) depending on how those identities are evaluated by others, particularly depending on whether those identities are considered normative (Butler, 2009; Zhu Hua, 2015; Minarik, 2017). For this reason, in any context, some identities are more desirable for certain people, and some less.

What this means for narrative research is that even though a person may be *telling* their identity in a narrative, it is not objectively something they possess. It is something they lay claim to, or indeed reject. Attending in analysis to the ways that a narrator claims or rejects an identity, the basis they provide for their claim/rejection, and the reasons they wish to claim or reject it, may enable a researcher to develop a sense not only of the relevant identities but also to the meaning and value of those identities in context. One key thing to consider is how identities are *performed* in the narrative (Talmy, 2011), the features the narrator chooses or refuses to display in the course of narration, and the identities that are consequently claimed or rejected (Zhu Hua, 2015).

However, it must be noted that narratives are not constructed simply by an individual but *co*-constructed by narrator and audience. As has been noted, the narrator's discourse is constrained by the imperative to base their story on a cultural/ideological framework that is comprehensible to the audience (Bruner, 2004). Consequently, the narrator's discourse will reflect not only their own ideologies and identity definitions, but those they perceive in their audience (Baynham, 2000). This fact is especially significant when the narrative is generated in an interactional setting, such as a research interview where the mutual orientation, shared/differing positions and values of the interlocutors, and the identities that both choose to perform play a role in determining what is said and what is not said (Mann, 2011; Talmy & Richards, 2011; Pavlenko, 2007; Garton & Copland, 2010).

Thus, while narrative data can be analysed with a view to understanding identity and ideology, these things are not to be understood as an objective reality for the narrator. Instead, a narrative is a situated instance of identity performance and ideology negotiation between multiple parties. This is not to say that nothing can be learned about a particular narrator from analysis of a narrative, but rather that a researcher must pay attention to the contingency of a narrative, to the role that the audience (the researcher) and the context play in its construction, and to any salient or persistent meanings that may be interpreted from the narration even after this contingency is accounted for (Holliday, 2012).

4.1.5. Examining ideology and identity in narratives by analysing narrative types and functions

A narrator may not explicitly claim/reject an identity or outline an ideology, as these are often implicit and taken-for-granted (see, for example, Rabbidge, 2020). Nonetheless, there are functional elements in narratives that researchers can look for. As noted, identity is performed in narrative (Talmy, 2011), so the identity-defining features that narrator and audience display in the process of narration should be considered. Also, as narratives can be not only descriptive but also evaluative (Labov & Waletsky, 1967; Labov, 1972), statements of value in the narrative can also be considered. Moreover, the way that narrators justify their evaluations with appeals to discourses can be informative about the relevant ideological context.

For instance, a narrator may appeal to an authority to support their views (Blommaert, 2007), or frame an idea not as their own but as a sociocultural norm, perhaps by offering a generic rather than personal narrative (Baynham, 2011), to claim 'normative validity' for their statements (Blommaert, 2007, p.6). Also, a narrator's descriptions of the norms of their context should be examined, as 'culture' is open to being represented in ways that strategically serve a speaker's interests (Holliday, 2012). Relatedly, a narrator may represent themselves in a narrative as agentic or as a victim of circumstance (Polkinghorne, 1996). This choice may illustrate their relationship to the values of the context and may also function to valorise or excuse certain views or actions.

Overall, for the narrative researcher interested in identity and ideology, it is important to ask: why is this person saying this here and now? Attention must be paid to the ways that narrators use language to position themselves (Bamberg and Georgakopolou, 2008; Baynham, 2011) because linguistic positioning is 'identity work' (Bamberg & Georgakopolou, 2008, p.379), a semiotic negotiation of power and position (Canagarajah & De Costa, 2015) that is done in reference to the values of the audience (interlocutor) and the context.

4.1.6. Locating the present study in the field of narrative inquiry

4.1.6.1. Commonalities between Foucault's ideas and narrative theory

In the present study, I examine the Korean learning motivation of FETs using Foucault's notion of *ethical self-formation*. In sum, language learning is understood in this study as part of the process of creating oneself. The decision to learn or not to learn a language is understood to be made in reference to the identity/value that a given person can (or cannot) acquire by learning a given language in a given context. As I argue below, this theoretical viewpoint gels well with the method of narrative inquiry.

There are many commonalities between Foucault's process of *self-formation* (self-creation [Infinito, 2003]) and the narrative conception of identity formation. For instance, as Foucault describes it, *self-formation* is the process of transforming one's life towards an ideal state, or *telos* (Foucault, 1984; 1985). In this way, his idea is very

similar to Bruner's (2004) notion of narration as the process of self-authorship. Furthermore, as Hennig (2010) notes, Foucault's *self-formation* is a social process, because it is guided by both internal values and external ideologies (disciplinary forces [Foucault, 1995]) that steer us towards certain paths of self-creation by defining the identity/value one can acquire by engaging in certain acts of self-development. Foucault refers to this value-defining system of rules as the *mode of subjection* (Foucault, 1984; 1985), meaning the imperatives and limitations to which we are subject. Here, too, there is a link to narrative inquiry. As narratives are produced and reproduced within a shared value structure, so self-creation is done in reference to ideology. Just as my narrative must be comprehensible to others to be meaningful, so my identity must be comprehensible to others to be worthy of esteem.

All this is to say that narrative inquiry is an appropriate methodology to use for the present study because the theoretical principles that underlie the method map onto this study's theoretical framework remarkably well. I conceive of this study as an attempt to examine the ways that identity and value (ideology) may have played into language learning decisions. I have presented the view in this chapter that narratives necessarily reflect identity and ideology. So, I submit that narrative data is a good type to collect.

4.1.6.2. Narrative research into teachers' identities

The group at the heart of this study is FETs in Korea. I am interested in whether these language teachers are themselves language learners and what, if anything, their language learning has to do with their teaching. To date, studies in various contexts have employed a narrative methodology to examine the formation of teachers' identities (e.g., Beijaard, et al., 2004; Park, 2006; Tsui, 2007; Ellis, 2013; Ellis, 2016; Sarasa & Porta, 2018). Indeed, there is an increasing emphasis on identity in the field of teacher education (Sarasa & Porta, 2017, p.143). Language teachers are situated in a position of tension between their self-images and emotions and those images/emotions they must display for the sake of pedagogy (see Benesch, 2012; Gallagher, et al., 2021), between their own values and those of their employers and other stakeholders, and naturally, between different languages and cultures. As

Clandinin and Connelly (1996) note, a teacher's narrative is a 'landscape', a complex network of 'relationships between people, places, and things' (p.5).

Thus, studies that examine how teachers *do* identity in positions of tension have potential for uncovering insights into the reality of pedagogy, and thereby providing recommendations for stakeholders in the education industry. Indeed, there have been calls for further study in the experience of teachers crossing cultural borders (Rudolph, Selvi, & Yazan, 2015). Concurrently, there have been calls to examine how English teachers come to learn 'other' languages and use them in their teaching (Ellis, 2016), and how they form, perform, and maintain their linguistic identities as language teachers and learners (Motha, Jain, & Tecle, 2012). Such research is necessary if we are to understand how English teachers' language backgrounds influence their teaching. This specific issue has been receiving attention in recent years, as the argument has been made that multilingual (or translingual) pedagogies can be empowering for teachers and students (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Lin and Wu, 2015; Lee & Gray, 2019). The present study is located within this discussion, as it attends to the ways that Korean language learning and use may or may not relate to the identities and pedagogies of FETs.

4.1.6.3. Critical goals of the present study

The present study is critical in two ways. Firstly, this study attends not only to the language learning behaviours of participants, but to the discourses of value that underlie those decisions (Roberts, 2014); in other words, to the causal mechanisms at play in the relevant context (Benton & Craib, 2001). Secondly, this research is critical because, as a study of identity, it necessarily takes into account the ways that identity is a source of unfair advantage (Butler, 2009). Considering these critical dimensions, narrative inquiry represents an appropriate methodology. To examine privilege at work in the English education industry, as Appleby (2016) suggests we do, we must get a sense of how privilege manifests. We must ask how it relates to identity, how people perform and reject identity in pursuit of privilege, and what this says about context-dependent discourses of power and value that apportion advantage and disadvantage. Xu and Connelly (2010) argue that narrative inquiry offers a means to do this because, as I have claimed *ad nauseam* in this chapter, narratives reflect contextual discourses.

Thus, the present study employs narrative inquiry to serve its critical aims. As will be seen in later chapters, the decision of an FET to learn Korean to a greater or lesser extent can indeed be interpreted in relation to (among other factors) an ethnolinguistic apportioning of privilege both within and beyond the Korean ELT industry (see part 2 of Chapter 7).

Having made this point, I must note that the privileges afforded to the FET group are not the only critical concern that has animated me to conduct this study. As an FET myself, I recognise marginalisations that can come along with the role in Korea. It is notable, for instance, that the legitimacy of FETs as teachers in Korea is questioned by Korean colleagues on the basis that they are presumed ignorant of the Korean language and the Korean school culture (Lee, H.S., 2020). FETs in Korea, privileged in hiring for their nationality-determined native speaker status, can also be marginalised professionally, in some cases denied the right to teach independently (Lee, H.S., 2020), or viewed by employers as interchangeable with each other (Gallagher, 2018).

I hope that by sharing narratives in which FETs engage with Korean language and culture and with pedagogy over the course of years, I will offer a counter-narrative to the dehumanised view of the monolingual, monocultural FET. Such a sharing may be emancipatory for FETs (Lodh, 1996, in Hardcastle, et al., 2006; Gouthro, 2014) as it will give them a chance to share their experiences with the wider world, a chance they might not have otherwise. This may also serve to work against the notion of culturally and linguistically pure native English speakers that underlies the policy in Korea of exclusively hiring FETs from a tiny handful of 'inner-circle' countries (Kachru, 1996), a policy still in effect at the time of writing (Lee, H.S., 2020).

4.1.7. An alternative to the narrative methodology: Critical Discourse Analysis

Though I have so far outlined numerous reasons for choosing a narrative methodology, it is worth noting that there was one other research method I considered employing for this study: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As noted previously (section 4.1.5), a narrator uses discourse in functional and strategic ways. Researchers can engage in CDA to examine how a narrator does this in detail, with a critical aim in mind: to

determine how 'discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society' (Van Dijk, 2001, p.353). This aim is essentially Foucauldian, and indeed some notable proponents of CDA have cited the ideas of Foucault as influential for the method (Van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 2003).

For the present project, CDA would likely have involved a close textual analysis. In contrast with Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) description of a broader analytical process of comprehending, contextualising, and reconstructing narratives (described in more detail in Chapter 5, section 5.1.1. of this thesis), CDA might involve coding data at the word and phrase level. Such coding might focus on linguistic and stylistic choices: the use of words like 'might, may, should, always, possibly' (Gallagher, 2018, p.59), hedging phrases, modality, abstractness, and even phonological features like stress and rhythm (Fairclough, 2003, p.162). All these things can form part of a narrator's discursive positioning of themselves in relation to ideological structures.

When planning this study, I recognised that a fine-grained CDA approach might indeed reveal interesting discursive manoeuvres made by participants (and by myself), and that these might be indicative of the power structures that FETs (we) recognise operating in our lives and influencing our Korean learning motivation; a key goal for this project. However, I chose narrative inquiry after becoming convinced that it, too, was a suitable approach to achieve my goals of critically examining identity and ideology (as this chapter so far demonstrates). Moreover, I anticipated collecting large amounts of data covering years of participants' experiences in Korea. A fine-grained approach to coding such data might be a task of a prohibitive scale, and indeed, an excessive focus on scrutinising the linguistic nuances of participants' discourse might distract from the broader meanings of their stories. As I was interested, both academically and personally, in the experiences and meanings that participants had to share, I ultimately chose the method that placed the story at the centre of things, rather than the way the story was told. Nonetheless, in narrative inquiry also, it is profitable to examine the details of the linguistic/discursive construction of a story, and even after settling on narrative inquiry as my methodology, I continued to grapple with

the question of how fine-grained my analysis needed to be for some time (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.3. for details).

4.2. Design of the present narrative study

4.2.1. Research questions

The questions answered in this research project are as follows:

(1) To what extent, and for what purposes have the participating FETs learned Korean?

(2) How have personal and contextual factors influenced participants' motivation to learn Korean?

Question (1) is a background question (Aslam & Emmanuel, 2010). I ask it with the aim of developing my awareness of the object of study. Put simply, before critically scrutinising the reasons that participants had learned however much Korean they had, I decided to take time and get a faithful sense of what they had learned and the purposes they described for their learning. Moreover, I wrote question (1) in such a way that it was (a) answerable by FETs who had learned no Korean as well as by those who had learned it to high proficiency, and (b) open enough that an unrestricted range of learning purposes could be included in the answer, allowing me to take a broad view.

Question (2) is the more explicitly theoretical of the questions. It relates to Foucault's description of self-creation as a negotiation between the personal and the contextual – between the subject and the discursive forces that act on them (Foucault, 1995). While the question, as presented, may appear to address two objects, my aim in asking it was to approach the complex human experience reflected in narrative, wherein actions are explained in relation to both/either internalised values and/or interpretations of external realities. These may be separated in the narrator's descriptions, but because the individual and the context shape, define, and redefine each other, they are in fact complexly interrelated. Hence, the phrasing of question (2).

4.2.2. Participant sampling

For this study, I decided to recruit a sample of between six and ten participants. This was based on the argument of Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) that around six participants belonging to a reasonably homogeneous group should provide a useful amount of data for a qualitative study. As I conducted a narrative study as part of my M.A. studies (Gray, 2017b), I was inclined to agree with this point of view.

My sampling was based on judgment (Marshall, 1996). As an FET, and therefore an 'insider' (Quickfall, 2018), I had a few definite ideas in mind about who I wanted to sample. Naturally, all participants would have to be FETs, but I also decided to recruit only participants who had been in Korea for more than two years. My own experiences have left me with some clear impressions, and one of the clearest is that large numbers of FETs leave Korea at the one- or two-year mark. This makes FETs who have stayed longer than that a distinct group. To use Schutz's (1944) term, they are *veterans*. Yet, I am also aware that a long residence is no guarantee that an FET will have learned a lot of Korean. I reasoned that FETs with longer residence periods who had learned Korean and those who had not learned it much would both have a lot to say about their learning decisions. They would have a wealth of varying experiences in the Korean context to draw on in explanation.

Another consideration was how to sample participants by Korean ability. It is a central speculation of this study that identity and value might explain not only the decision to learn Korean but also the decision not to. With this in mind, I decided to aim for a roughly equal number of participants with advanced, intermediate, and beginner Korean ability. These are over-simplified categories that do not capture the complexity of language proficiency (Blommaert & Backus, 2011), but they provided me with an easy initial framework for dividing participants by ability – a framework all participants would be familiar with. I mulled the idea of employing a Korean ability self-assessment tool in the style of McMillan and Rivers (2011), but ultimately decided to allow participants to describe their own ability. I reasoned that I would get a detailed look at their Korean once I had collected their narratives, and so felt no great pressure to test them in advance.

In comparison to length of residence and Korean level, other potential sampling factors proved harder to weigh. The nationality, gender, race and ethnicity, language background, and even the teaching context of participants could all play a role in how they experienced life in Korea and how they valued Korean (see Gray [2018] for examples). However, I found myself uncomfortable with using essentialised categories for sampling. In the event, I concluded that if participants could represent a diverse range of backgrounds, that would allow for some potentially interesting results, but I declined to actively recruit with that in mind.

A final consideration was whether I should recruit participants that I already knew personally, and I decided to do so. As an FET, I am an insider researcher in any case (Quickfall, 2018). I judged that I would have to keep in mind my relationship to participants when collecting and analysing data whether they were prior acquaintances or not, as I would be influencing the narrative generation regardless (Roulston, 2011). Meanwhile, allowing myself in principle to recruit from among FETs of my acquaintance would give me access to a much larger and more readily available pool of participants.

4.2.3. Data collection plan

I decided to collect narrative data from participants in two rounds, with the idea being that a multi-round data collection strategy would be likely to produce more detail (Huber, Milne & Hyde, 2017). I was particularly inspired by Harvey (2014) and Javier (2014), who used multiple rounds of data collection to seek greater detail and clarification of their analyses, a strategy affirmed by Mann (2011). Following Javier (2014), I decided to gather written narratives for the first round, then use the initial analysis of these to prepare question schedules for the second round, an in-person interview with each participant.

When planning my data collection, I had to decide whether I would elicit a narrative from a specific period, or a whole-life narrative (Huber, et al., 2017). I reflected that a participant's background and long-term identities were likely to feature in their Korean learning motivations. I therefore decided to elicit a narrative that included whole-life details but focused predominantly on the specific period of their time in Korea.

4.2.4. Pilot study

Concurrently with participant recruitment, I conducted a smaller-scale pilot study with four FET participants. This study involved two rounds of data collection, mirroring the present study (a written narrative and an interview), and took a broader view of the FET experience in Korea, with Korean learning being just one area of focus. This research experience allowed me to test my instruments (including the narrative writing prompt, described below) and refine my data collection, transcription, and analytical approaches. Moreover, all participants in the pilot were prior acquaintances, and I was hoping to practice interrogating the researcher's role in the production of narrative data in the style of Holliday (2012). In the event, I noted when analysing the interview data that participants often disagreed with ideas that I put to them. Thus, I came away satisfied that my presence in the interview was no guarantee that participants would feel obliged to share my viewpoint. Based on the experience, I judged that I could gather useful data as an insider researcher in the present project, as long as I paid reasonable attention to how my framing and phrasing might have influenced participants' statements. The pilot study was published and is cited in this thesis as Gray (2018). Happily, the results of the study provided useful contextualising insights, which are included occasionally throughout this thesis.

4.2.5. Ethical considerations for data collection and presentation

Having planned the data collection process for the present project, I submitted my project plan to the ethical review committee at the University of Leeds. Before granting approval, the committee called on me to articulate for them how I would ensure that participants' anonymity would be maintained, and their data secured. I responded that I would give all participants pseudonyms and store their data and contact information on password-protected servers. The committee then granted ethical approval (see Appendix A for the approval letter).

Despite receiving approval, I was conscious of the fact that anonymity would be a difficult thing to guarantee. My intention was to collect data from members of a somewhat small and geographically close group (FETs). Also, as an active member of the FET professional community myself, I might wish to present my research findings at conferences attended by the participants themselves or others that knew

them. The risk that a participant would be identifiable from their story, even with pseudonyms employed, was considerable. Moreover, since social and professional experiences (as related to language learning motivation) were among the topics of interest to me, I had to anticipate the possibility of collecting data that would include negative/disparaging remarks about participants' peers or their current/past employers. This would add urgency to the issue of anonymity, as it would be crucial to avoid any harm that might come to a participant if such remarks were matched to them.

One option I had for addressing these issues was to change substantial details in participants' narratives, even perhaps blending elements of the narratives to create a 'composite' (Willis, 2018) that would contain the key insights I wished to convey based on my analysis while rendering participants difficult to identify as individuals. However, I had taken an exploratory step in this direction in the pilot study and the experience had not been positive. In that case, I had changed one detail of a participant's background in a way that I judged would hide their identity without weakening my analysis. Later, when the participant in question read the pilot paper, they quickly contacted me, seemingly displeased, to ask why this change had been made. I was left feeling that a given participant might be less concerned with their identity being exposed than being altered, ignored or misrepresented. While I considered trying something similar for the current project (but perhaps in ongoing dialogue with participants about whether and how to make changes), I also found myself questioning the wisdom of conducting a study focused on identity in which I would be changing the apparent details of participants' identities (backgrounds, etc.). If I intended to say something about the role that different identities can play in motivation, I felt I would need to represent the relevant identities faithfully. Moreover, I aimed to share participants' stories through this thesis (see section 4.1.6.3.), and I was hesitant to manipulate their stories too much, lest I undermine this goal.

Ultimately, I decided that I would not change any details in participants' narratives as I presented them in this thesis besides hiding their real names. I would, however, omit certain identifying details: all employer names, all names of locations within Korea (except Seoul), and most specific dates/years. This would make participants harder to identify, but it would not be perfect by any means. As a further safeguard against any

harm befalling participants, I decided I would make explicit to them that I would be presenting and potentially publishing the results of this research, and that with that in mind, they were under no obligation to tell me anything at all, and that they could instruct me to discard any data they had provided if they would rather it not be shared publicly. With this discretion given to participants, I reasoned that their narratives would be unlikely to include anything they would strongly prefer to hide, and so they would, hopefully, not be harmed even if they were somehow identified by a reader.

Following the advice of the research ethics committee, I set a time limit of 'within three weeks' for a participant to request that data be withdrawn. I included this information in the letter I sent to participants (Appendix B) and reiterated verbally it in the interview I had with them. In the event, no participants asked for data to be withdrawn after it had been collected. There were, however, some occasions in the interviews in which participants said something and then immediately asked me not to use it. Naturally, I obliged, and none of that data is reflected in this thesis. There was also some data of a personal nature to participants that I was not asked to discard but which I omitted anyway, as I thought it unnecessary to share such information without a compelling reason. Overall, it is my judgment that the narratives I present in this thesis (in Chapter 6) would be unlikely to scandalise participants, and that employers and other stakeholders would find it difficult to identify themselves conclusively. However, this is my own judgment, and I cannot assert that no harm could possibly come to participants from this thesis. This is an ethical limitation of the present project (I attend to this further in the 'Limitations' section [Chapter 8, section 8.5.1]).

4.3. Data collection

4.3.1. Participant recruitment

I used social media (Facebook) to find participants. To maintain a semblance of control over the recruitment process, I appealed to my contact list rather than posting an advertisement in a public group. As an active member of the FET professional development community, my Facebook contacts included many English teachers, and I was confident that this approach would bear fruit. In my appeal, I outlined the focus of my research and asked for recommendations of likely participants. This quickly

yielded results. In a few days, I had a list of twelve names. Most were people I had never met, while some were people I had met rarely, and did not know at all personally. Also, a small number of acquaintances volunteered themselves as participants.

My next action was to send all twelve potential participants an initial message. The degree of formality in these messages varied depending on the degree of familiarity with the participant in question, but in every case I shared information about myself, the project, the expected time commitment for participants, and these four questions:

- How long have you lived in Korea?
- What is your nationality?
- Where are you currently working?
- How would you describe your Korean ability?

Once I had received replies, I determined that two of the twelve were soon to leave Korea. The remaining ten fortunately represented a broad range of self-described Korean ability, as well as a variety of backgrounds in other respects. To these ten I sent formal consent forms. In keeping with the guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (2011), these forms plainly outlined the purposes of the study, and the potential uses of the data collected. I promised to maintain participants' anonymity to the best of my abilities and affirmed their freedom to leave the project at any time without obligation to explain why. I also promised to show them any data I held from them on request, and to delete any data they wished me not to use should they request as much within three weeks of providing it. The participant information letter and consent form are Appendices B and C of this thesis.

Ultimately, I employed the data from nine of these ten participants for reasons that are elaborated in Chapter 5 (Data analysis), section 5.2.4. Of these nine, three were prior acquaintances (John, Henry, and Eric). For organisational purposes, I divided these nine into three Korean level categories based on their own self-assessments. I also gave them all pseudonyms (Table 1).

Table 1. Participants

Name	Years in Korea[25]	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean ability
Raymond	15+	U.S.	University	Advanced
Evelyn	10	U.S.	University	Advanced
Thomas	8	U.S.	University	Advanced
John	8	U.K.	University	Intermediate
Lauren	7	U.S.	Kindergarten	Intermediate
Jean	6	U.S.	University	Intermediate
Lisa	8.5	South Africa	Elementary	Low
Henry	7	U.S.	Elementary	Low-intermediate
Eric	22	Canada	University	Low

It must be noted that none of the participants in this study knew *no* Korean. It would be highly surprising if they had known none of the language, given their years of residence in Korea. However, this is an important point to make: the present study contrasts the cases of FETs who have all learned Korean but have achieved greatly varying levels of competence. Another note that must be made relates to participants' ethnicity. I did not ask participants to describe their race or ethnic background when recruiting them, and as I was to discover when I met them, all were white except one, Evelyn, who was a Korean adoptee who grew up in the U.S.

4.3.2. Data collection round (1) – Written narratives

4.3.2.1. Collecting written narratives

Once I had received signed consent forms from each participant, the next step was to request a written narrative. I had a clear sense of what I hoped their narratives would include. This was informed by the theoretical framework of this study, *ethical self-formation*, and by my reading into narrative data collection. I hoped they would tell me about things in their background that related to Korea, Korean, or language learning, their experiences of life in Korea over the years, and the decisions they had made within that context about learning Korean, any actions they had taken towards learning, their goals for the future, and any ways in which Korean might relate to those goals. I

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[25] The number of years in Korea was accurate at the point of recruitment for this study.

also hoped they might include some particularly memorable experiences (following Pederson, 2013), as these might prove salient.

Eliciting a narrative that attended to these specific points presented a challenge. For one thing, as I was requesting narratives from ten participants, there was a lot of scope for diversity in how they might understand my request, how much detail they might provide, what areas they might focus on and neglect, etc. I decided to write an example narrative of my own Korean learning experiences and include this with my request to participants. My narrative included all the elements I was hoping for from participants. I got this idea from Javier (2014), who like me was an insider researcher.

In choosing to do this, I had to face the fact that my narrative would guide participants' writings, and thereby limit them (Pederson, 2013). They might be less likely to spontaneously write something insightful if they felt constrained. However, I was motivated to provide them with my narrative anyway, because doing so might (a) make the focus of my research and my position as a researcher transparent, (b) serve as an initial rapport building strategy, and (c) increase the odds that participants' narratives would attend to my areas of interest. I was also vaguely worried about excessively long or short writings and anticipated that the example I provided might hint at an appropriate length without me having to restrict participants' freedom to write however much they wished.

Based on these points, I wrote a two-page (A4) narrative of my own experiences for participants to read, but I was aware that I needed to keep the prompt as open-ended as possible, and not only because I wanted participants to feel free to express themselves. I also had to account for an issue related to the diversity in participants' Korean levels. The request had to be framed in such a way that people would tell me why their experiences, values, and goals had led them to learn Korean, *or* why this had *not* happened. With that in mind, I provided participants with a Microsoft Word document that included my narrative (Appendix D), a roughly two-page-long blank

space for writing in, and the instructions given in Figure 1, which are reproduced verbatim[26].

Over the course of several months, all ten participants submitted written narratives. The narratives were all similar in length, around two or three pages, and covered similar narrative ground, as hoped. A complete example writing from one participant (John) is provided in Appendix E.

4.3.2.2. Beginning the ongoing, reflective process of analysis

Once I had gathered participants' written narratives, I scheduled in-person interviews with each of them. In preparation for these interviews, I began an initial analysis of the written narratives with a view to producing an interview schedule.

Figure 1. Narrative writing instructions

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in this research. The topic of this research is the experiences of foreign English teachers living in Korea and their experiences with the Korean language, including whether or not they learn it, and how much, and why. **Please write below about your experiences with the Korean language throughout your time in Korea.**

You might consider mentioning:
- information about yourself and your background that you consider relevant
- to what extent you have learned the language, and how you learned it if you did – also, why you have learned it to whatever extent you have, even if you have not learned it at all
- any particularly memorable experiences, events, or moments that you have that relate to the Korean language
- for what purposes you have used the language and/or currently use it, if any
- your feelings about the Korean language - what it means to you, if anything
- any goals you have for your Korean language learning, and/or any other goals for the future that might be served by learning Korean, if you have any

Write however much you feel is appropriate.

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[26] As noted above, this instrument (narrative, instructions, blank writing space) had been tested in the pilot study (Gray, 2018) before it was distributed to participants in this study.

I was very anxious about beginning analysis, as it seemed like a very consequential thing to do – something that one should get right even in the earliest stages. I therefore began keeping detailed reflective notes to describe and evaluate my every action and decision from this point in the study until the end some years later.

Writing the notes was part of a tricky intellectual and emotional negotiation of the research process, but the results have proven fruitful in retrospect, because those notes (several dozen pages) have made writing this chapter much easier.

4.3.2.3. Initial analysis of written narratives and interview schedule preparation

In preparing for the interviews, I was inspired by Harvey (2014) and Javier (2014), who both used analysis of their collected data to frame subsequent rounds of data collection. This was affirmed by my supervisors (one of whom is Harvey herself), who advised me to ask myself how I was going to use the data I had already collected to get the most out of my upcoming interviews.

Beginning my analysis, I immediately faced a series of dilemmas. I knew that in the long run, I would analyse the collected data in light of my chosen theoretical framework (*self-formation*), but I was uncertain whether to attempt analysis using this framework at such an early stage. I came to believe that applying hard theory would be premature, and that I should first take the chance to understand participants' writings plainly and faithfully (see Josselson, 2004). Even so, many questions remained. I had read a great deal about how narratives are co-constructed between the narrator and audience, and about the various discursive techniques that a narrator can use. Was I to analyse these writings to discern the fine details of their construction? This, too, seemed premature. After a lot of agonised, internal negotiation, I settled on an elaborate multi-stage analytical approach broadly modelled on Murray's (2003) two-stage analytical procedure (descriptive, then interpretive) and Liu and Xu's (2011) four-stage narrative analysis. As will be seen, I abandoned this before long, but producing it got me over the fear of getting started.

The first step was to carefully read through my own narrative again, to prime my mind to recognise the influence I might have had on participants' writings. I then transferred

each participant's narrative into a blank Word document and numbered the lines for reference. Having done this, I slowly read through each narrative, trying to absorb the stories, and making notes in a separate Word document of 'rich points' (Agar, 1996, in Abiria, Early, & Kendrick, 2013) that stuck out to me. Meanwhile, I was also keeping an eye out for any influence of my own writing. I did recognise a certain influence in some cases. A few participants included some statements that seemed to be direct responses to my narrative – comparisons between their experiences and my own – and I noted these. However, I was left with the initial impression that participants had written about their own experiences quite freely, providing a variety of details with few obvious references to my own story.

I then read through all the narratives again, specifically identifying and cataloguing the extent and stated purposes of their Korean learning – I had research question (1) in mind. Then, I read through the narratives a third time and began colour-coding. I focused on identifying the component pieces of each narrative, including those I knew would be of interest, such as statements relating to identity. On the first pass, I coloured the most concrete of details: time and place. On the second, I focused on the writer's actions in general, and actions (realised or anticipated) relating to learning Korean specifically. On the third pass, I noted external actors/actions. On the fourth, I noted any language that seemed to suggest identity, whether the author's or someone else's. Finally, I coloured statements of value, including the beliefs, interests, and hopes/goals of the writer and others. Figure 2 provides an example.

Figure 2. Attempt at colour coding

Example: After one round

I am interested in learning more Korean, especially now that I plan on changing teaching levels. Public schools do so much for you.

Example: Final colouring

I am interested in learning more Korean, especially now that I plan on changing teaching levels. Public schools do so much for you.

After I had done this for a few written narratives, it dawned on me that my approach was focused entirely on the proverbial trees, and I was neglecting the forest. I was very worried about missing something important, and that worry was driving me to be overly bureaucratic. I abandoned the word/phrase-level approach in favour of a broader, paragraph-level analysis.

Returning to the written narratives, I attempted to chronologise them following Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) recommendation to do so. I created another copy of each narrative in Word, and copy-pasted the text around (without changing the actual wording at all) so that it could be read in as close to a chronological order as possible. Re-reading the narratives in this order, I found that gaps in the timelines and areas of limited detail provoked questions in my mind. What happened next? What led to this or that decision? I noted these questions down for each participant.

I then took some time to refresh Foucault for myself. Having done so, I determined that it would be prudent to prepare questions that related to the four axes of *self-formation* (see Chapter 3) phrased in comparatively plain terms, as this would keep my interviews theoretically relevant without allowing the theory to overpower the simply human narrative I hoped to produce from them. Thus, I aimed to write questions about participants' identities, values/beliefs, actions, and goals.

At this point, I found I was caught between two competing desires. As Holliday (2012) puts it, I wanted to allow 'space for the autonomous emergence of the unexpected in (the interviewee's) contribution' (p.504) but I also did not want to end up with a raft of irrelevant interview data. To work towards reconciling these two desires, I decided to ground almost everything I asked in the interviews in direct quotes from participants' written narratives, and to keep my questions as open as possible. My hope was to use direct quotes in the interviews to provide a natural jumping-off point for participants to elaborate on their writings, with my questions suggesting a direction for their elaboration.

And so, I repeatedly read through each chronologised written narrative and appended questions to each paragraph as I went. Ultimately, the schedules that I carried into the

interviews resembled a list of lengthy quotes with questions after each. Figure 3 is an example.

Figure 3. A section of John's written narrative with interview questions

"After losing my job in London in the financial crisis of 2008, I was feeling like I needed an intellectual challenge… Spanish was a little easy because of its similarity to English (really this was a result of convincing myself that I was good at it), so when I decided to move to Korea, I was looking forward to tackling something a little more challenging."

→ Can you say more about your desire for a challenge at that point in your life? Do you still feel that desire?   → Why the move to Korea (of all possible places)?

4.3.3. Data collection round (2) – Interviews

Heading into the interview process, I was aware that interviewing is a complex, discursive activity. That is, interview data can never be considered a pure, unadulterated account of the interviewee's perspective (Pavlenko, 2007) as the researcher inevitably plays a role in co-constructing the interview (Talmy & Richards, 2011). It is therefore important for an interviewer/researcher to practice reflexivity (i.e., self-awareness [Mann, 2016]) to recognise the role they are playing. With this in mind, I prepared a Word document – a diary of sorts (Mann, 2016) – in which I wrote reflective notes twice for each interview, once before and once after. My aim in doing so was to give myself opportunities to examine the effect my interview approach was having on the interaction, and ideally improve that approach over time.

In total, I conducted ten interviews, one with each participant. These interviews averaged two hours in length, with the longest lasting around two hours and forty minutes. The interviews were all conducted in places of participants' choosing, usually a coffee shop local to them (I bought the coffee), and in some cases at their work office. Interviews were audio-recorded on two devices to avoid technical issues.

4.3.3.1. Beginning each interview

For the sake of rapport, I began every interview interaction with casual conversation. After a few minutes, the participant would raise the topic of this project, or I would, and

then I would ask permission to begin recording. That granted, I started the interviews proper.

From the first interview to the last, my main preoccupation (as noted in my reflections) was how much I should lead participants in the conversation or allow them to lead. While I was setting the overall topic in every interview (language learning motivation), I wished to give them room to steer the conversation towards whatever details they wished, as their choices about which 'aspects of self' to articulate (Mann, 2016, p.48) would indicate something about the identities and values they considered relevant. To leave participants substantial steering room, I began the early interviews with a broad, open question: 'can you tell me what has motivated you to learn as much Korean as you have?' However, several participants responded to this question by repeating something that appeared in their written narrative without addition. I was eager to use the interviews as an opportunity to build on the data from the written narratives, so after the first few interviews, I changed tack and started to open with a request for elaboration on a particularly salient or striking point in their written narrative. For instance, in Eric's case, his written narrative began with a sentence that included the phrase, 'my Korean is crap'. So, I began by asking him against what standard he was so harshly judging his Korean. In this way I compromised and took a more active role in directing the initial conversation but did so with participants' own data as a starting point. This form of question was, I thought, reasonably open: a simple request for elaboration. Moreover, this approach frequently provided me with the opportunity to hear ideas and details I had not encountered in the written narratives more quickly in the interviews, and so I continued to use it through to the end of the project.

Early on, I noticed that participants, having set the interview's direction, would sometimes wander quite far off-topic. Of course, this was a matter of my perception. I had to consider that participants might connect their Korean learning motivation to disparate elements of their values and experiences. After the third interview, which ran to 160 minutes and contained many details I suspected might be only tangential to my research interests, I adopted the practice of including an explicit statement of 'frame' (Goffman, 1974) immediately before my first question, along the lines of: 'I am studying why FETs learn as much Korean as they do, however much that is.' Again, this was a

compromise in favour of more leading on my part, but it gave me a greater feeling of confidence that whatever participants chose to talk about would be something they considered relevant to my topic of interest.

4.3.3.2. The main interview interaction

After the first question, I conducted the interviews in a semi-structured manner, following the argument that such a structure is best suited for research that attends to participants' unique interpretations of a particular set of experiences (Stake, 2010, p.95). I allowed participants' first answer to give us our initial direction. Meanwhile, I had my interview schedule open on a laptop screen between us. I had memorised it in advance and sought the most natural possible moments in the flow of participants' narrations to pose one of my questions. In this way, I tried to let the participants speak as freely as possible while also getting my questions answered. This was sometimes a tricky negotiation, and I always worried I would not find an opportune moment to ask my questions. Yet, it came together quite naturally in each case. A small number of questions sometimes went unanswered, or I asked them at the end as a final thought.

When I did find the moment for a question, I would usually precede asking it by reading the related direct quote from their writing and offering my thoughts, interpretations and perspectives. In this way, I attempted to ground the interview in the first-round data and make my early interpretations explicit so that participants could respond by clarifying, affirming, or rejecting them.

I considered early on whether it would be better not to articulate my own thoughts and positions. While it is arguably misguided for a researcher to believe that they can eliminate their own influence on what interviewees say (Roulston, 2011), I had thought it might be wise to at least minimise the pressure on participants to produce socially desirable answers. After some thought, I came to think that making my perspective clear was a form of transparency, and thus an ethical imperative. Consequently, I took opportunities to share my own experiences learning Korean and my perspective on life in Korea at appropriate moments in the interview (e.g., in direct response to participants sharing a related experience/perspective). In doing so, I often found that participants would respond by making clear that their experiences and views were

different from mine. For this reason, I felt confident that my own transparency would not necessarily oblige participants to agree with me, but I recognised that I would need to take my own statements into account during analysis (Talmy, 2011) (details of how I approached this are in Chapter 5).

As for my stance in the interview, I decided that I should be 'gently suspicious' (a direct quote from my reflections). Having already gathered one round of data, I thought it reasonable to probe in the interviews. However, I was also sympathetic to the argument that it is better to be invited by the interviewee to discuss a topic of personal relevance (Pederson, 2013) rather than raising that topic myself and forcing the discussion. So, I wrote many of my prepared questions and phrased my spontaneous questions in a gentle, open style, asking 'why...', or 'could you tell me more about...?' (the 'what happened next' variety of questions [Mann, 2016, p.35]). Then, when participants made a statement and I found myself sceptical (a common example being when they described their Korean as terrible), I politely told them about my scepticism. When a story they told appeared strange in light of my own experiences, I told them as much. And, when they expressed a view and a contrary view entered my mind (not to say I disagreed with them), I expressed this counterview to them. As time went on, I found I was able to bring up experiences I heard about in a given interview in subsequent interviews to present a contrasting case.

In this way, I sought to encourage participants to reflect on the narratives they had already shared with me, to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives, and to articulate their values in direct comparison to alternatives. Their responses in these moments of gentle confrontation were often rich with intriguing value statements. In such moments, I was as careful as I could be to use indirect, inoffensive phrasing – e.g., 'I interviewed someone else who had a somewhat different experience' – to indicate that I was intellectually curious about participants' viewpoints, not that I was aiming to correct or undermine them. To the best of my observations, none felt affronted by my challenges.

4.3.3.3. Concluding each interview

Once all (or most) of the questions were addressed, I concluded by asking participants if there was anything they thought worth sharing that I had not asked about. The results of this were mixed. Some said there was nothing. Most ventured something, though it was often something in their written narrative that I had not explicitly referred to. This added little. Eventually, I took to asking them to e-mail me after the interview if anything came to mind. Some did, and these e-mails included interesting additional information that I later appended to the interview transcripts.

4.4. On to data analysis

With two complete sets of data in hand for all participants (written and interview), the next step was to conduct an in-depth narrative analysis, building on the initial analysis I had already done in preparation for the interviews. In the next chapter, I describe the process of data analysis beginning after the second round of data collection had been completed.

Chapter 5: Data analysis

In this chapter, I outline the approach I took to analysing the two sets of narrative data I collected (writings and interview transcripts). I describe the thought process that went into planning the analysis, the frameworks employed, and the full analytical process.

5.1. Narrative analysis: The planning stage

5.1.1. Getting my analytic actions in order

In preparing for analysis, my first consideration was the most appropriate order of analytical actions. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest a three-part approach to narrative analysis: broadening, burrowing, and restorying. There are various descriptions of these three actions in the literature, some of which are quite abstract (e.g., Craig, 2007). I will briefly describe what I understood by them as I went into the process of analysis.

I took broadening to mean setting up the general context in which the events in the narrative have taken place. I understood burrowing to be reconstructing events from the central participant's perspective by examining how they make connections between events and ideas across time and space. Finally, I understood restorying to mean situating the narrative in a broader discursive and theoretical context in order to say something about it for research purposes.

In planning my analysis, I weighed my understanding of these three actions against some related propositions that I had read. For example, as noted in the previous chapter, Murray (2003) suggests that analysis be descriptive first, and then interpretive. Meanwhile, another suggestion in Connelly and Clandinin (1990) is to write up a chronology of events early in the process. I therefore decided that once I had transcribed all the interviews, I would produce a full chronology for each participant, incorporating both the written data and interview data into a single story. In my mind, this would be an act of broadening – setting all events in their place to be examined. I further determined that if I organised

the chronology in such a way that the various cause and effect relationships that comprised the narrative were made visible, that in itself would be an act of burrowing (practical details of this organization are outlined later in this chapter, in section 5.1.4). Seeing as the principle aim of this study is to describe relationships (e.g., identity to motivation), this made sense to me.

For the interpretive phase of analysis, I took a cue from Pavlenko (2007), who suggested that a theoretical framework be applied to themes generated from narratives to avoid superficial interpretation. I decided that I could work from the completed chronologies towards a thematic breakdown of each participants' narrative, which I would interpret in terms of my theoretical framework: *ethical self-formation*. With both the chronology and theoretical interpretations in hand, I would then be able to write up a restoried narrative for each participant. These restoried narratives appear in Chapter 6 (Findings).

Furthermore, I anticipated that I would develop a sense of how participants' narratives compared to one another as I went through the interpretive process for each one. This would enable me to complete the restorying process by using the collected narratives as contrastive context for one another in a final round of interpretation, which could then be related to the wider literature to conclude the project. For the outcome of this contrastive interpretation, see the Chapter 7 (Discussion).[27]

5.1.2. Making decisions about hermeneutics and bureaucracy

Having set up my plan of action, the next question I faced was how to approach the data. The first issue was my hermeneutic position. Josselson (2004), drawing on Ricoeur, describes two such positions: *faith*, whereby the researcher strives to relate the teller's story with the fewest distortions, and *suspicion*, whereby one attempts to uncover the meanings that may be hidden beneath the words the teller uses – untold stories beneath told ones. One of my aims for this study was to understand and share

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[27] It seemed reasonable to me to place the individual narratives and analyses thereof in a separate chapter from the inter-case comparisons. On account of the idea that narratives are both unique and interrelated, I thought it wise to allow them to be viewed both separately and in relation to each other.

the stories of participants, which might be better served by a *faith* position. On the other hand, a fundamental theoretical notion for the present study is that people engage in self-creation in a complex process of identity/value negotiation with their context. A certain amount of *suspicion* would surely be necessary if I were to examine this process, as value systems that may have been influential for participants are likely to be only implied rather than described in their narratives (Rabbidge, 2020).

As mentioned in Chapter 4, I had been 'gently suspicious' in probing during the interviews. Now that I had the whole set of data in front of me, I decided to return to a position of faithfulness, particularly in the production of chronologies, to ensure that I had as complete an understanding of what participants expressed to me as they intended it as possible. I would then shift towards a more suspicious stance at the stage of thematic analysis to interpret the faithfully reproduced narratives critically (i.e., discursively, ideologically, causally [Benton & Craib, 2001; Roberts, 2014]).

Another question that vexed me early on was how to be confident that my analysis would be based on a justifiable interpretation of the data rather than on faulty readings or my own pre-conceived expectations. In addressing this, I drew on Harvey's (2014) reading of Sullivan (2012) and conceived of my analysis as both a *charismatic* and *bureaucratic* process – one driven both by my intellectual and affective responses to the data and also by careful documentation.

5.1.3. Recognising the complexity of narrative as an object of analysis

A further question at the analysis preparation stage was what to attend to in the data. Much has been written about the complexity of narrative construction. Some notable considerations follow:

- **The influence of researcher and context:** Researchers inevitably influence narrative data during collection, as does the context of collection (Mann, 2011; Talmy and Richards, 2011; Pavlenko, 2007). Rapport between researcher and participant, their identities, and their mutual orientation (membership of the same 'group', prior relationship, etc.) are all influential factors (Garton and Copland, 2010; Talmy, 2011).

- **Language and style:** Linguistic choices made by both teller and researcher (Pavlenko, 2007; Miller, 2011) as well as the context of these choices must be considered to understand the process of narrative construction, and the identities being performed therein.

- **Discursive strategies:** Narrators use language to position themselves and their ideas (Baynham, 2011; Bamberg and Georgakopolou, 2008). Attention can be paid to how people make use of certain narratives subtypes (e.g., personal or generic, experiential or hypothetical) (Baynham, 2011), how they hedge or imply distance (Baynham, 2000), how they situated their statements in time and space (De Costa, 2015) and in relation to authoritative discourse (Blommaert, 2007).

- **Self-censorship:** An understanding of what is unsayable in a context can help a researcher understand that context (Sharkey, 2004; Prior, 2011).

Early in the analytical planning process, I recognised that many of the above factors might be relevant for this study. To take a single example, the way that narrators might draw on authoritative discourse to valorise their views and actions could be related directly to the Foucauldian theoretical perspective at the heart of this project. I considered the possibility of conducting a round of minute-detail coding on the entire data set to take account of these myriad factors from the very beginning of analysis. Ultimately, however, I decided against this for two main reasons.

The first reason was the volume of data I came to realise I was dealing with. I had ten interviews to work with (to say nothing of the written narratives), and once transcribed, the shortest interview text was around 15,000 words long. I judged coding the whole text at word-and-phrase level to tease out each subtle discursive manoeuvre would be a prohibitive task. The second reason was that I was somewhat sceptical of the benefits to understanding that such minute coding would bring. Based on my experience of initially analysing the written narratives in preparation for the interviews, I was worried that a carefully subdivided analysis attending to numerous pre-established categories of information (e.g., narrative subtypes) would cause me to lose sight of the wood for the trees. On the other hand, I did not want to miss anything important by taking too naïve a view.

Ultimately, I decided that a more manageable approach would be to read the data and allow myself to make a face value interpretation at first. Then, as the analysis progressed, I would repeatedly return to the data with a question in mind: what explanations can I reasonably come up with for why this person (the participant or myself) said what they said when they said it?

5.1.4. Outlining the analytical framework

To summarise section 5.1.1. of this chapter, my analytical plan was as follows:

(1) Transcribe interviews.
(2) Generate chronologies.
(3) Derive themes from the chronologies.
(4) Interpret themes using theoretical framework.
(5) Write complete narratives for each participant incorporating chronologies and interpretations.
(6) Use interpretations of each narrative as contrastive context for the others in a final round of interpretation.

As mentioned previously, my intention in step (2) was to structure the chronologies in such a way that producing them would be an act of broadening and burrowing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) – setting the context, and reconstructing the experience. Thus, I decided on the following four-component analytical framework for organising the data in the chronologies:

- Time/space
- Event
- Reason for event
- Effect of event

I derived this framework partially from Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) two-part division of narrative: scene (space, character) and plot (time, events). Though there are several more complex (and somewhat mutually dissimilar) narrative component models in the existing literature (see for example Bruner [2004] and Labov and Waletsky [1967]), I preferred this relatively simple breakdown.

I made this decision based on my experience. When I attempted to colour-code the written narratives before the interviews, I found myself forced to ask questions that did not seem to improve my understanding because my analytical frame was excessively specified. For instance, if the participant feels pressured to do something because of where they are and the people around them, should I code this as *value*, *place*, or *external actor,* or all three? I reasoned that it was better not to painstakingly subdivide everything. Rather, I would treat all things in the narratives as events, reasons, and effects. After all, what mattered most in my mind was the cause-effect relationship the narrator drew between things, because my interest in studying motivation lay in what caused people to be motivated. Assigning a specifying label to the causes struck me as not immediately necessary. Thus, I prepared a Microsoft Excel sheet for my chronologies with the headings in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Chronology Excel sheet headings

Timing (broad):	Timing (specific):	Event:	Reasons for event:	Effects of event:

Structuring the chronologies in this way had an additional benefit, which was that events would appear in their proper time/space context, but there was no constraint on when/where a reason or an effect had to have happened. A participant could, for example, talk about enrolling in a class one year and note that an effect of this was that they got a job the following year, and these things would appear next to each other in the chronology. Thus, I anticipated that this structure would allow me to see how things in the narratives were situated not only in their context of occurrence, but in relation to other things across time and space.

Once I had a full chronology for each participant – a complete picture produced as faithfully as possible – I planned to break the picture down into themes. I would classify these themes using the four components of Foucault's *ethical self-formation* (see Chapter 3, section 3.3 for details):

- Ethical substance (self)
- Mode of subjection (rules and values)

- Self-practices (actions)
- Telos (goals)

By using this framework to classify the themes, I would be able to relate them to one another and produce a complete Foucauldian overview of the process of self-creation the participant had engaged in, insofar as their narrative reflected this.

5.2. Narrative analysis: The experience

5.2.1. Interview transcriptions

In transcribing the interview data, I had some decisions to make. The first was whether to transcribe verbatim (full interactional detail, e.g. pauses, breaths, sighs) or non-verbatim (language only). Ultimately, I decided that excessive detail would be obfuscating. I was interested in how the interview narrative was founded on discourses of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1995), but, as Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2005) argue: '…the manoeuvrings of power are often captured in the content of the interview rather than in the mechanics of the conversation…' (p.1278). I decided to include in the transcription a handful of prominent affective expressions that would presumably help to clarify the position that the speaker was taking: vocal emphasis, laughter, and sighs. In terms of layout, I decided on a two-column format, following Oliver et al. (2005), which would allow me to easily view participants' speech individually and in dialogue. Figure 5 is an example.

Figure 5. Transcription layout example (John)

Line	Stewart	John
51		It was a little mountain town. There were a few other foreigners there, but they weren't the most social bunch.
52	Maybe *that's* why they chose to live in the mountains, who knows?	
53		Right (laugh). It left me, yeah, they seemed like really nice people.

For the actual process of transcription, I followed Azevedo, Carvalho, and Costa's (2017) steps:

(1) **Prepare**: Make backup copies of recordings, get tools ready.
(2) **Know**: Become familiar with the material before writing, listen through at least twice before writing.
(3) **Write**: Ignore punctuation and other minor details.
(4) **Edit**: Go back over, fix transcription errors, add notations as needed.
(5) **Review**: Final check.
(6) **Finish**: Decide what to do with the recordings – perhaps destroy them.[28]

However, upon starting the process for the first interview, I was struck by how laborious and time-consuming a process it was. This led me to wonder if it would be reasonable to employ outside tools and services for the transcriptions. Doing them myself, I would have the advantage of being familiar with the data (Halcomb et al., 2006), and the transcription process would make me even more familiar with it. I would not have the clerical accuracy of a professional (ibid.), but my errors could be corrected by spot-checking on a second listen-through (MacLean, Meyer, & Estable, 2004). However, I wondered how much of an advantage there would be to transcribing and spot-checking over having the initial transcription done by someone else then spot-checking what *they* had done.

I decided that I would try to get step (3) of Azevedo et al.'s (2017) process done by others for a minority of my interviews, thinking this would at least educate me about options in this area. I inquired among professional peers, and was referred to a wide range of options: professional human transcription and automated transcription. Meanwhile, I tested out a few different tools for my own transcription writing to see what was most comfortable and efficient.

To summarise quickly, none of the automated transcription tools were of any value, and nothing they produced was usable. The professional service I used for one

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[28] In the event, I was too paranoid to destroy the audio recordings after transcription. As I write, the thesis is not finished – I will destroy them when it is.

interview was quite expensive and altogether less accurate than I would have liked. After repeated listenings to the audio file and going through the process of editing the professional transcript, I was satisfied I had lost nothing substantial by outsourcing some of the labour. As for my own approach, the best method I found was to use the voice-to-text function in an online Google Document. I listened to the interview at half speed via earphones and read aloud what I heard. By the tenth interview, I was able to produce the unedited text fairly accurately at a rate of three hours of labour per hour of interview.

Throughout the process of editing and finalising the transcriptions, I kept notes of my developing impressions for each participant, building on the notes I had written when handling the written narratives before the interviews and the reflective notes I had written after each interview. This was not a thorough process attending to the whole transcript, but cursory and spontaneous based on points in the transcriptions that stood out to me, that surprised or intrigued me. It was in writing these transcription notes that I began the practice that would become the foundation of my bureaucratic analysis – I attached transcription line numbers to all notes.

5.2.2. Chronology generation

Setting out to write chronologies, my goal was reconstructing participants' experiences in spatiotemporal and causal terms. I envisaged a process of breaking the data down into units and interrelating those units (in my mind, an analysis akin to open and axial coding [Moghaddam, 2006]), and interweaving the written and interview data into a single 'crystallised' narrative (Ellingson, 2009) while seeking as best I could to understand what it all meant.

Having prepared a chronology template in Microsoft Excel, I selected a participant and re-read through the written narrative and interview transcript I had for them to refresh things in my mind. I then began to produce the chronology by writing descriptions of the data to complete the template. I chose to write my own descriptions of the data rather than using direct quotes because this was a more efficient way of using the space of the chronology documents. Doing it this way, I was able to interweave statements made by the participant about a single event at different times in the data

collection process in a single Excel block. I included direct quotes only when I judged them particularly striking and thought them pregnant with meaning. In this way, my analysis was guided by my reactions to and understandings of the data. However, to ensure that the final analysis would be grounded in the data rather than summarised impressions, I included writing/transcription line numbers for every point included in the chronology, however small the point was. Thus, I could refer to the original data at a later stage and reconsider whether the description I had written in the chronology was a fair reflection of it.

Also, I wanted to ensure that my chronologies reflected not only the text of the data, but also the context (the temporality, sequencing [Floersch, Longhofer, Kranke, & Townsend, 2010], and interactional context [Holliday, 2012]). To this end, I took whole paragraphs as my unit of analysis for the written narratives, and several turns of talk as the unit for interview transcripts. I repeatedly read back and forth through the text, seeking contextual influences on the participants' ideas. At times, I found things ambiguous. Multiple interpretations of statements were often possible. There were other issues as well, notably the source or salience of an idea (see Holliday's [2012] discussion of 'sustained meanings'). At times, participants agreed with propositions that I put to them rather than originating those propositions themselves. At others, they made intriguing comments, but only once in all the data. I included notes in the chronologies of such issues and ambiguities with the intent of making those things plain in the final narratives I would write[29].

I went on to produce ten chronologies, one participant at a time (Figure 6 is a short extract of one chronology). As I did so, I continued to build up the conceptual notes I had been writing for participants throughout the process so far. As certain ideas began to come into focus for me, I started to include certain questions in my notes: e.g., could this mean that…? As I moved from participant to participant, I continuously referred to the list of questions I was writing and wrote notes to compare how such questions could be answered for each participant. In this way, I sought to maintain an ongoing,

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[29] The reader can refer to the narratives in the Chapter 6 to see my efforts to make ambiguity plain.

constant comparison between cases (following Moghaddam [2006]) in anticipation of a final round of interpretation in which I would contrast them.

Figure 6. Completed chronology extract (Henry)

Timing (broad):	Timing (specific):	Event/circumstance:	Reasons for event:	Effects of event:
First years in Korea	Early 2012	Came to Korea (w13)[30] with the intention of staying 1-2 years and returning to US(t130)	Wanted to become a teacher, didn't mind where, didn't have a visa for China, so that fell through, he chose Korea(t20)	Ultimately chose to stay in Korea because life is convenient and he likes the job(t132)
	First teaching job, public school	While at the public school he did not need to find an apartment, file taxes, speak to officials without assistance (w32)	Public schools are very supportive (w31), and he could always call his Korean co-teacher for help(w32) - public school employees want to give a good impression of Korea, and go out of their way to help(w34)	He now feels he should be doing more on his own(w35) - this degree of support may account for his lack of Korean learning(t446) (**NOTE**: I asked him if he thought this might be the case, he said he did)

5.2.3. Answering research question (1)

With the chronologies in hand, I was somewhat anxious about the subsequent phase of analysis. My supervisors suggested it might be worth attempting an answer to research question (1) to be going on with, and I agreed. As a background question, this would not necessarily require much further analysis, and I reasoned that producing an answer would give me another close pass over the data. To this end, I read through each chronology and produced summary notes to answer the question of how much Korean participants had learned, and for what purposes. The outcome of this process – the answer to research question (1) – is presented in part 1 of Chapter 6.

As planned, I did not use the information in the chronologies per se to do this, rather I referred back to the original data constantly as I went, using the line references in the

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[30] Line references note: (w+number) refers to the written narrative, and (t+number) is the transcript.

chronologies as signposts. This proved a valuable approach, as more than once I found myself re-evaluating the descriptions I had written in the chronologies.

5.2.4. Reducing the number of participants for the final steps

At this point, with the answer to question (1) in hand, I came to reconsider the number of participants to include in the final rounds of analysis. I had been developing an ever more elaborate mental image of the participants, and the process of answering question (1) had affirmed a thought I was having – the most interesting aspects of some participants' narratives were present in the narratives of others. Anticipating a long process of analysis and narrative writing and reflecting on the fact that I had only originally intended to recruit 6-9 participants, I decided to progress towards a full, restoried narrative for a reduced number of them. I returned to my various notes and asked of each participant whether I thought they added anything unique or striking – something, dare I say, that would make for a relatively engaging, illustrative write-up in this thesis.

After much deliberation, I decided to reduce the total number of participants from ten to nine, thus creating symmetry within the study: three participants in each level group. Moreover, I decided to subject a core sample of six – two from each group – to further analysis (Table 2). I decided also to include simple narratives of the remaining three as part of my answer to research question (1). I chose to include these three to provide illustrative examples for each level group, and also so that I could make some use of their data as context for the core sample of six in the final round of analysis: inter-case comparison.

Table 2. Core sample of participants

Name	Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean ability
Raymond	15+	U.S.	University	Advanced
Evelyn	10	U.S.	University	Advanced
John	8	U.K.	University	Intermediate
Lauren	7	U.S.	Kindergarten	Intermediate
Lisa	8.5	South Africa	Elementary	Low
Henry	7	U.S.	Elementary	Low-intermediate

5.2.5. Chronology-guided thematic analysis

I then began the process of creating themes for each of the six core participants. Having come so far in understanding and reproducing participants' narratives faithfully, I judged it reasonable to begin a more suspicious analysis, asking what value discourses and identity negotiations might underlie the narrative. To this end, I decided to integrate the theme generation process with the theoretical framework, and to subdivide the themes according to the four axes of Foucault's *ethical self-formation* (self, rules and values, practices, and goals). I prepared an Excel document with the axes as headings, and with space on the left to include the narrative details from which the themes were produced, and on the right to write an overall interpretation. I referred to this interpretation as a *relational summary*, as it was my aim, having divided everything in four, to return it to a single complete picture (Figure 7).

As I was dealing with years-long narratives involving changes in circumstances, motivations, etc., I thought it wise to produce themes separately for different time periods so that I could more easily observe changes over time. This gelled with my understanding of identity as constantly in flux. I aimed for three to five rough time-period divisions for each participant and tried to divide the chronologies as organically as I could. Understandably, the exact periods in question varied between participants. For example, some had many themes relating to their pre-Korea experiences, and others few.

Having thus divided the chronologies into time periods, I used the chronologies and the line references therein to refer myself back to the original data related to a given time period. I constantly compared the description I had written in the chronologies to the original data, and re-evaluated the understandings of the data I had already arrived at. Once I had in hand one or more possible understandings of a given unit of data (as before, paragraphs, or several turns of talk at time), I noted this (these) in a separate Word document. I repeated this process until I had referred myself back to all the original data that related to a given time period. Each time I went to write an understanding in the separate Word document, I asked myself whether this new understanding was unlike any others I had already written, or whether it related to one already written but perhaps lent new details to it. Through this process, each new

understanding contributed to the gradual elaboration of summarised, salient themes that collectively came to represent the entirety of a participant's narrative[31].

This was the point at which I choose to explicitly employ my theoretical framework for analysis. I situated the themes/summaries in the prepared Excel chart under the heading *narrative details.* I then divided these summaries into parts and distributed the parts across the four axes of the theoretical framework. Where I could not identify a given axis in a summary, I left the relevant cell blank (see Figure 7).

I was keen to ensure that my inclusion of something under a heading (axis) was justified, so I kept reflective notes of my thinking processes. But inescapably, this distribution process was based on my subjective interpretation. I was guided by my understanding of what each of the four axes represents. I read the summaries and sought to identify the self, the rules and values, the practices, and the goals therein. Of course, at this point, I had collected, transcribed, and repeatedly read the data, chronologised it, reviewed and revised the chronologies, and produced thematic summaries. I already had a developed, internal sense of every participant's narrative. So, this final, real-time process of categorising the data explicitly considering the framework was no doubt predicated on understandings I arrived at beforehand.

Once I was satisfied that I had divided out the summary appropriately among the axes, I then wrote a *relational summary*. This was the first step of restorying, in which I sought to bring all four axes back together into a single interpretation that referred to theoretical concepts and the context, informed by my readings, impressions, and suspicions. The relational summaries taken all together represented a theorised version of each participants' narrative, albeit one not yet formed into a coherent whole.

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[31] I did not include all collected data in these summaries. As the summaries came together, I found certain details difficult to relate to anything else. It was in this way I decided on which data to exclude from the final analysis. A notable example is Lauren, who at one point narrated an experience that related to her Korean knowledge and to her sexuality. I found this potentially interesting in language/identity terms, but upon analysis, I concluded that her sexuality had not influenced her learning in any way I could identify – sexual identity lacked salience. It may be that the data was deficient. However, for the present study, I felt inclined to exclude this and other similar data.

Figure 7. Thematic analysis example (Lauren)

Time	Narrative details	*Self*	*Rules and values*	*Actions*	*Goals*	Relational summary
Pre-Korea	Family was "not a big fan of languages", jealous of kids raised bilingual, always interested in language and culture, anthropology, religious studies, interest was related to friends	She has an appreciation for language and culture	The value of bilingualism, and its relation to culture - contrast between linguistic/cultural diversity and her family background (the appeal of the exotic)	Learned about culture through friends and acquaintances. The social side of anthropology		There are a couple of roads she is walking down here: to enrich herself in language and culture, and relatedly to become a teacher. The relevant mode of subjection has to do with the value of bilingualism, and what it means to be a teacher. Monolingualism is, perhaps, a problem to be solved. In her narrative, these values are never imposed from without. She happens upon them in the course of things, embraces them, and engages in the relevant self-practices. Those values that are imposed on her (like being fired from the military) have no relevance for her goal. Like a lot of participants, she seems very much at liberty to make her own decisions.
	Studied French/anthropology in undergrad as well as Spanish and German (was always at top of class), did a foreign language education masters		French, a lifelong interest (studied in Louisiana on account of the French connection)	Pursued multiple languages (and anthropology) through college, on and on to higher teaching qualifications	She was committed to engaging with languages and cultures, through to becoming a teacher of language. Wanted to become a multilingual person.	

5.2.6. Restoried narrative generation: Answering research question (2)

I then set about writing a full narrative for each of the six core participants based on the chronologies and the (still disjointed) theorised narratives I had for them. Writing these full narratives proved to be an analytical action in itself. Though I already had the results of my thematic analysis on hand, writing those results into a coherent narrative required me to evaluate how different themes across different time periods might fit together. Thus, I concluded interpretation for each participant in the act of producing the final narrative. As I went about this final interpretation, I kept reflective notes as I had always done, and consequently each narrative was somewhat more comfortable to write than the last, until by the sixth I had a much-strengthened sense of how to fit the analyses together, and of how the cases might be contrasted with each other.

For each participant, I produced a full narrative in six sections: three chronologically ordered faithful narrative sections, and my interpretations presented after each one of these. My intention with this structure was to (a) to balance inductive and deductive presentations of the data (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) – i.e., to let the narrative speak for itself, and to use it to illustrate a point – and (b) to make plain the ways in which participants' circumstances, identities and motivations changed over time. Of course, the decision to divide the narratives in three was mine, and I made it in no small part for the sake of symmetry of presentation between cases. This decision may even reflect an unconscious preference for simple stories with beginnings, middles, and endings – a canonical bias (Ochs & Capps, 2001) – on my part. I do not believe this division undermines the faithfulness of my presentation much, but in any case, let the reader note that this division is not organic. It is a stylistic choice.

5.2.7. A digression on quotes

In writing, I was aware of the argument that simplified data presentation in narrative analysis can obfuscate the full complexity of the data – something that might be remedied by presenting full transcripts rather than decontextualised quotes (Mann, 2011; Prior, 2011). In the event, I did make use of quotes throughout the writings to illustrate points, particularly when the quotes were striking, and in cases where I could not think of a clearer or more concise phrasing. I hoped to ensure that participants'

voices would be present. I also included quotes of myself from interview transcripts where I thought that doing so might demonstrate the co-construction of the narratives. That said, my data presentation falls short of full transcripts. Most of the presentation is my own description of things, and quotes presented have often been edited to remove repeated words, to bring related but disparate statements together to form a single quote, etc. My intent was to produce a concise, readable narrative using such edited quotes, though of course such editing detracts from authenticity. To defend my decision, I offer the claim, for what it is worth, that I tried to retain participants' original meaning as I understood it in all cases. Moreover, I have included line references for all partial quotes, so the reader will always be able to see when a quote has been constructed from multiple elements.

5.2.8. Inter-case comparison for the Discussion chapter

The final stage of the analytical process was inter-case comparison for inclusion in Chapter 7. This involved no new chronologising or thematising but was rather a straight-forward comparison of my interpretations of each case. By the time all six of my restoried narratives were done, I was in a position to compare them. Keeping in mind the different extents to which participants had learned Korean, and the various value statements they had made, I sought to offer some commentary that might explain why certain participants learned more or less than others, and why certain factors appeared to have been more or less influential.

Comparing the six core participants, I began to think I could pair them to offer an illustrative contrast. This pairing is reflected in the ordering of the narratives in Chapter 6. It is also reflected in the first three subsections of Chapter 7 (7.1.1 to 7.1.3), each of which refers to a pair of cases. Furthermore, when I had drawn my conclusions from the comparison, I returned to the three participants' whose data I had not taken through the final stages of analysis and examined them for any contents that might support or undermine the conclusions I was drawing. Having done so, I was satisfied that my conclusions were justifiable, and I proceeded to write Chapter 7 (Discussion), concluding my analysis.

Chapter 6: Findings

In this chapter, I provide answers to both of my research questions.

Of the ten participants from whom data was originally gathered, I selected six to be the central focus of this study. Upon repeated readings of the gathered data, I judged that six participants would represent a reasonable core sample. This is because (a) these six spanned the Korean level spectrum from beginner to advanced, (b) these six presented intriguing comparisons and contrasts with each other, and (c) there was considerable overlap in some of the experiences and perspectives offered by these six and the remaining four.

Nevertheless, I judged that the remaining participants whom I did not select offered some potentially valuable, illustrative examples of Korean learning motivation. To make use of their data for this project, I decided to answer my research questions in the following way.

For question (1), I provide summary descriptions of the extent and purpose of participants' Korean learning. These summaries, one for each of the three Korean level groups (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) are based on analysis of data provided by nine participants. Furthermore, before each of these summaries, a brief account of one participant's Korean learning is provided – three accounts in total. These three (Thomas, Jean, and Eric) are participants who were not included in the core sample of six. I have included the data of these three participants to provide illustrative examples to enrich the answer to question (1), and to act as context for the answer to question (2), which is comprised of the six, full narratives of the core participants. For the sake of space and an even distribution of cases across level brackets, one participant's data (Frank) was not included.

6.1. To what extent and for what purposes have participants learned Korean?

6.1.1. Participants with advanced Korean proficiency

Table 3. Participants with self-declared advanced Korean proficiency

Name	Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean
Raymond	15+	U.S.	University	Advanced
Evelyn	10	U.S.	University	Advanced
Thomas	8	U.S.	University	Advanced

6.1.1.1. An example: Thomas's Korean learning

Thomas has always been interested in languages and how they are learned. When he first came to teach in Korea, he immediately noticed the similarities between Korean and Japanese, a language he already knew.

> **Thomas:** …just seeing the similarities, seeing the puzzle, it's like, man, I really wanna put this together.

As a young, energetic person, he was initially motivated to learn by his 'full-tilt' enjoyment of life in Korea. He adopted study practices that fit his preferences, such as repeatedly practicing songs. He dated extensively and learned Korean by hanging out with people. He actively practiced speaking, but with a Japanese accent in the early days. He knew he was making a fool of himself doing so, but he did not care because he enjoyed it.

Thomas found the Koreans with whom he worked were enthusiastic to help him learn. He also observed that Koreans with very strong English were more likely to have cultural expectations of him on account of his being American. This became a reason for him to learn Korean.

> **Thomas:** I really wanna talk to somebody who's not going to have a misconception about me before I start talking to them.

Before long, he met his now-wife, and developed his Korean a great deal speaking with her. His desire to communicate with her 'on equal ground' was another motivation:

Thomas: If I have to play counsellor with this woman who I intend to spend the rest of my life with, I'm gonna have to be able to communicate on some deep issues… and what about my issues? I wanna be able to say what's going on with me, you know.

Moreover, as an immigrant to Korea with a Korean wife, he felt it was his responsibility to learn rather than hers.

Recently, he and his wife had a daughter. He recalls he used flashcards to learn Korean vocabulary for OB-GYN visits. His daughter has now become a source of motivation for him. Although he speaks English with her for her benefit, he sees the need to sharpen his Korean in hitherto less familiar genres so that he can be fully involved in her life in Korea. He does not want a language barrier to force his wife to take on all child-related responsibilities.

Thomas describes his present Korean as 'unaccented'. He claims to have surprised Korean delivery men who had presumed him to be Korean when speaking on the telephone. He tends to speak almost exclusively Korean with his wife and her family. He can communicate on any day-to-day topic colloquially, though he struggles in situations that he encounters only occasionally. He also finds it challenging to switch between Korean politeness levels in real time when speaking in a group.

Thomas currently teaches at a university, where he uses Korean to crack jokes and make cultural references in order to deepen his rapport with students. He sees knowledge of Korean as important for language teachers and linguists, like himself:

Thomas: …you talk to a lot of linguists or other people and they're like, 'Ah, I don't speak a lot of languages 'cause I'm a linguist.' I'm like, 'well, maybe you *should*.' [32]

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[32] Note: Throughout this chapter, *italics* in a direct quote indicate vocal emphasis.

Even so, he tries not to use Korean in his English classes. In the long run, however, he hopes to become a tenured professor in linguistics, and is working on his Korean reading proficiency at present. He likens his learning to a hermit crab expanding to fit its shell. He would ideally like to be able to discuss his academic interests as well in Korean as he can in English. He also imagines that his dedication to learning Korean may be seen by employers as a sign of 'sincerity' and 'prowess'.

6.1.1.2. Advanced participants' Korean learning: An initial summary

In many respects, Thomas's narrative is representative of the narratives of advanced participants in this study. For example, all three advanced participants, when outlining their purposes for learning Korean, tend to include instrumental needs (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) such as speaking with medical professionals, but to foreground motivations of a more personally meaningful nature, relating to identities they claim and those they hope to acquire. In Thomas's case, this includes his identities as a teacher, immigrant, husband, father, linguist, and in future a full professor. For these participants, learning Korean has been part of a process of self-transformation in some respects (Hennig, 2010). Moreover, advanced participants describe Korean learning motivation in terms that are not only personally meaningful, but at times quite abstract or metaphorical (e.g., Thomas is a 'hermit crab'). Thus, while concrete motivations do figure in their narratives, there is a clear sense in all three cases (as will be seen) that their learning motivation has extended beyond the straightforwardly instrumental.

A related commonality among advanced participants is the persistence of their motivation over a long period. They sometimes describe short-term, context-specific *ought-to* learning imperatives (Dörnyei, 2005), but their more ideal goals and their ongoing identity transformation processes carry them along for years. Here, Thomas provides an example. His Korean learning proceeded from an initial fascination, through personal and social engagement, to professional self-development. Such a progression might be characterised as a long-term motivational current (Muir and Dörnyei, 2013). It is notable that interruptions to the learning process – episodes of demotivation, priorities other than Korean learning – are almost completely absent from advanced participants' narratives. This is not to say they did not encounter obstacles of greater or lesser impact. For instance, Thomas recognised that he

appeared foolish when speaking early on. But, even in the face of practical or affective challenges, these three participants proceeded with their learning.

There are, however, some substantial differences between the advanced participants. One of the most significant differences is the extent to which their purposes for learning were positive or negative; whether they had a *promotion focus* or a *prevention focus* (Thompson, 2017a). In Thomas's case, his purposes were largely positive, though there is at least one preventative point: his desire not to be subject to 'misconceptions'. As will be shown, the degree of positivity/negativity differed greatly between Raymond and Evelyn.

Nevertheless, all three of these participants have achieved a high degree of proficiency in Korean. They describe not only using the language to conduct their everyday lives, but also various, complex linguistic behaviours, ranging from telling jokes, making cultural references, and acting as a 'counsellor' for their spouse (Thomas), to paid translation work (Raymond and Evelyn) among other things.

6.1.2. Participants with intermediate Korean proficiency

Table 4. Participants with self-declared intermediate Korean proficiency

Name	Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean
John	8	U.K.	University	Intermediate
Lauren	7	U.S.	Kindergarten	Intermediate
Jean	6	U.S.	University	Intermediate

6.1.2.1. An example: Jean's Korean learning

Jean came to Korea after finishing an M.A. in TESOL, planning to stay one year then move on to Japan. She came to Korea first because she had Korean friends in the U.S., and because the Korean language has only one writing system to learn.

In her first teaching job, at a university, she found herself in an isolated, mountainous location, and so began taking a survival Korean course. She got on well with the other students and the course teacher. They began to hang out after class, and over time

Jean would attend several weddings, sharpening her listening and Korean cultural knowledge.

Jean had enjoyed studying languages like German in the past. She describes herself as curious about language and culture, and thinks that learning the basics of a country's language is a sign of respect. However, it was primarily her friendships that motivated her to learn Korean.

> **Jean:** If I had chosen not to come to Korea, I don't think I would've learned Korean. I'm not super into, like, K-dramas, so there wouldn't be a cultural reason for me to learn beyond having Korean friends.

Having become comfortable and developed some close friendships, she decided to remain in Korea after the first year. She continued studying Korean by herself.

> **Jean:** Deciding that I was gonna stay, I became more motivated because I wanted to show my students that I was also making an intentional effort to be a language learner and a lifelong learner.

And indeed, because she is 'not afraid to use Korean' in class, she finds students often treat her like with reverence - like 'Jesus'. She aims to provide them with an example of L2 meaning negotiation and uses her Korean to help students when they are clearly struggling. However, she uses English '99% of the time'.

Another motivation to stay for Jean was her Korean boyfriend, whom she dated for three years. She continued to study Korean alone but found her partner totally unhelpful. Looking back, she speculates that he may have resented her Korean learning because it made her more independent, which she did indeed want to be.

Eventually, with a view to staying in Korea longer, she enrolled on the Korean social integration program (KIIP), a Korean-medium course that would help her to acquire a more secure visa independent of any employer or spouse. Shortly after starting, she

broke up with her boyfriend. Consequently, she became depressed and lost her motivation to learn.

> **Jean:** Thankfully, I had made wonderful foreign friends in my class, my teacher was great, and my students and colleagues were very supportive. Over time, my curiosity won out over my depression.

When she finished the program and acquired her visa, her Korean learning motivation again declined. At the time of her interview, she is busy with work, and has been studying Korean around two hours a week for six months via an app.

In particular, she is learning Chinese characters, a traditional script rarely used in Korea. In telling me about this, she says she sees the characters as an interesting puzzle, and values them both because they help her develop her Korean vocabulary and because they are used in other countries. She characterises this learning as part of her ongoing self-improvement.

> **Jean:** My definition of forward momentum is not staying in the same place. Learning things, either knowledge or skills, is a way to stop stagnation.

At present, Jean is comfortable having conversations in Korean with friends and colleagues, though not on unfamiliar topics. She can generally read work e-mails. She would ideally like to speak and read Korean more comfortably, but:

> **Jean:** I know that I'm very likely never gonna reach a point where I feel like I'm fluent because it don't have the time, or energy, or maybe even motivation.

Indeed, she recalls having heard a taxi driver comment that foreigners in Korea from other countries (Vietnam, the Philippines) speak better Korean than her after a shorter residence. She thinks this judgment is unfair, given her situation.

> **Jean:** There's a difference between being married to a Korean and living in a Korean household, and teaching English as my day job and only, you know, having 30 minutes to practice every day.

6.1.2.2. Intermediate participants' Korean learning: An initial summary

In the extent of her Korean learning, Jean is quite representative of the three self-described intermediate participants. Their ability is characterised by conversational competence and practical, day-to-day functionality. They also describe weaknesses in their language, difficulties they have communicating either in general, in certain situations, or on uncommon topics. Following Blommaert and Backus (2011), their competence might be called *truncated*.

Moreover, they all describe periods of intensive formal and informal Korean study, but also periods of lapsed motivation and of not studying. They often attribute this to other priorities such as work or social activities. They also all say they would ideally like to improve, but doubt that they will achieve fluency, due either to a lack of aptitude or deficiencies in motivation. The relatively frequent narrations of demotivated episodes, alternative priorities, and self-doubt distinguish these three from the participants with advanced proficiency.

As to their purposes for learning, intermediate participants do describe some unique, motivational through-lines of personal meaning as the advanced participants do, though perhaps more general in nature: in Jean's case, satisfying curiosity, showing respect, solving a puzzle, etc. The lack of a specific, vivid ideal goal could conceivably be a factor in these participants' comparatively variable motivation (Muir and Dörnyei, 2013). In practical terms, all three note that their Korean was motivated by social connections in Korea. They wished to communicate with friends they met, colleagues, partners, etc., and these people often supported their learning. There is some variety in this, however. For John and Jean, social interaction was perhaps the most consequential single motivation and purpose of learning; less so for Lauren, as will be seen.

At the point that I interviewed them, none of the intermediate participants were investing much time in studying Korean. They expressed differing degrees of comfort with this fact. Jean and John seem broadly at ease with it, Lauren notably less so. What is common among them is they appear to have entered an *attractor state*

(Thompson, 2017a) at the level of conversational Korean. That is, they have plateaued before reaching advanced proficiency.

6.1.3. Participants with lower Korean proficiency

Table 5. Participants with self-declared lower Korean proficiency

Name	Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean
Lisa	8.5	South Africa	Elementary	Low
Henry	7	U.S.	Elementary	Low-intermediate
Eric	22	Canada	University	Low

6.1.3.1. An example: Eric's Korean learning

Eric came to teach in Korea almost twenty-three years ago, thinking it would effectively be a paid vacation. He began studying Korean immediately and was able to read the script in a week. This distinguished him among FETs of his acquaintance, most of whom could not read it.[33] He attributes his learning to his background in anthropology.

> **Eric:** I very much had this idea that if it's there, it works… I didn't understand why (other English-speakers) wouldn't try (to learn)... Russians who came here to work in the factories, they would *all* speak Korean… My idea was to come in and learn as much as possible.

Early on, Eric 'went native', eating only Korean food, and studying the language with a friend. He acquired around 100 words and practical phrases for shopping. Then, he enrolled on a short Korean course at a university. He started off strongly, but was soon outpaced by his Japanese classmates, and had little time to do homework due to his teaching responsibilities. He finished at the bottom of the class.

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[33] For context, the Korean script, Hangeul, is widely considered to be an intuitive and easy-to-learn writing system. While learning to speak Korean is considered difficult for English speakers, learning to read it is the work of a casual week or two for many learners. Moreover, knowledge of the script makes life in Korea easier in myriad ways. At the very least, it enables one to read place names on signs and recognise English loan words. This is to say that learning Hangeul is not necessarily a sign of high investment in learning Korean. *Not* learning Hangeul, on the other hand, demonstrates a surprising willingness to limit one's day-to-day understandings of the local environment for the sake of saving only a modest amount of time and effort.

Eventually, Eric decided to stay in Korea because he was enjoying teaching. Indeed, he found himself 'at the top of (his) profession'. He notes that professionalism among FETs at the time was lacking.

Over time, Eric tried periodically to learn Korean. He practiced with friends and girlfriends, but generally defaulted to English with them – it was the easier language for communication. He found there were few people interested in speaking Korean with him. His students were, but he spoke only English with them. His philosophy was (and is) that students should be encouraged to see English as a real language, not just a school subject, and sticking to English is part of this.

After six years in Korea, Eric began working at a university and had long summer breaks. He resumed studying Korean because he now felt he should be better at it.

> **Eric:** I feel it's kind of almost disrespectful to be in Korea, have all my Korean friends *forced* to speak English to me, even though I think most of them would *rather* speak English to me… (It's) a lack of respect for the culture, and indirectly to them.

For several years, Eric repeatedly enrolled on formal Korean courses during vacations, but each time he forgot most of what he had learned after returning to work. At peak, he was able to converse in Korean on various topics if he had time to prepare. However, as of his interview with me, he has not studied Korean for around eight years. His Korean ability is now comparable to that of his earliest days in Korea, which he says makes him feel embarrassed.

As to why progress has been difficult for him, the main reason has been alternative priorities, especially professional development as a teacher. In this way, learning Korean carries an 'opportunity cost'.

> **Eric:** While here, I have travelled, made regular trips back to see my family, become a dive master, increased my teaching qualifications and taught many students outside of work, among other things. I don't feel I have wasted my time, but I do feel like I should know more (Korean).

Eric notes he has tended to prioritise short-term goals with clear results. In comparison, when learning Korean:

> **Eric:** It's a lot harder to say 'I finished this, and now I'm 1/100,000th of the way closer'. It's a *completely abstract* concept.

Eric is presently dependent on his bilingual wife for many tasks. However, he has adapted his body language and mannerisms to Korean culture and is able to behave respectfully towards Koreans in this way. He still believes his Korean should be better and expects to get back into it 'eventually'. His goal is to be conversationally fluent and to speak multiple languages with friends and family, including his Korean-speaking parents-in-law. He also attends teaching conferences where most presentations are in Korean and would like to understand these better. However, he will not resume study of Korean for at least a year, as he is currently working on an M.A. TESOL.

6.1.3.2. Lower-proficiency participants' Korean learning: An initial summary

One thing to note about the participants with lower Korean proficiency is that, as Eric exemplifies, they have all invested some effort in trying to learn Korean. They all describe their Korean ability as quite weak, ranging from basic transactional language to limited conversational competence. They all outline ways in which they have socially and culturally adapted to life in Korea in non-linguistic ways: e.g., Eric's mannerisms. Also, they all talk about being dependent on bilingual associates. Clearly, it is possible for an FET to live in Korea without being obliged to develop strong Korean. In this respect, they belong to a privileged (i.e., non-obligated) group (Minarik, 2017). Yet, all these participants have tried to learn anyway to varying degrees. Their narratives are characterised by episodic study, but also by difficulties making progress, and backsliding. Another commonality is that they outline personal and professional priorities that have edged out Korean study; in Eric's case, there have been many.

Regarding the purposes of their learning, human relationships stand out in each case: a desire to communicate with friends, romantic partners, partner's parents, and students. Yet, all three state that they are not able to do this as well as they wish. It seems they primarily keep the company of English speakers. Other researchers have proposed that contact with non-host-culture associates may relate to decreased

interest in language/host culture learning (Hendrickson, Rosen, & Aune, 2011; Ng, Wang, & Chan, 2017). Moreover, all three describe relationships they have with people who do not speak English confidently (e.g., Eric's parents-in-law) and participation in Korean-language activities even though their understanding of what is being said is restricted. Yim and Hwang (2018) suggest that even such linguistically limited contact may foster a sense of belonging. Indeed, all three lower-proficiency participants describe their comfort and familiarity with life in Korea, even as they make clear that their Korean ability circumscribes their lives in some ways.

One of the most prominent differences among these three is the intensity of their expressed belief that their Korean should be better. Lisa seems quite uncomfortable with her Korean; Henry seems very comfortable with his. Eric falls in the middle. He says he thinks his Korean should be better, and does not want to show disrespect, but he is comfortable enough not to have studied for eight years. Indeed, like the intermediate participants, none of these three were active in studying Korean when I interviewed them. They all give reasons that learning more Korean could be beneficial, yet their present motivation appears low.

6.2. How have personal and contextual factors influenced participants' motivation to learn Korean?

In this section, I give accounts of six participants' Korean learning. These accounts are based on an analysis of narrative data collected from participants framed around Foucault's notion of *ethical self-formation* (Foucault, 1984; 1985). This involved interpreting the data as a narration of participants making agentic decisions about what self-development actions to engage in. The particular focus is why learning Korean represented such an action for them at a given time, or why it did not. To facilitate interpretation, the data was categorised into Foucault's four axes of self-creation. The definitions of these four axes, adapted from Clarke and Hennig (2013), are given in Table 6 for the reader's reference (see Chapter 3, section 3.3 for more detail).

Table 6. The four axes of self-creation

The ethical substance	The self; aspect(s) of participant's identity concerned with learning.
The mode of subjection	The rules and values of the context that influence learning decisions.
Self-practices	Participants' learning activities (or lack thereof).
Telos	Participants' ideal future self that may (or may not) be achieved by learning.

The accounts hereafter include theoretical interpretations that integrate all four axes in order to explore the interrelatedness of participants' identities, values, experiences, actions and goals.

6.2.1. Lisa's Korean learning

Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean level
8.5	South African	Elementary school	Low

6.2.1.1. The first two years: Lisa has low motivation, learns passively

When Lisa came to Korea to teach English at an elementary school, she was already a successful language learner. Coming from an Afrikaans background, she learned English as a young child, then Sotho at school, then Spanish on her own initiative as an adult. However, in her first year in Korea, she acquired only basic Korean phrases, including some she heard her elementary school English students use repeatedly. She did not invest herself in studying Korean. When I asked why this was, she gave two reasons. One was that she had originally come to Korea to put some distance between herself and a troubled personal life, which influenced her experience of Korea as a new environment.

> **Lisa:** I didn't go through the honeymoon phase of 'oh, Korea is amazing' (t374)[34]. I had to start a new life, I was in that emotional chaos coming to a country, I didn't know the language, didn't know anyone, didn't understand anything, I didn't even read up on Korea before I came. (t376)

The other reason she gave was that she was initially unsure how long she would stay in Korea: likely 1-2 years. So, she took the view that Korean would not be worth learning, as it would be of little use once she left.

> **Lisa:** For me, spending so much time learning a language that's going to be sort of useless anywhere else in the world was not an option (t360). If it's French, you can use it in twenty other countries. Korean, you cannot use anywhere else (t364).

6.2.1.2. Interpretive commentary (part 1)

At this stage, in terms of the *ethical substance,* learning Korean might have appealed to a newcomer's curiosity, but Lisa arrived under difficult circumstances, and did not

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[34] Interview transcript line number.

experience the 'honeymoon phase'. It might also have served an accomplished language learner's sense of their own identity. However, as remaining in Korea was not an element of Lisa's *telos*, she evaluated Korean in terms of its worth outside of Korea compared to that of other languages, and she found it lacking.

6.2.1.3. Third year on: Lisa struggles to learn, settles into life with basic Korean

As Lisa tells it, her first two years in Korea passed quickly. When she was given the chance to renew her employment for a third year, she took it. Around the time she made that decision, she also enrolled on a course of Korean at a local university that was being offered at a discount for foreigners.

> **Stewart:** What was your motivation to learn Korean at that time?
>
> **Lisa:** Just that I'm going to stay another year so maybe I should make the effort to learn.
>
> **Stewart:** A third year. Can you recall now what your motivation was to stay?
>
> **Lisa:** Just that I had no desire to go back, my country's condition is getting worse, I don't want to go back. So, what's the best option? Stay here and stick it out.
>
> **Stewart:** But one imagines that there was something even at that time that made being here worthwhile.
>
> **Lisa:** Nothing that said, like, 'oh, this is amazing, I want to be here,' but nothing that called me back to the other place, either. It's just kind of like, this is good enough. (t465-470)

By this point, she had made some observations regarding Korean language at her school. In her department, she was one of two foreign teachers alongside three Korean teachers. The Korean teachers would use English when speaking with the foreign teachers one-to-one, but when all five met together, the Korean teachers would use Korean amongst themselves, effectively excluding her and her other colleague[35]. She attributed this to the lack of a multicultural concept in Korea – in South Africa, by contrast, a common language is used in such situations. Also, at this time, she was

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[35] This phenomenon (non-use of English even in the presence of foreign teachers) is attested in the literature: see Yim and Hwang (2018). It should be noted that Lisa never stated unambiguously that this motivated her to learn, but she did share it as part of a longer response to a question about whether she felt learning was an obligation (transcript line 483).

co-teaching her English classes with a Korean teacher who would habitually translate Lisa's English instructions into Korean for the students. Lisa did not like this. She felt it took away the students' incentive to pay attention to her.

Once she began studying Korean formally, Lisa hit several roadblocks. The classes she took turned out to be Korean-medium, which she found frustrating. She also found Korean to be a tricky language. When learning Spanish, she had made a lot of connections between it and other languages she knew. However, she could not make connections with Korean. She found the sounds and words unfamiliar and hard to remember. She did not get the sense her Korean was improving. Meanwhile, she was teaching English full time as she studied. She arrived home late each day, with no time to do homework. Exhaustion set in. After three months, she withdrew from the Korean course. From this point, she sometimes self-studied Korean when desk warming at work (attending, though there are no classes to teach), using books and the internet as resources. Meanwhile:

> **Lisa:** I just continued living life with my very basic Korean knowledge, often having to rely on the help of English-speaking Korean friends to assist me whenever something urgent came up like refrigerators breaking down and having to call the AS service centre, where only Korean is spoken, to get someone to fix it. I found it frustrating and humiliating as well but somehow decided that I would never be able to learn Korean anyway. It is just too difficult. (w69-73)[36]

6.2.1.4. Interpretive commentary (part 2)

As she makes plain, Lisa's efforts at learning Korean did not bear the fruit she had hoped for at this stage. As to why she tried to learn, her motivation was: 'Just that I'm going to stay another year so maybe I should make the effort to learn.' (t466) This could imply subjection to a sense of obligation relating to a personal philosophy. If so, it was likely a weak sense, given the diminishing effect of 'just' and 'maybe'. Nonetheless, the decision to stay in Korea appears have made Korean ability relevant to Lisa's *telos*. Even if she had no love of Korean or Korea, the things she did apparently value – independence, control over her teaching, inclusion in (or non-

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[36] Written narrative line number.

exclusion from) conversations – were, in Korea, substantially mediated through Korean. This would not have mattered if she were leaving Korea, but as of the third year, she no longer was. Thus, though she lacked an idealistic view of Korean, her ideal life situation would henceforth require it. This can be seen as a corollary of the findings of Gearing (2019) that 'a sense of not knowing how long their South Korean sojourns would last' is a demotivator for FETs learning Korean (p.208); when an FET's residence is extended, motivation may increase.

However, Lisa's formal study experience was decidedly mismatched with her learning preferences. And as it turned out, Korean was a difficult language for her. Her identification as a successful language learner (*ethical substance*) required that she make progress to be satisfied, but she could not. She then disidentified (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002)[37] with learning Korean, deciding it was not something she could learn. As to why she did this, rather than investing in other learning practices, there are several possible factors. One is the unpleasant learning experience itself and negative emotions associated with it, both of which have been linked to reduced investment in language learning and use (Lamb, 2012; Saito, Dewaele, Abe, & In'nami, 2018). Another factor may be Lisa's apparent lack of idealism. As has been noted, the role of Korean in her *telos* was arguably tangential at this point. She had no ideal self-image of herself as a Korean speaker. Therefore, there was perhaps little compelling her to continue after her bad study experience. Moreover, she was apparently surprised by the difficulty of Korean, and disidentification may have been a defence mechanism used to heal the divide between her language learner self-image and her failure to make easy progress in this instance (Steele, et al., 2002).

After her course, Lisa was left in a frustrated but resigned position of dependence due to her lower Korean ability. However, she did persist in low-key *self-practices* towards learning Korean. This suggests that Korean might still have had a role to play in her *telos*, and that though she had ruled out mastering it, she may still have hoped to improve it enough to move towards a more ideal life situation. Either that, or she felt

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[37] That is to say, she sought to distance herself from Korean in response to trauma as an emotional defence strategy.

compelled to keep going despite herself. Her reasons at this point are not clearly elaborated in the data collected.

6.2.1.5. Present day: Lisa desires connection, community, security, and balance

Since her third-year renewal, Lisa has remained an elementary school English teacher, though she now teaches her classes alone. She has completed a Diploma in TESOL. She lives in the same rural province. She feels at home in Korea, even describing herself as a 'blonde, blue-eyed Korean' (t1112), but has no desire to become Korean in as much as that would mean 'throw(ing) away (her) own way of thinking' (t501). She attends a Korean-language church and sings in a Korean-language choir.

> **Lisa**: I currently manage fairly well in Korea with my limited language skills. I can have superficial conversations, can ask for help in stores or tell the taxi driver where to take me. I manage discussions of schedule changes at work speaking only Korean with colleagues who are not comfortable with English. But I do not think it is nearly enough (w119-122). I'm still using the basic level of grammar that I used 3 years ago and it's still the same baby level Korean. The people around me understand well enough but I can't express myself in the end (t726).

In the interview, I ask her about her experiences teaching English. She says it has grown on her, and she plans to stick with it. She has completed a Diploma in TESOL while in Korea. Also, now without a co-teacher and working with students not much exposed to private English education, she uses Korean to give instructions in class. This is more efficient and allows more time for students to engage in practice activities. However, she has higher ambitions for which she would need more advanced Korean:

> **Lisa**: I want to teach them more than just how to memorize an English sentence, I want to teach them life skills, I want to teach them how you think, how to change the way they think, and in order to do that you need language to describe how they should think or what else they should consider (t872).

Lisa also recalls a recent experience of tension between her and a distressed student. She was able to discuss things with him in Korean (with negligible use of a smartphone dictionary), but only managed a superficial depth of communication. She would have

preferred to connect with him on a human level, to convey to him her own feelings in their fullness of meaning, but she could not. Her descriptions of the limits of her language are similar for her social sphere. She cannot convey to Korean speakers who she is, as that would require a considerable level of language.

> **Lisa**: I come to church, these people here don't know (what I believe). My spirituality is a big part of who I am… and how I've grown to where I have today in my life, and what I feel and what I experienced. It's not a matter of how I'm sad because I miss my family. I miss my family because I miss the ritual that goes with family gatherings, I miss the acceptance, being accepted with my faults… what I'm saying to you now, just the words, I cannot say in Korean. (t569-571)

She notes that the close friends she has had in Korea, such as one of her Korean teaching colleagues, tend to have been competent in English. However, she also points out that she has found community acceptance despite the limitations of language. A notable example this is her participation in choirs. She has been a member of multiple choirs and has participated in choir contests singing songs in Korean, the lyrics to which she memorised but did not understand.

> **Lisa**: It's over a thousand people just singing and having a big show. It's wonderful. I do things that include me in the community. It's not like I'm at home thinking, 'I cannot sing in the choir because I don't speak'. It's *hell* because I have to memorize all those Korean songs… but every now and again our conductor would say, 'Lisa, you can look at (the lyrics) once during the (performance)' (laughs) (t506-514).

While it is true Lisa might not be able to speak to the other choristers in Korean, this does not much matter, as the choir members do not tend to hang around after practice anyway. In situations of this sort, her community involvement is not dependent on Korean. Nevertheless, she does express a belief that she will need to learn more for social as well as practical purposes.

> **Lisa**: Stewart, if you plan on having a life here, really be integrated, and by that I mean not live in Seoul and only mix with a foreigner community… if I want to really integrate I need to know the language, if I want to feel I belong, and I want to contribute to valuable

conversations and have people understand, I need to learn the language (t960). I do not need to be an expert in Korean language, but I do need to be able to live my life and help myself in a country where not nearly enough people can speak English. I also cannot expect everyone to use English. This is after all Korea! (w124-126)

As to her recent Korean studies, she mentions that she has just completed the final level of Korean Immigration and Integration Program (KIIP), which involved a lot of Korean study over several months. However, this mirrored her earlier experience of formal study – Korean-medium classes, a lot of effort spent translating materials, high stress. She described this experience succinctly as 'hell' (t35). By the course's end, she did not feel her Korean had improved. However, finishing the KIIP would strengthen her application for a better visa to secure her residence in Korea. This was the only reason she did it.

> **Lisa**: I want to have at least the option, like, I want to feel that regardless of whatever else happens I'm allowed to stay, not if I have a traffic fine then I'm going to be deported or, you know what I mean.
>
> **Stewart**: Very much.
>
> **Lisa**: I want to feel that security, whereas even if I decide to leave the country in five years from now or whatever but I have permanent residency in Korea I'd have a choice because I still have a back door… without having to return to my home country as my only option. (t237-241)

While she talks of the option to stay in Korea or leave it, she also says that she loves her life in Korea. Having been out of South Africa for a long time, she does not quite feel she belongs anywhere. But in Korea, she feels physically safe in a way that she would not in South Africa. She also finds much in the culture that speaks to her.

On the question of whether she will study Korean in future, Lisa states that she needs to learn more. She has some thoughts about how she might improve, for instance by enlisting the help of her close Korean teaching colleague to practice grammar together. However, she feels presently demotivated. Partly, this is because of the time she has already invested to little effect. Also, having just come off a hellish experience with the KIIP, and having done a Dip-TESOL before that, she has no immediate desire to

resume studying. She needs balance. She wants her life to be about more than work and study: 'I don't have the desire. It's exhausting. Especially if I don't feel like I'm reaping the benefits' (t717).

6.2.1.6. Interpretive commentary (part 3)

In the description she gives of her current life situation, Lisa presents several points that can be interpreted in terms of *ethical self-formation.* Table 7 presents a summary of these points in relation to each other.

Table 7. Lisa's current situation presented in terms of **ethical self-formation**

Ethical substance		Mode of subjection		Telos
She is a teacher.	>>	It is better for her to teach thinking/life skills than just English.	>>	She could use Korean to connect with students, and to teach them thinking skills.
She has feelings and spiritual ideas that make up who she is.	>>	One need not be an expert in Korean, but to contribute to valuable conversations, one needs enough of the language.	>>	Better Korean ability would allow her to express herself fully and facilitate a richer social existence.
She wishes to be involved in the community.		She cannot expect others to use English; this is Korea.		
She desires a sense of safety and security.	>>	Without a secure visa, people in her position are vulnerable to deportation.	>>	With a better visa, she will have options. She can stay in or leave Korea as she pleases.
		Korea is safe, and South Africa is not.		

Referring to table 7, it could be argued that learning Korean now would contribute to Lisa's self-formation in specific ways in a range of domains, seemingly more so than

at her third-year mark. Yet, as she tells it, her Korean remains as it was some years ago, and her current motivation to learn is not strong.

As to why this is, we may note first that the contribution Korean learning would make to Lisa's *telos* is still indirect. She says nothing about wishing to become a Korean speaker and expresses no particular affection for the language. If her ideal life situation could be achieved by other means, Korean would be optional. Indeed, considering her *self-practices*, this seems to have been the case. She completed the KIIP course and memorised Korean songs – both 'hell'. Moreover, even though both actions required her to engage with Korean, neither boosted her competence much. Yet, by doing these things she has been able to take steps towards a sense of security[38] and to participate in community activities. Indeed, she states plainly that she refused to let the language barrier prevent her from singing in the choir. Given her previous disidentification with Korean, and her ongoing frustration trying to improve her ability, even a difficult approach that bypasses Korean improvement may be tolerable.

On the other hand, there are things in her *telos* as I have interpreted it, for which there may be no good alternative but to learn Korean: to communicate deeply with non-English speaking Korean acquaintances and students. This is especially true given Lisa's value statement: 'I also cannot expect everyone to use English. This is after all Korea!' Then, why has the desire to communicate deeply not motivated her to learn more by this point? Naturally, Lisa's negative learning experiences may be a factor. Perhaps she would have been more motivated if fortune had placed her on more suitable courses early on.

Another consideration is the tolerability of her current situation. Even in domains where Lisa clearly outlines the benefits that better Korean would bring, she already manages well. She may not be able to connect with students as much as she would like, but she can communicate and instruct them basically in Korean. Also, she may be limited in what she can express to whom, but she is not without friends, nor is she excluded

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[38] It should be noted for context that the public-school FET program in Korea is officially a temporary arrangement, and has been so since its inception in the mid-1990s (Lerner, 2020; Lee, H.S., 2020). A permanent threat of unemployment may explain Lisa's desire to achieve a sense of security, whether by acquiring Korean or not.

from community activities for the lack of Korean alone. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) note that, to be motivating, one's ideal future vision must be sufficiently different from one's present self, and it needs to be plausible. For her part, Lisa seems convinced her vision is different enough to warrant effort to learn, given how she vociferously laments her linguistic limits. Then again, she has decided that Korean is too different and difficult to learn, which would make her ideal implausible.

In light of all this, my overarching interpretation of Lisa's narrative is that a contradictory interaction of personal and contextual factors explains the position of tension Lisa is in: between the sense that her Korean should be improved, and that improving it would require great effort for small gains. Her clear sense of displeasure at her Korean ability, and her statements about needing to learn more make plain that she perceives Korean learning to be a necessary *self-practice* to achieve her highest *telos* while in Korea. However, she demonstrates no personal connection to the Korean language itself; Korean learning carries a high cost in time and fatigue; and her *telos* can be approached (though not fully achieved) by means other than learning Korean. Thus, in the absence of any idealised desire for the language, Lisa has had to choose either to battle on against the odds to learn Korean purely as a means to other ends, or not to learn and therefore to live a less-than-ideal but tolerable life. Having just come off a course of gruelling study, she has chosen the latter option for now.

6.2.2. Lauren's Korean learning

Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean level
7	U.S.	Kindergarten	Intermediate

6.2.2.1. Before Korea: Lauren desires knowledge of culture and mastery of language

Lauren has always been interested in language and culture, and in her narrative, she credits friends with sparking this interest. Though she was raised in the rural US, she had a childhood neighbour whose parents were from France. She made friends with exchange students in high school. Her best friend in university taught her about Hindu mythology – this last experience sparked an interest in anthropology and religion.

> **Lauren:** I've always been jealous of children who were raised bilingual, my family is not a big fan of languages… (t74)

At university, she chose to major in French and anthropology. She also took classes of Spanish and German. She found these languages easy (they were European) and was often top of her class. But ultimately, she did not go beyond a semester of study with either of them. She went on to do a master's degree in foreign language education, completing it by age 22. It was at this point that she experienced a 'life-altering shock' (w14).

> **Lauren:** I had trained so hard to become a teacher, yet I had never really experienced the world outside of academia. How could I prepare students for a world I knew nothing about? (w14-15)

Following this, she did a wide variety of jobs in the US, from bartending to the military. She found she was comfortable anywhere, but more than anything, she wanted to see the world.

By around age thirty, she found herself in a 'pit' (t618). After making many impulsive decisions (like joining the military), she felt a need for direction, and for a real job. Also, family difficulties at the time made her unwilling to stay at home. In this context, she applied to become an English teacher in several Asian countries, settling on Korea because it was the first good deal she was offered. She particularly liked the idea of studying Korean, as she imagined it would prove more challenging than the European languages she was used to.

> **Lauren:** I didn't want learning Korean to fall by the wayside the way learning German and Spanish had. I promised myself that I wouldn't leave Korea until I learned to speak Korean well. Now, I think I might die here! (w22-24)

6.2.2.2. Interpretive commentary (part 1)

Up to this point, Lauren's narrative lends itself comfortably to a Foucauldian interpretation. Her life was *problematised* (Gutting, 2005, p.1586) in multiple ways. That is, she was called upon to transform herself. The *ethical substance* that made her a potential subject for transformation was initially her monolingual background. The *mode of subjection* was the value that possessing linguistic/cultural knowledge bestows upon a person. In her encounters with friends of diverse backgrounds, Lauren identified this value and desired to pursue it – an unforced *mimetic* desire (Girard, 1976) rather than a subjection to external forces. Moreover, she contrasted her appreciation (felt as envy) for the bilingual identity with her own monolingual family. Thus, it appears that the *telos* of Lauren's self-creation project was a life of linguistic and cultural enrichment and a multilingual identity, as contrasted with an undesirable monolingual alternative (something like a *feared self* [Muir & Dörnyei, 2013, p.362]).

Lauren's commitment to extensive study in pursuit of her goal demonstrates how much appeal it held for her. Her pursuit of this goal down an academic path led her to complete a teaching master's, at which point she experienced a *critical event* of the sort that relates to and shapes identity (Woods, 1993). Because she believes teachers must be worldly for their students' sake, acquiring a teacher identity lent a new and specific necessity to Lauren's project of self-enrichment.

Lauren's move to Korea can be seen as an extension of the self-creation project she had been working on since childhood. Learning and teaching in Korea would allow her to pursue her own multilingualism, and in the process of language/culture learning to grow generally as a person and specifically as a teacher. In this way, she would be getting back onto a firm track after a period of looser experimentation.

Moreover, the degree of commitment she felt towards learning Korean, despite lacking experience with the language or any prior connections to it, is striking. It suggests that the enrichment she might get out of linguistic and cultural learning was both personally consequential and, to an extent, general. Perhaps learning any language would have held value for her. Indeed, her choice of an unfamiliar culture and her stated desire to study a more challenging language gel with the interpretation that she was seeking an enrichment; a growth of the self beyond its present limits. However, as Lauren's joke about having to die in Korea implies, learning Korean to a point of satisfaction would not prove easy for her.

6.2.2.3. Learning Korean: Lauren does language exchanges, then studies at university

Lauren began learning Korean on the plane ride to Korea. With the help of another passenger, she learned to read the script from signage around her seat. She immediately noticed how simple *Hangeul* is, and that consequently, it was difficult for her to distinguish between symbols that differed in only one stroke – Lauren has dyslexia.

Upon arrival in Korea, she started teaching in two schools in a small city (neither school could afford her by themselves). For the first two weeks, she struggled with the language barrier. She lacked independence, and her co-workers were not strong English speakers. After a while, she stumbled on the only foreigner bar in town (i.e., a local bar frequented by the western expatriate community), and gained a sense of community there with the other foreigners. Meanwhile, she pursued Korean proactively. She found a Korean colleague who was willing to teach her informally. From this, she acquired Korean introductions, the names of classroom objects, and some practical situational language. She found that she did not retain much

vocabulary in memory, but she compensated by meticulously writing the language she needed in a notebook, which she then carried everywhere.

Lauren proceeded to set up several other informal teaching arrangements and language exchanges with Koreans in the small city. She went on to build a close and lasting friendship with one of her exchange partners, even coming to think of that person's family as her own 'adoptive family' (t48). She spoke with members of this family in Korean, and her relationship with them became a further motivation for her to learn.

As expected, Korean was harder for her than European languages had been at university. She focused on learning the unfamiliar grammar. Her approach to study was to work through a textbook alone in silence or reading aloud to herself, writing what she wanted to say. She would then meet her teachers/exchange partners who would instruct her in English. As a result of this approach, she did not develop strong listening ability in Korean: 'When I first came, it was natural for me to tune out anyone speaking Korean.' (w95) She did, however, learn rapidly overall. Korean grammar became a lot less confusing to her. Eventually, she became someone who could translate Korean for other foreigners when needed.

After 2.5 years of studying and progressing in this way, Lauren decided to move to Seoul for various reasons. The effects of this move on her Korean learning turned out to be catastrophic. Her new job was much more demanding, and she became too busy to study. She attempted to establish new language exchanges anyway but found that people in Seoul were more likely to brush off meetings and neglect homework. She postulates that this is because people in Seoul have ready access to English and international culture, whereas people in the small city needed such exchanges to access the wider world. In the event, Lauren went from making fast progress to learning 'nothing' (t142).

After a while, exhausted by work and frustrated with Korean, Lauren decided to resign from her job and become a full-time student of Korean at a university in Seoul: 'I decided that if I were ever to learn Korean well, I would need a legitimate teacher'

(w78-79). As a student, she immediately experienced difficulties. She was initially placed in a Level 3 Korean class, but her previous study approach had left her with weak listening and limited lexis. So, she had to take Level 3 twice to pass it. She also found her teacher's explanations did not help her understanding, and she was forced to practice vocabulary with an app before class to keep up. In contrast to her student experiences in the US, she was not top in her class in Korea.

> **Lauren:** I did great (in the US) and coming to Korea it's been just head-banging difficulty… *why can't I remember these words?*... The majority of the students were Chinese and they already *know* all the words 'cause the (Korean) root words are all (Chinese)… I don't speak Chinese!... but you don't want to *blame* it on that, you want to be responsible for your own learning… (t44-48)

While at university, Lauren spoke entirely in Korean for four hours a day and studied after class for 4-5 hours. As a result, she progressed through the course, and after one year she completed Level 5A, though she was not highly ranked in her class. She would have happily continued on this course, but her financial circumstances meant she could not. So instead, about two years before her interview with me, she found another job and resumed teaching English in Seoul.

6.2.2.4. Interpretive commentary (part 2)

Lauren started learning Korean early on. If she had also stopped learning it early on, she could have cited numerous reasons for giving up: difficulties with reading, listening, grammar and vocabulary, early social connections with English-speaking foreigners (Ng, et al., 2017), a heavy workload, an unconducive environment in Seoul (a factor that demotivated an FET in Gearing [2019, p.209]), perhaps a sense of wounded pride at being outperformed by other students (Rivers, 2011). Yet, she persisted. When she encountered difficulties, she worked around them. She demonstrated a preference for a particular study practice (language exchanges) but was willing to change things up when that became inviable. Indeed, she is the only participant in this study ever to resign from teaching to pursue Korean. As Moodie (2020) has shown, FETs' commitment to their jobs is foremost related to affective factors, and also to

possession of teaching qualifications. Lauren is a qualified teacher, yet she temporarily chose Korean over teaching – a massive display of affective commitment to learning.

Though she invested time, energy, and money in learning, Lauren never nominates any sources of external pressure for her learning. Her Korean learning is not easy to explain in terms of the neoliberal conception of language learning for economic benefit (Kramsch, 2014), and of identity formation as adding market value to oneself (Rabbidge, 2020). Nor is it obvious she was seeking approval from anyone (Hennig, 2010), besides herself. The only two motivations she describes in relation to these years of study are a general desire to 'learn Korean well' (mentioned when explaining the decision to go to university) and the desire to speak with her 'adoptive family'. On this basis, it is my interpretation that Lauren's primary motivation remained what it was from the start: a commitment to multilingual self-development, to stick with Korean until she had mastered it, supplemented by a new element of socially integrative motivation. Moreover, judging by her investment in learning, this motivation was clearly long-term, and compelling for her.

6.2.2.5. Life after university: No progress with Korean for two years

Despite all her efforts to learn, Lauren describes feeling a great deal of shame related to Korean. In her interview with me, she says she is ashamed that she is not now actively studying Korean. She is also ashamed to admit to me how much she has already studied Korean, given her modest level. I find myself sceptical of her self-perception. I imagine she might not be giving herself enough credit for her Korean, and I tell her so. Then, when she mentions that she recently got into an argument with a Korean taxi driver about religion, I venture that such an argument surely required decent Korean. She responds that she could have had the same argument as much as two years ago – she has, if anything, gotten worse at Korean since then.

Lauren's Korean learning has given her the ability to live independently. Her vocabulary is still not strong, but she can handle practical life matters without help. For this reason: 'to an extent, I'm happy where I am now' (t74). Her Korean has given her access to a wider range of perspectives on Korean culture because she can speak

with more Korean people than she otherwise would have. This includes her own students' parents – she can tell them in Korean how much she adores their children.

She has also developed a clear accent, and people often think she is fluent in Korean. Then again, this was true early on, when she knew barely any Korean.

> **Lauren:** I got the impression that a lot of Korean people think that Americans are too stupid to learn Korean (laughs) (t516)… It's not (the fault of Koreans that) they have this perception of us. Korean people think we can't speak Korean because so many of us have shown them that we can't (t528)… At the same time I feel insulted that they think that I can't learn it... and at the same time I feel like maybe that is a little bit of projection, because *I* feel bad about myself for having such trouble learning it… (t530)

In fact, Lauren says she is 'mostly faking it' (w145) with Korean. She still finds listening and reading difficult. She sometimes struggles to understand the content of conversations that other foreigners, more recently arrived in Korea, can apparently understand. There is certainly scope for her to improve her Korean, but she is not now working on it.

> **Lauren:** I always say I'm going to, and one of these days I will, hopefully I will, but I try not to punish myself too much when I don't. (t772)

Why is she not progressing? Since finishing at university, she has been working at a job and living in a neighbourhood where mostly English is used. The job also keeps her very busy. She gets in very little Korean practice these days. Would she be tempted to move, or change jobs? She says she would like a new job, especially one that focused on teaching cultural topics, but she is reluctant to leave Seoul. There is so much more to do than in rural areas. For instance, she is a member of a foreign choir. Such things are not to be found outside of Seoul.

She also tells me that she tends to default to English after speaking with people in Korean for a while. Her Korean words come out slowly when she has not prepared what she wants to say. I ask if she is tempted to push on, to insist on using Korean with people for the sake of her practice. In response, she tells me a story about an

FET colleague who had a meltdown and yelled at their boss because he wished to speak Korean but his co-workers routinely spoke to him in English. She is not interested in taking such an attitude. In fact, she is happy to be approached by Korean strangers who wish to talk to her in English – such encounters always turn out pleasantly.

Does she think FETs *should* learn Korean? While emphasising that 'should' is too strong a word, she thinks that learning Korean is something FETs can do to be good guests in Korea, and better serve their students. Lauren does not think of Korea as her country. She is a guest, and a guest does well to respect the culture and provide good service to the host country – learning the language is part of this. Indeed, her Korean knowledge helps her in teaching.

She does not actually use Korean in class unless absolutely necessary, nor does she permit her students to use it. She does not want her students to get into a habit of one-to-one translation that assumes, falsely, that words from different languages are exactly equivalent in meaning. However, her language knowledge does help her to predict and understand students' mistakes. Meanwhile, her cultural knowledge allows her to avoid faux pas with students, and employ cultural metaphors that are familiar to them.

Lauren relates her approach to teaching to anthropology. She seeks to understand and respect students' culture and educate them as whole beings. Ever since she came to Korea, she has used culture to connect with students and relate English to their interests. She has taught English using cultural topics and materials, her own (e.g., American music and sports) and that of her students. She recently selected a book of English-language Korean folktales for use in her class: 'that's the one *I* want to do' (t234). Indeed, one ambition she has had is to become a translator of Korean cultural materials into English. She has found that translated Korean literature, and English subtitles for Korean movies and musicals, are often very poor.

However, she does not believe she will ever be a translator. She does not believe her Korean will ever be as good as she wishes, perhaps because she was too old when

she started learning it: 'my brain is not rubber anymore' (t754). Nevertheless, she is reading newspapers these days for practice – not in Korean, but in French. She is afraid of losing her French while in Korea, and imagines that restoring her French will be easier than advancing her Korean. In fact, she is entertaining the possibility of moving to France in the future: 'The cost of losing all my roots would be mitigated by the new adventure I would have' (t854).

6.2.2.6. Interpretive commentary (part 3)

As the narrative concludes, the identity elements of Lauren's *telos* that might be served by acquiring knowledge of Korean language and culture can be seen: good guest, anthropologist, effective teacher, multilingual and culturally enriched person. She does also mention feeling insulted by the assumption she could not learn, but she is circumspect about this feeling. Her narrative lacks the bitter reactivity that might suggest an *anti-ought-to* motivation (Thompson, 2017a). Rather, her goals are positive and idealistic. And, she has made a cultural *self-practice* of her teaching. She has learned culture and used it to teach, and learned culture while teaching. Here, Lauren provides an example of a teacher using identity as an 'organizing element' of practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 175). Meanwhile, her Korean has given her access to a wider range of perspectives on Korean culture. Growth has facilitated growth; added value has led to more value.

However, it also appears she is severely dissatisfied with her Korean. It is not yet good enough to scratch the multilingual itch. That is, she has not reached the limit of Korean's possible contribution to her *telos*, and she is very aware of this. Seemingly, learning more would be the thing to do – yet she does not. It is true that Lauren's independence through Korean makes her happy 'to an extent', and contentment could explain a lack of learning. However, I perceive shame to be a far more salient emotional state in her narrative that contentment, at least with respect to Korean achievement. If she is truly ashamed, why not learn?

In answering this, we may recall that *value* exists in relation to *cost.* Two years ago, the financial cost of learning Korean became too much, but there are other costs identifiable in her narrative. Learning while working full-time in Seoul carries a high

cost in time and energy. Leaving Seoul would mean losing her roots. Pushing harder to practice Korean speaking is anecdotally associated with a social and emotional cost. In this analysis, the value of Korean for future goals can remain high, and Lauren can be genuinely motivated to learn more, and still not do so because the cost is so high. This may go some way to explaining her shame – she must reckon with the fact that she wants to learn, and believes she should, but is constrained by cost, and has been for years.

Since she has recently resumed studying French, we might now ask if the cost of doing so is lower than that of Korean, and it appears so. Lauren states plainly that getting her French back up to speed may be easier than advancing her Korean. After all, it is a European language that she started learning much earlier in life. Moreover, as Lauren's *telos* requires a general advancement of her language ability, French may do as well if progress in Korean is inaccessible. Indeed, it might be suggested that learning French with an ambition of moving to France is an exploratory *self-practice* towards a similar but, crucially, more achievable end.

Of course, circumstantial costs are not the only factors we might consider. Her lack of belief in her ultimate success is another. Belief is a factor in motivation (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013), so it may be that Lauren is demotivated without it. However, Lauren does not claim to be demotivated, and explicitly associates her lack of learning more with circumstantial factors. Ultimately, the single most prohibitive factor cannot be clearly discerned from the data gathered, but it is certain that Lauren is currently facing several roadblocks that do not so much lower the value of Korean as raise its cost.

6.2.3. Henry's Korean learning

Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean level
7	U.S.	Elementary school	Low-intermediate

6.2.3.1. The first two years in Korea: Henry wishes to be more sociable

In his written narrative and interview, Henry told me some things about himself that he never previously had. For instance, while I had known him to be a somewhat quiet and shy person, he told me that since childhood, he had been introverted to the point that he found people scary. From middle school on, he had taken various steps (met friends, joined clubs) to try and become more social as he felt he should be. But, after much effort on this front, he knew he had not made enough progress because he was still scared. Then, as it happened, he had some fulfilling experiences working with pre-college students in the US (counselling them, etc.). He also had some less pleasing work experiences; in a slaughterhouse, for example. And so, he became interested in teaching as a career. He had not majored in education, however, which limited his employment prospects in the US and so he decided to teach abroad. After a TESOL course, he applied to jobs in China and Korea, choosing Korea because he got his first solid offer from there.

> **Henry**: I wanted to teach, and I said, okay this is my chance here. I'm gonna force myself to go over there and I'll have no choice but to talk to people, otherwise I'll just be sad, and I won't like that. (t863)

In this way, coming to Korea contributed to a self-development project he had been working on since childhood.

Henry initially expected to live in Korea for 1-2 years and then return to the US. In the narrative he shared with me (the core topic of which was his Korean learning) his description of those first two years centres on four points: his job, his drive to be social, the convenience of his lifestyle, and his Korean learning activities.

Due to bureaucratic difficulties, Henry arrived in Korea about six weeks late for the start of the teaching semester at a Korean elementary school. Consequently, he was told on arrival to 'just go in and start' (t46). Nonetheless, he discovered he liked the job. Working with young students, he found himself taking on a more parental role than he had with pre-college students in the U.S. He felt he was doing something worthwhile, something that could have long-lasting effects on his young students, something that was 'not just like a job' (t118). As well as being satisfying, Henry's job was also highly convenient for him. As a foreign teacher at a Korean public school, he was provided with an apartment rent-free. His taxes were also filed on his behalf, and his school helped when he needed to communicate with someone in an official capacity. His English classes were co-taught with a Korean teacher – someone upon whom, Henry discovered, he could always call when he needed help.

Stewart: So perhaps you would say it is *because* you have been in public school specifically that you have not improved your Korean more than you have?

Henry: Yeah probably, probably actually.

Stewart: Okay.

Henry: That's a very good reason why.

Stewart: Hmm.

Henry: Because in the public school system they take care of you (laughs), so you don't really need to do things on your own, so it does make it a lot easier not to study Korean. (t445-450)

The final area of Henry's life that he relates to his Korean learning was his project of becoming more sociable. To this end, he tried to speak with his Korean colleagues at school. He describes his intention to do this as the 'original reason' (w24) he wanted to learn Korean.

Henry: I said, oh, a lot of my colleagues can't speak English very well, I should try to speak to them… I should probably learn some Korean. So I tried, but it turns out a lot of those colleagues aren't very friendly (laughs)… like a lot of them tend to talk too much to other people about what you say, or things like this… (t473-477). I wanted to be more sociable… but after *talking* to them, I was like, screw that, I don't like them (laughs). (t869-873)

He did speak with the Korean teacher who co-taught classes with him, but this was done in English. Meanwhile, a different social avenue he explored was reaching out to strangers. Some of the connections he made this way became lasting friendships.

> **Henry**: …at the beginning I really wanted to talk to people, so it was difficult talking in Korean, so I just spoke to like, uh, waitresses (laughs), waiters, shop owners, just talked to them when I could, and some of them actually liked me so they were like, here's my number, uh, let me know when you're here, we can get a drink (laughs). (t905-907)

As to what motivated Henry's Korean learning practices in the early years, there is some ambiguity in his narrative. He states that aspects of his social and work life motivated him to learn Korean, but he tells his story in such a way that no direct connection can be made between these sources of motivation and any specified learning practices. As he describes it, he did not study much in his first year. He learned a few words and tried to read the language. Then in his second year, he studied somewhat more, acquiring 'enough (Korean) to get by' (t150), meaning 'just for ease of communication, getting around, getting what I need… travel, buying things, simple questions, that's about it' (t153-155). It was in this second year he joined an informal Korean study group run by me, the researcher. He came to be able to read the language, which, he noted, made it easier to buy things. Throughout this period, he also picked up information about Korean culture: the drinking etiquette, the materialism, the pollution, the high regard for teachers, the respect for elders. I noted in our interview that this list included several quite negative items, and I asked Henry if he liked Korean culture. His response was: 'Parts of it, not all of it.' (t618)

6.2.3.2. Interpretive commentary (part 1)

Henry's narrative of coming to Korea contains a clear element of self-transformation. He was subject to an imperative to be more social, contrary to his introverted disposition. This imperative was strong enough to figure in his decision to move abroad. Relatedly, his original intention to learn Korean had to do with his intention to connect with colleagues – an *integrative* motivation, perhaps (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). In practice, however, he found his colleagues were not people with whom he wished to socialise. As for the strangers he spoke with, he does not state what language he used

to speak with them, but as part of this narrative, he notes that: 'it was difficult talking in Korean, so I just spoke to like, uh, waitresses…' (t905). This juxtaposition may indicate that English was a significant language in his interactions. Whatever the case, Henry certainly took action to be sociable but did not learn much Korean in his first years. This indicates that pursuit of his transformative goal was possible without Korean, perhaps due to the range of social options available to Henry as an English speaker.

Although relatively idealistic ambitions such as becoming more sociable feature in Henry's narrative at this point, convenience of life seems the more substantial factor in his language learning motivation. The learning practices he describes engaging in are associated exclusively with pragmatic needs and ease of life: 'enough to get by' (t150). Moreover, he is willing to take the view that factors such as a highly supportive employment situation limited his learning. I was the one who posed this possibility to him, and he responded that it was likely an accurate interpretation. Considering this, along with the fact that he only chose Korea over China for practical reasons, and the fact that he apparently did not become enamoured with Korean culture after arriving, it seems Korean ability was related significantly more to instrumental needs than ideal goals for him.

6.2.3.3. Subsequent years: A romantic experience influences Henry's motivation

After attending the study group with me, Henry's active Korean learning continued in only a low-key manner.

> **Henry**: …I studied a little bit… just like an expression here or there, but not anything expansive. Korea is just too convenient… it's not necessary to learn Korean… so I *haven't* learned it (t160-164).

Meanwhile, he continued to pursue his social goal. Particularly between his second and fourth years in Korea, Henry was curious and proactively social. He went out every weekend to 'random meetings' (t874). As a result of this, he became sociable to the point that when he told people he used to be shy, they were sceptical of this. Also, motivated by curiosity, he attended some staff meetings at school. These meetings

were conducted in Korean, and though Henry tried to understand what was being said, he decided against attending further, both because understanding was difficult, and because the meetings had no relevance for his work: 'There is nothing of importance to *us*, it's *all* administrative, so there is no reason to go… and most e-mails are like that as well.' (t540-542)

It was around four years before his interview with me that circumstances led to a change in Henry's Korean learning motivation. He became romantically involved with a Korean woman, a teacher at his school – indeed, the teacher whose responsibility he was[39]. To prevent any difficulties at work, they kept their relationship discreet. As he tells it, Henry became 'deeply motivated' (w27) to learn Korean while they were dating.

Henry: …my girlfriend, her English was okay but it wasn't the best, so I did feel I should study more, so I did study a lot more, and my Korean *was* improving.

Stewart: Just for the straight-up conversational communication with her?

Henry: Yeah. Also I thought, oh, maybe if I meet her parents one day I might have to be able to talk to them a bit. (t234-236)

… … … …

Stewart: So the only time you ever felt obliged was with your girlfriend?

Henry: Yes.

Stewart: Did she, is that something *she* said?

Henry: Not explicitly, but it was something more that I felt I should probably do to help her, 'cause I know many times she did say she had a hard time saying what she wanted to say, so I said, oh, maybe if I learn Korean I might be able to help her and we can communicate better. (t261-264)

Having become motivated, Henry bought some Korean books, and practiced writing. He also took to reading Korean-language work e-mails for a year, though he would previously have ignored them. When speaking with his girlfriend, he used mostly English, but would throw in some Korean.

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[39] Public schools in Korea often assign particular administrative responsibilities to teachers. Among these is management of the foreign teacher, if one is employed there.

And then, they broke up. In motivational terms, the effect on Henry was devastating. He lost all interest in Korean and in Korea for 'at least six months' (t238). He might have left Korea entirely, but he had just then extended his teaching contract. Worse, he would still be working with his ex-girlfriend. He gave up reading work e-mails and began avoiding social occasions with colleagues: 'I didn't really feel like even *teaching* very well. It was not a good time' (t246). After a while, he noticed that his Korean ability had declined.

Henry: I thought, oh, my Korean has become so terrible, I knew more last year than I know now… so I need to fix that, I think it's time I move on, forget about all that, just start again, if you will… there were things that I *wanted* to say but I couldn't think of what it was.

Stewart: All right. Like, to who, or for what situation?

Henry: Like, even shopping or all the things I said that are necessary, these things, I was forgetting a lot of those words, so I knew, well, this is not good… (t250-256)

Then, about two years before his interview with me, Henry left that school for another in different city. He had, up to that point, maintained the same job for five years. As he transitioned between jobs, he had some free time and so decided to take a three-week paid course of Korean.

Henry: I could not travel, so I said, might as well spend some time, work a little bit on my Korean, because I know that knowing a little more is *better*, not necessary but better. (t175)

In the event, he found this course to be the most effective study approach for him. The focus was on beginner-level language, which allowed him to build on what he already knew. He had thought he knew a lot but discovered on the course that this was not the case. This course sharpened his Korean but did not take him beyond the elementary level.

His Korean study was not to last long after his course. Having been a public-school teacher for six years, he decided to make a move into university English teaching, as

this would open his professional options[40]. To meet the qualification requirements for this move, he enrolled in a MA-TESOL program at a local university, which he completed shortly before our interview. Consequently, he had not studied Korean seriously for a year while enrolled. He had also stopped being as proactive in his social adventures.

> **Henry**: I kind of reverted a little bit, like I don't want to talk to people, I'm tired… I would say I'm pretty sociable now, but I'm still not that comfortable with groups or uh talking, like, loudly or putting myself on the spot, but again I guess that's natural with everyone, and I am again introverted so it's natural… I wanted to change myself from being, I guess I would say, extremely scared of people to *friendly* with people, which I would say I have succeeded at. (t878-882)

6.2.3.4. Interpretive commentary (part 2)

Two of the most prominent influences on Henry's learning in this time period, as expressed in his narrative, were romance and shopping.

Of less relevance was his goal of becoming generally more social. He pursued this goal actively and extensively, and ultimately got to a point where he was satisfied. But, given his modest achievement in Korean, it seems reasonable to conclude that his socialising was not done primarily in Korean. Moreover, his description of his experience attending staff meetings suggests he was not interested enough in Korean at this time to tolerate practicing it in a personally irrelevant way.

Becoming a boyfriend, however, increased the importance of Korean to him. With this new identity, he acquired a sense of obligation to learn. It is notable that he says he was trying to learn not merely to communicate with his girlfriend (she could speak English to an extent) but to communicate *better* with her. He was also learning to speak with her parents, whom he had not met. These imperatives ('not explicitly' articulated by his girlfriend [t264]) apparently caused him to take on a variety of new learning practices. In light of other dismissive comments he makes about work e-mails,

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[40] Typically, foreign English teachers in Korean universities get vastly more vacation time and freedom to work multiple jobs than those who work in a public school.

meetings and similar, his decision to try and read Korean-language e-mails in particular may indicate a sincere motivation to improve.

It might be said that a circumstantial change in his identity subjected him to previously irrelevant discourses of value: romantic partners should be able to communicate well; and if one has parents-in-law, one should speak with them. On this second point, Henry appears to have been ambivalent ('I might have to be able to talk to them a bit' [t236]), but to take him at his word, the requirement to speak with parents-in-law did feature in his thinking. There may have been other, related discourses in play, for instance that Korean parents-in-law are unlikely to speak English, but this is speculative. Henry may have been told by his girlfriend that her parents could not speak English well, or he may have felt a desire to learn just to show his future in-laws he was willing. Whatever his exact thinking, his new identity as a boyfriend put him on a road towards a new *telos,* one in which he communicated well with his partner using some Korean, and one in which he had parents-in-law with whom he also spoke in Korean. Capable in English as his partner was, and hypothetical as his parents-in-law were, this image and its associated values must have been compelling for him, because he did indeed start to learn actively.

And then, when Henry and his girlfriend broke up, all of that returned to irrelevance for him. Between the emotional turmoil of the experience and the loss of a future image, he became broadly and deeply demotivated. His eventual brief return to studying was evidently motivated by a sense that his Korean level had declined so much that previously overcome practical difficulties in shopping and other everyday activities were re-emerging. It seems clear that in this instance he was motivated more by a desire for convenience than a hard, practical necessity. Furthermore, when he began working towards advancing himself professionally, his Korean study again fell by the wayside. This suggests that Korean ability now meant basic ease of life to him and may not have been relevant to any more ideal notion than that at this time.

6.2.3.5. Now: Henry uses little Korean, may learn more for official purposes

At present, Henry has no particular intention to leave Korea. His salary is satisfactory, he pays no rent, and he likes the food. He has adapted well to the culture and

understands the pragmatics – just not the language. His life in Korea is convenient, and he would have to give this up to go somewhere else. As for Korean, Henry describes his ability as low-intermediate listening and beginner speaking. His perspective on language learning is that enough is enough, and achievement of fluency is not obligatory. In day-to-day life, he makes little use of the language.

> **Henry:** I use Korean to help facilitate communication with my students and when strangers I talk to have no English ability. The biggest reason for not using Korean more in my daily life is simple, I don't have agency. A great majority of Korean people can speak English, so I don't need to speak Korean to get what I want. It's too easy not to use Korean. (joke: We are doing our job too well, everyone knows English in Korea lol) But I know there is a lot I'm missing by not speaking Korean. (w51-55)

Henry makes very clear that not speaking Korean is a choice that he makes. As for what Henry is missing by making such a choice, this is complicated. Socially, he identifies speaking with non-English speakers, and 'intimacy things' (t648). However, he has a few close friends with whom who speaks in English, and he has used the dating app Tinder to meet prospective girlfriends, with whom he has spoken in English. Also, as he has achieved his goal of becoming more social, he no longer feels as much desire to meet new people as before. And indeed, as an introvert and a 'loner' (t794) there are some benefits to a language barrier.

> **Stewart**: To the extent that you need your distance, living in a place where people mostly speak in a language that you can't must be pretty comfortable, right?
>
> **Henry**: Yes, yes. 'Cause I don't need to involve myself… unless I really want to.
>
> **Stewart**: I mean you use the word *need* so many times and I feel like to the extent that you *want* contact you can seek it and to the extent that you want distance you can have it. (t917-921)
>
> **Henry**: Yes (t922). I can talk to people when I want to but I don't need to, and for Korean language, it's a nice barrier and also a nice bridge. (t929)

Henry's voluntary self-exemption extends also into his work context. He has seen other foreign teachers with stronger Korean ability given additional work responsibility by their employers. But because his Korean is modest, he thinks he will not be given

such responsibilities. Also, he no longer reads work e-mails. Rather, he deletes them immediately without trying to read them: 'I know if it's important they will tell me.' (t516)

As for communication with students, he mostly uses English. His Korean enables him to understand what his students are saying, and to understand their challenges. He also uses short command phrases in Korean for class management. However, he sees it as his job to maximise his students' English input in the short time he has with them each week. Also, he believes that his students will not speak English with him if they know he can speak Korean, so he keeps what he knows a secret.

Henry acknowledges it can be difficult to build rapport using only English. So, sometimes he will chime in on students' conversations, revealing that he can understand what they are saying, but using English himself. Also, he has recently been teaching high school students as well as elementary, and with those students he is better able to connect in English. He recalls a time when these students looked up his photography on Instagram and they bonded over this.

Looking towards the future, Henry still intends to move into university teaching. With his completed MA-TESOL, all that remains is to find a job opening and be hired. With this in mind, he says he would like to learn some more Korean. He is not studying the language now but imagines that he will have to do few more things by himself in the less supportive university environment. So, he may need Korean for some important but rare purposes, like immigration and other official business. He thinks he might take a longer formal Korean course. He would like to get to a point where he can do everything in Korean 'at a mediocre level' (t754), which, excepting those rare official purposes, he has already achieved. As to any possible learning beyond that, he refers to me when he says: 'I really don't think I'm going to get to *your* level, because I don't really need to.' (t700)

6.2.3.6. Interpretive commentary (part 3)

The motivational through-line of Henry's narrative is evidently convenience, or ease of life. This was present in his earliest motivation and informs his thinking even now as he considers a change of jobs. By comparison, idealistic ambitions such as learning

Korean as part of a social self-transformation and in anticipation of a married future have been transient, albeit influential in their time. It might be possible to interpret Henry's motivation as instrumental in the long run, with periodic episodes of integrative motivation arising from circumstances. However, as he narrates his current situation, complexities appear.

Among participants in this study, Henry is the one who most plainly articulates a sense that improving his Korean could worsen his position. As he noted, Korean for him is both a barrier and a bridge, and this is evident in various aspects of his life. For instance, he has transformed himself and is now more social. Yet, he remains not entirely comfortable in social situations. These are two opposite and balanced aspects of his self, his *ethical substance*, upon which learning Korean would be an action. Were he to improve his Korean, it would not likely increase his social satisfaction because he has achieved satisfaction already and can use English for social purposes. But learning Korean might work contrary to his wish to retain the ability to stay out of things when he prefers to.

Meanwhile, in the domain of his work, we might consider the relevant values and rules, the *mode of subjection*: it is good for a teacher to understand students and build rapport; and foreign teachers are exempt from certain responsibilities because (and only so long as) they do not understand Korean. Henry has attained enough Korean to understand his students to an extent, and is also able to use English with them, which may satisfy the first point of value. But, if he learned more Korean, he would be working against himself in relation to the second point, and perhaps exposing himself to unwanted responsibilities. Therefore, performing the normative identity (Butler, 2009) of a non-Korean-speaking FET is a source of privilege for him.

Moreover, if we consider other aspects of the *mode of subjection*, Henry seems subject to little pressure from others or himself to learn Korean. As he is an FET, his current school does not expect him to manage his life without assistance. And at least explicitly, his girlfriend did not pressure him to learn. For his own part, Henry characterises his job in terms that distance him from the obligation to learn Korean: he must speak English with the students; it is teachers like he and I who have made Korea

a comfortable place for English speakers. Consequently, he lacks 'agency' to use Korean in daily life (w52). Such a characterisation could be said to justify Henry's position. Whether Henry feels a need for justification cannot be determined from his narrative (he does not seem very anxious about his position), but nonetheless, the way he describes his situation makes his limited Korean learning appear quite understandable.

The picture, then, is of someone who has found an agreeable life situation. Henry's identity as a foreign English teacher does not make him subject to an expectation of Korean learning from others or himself. His life is not *problematised* (Gutting, 2005, p.1586) in this way. Therefore, within his context, he is at liberty to learn Korean to whatever degree he wishes, and he has chosen to learn modestly. Why has he done this? If we think of limited Korean learning and use, in itself, as a *self-practice*, we can ask what *self* is being practiced. Henry is both introverted and sociable: limited Korean gives him a social opt-in and opt-out. Henry is a foreign English teacher: limited Korean gives him understanding of his students, while keeping him exempt from extra duties. In this way, the amount of Korean he has learned puts him in a position of access to the degree that he wants it, and exemption from things he does not want – in other words, a position of privilege (Minarik, 2017). As someone who values ease of life as much as Henry does, this position is seemingly a comfortable one for him in several domains of his life, and it sits well with the relevant rules and values, his own and those of his context. Thus, it could be argued that Korean learning has already made its contribution to Henry's *telos*. Now, learning more could actually tip him over into a less ideal situation. Given this, it makes sense that Henry does not describe Korean learning as difficult, laborious, or impossible. Rather, he emphasizes consistently that he has learned what he needs, and that enough is enough. And, while he often foregrounds instrumental motivations in his narrative, it is also true that he has learned enough Korean, and only enough, to find a comfortable niche for himself within his social and professional context.

Considering this, it would be hard to argue that Henry would benefit from improving his Korean substantially at present. His ability, modest as it is, is almost precisely in the Goldilocks zone, providing ease of life, access, and exemption. Of course, that

might change. For instance, perhaps a new long-term partner will reintroduce images of future Korean speaking into Henry's *telos*, as before. But for now, in as much as Korean has anything to do with his ideal life situation, he has learned just about enough. This, I submit, is why he has not learned more.

6.2.4. John's Korean learning

Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean level
8	U.K.	University	Intermediate

6.2.4.1. Coming to Korea: John learns little Korean until he starts playing football

John: I don't really consider myself much of a language learner, by which I mean I don't think I have ever felt any burning desire to speak another language extremely well, nor especially enjoyed the experience of speaking in another language for its own sake. (w1-3)

Given such a self-characterisation, one might assume that John's Korean would be weak. In fact, it is quite well developed. Indeed, he counterintuitively names language learning as one of two key motivations for moving abroad to teach English, the other being travel.

John was moved to leave England when he lost his job in the 2008 financial crisis. He had, for a while, been working jobs that did not require him to think, and as a 'perpetual student' (t255) he missed university. He therefore wished to get out of England for a 'late-life gap year' (t243), but he was determined that he would not 'bum around' (t261), and that he would get something out of it. So, he moved to Guatemala for a year to teach English. He reasoned this would satisfy his wish for travel while also giving him the chance to learn Spanish. Though not a lover of languages, he did have a sense that learning Spanish would be an intellectual challenge. Also, he suspects he may have been motivated by a desire to speak a second language because it seemed an 'awesome', 'magic' skill (w11-12): 'an arrogant part of me may well have wanted other people to feel the same watching me as I did watching speakers of other languages' (w12-13).

In Guatemala, he found he enjoyed teaching, and acquired some Spanish without studying hard. However, the pay in Guatemala was so poor that it actually cost him money to stay there. He also did not like the school that employed him, and perceived that the city he lived in was dangerous. So, he decided to move to Korea and continue teaching. Korea at this time was at an historic peak of hiring FETs and offered relatively good prospects. His motivation to move was therefore 'mostly mercenary' (t205). Also, as Spanish is similar to English, he found it easy (or he convinced himself he was doing well at it). He imagined that Korean would provide a greater intellectual challenge.

Before moving, he studied Korean using the Rosetta Stone program, which he describes as 'useless' (w24). Then he moved to Korea, beginning work at a public school in a rural town with few foreigners. While spending time with the foreigners he met there, he picked up some Korean for ordering in restaurants. As for his Korean colleagues at school, he rarely spoke with them in any language.

> **John:** It was a country school, which I think is where old teachers go to for their teaching careers to die (laughs). I didn't have a lot of common ground with anyone there. I talked to my co-teacher mostly. The other two English teachers there, one would actively run away and hide if I was around so he didn't have to speak English. (t314-316)

He made little progress in Korean for the first few months. He acquired survival language (reading aloud, greetings, counting, other basic operations), then 'stalled for a while'. Immediately after relaying this fact in his written narrative, he declares:

> **John**: …I have a good degree of sympathy for English teachers in Korea who don't learn the language. Very often you find that your work and social life, and even relationships, are all conducted in English. It often takes great determination and discipline to seek out and use Korean… (w28-32)

However, he was shortly to begin studying Korean in earnest thanks to an 'affordance' (w35): joining a football team with Korean players. As he tells it, he plays football wherever he goes in the world because language is no barrier to it.

A colleague at school introduced him to a local team, and he was able to join it. He was good at football, which the other players liked. The language barrier was 'almost total', but he found they were 'extremely good' (w36) to him anyway. He began having weekly nights out with them. For this reason, he began to actively study Korean. He self-studied on the internet, focusing on grammar and vocabulary memorisation. Between that and his Korean-medium team meetings, he achieved conversational ability in Korean. Indeed, John describes this period as the only one in which he has ever invested time in actively studying Korean – subsequent learning has been relatively organic.

> **John**: By winter of my first year in Korea I could stumble my way through a conversation in Korean, especially after a bottle of soju[41] (w39-40). I was motivated by the fact that I basically had friends who I was hanging out with quite a lot. (t50)

I ask John if his 'students, colleagues, or in any sense, (his) job' (t313) had motivated him as well. His answer is 'not particularly' (t314).

> **John**: It was nice when I *did* develop some Korean, and like at dinners and stuff that I could chat to some people. But it wasn't the same as the football team. I wanted to learn so I could get to know these people better because I liked them. But work was, no. I could teach. Anything I needed, I could do through my co-teacher in English. And I felt like, as well I suppose, I was being a burden to her, but that sort of was her job, you know. (t320)

6.2.4.2. Interpretive commentary (part 1)

John's narrative of the early years contains some elements that appear to make up a project of self-creation. To whit: he was looking to escape from a stifling context and find a new one where he might satisfy the 'perpetual student' in himself. He made the choice to learn languages with reference to value judgments about second-language ability. He moved twice in pursuit of his goal. And, he had some sense of an idealised end that might come from language learning: to appear as 'magic' to others as second-language speakers appeared to him. These ingredients cover all four axes of Foucault's framework of *ethical self-formation*.

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[41] A popular Korean spirit.

Yet, after picking up survival Korean, John's learning stalled. Why is this? It is true he recognises that Korean is not strictly necessary and sympathises with those who do not learn. However, the motivation he outlines for coming to Korea in the first place – an 'intellectual challenge' – should perhaps transcend necessity. The explanation may be that language learning was not a very consequential part of his overall project. His decisions were informed by a desire for travel, a change of pace, and new challenges – some decidedly broad desires. Moreover, he moved to Korea from Guatemala primarily for 'mercenary' reasons. It just happened to be the best place to move at that time. He had no particular interest in the language or country; nor was he a self-identified language learner; nor did he apparently feel obliged to learn.

But then, he began to study actively to speak with his football team friends. While perfectly understandable in human terms, his actions here are slightly tricky to theorise. His motivation was socially integrative, though his orientation was towards a very specific group of speakers rather than a broader Korean community. It is safe to say he was seeking inclusion in a speech community, but nothing he says indicates he was suffering due to exclusion. As a non-Korean speaker, he was already playing football and socialising. In a sense, he was seeking the *ability* to speak more than the *right* to speak as described by Norton Pierce (1995). One possible interpretation is that joining the team created a disparity between his current state and his preferred state that only learning Korean could bridge. Then, the *self* he learned for was his social being; the *value* of learning was the richness of the social experience, and the connection with people he liked.

We might speculate that John's football team-related learning also, coincidentally, served his previously described intellectual challenge project, though John does not say this. What is certain is that his team provoked a new investment in active learning. This may be because the value of Korean, previously general, had become personal and tangible. With regards to language learning, the possibility of transforming his life on an immediate, intimate level may have been more compelling than transforming it in relation to larger discourses of identity and value. Given that he was not apparently subject to learning pressure from such discourses, this makes sense.

6.2.4.3. Subsequent years: John uses Korean as a husband, and a teacher

In John's second year in Korea, he began studying for a distance M.A., and so his formal study of Korean declined. He kept it up to a limited degree studying with flashcards, but by this point his ability was sufficient to learn the language socially, picking up expressions from students and colleagues.

Then, in his third year, he moved from the countryside to Seoul, and began teaching at a university. Upon moving, he decided to seek out a language exchange partner.

John: I didn't know anybody here, so I wanted to meet some people, and language exchange seemed like a good way to do it.

Stewart: And here you are *married*, so I guess it worked (laughs).

John: It did, it did, but I only met one person (laughs). (t632-634)

After three months of weekly language exchanges, John and his only exchange partner began a romantic relationship. They married some years later. With respect to Korean learning, John describes his wife as 'the second, and biggest affordance' (w46), following his football team. He emphasises that he and his wife have not acted as language teachers for one another, as teaching involves an 'unequal power relationship' (w57-58). Nevertheless, he has been fortunate to find a partner who is willing to speak both languages. He has observed that many relationships like his begin because the Korean partner can speak English, and English becomes the primary language of communication. Whereas, he and his wife tend to speak Korean more than English. These days, it is Korean 90-95% of the time. He says jokingly that his 'wife being lazy' may explain this (t592). Also, since getting married: 'I have had much more contact with her family, and I feel that this has pushed my Korean on a little, especially in terms of listening.' (w61-63)

Though John's Korean development has been largely social and informal, he did study formally once. A few years before our interview, he took a three-week course at a prestigious university in Seoul – but in that case, Korean learning was a secondary ambition.

John: That actually was more professional interest than anything… Of course, I did want to push my Korean on a bit, but I really, really, really wanted to take a language class… so I could be a language student and have a look at it from the other side. (t419)

Although John makes some use of Korean in his work (to keep students on track), he believes it is possible to be 'a very good teacher without being a language learner' (t670). Korean is not a big part of his teacher identity, and had he not learned, he imagines he would have found a way to teach entirely without it. However:

John:	I think it's good for teachers to know any language… it *helps*, right?... It stops you making horrible mistakes sometimes… and particularly with reference to Korea… you still get quite a lot of unqualified people.
Stewart:	To this day, yeah.
John:	To this day, pushed in front of an English class. I think… if you've had some language learning experience…
Stewart:	It could be an element of professionalism, in that sense?
John:	Yeah. (t668-674)

Nevertheless, when I ask John if he thinks foreign teachers should learn Korean, he says he disagrees that learning should be obligatory, especially since the language is not absolutely necessary for life. He is 'extremely uncomfortable' (t101) with the converse idea that immigrants to the UK should be obliged to learn English, though he wonders aloud if white people moving to Korea might be a different issue due to 'power structures' (t103). That said, he would recommend anyone coming to Korea to learn some Korean, as they will then be able to 'go anywhere, and sort of put people at ease…' (t115)

6.2.4.4. Interpretive commentary (part 2)

When John moved to Seoul, he sought a language exchange for the sake of social opportunities. An alternative to this might have been to seek only the company of English speakers. The fact that he made the choice he did suggests that Korean had some value to him. Lacking evidence of any other immediate source of motivation, I conclude that value was social in nature. In *self-practice* terms, practicing Korean may have served his social identities, values and goals, maintaining his relationships, and

facilitating the creation of new ones. It is also significant that once John had bridged his Korean up to the point of interactional competence, he then almost exclusively developed it through interaction. This practice matched his values and goals in ways that formal study might not have, which further strengthens the idea that socialising was central.

For his part, John describes his motivation in terms of 'affordances' – social circumstances that have moved his learning on. That is certainly evident in this part of the narrative. His behaviour seems consistent with his initial self-statement, in that he does not seem to have practiced Korean for its own sake. Rather, he sought out social opportunities, Korean ability happened to be relevant to his experiences and intentions, and Korean practice was the result. His decision to take a short Korean course was similar, as Korean learning was a mere dimension of a larger enterprise, subordinate to developing himself as a teacher.

There is a great deal of coincidence to John's experiences with Korean. Besides the larger coincidence of being in Korea at all, his marriage to a partner with whom he speaks primarily Korean is arguably coincidental[42]. Likewise, had he begun life in Korea in a more urban setting, his football teammates might have been more likely to speak English.

Moreover, there is a striking ambivalence in John's discussion of Korean learning for foreign teachers like himself – it is beneficial, but very much optional by his standards. Seeing as he is also not a self-identified language learner, it appears his identity does not subject him to any personal or contextual expectation of Korean learning. Also, to reiterate, his initial learning was survival only, suggesting that his desire to take on the awesomeness of a second language speaker may not have been very compelling. One interpretation of all this is that in the absence of *a priori* rules and values that demand or reward learning from people in John's position (*mode of subjection*) or a clear and personally relevant ideal goal for him (*telos*), his motivation was particularly

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[42] It is worth remembering that in Gearing (2019), having a Korean spouse who can manage things is cited as a demotivational factor for FETs with respect to Korean learning (p.210). Indeed, one participant in the present study, Eric, is dependent on his wife for tasks requiring Korean. John's situation stands in contrast to these other cases.

susceptible to circumstance. If he happened to land in a situation where Korean learning appealed to a value he held dear (e.g., social connection), or where he took on an identity that related to Korean use (e.g., husband) he might learn – and indeed, this is what happened.

Of course, it must be remembered that his *initial conditions* (de Bot et al., 2007) were promising. He was reportedly willing to learn from the start. However, it was the social 'affordances' he came into that propelled and defined his learning by making Korean valuable to him. This is reminiscent of the finding of Gearing and Roger (2019), that integrative motivation can be a significant driver for FETs who '(lack) clear future L2 self-visions' (p.122).

6.2.4.5. Now: John would need very strong motivation to work on his Korean

John describes his current Korean level as 'probably upper intermediate', and 'conversationally fluent' (t89). He also says, jokingly, that it is 'not very good', because his learning has been so shaped by 'the way (his) life sort of turned out,' (t22) and he otherwise has not had much motivation to learn.

As for what he does with the language, John conducts 'a very, very big chunk' (t441) of his family/social life in Korean. He does not speak Korean at work now, as he has recently gained employment at the Korean campus of a foreign university. Indeed, his Korean is better than that of some of his students. Elsewhere in wider society, he notes that he can use his Korean to put interlocutors at ease, for instance when faced with a shop assistant who, seeing him, may feel pressure to speak English. By using Korean, he can take the tension out of such situations. He is sometimes complimented on his Korean by Koreans, though this occurs even when he uses the most basic of greetings. His usual response is: '아, 그냥 하는 거예요' (English: It's nothing, really) (w83).

Meanwhile, John is clear on the limits of his abilities. When I ask him what he might wish to improve about his Korean in future, he points out that he can speak with members of his family-in-law one-on-one but struggles to participate in group conversations. As he puts it, 'by the time the cogs have whirred, and the black smoke

has belched out of my ear' (t457) the conversation has often moved on. Although he is not significantly excluded, he finds it annoying that he cannot communicate effortlessly. Furthermore, he struggles to understand 'non-participatory' listening (t511), like Korean television programs. Also, purely hypothetically, if were he to learn further, he would like to be able to talk about more specialist topics.

However, John makes it plain that he is not working on his Korean these days. At this point, the input he receives from his wife matches his level, so he is no longer improving through interactions with her. He would need input graded slightly above his level, but this is hard to come by. Furthermore, his new job requires him to mark large amounts of students' written work, which keeps him busy and exhausted. Studying now would be additional labour in a laborious situation. He has an idea how he would go about it (perhaps hiring a tutor, engaging in extensive and intensive listening and reading practice), but:

> **John**: …the sort of motivation that I would need at the moment would be incredibly strong, because it would have to push me into, you know, some discomfort… (t477)

Noting that John stated in his written narrative, 'I do feel like I have a greater practical need to improve my Korean now because my family and social life revolves around it more' (w89-90), I ask if desire to improve communication with family members could provide enough motivation to get him going. He responds:

> **John:** …yes, there is that motivation there, but it's not really working (laughs).
>
> **Stewart:** Why not?
>
> **John:** I mean it's clearly not strong enough to get me, you know, I don't have *no* time at all.
>
> **Stewart:** We could all stay up until 4:00 a.m. I suppose.
>
> **John:** Right, yes… I tend to get home, have dinner, and clear up, and there tends to be an hour before I go to bed, but generally my brain is shot. Any motivation that's there is not strong enough to overcome that. (t471-475)

6.2.4.6. Interpretive commentary (part 3)

The narrative of John's current situation includes several points that seem to align with earlier details. For instance, the fact that he is not pressured to learn Korean is again demonstrated. His job requires less Korean of him even than before, and Korean interlocutors are sometimes impressed by even modest Korean use. Also, his focus on family interactions and his talk about putting interlocutors at ease reaffirm the value of Korean to him as a pro-social person. His position in these respects has not changed much. What is more, he has a potential social motivation to improve his Korean as he has had in the past, in this case smoothing out communication with his family. Yet, he is not motivated to learn now. Why is this? John himself nominates some points to consider: his heavy workload makes study undesirable, and his communicative challenges are 'not strong enough' motivation for him.

First, his work-related fatigue: this may be taken as an indicator of circumstances previously conducive to learning turning against him. For a learner so influenced by affordances, it makes sense that this would have a negative influence. However, his job is just one part of the equation. John describes the prospect of study after a long day's work as 'discomfort', but the study he is referring to is presumably of an intentional and active sort (e.g., intensive reading). While his work may indeed discourage such study, it is also worth remembering that he has not primarily learned this way so far. Rather, he has done so through social interaction. And interaction (as he mentions, with his wife) no longer provides the input he needs to level up. Thus, though his job may certainly be a factor, the sort of study it discourages is arguably mismatched with John's preferences anyway.

Of course, when he was learning for the football team, he did engage in intentional language study, so this is conceivably something he could do again. Various factors may play into his decision not to. His workload now may be greater than it was then, or perhaps higher-level study is more difficult/complex. Both of these are possible, but speculative – John says nothing to unambiguously indicate either. On the other hand, if we grant for the sake of argument the admittedly controversial claim that a truly motivated language learner will inevitably learn so long as they are exposed to the

language (Corder, 1967, p,164), we would then consider John's lack of motivation as primary over peripheral difficulties.

On this point: when he was learning for the football team, John was working to bridge a sizeable gap between his current and ideal situations: he was unable to speak with people he liked, and he wished to speak with them. Now, with respect to his family, the gap is seemingly smaller. At worst, he cannot contribute as much as he wishes to the conversation at present, but he can speak, and he does speak, and he is not severely excluded. Given the importance of the degree of difference between current and ideal selves for motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), the idea of more comfortable communication may simply not be different enough to move John to action, especially if that action cannot be his preferred form of practice.

Overall, then, my interpretation of John's narrative is this: the affordances that have driven his learning on have done so because they were meaningful to him, to his values, and to his goals. He has not been subject to an identity or value-based imperative to learn, but even the coincidental, circumstantial drivers of his learning have related to and helped shape his identity (teammate, husband, family member), and certain things he values (social/familial connection and interaction). His Korean learning has been intertwined with the process of shaping his social life in Korea, and (after an initial burst of effort) he developed his language through interactional practice – a neat alignment of values and practices in the process of self-creation. Now, he faces a situation where he may have to engage in less well-aligned learning practices to achieve an end that, while desirable, may not be much more ideal than his current situation. This can explain why, having come as far as he has, John is not much motivated to proceed further.

6.2.5. Evelyn's Korean learning

Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean level
10	U.S.	University	Advanced

6.2.5.1. Childhood to university: Evelyn grows up in the U.S., visits Korea for study

> **<u>Evelyn</u>**: I always call it, like, a negative motivation (t21). When it comes to language and identity, there's always been a lot of, it always becomes a conversation (t142-143). I wanted to learn because… I think it's always been like I wanted to trick people a little bit... I wanted them to stop asking me questions on *both sides* of the fence, like, in America and Korea. (t616-618)

Evelyn was born in Korea and was sent for adoption to a small town in the U.S. at the age of about two. She grew up speaking English and not Korean. As a child with a 'very visible heritage' (w5) in a town with limited ethnic diversity, she was often asked where she was from. She was also asked to 'speak some Korean' (t35).

> **<u>Evelyn</u>**: I have clear memories of other children touching my hair and commenting on my physical features, but the struggle that hit me the most was not being able to speak this mysterious language that I apparently had some connection to. I remember I would walk around and tell my friends that I knew how to speak Korean but that it was just "rusty" or "in recess memory." I would make up Korean words to affirm my tales and, for the most part, this was largely accepted without question by my peers. (w6-9)

In middle and high school, she would also pretend to speak Chinese because her peers did not know this was a distinct language from Korean. Pretence aside, Evelyn wished to know Korean. She would later come to think of the language as something 'stolen' from her (t26), but as child she was: 'just really curious, maybe a little bit sad about it' (t56-57). Her early learning opportunities were few. At age 7 or 8, or slightly older, her father gave her a Korean phrasebook. She tried hard to learn from this, and kept it under her pillow as she might be able to: 'absorb it in my sleep because I was

Korean' (w13). In school, she had no opportunities to learn Korean, and instead studied European languages like Spanish, attaining a strong competence, though she notes she had no emotional ties to these languages.

When she entered university, she encountered Koreans and Korean Americans with varying degrees of Korean language competence. Consequently, she had to abandon the façade that she understood Korean.

> **Evelyn:** I felt ashamed that I could not even recognize what Korean sounded like in passing and felt immense pressure to learn. I desperately wanted to be able to have conversations in Korean, but had no idea where to start. (w24-26)

Then, while still a student, she was able to plan a six-month study trip to Korea. Abandoning a scholarship to study Arabic, she travelled to Korea and began studying Korean at a university in Seoul. In this Korean class, she was the only person of Korean heritage. She was given a Korean name by the class's teacher. This teacher often singled her out to answer questions first, and frequently corrected her. She also criticised her pronunciation (and only hers among the students) as 'uneducated' (t114). Evelyn did not remain on this course long.

> **Evelyn:** A few days in, the teacher said something about how my pronunciation was quite good for a first-time learner, but she was amused that I couldn't speak Korean to save my life. For some reason, this off-the-cuff comment made me feel deeply ashamed once again that I could not speak Korean and I dropped out of the class. It's silly, yes. I spent the rest of my semester in Korea wandering around Seoul and wasting a lot of money. (w30-34)

While waiting to return to the U.S., she took up residence in a pastor's house with some Korean roommates. Attending church with these roommates, she found that elderly churchgoing Korean women would shame her 'constantly' (t158) for her Korean ability. When her roommates would try to shut this down by pointing out that she was an adoptee, these same women would then take on a new, sympathetic attitude: 'wanting to invade my life, take me under her wing and show me how to be Korean' (t560-561).

Evelyn was uncomfortable with this attitude, patronising and pitying as it was. Ultimately, she felt relieved to return to the U.S. at the end of the semester, though she thought she had not made progress in Korean. It was on the plane back, while chatting with some people who had also been students in Korea, that she discovered that she could recall some Korean words. She had picked this up while doing daily tasks rather than studying.

Nevertheless, Korea was 'dead' to her (t361) after she left it for the first time.

6.2.5.2. Interpretive commentary (part 1)

Evelyn's identity is normative (Butler, 2009) in neither her adoptive country, nor her country of birth. As such, she is subject in both contexts to what Foucault might term *disciplinary forces* (Foucault, 1995) that act on her to shape her in line with certain values. From her narrative, we can get a sense of what these values, her *mode of subjection*, are. In her hometown in the U.S., there is the quite un-nuanced sense that a person who appears Korean (or indeed, Chinese) must be from another country, and is likely to speak the language of that country. Curiously, a similar sense manifests in the Korean context as well: seeing as she is apparently Korean, she should speak Korean well. In both contexts, the aspect of Evelyn's *ethical substance* that is subject to these values is her visually apparent ethnicity. In Korea, there is the additional point that as an adoptee she is worthy of pity, and a fitting object for education in Korean culture. All these values have a normalising force to them. Both in the U.S. and in Korea, Evelyn has been pressured to be, in linguistic and cultural terms, what her ethnicity implies she must be. As to why people would pressure her in this way, in Foucault's analysis, people engage in meticulous classification of people as part of an exercise of power over them (Rabinow, 1984, p.8) to discipline them in line with social norms and/or to exclude people with undesirable identities with the aim of reducing the amount of chaos in society (Foucault, 1988; 1995). So, when considering the meaning of the Korean language to Evelyn, we can ask what role it plays in her negotiation with this disciplinary/exclusionary power.

Before she knew any Korean language, Evelyn was already pretending to friends that she could speak it. There existed a gap between her self and the self they expected

her to be, and this *self-practice* superficially bridged the gap. Even fake Korean was enough for this in her hometown but would not suffice at her university. Moving to Korea and learning the language may have been part of the effort to resolve this gap. Her *telos*, then, was seemingly a version of herself in which there was no gap at all – where she spoke Korean, just as her apparent ethnicity would imply. In both her fake and real practices with Korean, she demonstrates a willingness to pursue such an ideal situation in line with the expectations of others, apparently because of emotions (sadness, shame) within herself relating to the Korean language, and also because she wanted people to 'stop asking (her) questions' (t618) – 'negative motivation', (t21) indeed. It might be said that exemption from such questions was a privilege she might gain if her identity could be made to conform to people's normative expectations. The practice of Korean, in this view, was a means of conformity.

However, Evelyn's decision to withdraw from her Korean study course indicates a limit to her willingness to subject herself to expectations. Her teacher's behaviour towards her as an ethnically Korean student clearly crossed a line. One interpretation of this is that, in that moment, her desire to avoid ethnically determined expectations from others in the short-term outweighed her desire to make a Korean speaker of herself in the long-term. Another is that as a first-time student of Korean and visitor to Korea she was simply caught off guard by this negative experience and reacted strongly. Whatever the case, the decision to leave the course seemingly corresponded with a refusal to respect the expectations of others, an act of resistance against normative pressures that had passed the point of toleration (Butler, 2004; Block, 2009, in Gearing and Roger, 2018).

6.2.5.3. Returning to Korea, becoming a teacher: Evelyn faces persistent expectations

After graduation, Evelyn again took a course of Korean, but this time at a prominent American university. Unfortunately, this brief experience mirrored that in Korea. She was pressed by an elderly Korean teacher to explain why she could not already speak Korean, revealed she was an adoptee, was shown pity, felt distressed and humiliated, and quit.

Meanwhile, Evelyn was without a future plan. She was interested in pursuing an academic path in the human rights field, and a supervisor suggested she might go to Korea on a scholarship. Her primary interest was the Spanish-speaking world, but her supervisor suggested that Korea would provide a better niche. Also, she might get rare access when researching there on account of her ethnicity. She was persuaded to go even though at this point Korea was 'dead' to her (t361). On the scholarship application, her supervisor represented her Korean as near fluent, though he knew this to be untrue.

> **Evelyn**: I was like, what if somebody asks me about this later? What if somebody speaks to me in Korean? He was like, they won't, don't worry about it. (t374)

Once back in Korea, Evelyn noted that although she felt confused and lost, she did not receive as much sympathy as other foreigners. Nor, for that matter, was she approached to be a language tutor as other North Americans were, which made her upset. Moreover, everyone expected her to speak Korean. She was pushed by her scholarship mentor to translate Korean documents. When she said she could not, she was not believed.

> **Stewart**: Did you fail to do (the translation) or…?
>
> **Evelyn**: No, no, no, no, I killed myself to do it, 'cause I kind of wanted, I don't know maybe I just, it was like to prove it to myself, or I don't like to fail at things, right? I'm like very competitive. (t385)
>
> **Stewart**: Yeah.
>
> **Evelyn**: I was also worried that maybe if I didn't live up to their expectations in a way that, you know, my scholarship would be in jeopardy. (t387-388)

After her scholarship period, she returned to the U.S. again to pursue higher education, but at that point the banks crashed, and the prospects and cost of living there were disagreeable. So, she returned to Korea once more pursuing a job connection. After this, many of her experiences on the scholarship would repeat themselves over the years. She worked for a documentary company making films around Asia, but while in Korea, she was presumed to be self-sufficient, and not given much help. She also worked at a broadcasting station as a production assistant. There, she was given responsibility for translating subtitles for a variety show. She told them she could not

do this; they told her she would be fine. She took to doing this job with the aid of an online dictionary and a Korean friend. One consequence of this was that her Korean writing skills advanced greatly. Also in this job, she was required to give presentations in Korean. She was ignored when she said she could not, and criticised for lack of preparation when she did.

Outside of work, Evelyn did not study Korean and was scared to speak it: '…people see the Asian face and they want *perfect* Korean, so I wasn't willing to speak until I knew it was gonna be perfect' (t211-213). Despite this, she certainly did speak in Korean, for instance with her now ex-husband, with whom she always spoke it.

When she spoke Korean, she was repeatedly told that her Korean did not 'sound foreign' (w54). People even implied that she must be hiding the extent of her Korean ability, but also acted amused and ventured criticism when she did not know certain words or used inappropriate titles for people, and similar. This caused her to suspect that: '…my Korean was *never* gonna be good enough as a non-native speaker' (t484). She felt stressed (and still sometimes does) and bitter when she observed that others (Korean Americans[43]) were much better supported. It was in this context that Evelyn decided to move into English teaching. This, she reasoned, would be a non-Korean-speaking job, which is what she wanted.

Evelyn: I just found myself in a place where I was like, why do I subject myself to this, like, why do I keep trying to prove myself to people that clearly are never going to let me into their little club, right? So I was like, I'm just gonna hang out with all the foreigners from now on, so (laughs).

Stewart: But then when you got into the (teaching) industry…

Evelyn: And it was the same, so (laughs).

Stewart: It was the same?

Evelyn: Yes.

Stewart: 'Cause I know you said that you had difficulties with people preferring Caucasian teachers and such.

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[43] Note: 'Korean American' refers someone who, like Evelyn, is of Korean extraction and grew up in the U.S. but, unlike Evelyn, was raised by Korean parents.

Evelyn: Yeah, there was *that* part of it, but when they did hire me there was always this expectation that I would do a lot more than everybody else. (t713-720)

Over the years, Evelyn worked a variety of English teaching positions in Korea. When applying for these positions, she was always interviewed in Korean. Employers also doubted that she was a native English speaker because her Korean sounded 'too Korean' (w67). She was told at times that she would be paid less than a Caucasian, or not hired at all because she was not one. When working at a middle school, she was told that they had, in fact, wanted a 'real foreigner' (w70) but had chosen her because she was locally based and would not need housing support.

Furthermore, Evelyn did indeed use Korean while working as a teacher. Several employers gave her translation, administrative, and managerial duties. As for the language she used to communicate with students, this was dependent on the context. At the middle school, she hid her Korean ability as her employer felt this would encourage her students to use English with her. She used little Korean when working at a private school for children from wealthy families, who had been learning English all their lives – when she did use Korean, they mocked her pronunciation. By contrast, she used Korean with students often when working at an alternative secondary school, where fun rather than English was the priority. She also used a great deal of Korean when working at an after-school program, as the students were 'hoodlums' (t958) and she had to manage them alone because her co-teacher was an absentee. Eventually, she began teaching advanced English writing classes at a university. She was made the director in this job and was required to give presentations and attend meetings in Korean, which sharpened her language skills in the academic genre.

As to how Evelyn feels about her experiences as an English teacher, she makes a comment that I am choosing to include here, though it lacks a specific reference point:

Evelyn: Ironically, I feel I have to work twice as hard to prove I am as good as any other native English-speaking teacher because my *Korean* is too good. (w74-75).

6.2.5.4. Interpretive commentary (part 2)

It is difficult to say whether Evelyn's narrative is victimic or agentic in nature (Polkinghorne, 1996). From her supervisor to her scholarship mentor, to her employers in Korea, Evelyn has been constantly subject to consistent expectations and demands: she must know and use Korean because she is Korean. It is interesting that in her earlier experiences (the scholarship, the broadcasting company), her opportunities and responsibilities were defined by Korean ability she did not even have. In a sense, this mirrors her childhood experiences of speaking made-up Korean. People's perceptions had more to do with her apparent ethnicity than any actual linguistic competence. However, subject to these perceptions as she was, and clearly pressured, pigeonholed, and criticized as she was, she seems to have made the agentic decision to go along with things for a long time, at least until the point where she transitioned into English teaching. In seeking to understand what Korean ability meant to her, I take her agency into consideration.

It seems fair to say that the *ethical substance* central to this narrative (at least before she became a teacher) is Evelyn's identity as a person of Korean extraction. The *mode of subjection* is the notion that on account of her Korean identity she must know and use Korean to an advanced or even perfect level; an imperative that manifests plentifully in the demands made on her by employers and supervisors. In terms of *self-practices*, Evelyn shows herself willing to use Korean, to work with the language way beyond her present abilities in order to meet those demands. Certainly, these demands were backed by material force, as those making them were the arbiters of Evelyn's employment. But Evelyn did not necessarily have to come to Korea, or stay in Korea, or retain any given job. To an extent, she freely chose to soldier on towards something. What, then, was Evelyn's *telos*? What future self-situation was she working towards?

In her narrative, Evelyn talks multiple times about proving herself, both to herself and to others. Given her overarching desire to stop people asking questions, and the shame that she felt due to her own inability in Korean, previously mentioned, it seems reasonable to interpret her *telos* as a situation in which the discrepancy between the language ability her ethnicity demands of her and her actual language ability has been

resolved. Indeed, as others were demanding that she use Korean, it makes sense that actually using Korean would be such a resolution in itself. The fact that she was willing to work as hard as she did to use Korean suggests she took this very seriously. And, in the event, doing this work advanced her Korean substantially.

As for how she would know if her *telos* had been achieved, it seems that the 'approval of others' (Hennig, 2010, p.308) would act as an indicator. Her anxiety about speaking Korean imperfectly, and her descriptions of critical comments on her Korean made by others suggest that she may have been, in effect, waiting for people to actually stop making an issue of her language and identity. However, they did not stop. She talks about not being allowed into the Korean 'club' (t714) just as she is narrating her move into English teaching. We might say then that the transition into teaching came with an understanding, perhaps arrived at over time, that improving her Korean would not allow her to achieve her *telos,* because the discursive environment within which she was working did not allow such an outcome. Relevant discourses, rather than direct her towards acceptance, defined her as deficient.

In this way, her move into teaching may be understood as an act of resistance against disciplinary forces she no longer saw as aligned with her own self-creation interests. Moreover, the choice of English teaching, and 'hang(ing) out with all the foreigners' (t714) makes sense in that it could distance Evelyn from the dead-end of Korean, and re-position her in relation to Korean society as an outsider, which she already was to some inescapable degree. This might be seen as another act of resistance by Evelyn through non-performance of identity (Butler, 2004; Block, 2009, in Gearing and Roger, 2018). It might have resolved the discrepancy between Evelyn's identity and the expectations of others in a way that improving and using Korean had not, and also given her access to privileges offered to foreigners other than herself that she had observed – in teleological terms, a superior situation.

However, while Evelyn may have been seeking a context where her ethnicity and language were not an issue, in the English teaching industry they certainly were. Her identification as a Korean who spoke Korean rendered her ineligible for certain pay and employment opportunities afforded to White teachers who, it must be noted, were

only as 'native' in English as she was. This identification also made her subject to additional work responsibilities, such that she felt she had to work twice as hard as other foreign teachers. Her freedom to self-define were certainly constrained by external forces (Infinito, 2003).

Overall, then, this narrative of Evelyn's suggests an individual caught in negotiation (sometimes hostile) with the values of her context, seeking a position and a mode of *self-creation* that would lead to an end of negotiations, a resolution. Because of her ethnic identity, Korean ability had an essential role in this negotiation, and she did learn a lot of Korean in the process. But her capacity to achieve such a resolution was hamstrung because her abilities and value were defined in terms of discriminatory ethnolinguistic discourses related to Korean, discourses that employers, even in ostensibly English-focused fields, were willing to draw on for their own ends. Thus, whether she learned and used Korean or tried to reject it in favour of a foreigner identity, Evelyn could not completely achieve her ideal situation.

6.2.5.5. Now: Evelyn has adapted, hopes to help her children get along seamlessly

Shortly before her interview with me, Evelyn began working in a new university teaching job teaching basic English. She was offered the position of director but declined, wanting to get away from that role. However, she feels they are clearly 'keeping (her) in the back pocket' for such a role in future (t770). This may have something to do with her language skills and ethnicity, but also with the fact she is a mother, and therefore is unlikely to leave the job or leave Korea.

> **Evelyn**: People have this idea, like, working moms, like, super hard workers, they need the money, you know, you can basically have them put up with all sorts of crap and they're not gonna be like the single women who give you a lot of shit for it. (t793-794)

When teaching, she tries not to use Korean with her students, though she invites them to speak Korean when they have questions for her. She believes understanding Korean, and appearing Korean, makes her more approachable and helps with rapport

building.[44] However, if she were to use Korean as someone who looks Korean, she anticipates her students could get lazy and stop using English.

While Evelyn is not very professionally satisfied in Korea, she has not left. As to why this is, she gives several reasons. For one thing, she looks like everyone else, which is nice. For another, as an ambitious person with advanced Korean and English writing, editing and translation skills, she has a rare skillset that will likely serve her well in her ongoing career. Furthermore, though she has had professional frustrations, she has friends back in the U.S. who are frustrated, too. This cannot be completely avoided. Also, on a recent trip to the U.S., she was shocked to be asked by a cashier if she spoke English. So, even in the U.S., she experiences 'perpetual foreigner syndrome' (t259).

There is another reason for staying that used to be significant to her: she hoped that she would eventually meet her birth parents. This has not happened, but in the meantime, she has taken many steps in her adult life in Korea, and this has been a stronger motivation to stay.

> **Evelyn**: I got worked to death in several industries all in Korean. I got married all in Korean. I gave birth to two children in hospitals with Korean-speaking staff and spoke Korean even during the most excruciating pain of my life. I got through a divorce all in Korean. I earned a master's in history, economics, and law in Korean. I bought my first car, insurance, and health insurance plans for my family all in Korean. I learned about real estate law in Korean. I joined a class action lawsuit in Korean. I learned about banking and investment in Korean. This March I will send my daughter to Korean elementary school, from which point I will be expected (as I have always been) to keep up with all the other native Korean parents… and be able to help her with homework. My entire life outside of socialization is *in Korean*. (w81-89)

Though her spoken Korean is now very strong, Evelyn still takes the time to plan out what she will say, and she still feels anxious about imperfections in her speech. Also, there are certain gaps in her Korean she feels could be filled by study. For instance,

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[44] At least with respect to appearances, this perspective mirrors one found in the pilot study conducted before the present project (Gray, 2018).

she will not rent a car in Korea out of fear that an accident in a rented car would involve too many unfamiliar language situations for her to handle. However, though she tried to join a Korean course, she was not permitted to attend as her Korean was assessed to be too good.

One of the most significant effects of achieving such advanced Korean for Evelyn is that it has enabled her to tell people comfortably that she is of Korean heritage but grew up in the U.S: 'it has helped me to rewrite the narrative of my past' (w94-95).

> **Evelyn**: I guess I do have like a *tiny*, tiny sense of pride when people are like, how did you learn Korean, and you're an adoptee? A question people ask me all the time. (t639)

She is less comfortable revealing the fact that she is an adoptee to Koreans (foreigners do not care). However, she has now adapted enough to Korean culture to fool people into thinking she might be Korean. And if they do ask about her heritage, she says she is 'American'. She says this because being 'Korean' comes with expectations she cannot live up to.

As for the future of her Korean learning, she says she no longer has any goals. She only hopes she will be able to use Korean to help her children get along 'seamlessly' (w95) in Korea. She is already worried about this. She speaks English with her children at home to ensure that they can connect with her on the deepest level. However, there have been incidents in which other children have made hostile comments to her children when they speak English in public – her daughter even asked if they could use Korean instead.

Moreover, Evelyn assumed that her children would pick up flawless Korean living in Korea with a Korean father. Her goal has been for them to be perfectly bilingual in Korean and English with access to a range of opportunities and not subject to judgment by Koreans or non-Koreans for their language use. In fact, she perceives her children to be slightly behind their peers in Korean. Yet, she has observed that superficially foreign children at school are helped, whereas her children, who look entirely Korean, are not.

Evelyn: As a parent in my situation, my kids in their situation, I'm like *begging* the teachers, I'm like *constantly* reminding them that, like, we are not Korean in the way that you think we are. You need to help my child, you need to think of my child, and I say to them, this is very, like, I don't like saying it like this, but I tell them, like, you need to think of my kid as a white kid (t1230-1231).

6.2.5.6. Interpretive commentary (part 3)

Evelyn demonstrates circumspection when she notes on the one hand that factors such as motherhood may influence her experiences just as ethnolinguistic factors may, and also that her struggles are not unique to her, or to Korea. However, the ongoing relevance of ethnolinguistic identities for her is evident.

As before, she is subject to linguistic expectations: as a visibly Korean teacher teaching English, and as a mother of children in a Korean-medium school. And as before, she is engaging with these expectations, and the site of her engagement is language.

It may be that her persistent anxiety about speaking and the commentary she receives on her Korean (complimentary as it has become) indicate that she has not ended up in a position where her ethnolinguistic identity is unlikely to draw judgmental comment from others. However, she lists an impressive set of activities she has done in Korean, and notes that her high ability has allowed her to rewrite her history. If her goal was to be a Korean speaker as ethnic expectations have always demanded, then such an exemplary history of language practices should now qualify her to identify as such. This identification seems to have coincided with an emotional shift. Though she previously felt shame, now it is pride she names when talking about her Korean, albeit 'tiny' pride (t639). This suggests that improving her Korean so much has indeed helped her take strides towards her *telos* in as much as that had to do with personal satisfaction.

Evelyn's situation is not ideal at present and may never be, as it appears others can be hard to satisfy. But she demonstrates a sense of what situationally appropriate *self-practices* she can engage in. She knows what she can say about herself to whom and

why – a practical awareness of discourses that, if she cannot entirely escape her identity, enables her to find the most comfortable position available. Again, though, Korean learning has not been without benefits in Evelyn's negotiation towards her desired situation. Her acquisition of high Korean ability allows her to fool people, as speaking made-up Korean did when she was a child. Thus, Korean learning has provided a meaningful contribution towards Evelyn's ideal of not being questioned and challenged by others. And where its contribution meets it limits, she has found other ways to work with discourse to get by.

As for Evelyn's children, like her they are caught between worlds, subject to the judgments and expectations of others based on their appearance and language use. This is despite the fact that, unlike their mother, they are growing up in Korea, appearing Korean, and speaking Korean. This should be taken as an indication that, even under quite favourable circumstances, moving seamlessly between diverse languages and cultures may be a difficult ideal to realise, if not an impossible one.

6.2.6. Raymond's Korean learning

Years in Korea	Nationality	Teaching context	Korean level
15+	U.S.	University	Advanced

6.2.6.1. Before Korea, early learning experiences: Raymond studies very broadly

To understand why Raymond came to Korea and learned Korean, at least two things must be considered. First, he is a curious person – 'insatiably' so (t97) – with a particular interest in culture, language, and society. Second, long before he became an English teacher, he already had a rich history of Korean cultural experience.

Raymond grew up in a culturally diverse environment. Although he is white, he attended schools where most students were not, and he had many Korean friends. At some point in his teenage years, he noticed a Korean martial arts school freshly opened in his local area and walked in, becoming the first student there. He learned traditional Korean martial arts, including archery. He became known to the leaders of the martial arts association of which the school was part and was invited to travel to Korea as part of a demonstration team. Among various other experiences while traveling, Raymond met Kim Dae Jung, a former president of Korea.

> **Raymond:** Those early days (in Korea) made an impression on me and there were very few foreigners around that I could see. There was no way to get things done without using the Korean language and if one wanted to engage with the society at all, it was important to learn the norms, customs, and language skills necessary. (w12-14)

Once in university back in the U.S., Raymond was allowed to design a class for himself to take. He organised one in which he learned martial arts, acupuncture, and Korean history and language. At this time, he acquired a little Korean phonological knowledge, but no real practical skills. It was also at university that he 'became familiar with the notions of privilege, class and the role of race and culture in society' (w5-6). After considering a wide range of subject areas, he ended up majoring in education, and

was accepted onto a PhD program at age 21. However, he ended up moving abroad to teach English.

> **Raymond:** The head of the program said, look, if you join an education PhD program at your age without teaching experience, you're never going to get a job (t177). I reflected that to be a good teacher, I should improve my awareness of such matters (as privilege, class, and race) and travel as much as possible. (w6-7)

His move to Korea specifically was influenced on the one hand by the experiences he had beginning with martial arts, and on the other by fortuitous circumstance. A member of his family happened to know someone from Korea with connections to one of the country's largest language education companies. With this person's help, Raymond got his first English teaching job.

He initially intended to stay in Korea for a year, but nevertheless chose to take a Korean class. He could not afford expensive classes at universities, but fortunately his employer offered him a class at a discount. He describes his motivation at this point as 'youthful exuberance' (t735) on account of being in a new place. Also:

> **Raymond**: I had been to Korea before… and I remember going to fast-food restaurants and not being able to order food and trying to extort English from people on the street… and it being so frustrating… you want to be able to, like, do things comfortably and not make other people feel uncomfortable in your presence… and it's isolating, a lot of people learn adaptive strategies if Korean is very hard… but there is a certain liberation in being able to order a cup of coffee… you have control over your world... (t737-743)

As it turned out, his Korean class provided few chances to practice speaking – unfortunate, seeing as 'it's the conversational dimension that makes (Korean) something you could actually use as a tool in society' (t743). The class was also taught entirely in the highest Korean politeness register[45], which he struggled to learn. Moreover, when he attempted to complete everyday tasks in this register, he was

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[45] Note: The Korean language has many politeness registers. The highest of these is more complex than the others and is used only in particularly formal circumstances, not in day-to-day life.

laughed at. So, he quit the class, bought himself a notebook, and took 'to the street' (w26) instead.

Seeking to immerse himself in Korean, Raymond went out with friends, carrying his notebook with him. To improve his knowledge, he would 'take notes and ask questions in pubs, classes, cafes, and bars' (w28). He showed people his notebook and encouraged them to add whatever details about Korean language and culture they could. His thinking was that the culture could be 'a vehicle to get at the language' (w29). Moreover, he may have been trying to overcome isolation by accumulating 'social proof' (t237) through community immersion and language learning – but in his account, he speaks generally of foreigners learning Korean rather than of himself on this point, so it is unclear.

At some point, he began to incorporate what he was learning into his teaching. As a young teacher, he was eager to apply theory from his master's, and this included the idea of drawing on what students already know. So, he presented his students with aspects of Korean culture/history and challenged them to teach him about these. This gave students motivation to communicate – 'there's a sort of cultural desire to inform the white guy' (t39) – and helped Raymond to further refine and expand his knowledge.

6.2.6.2. Interpretive commentary (part 1)

While some other participants began to invest themselves in learning Korean only after they had been in Korea a while (when they made social connections, or decided to remain long-term, etc.), Raymond seems to have been motivated from the beginning. One thing that may differentiate Raymond from the others is the fact that he arrived in Korea some years earlier. As Raymond points out, getting by with English in Korea was harder before. Practical considerations (and relatedly, overcoming isolation) factored into his early learning motivation. However, Eric (section 6.1.3.1. in this chapter) was also in Korea at that time, and his own modest Korean apparently put him ahead of his foreign contemporaries. Indeed, Raymond acknowledges that those for whom Korean is very hard may use 'adaptive strategies'. Therefore, we can speculate that his motivation to learn Korean was outstanding for the time.

To understand this motivation, we may take the Foucauldian perspective that his learning practice decisions relate to his identity, values, and goals. With respect to identity, Raymond is a voracious student with an insatiable curiosity and a foundation of Korean cultural learning. He was also, at this early time, a new teacher. As such, he not only had a sense that students' culture could be a resource in class, but also that a teacher benefits from sociocultural awareness – both relevant values. Another related value is this: '…if one wanted to engage with the society at all, it was important to learn the norms, customs, and language skills necessary' (w13-14). It will be noted that Raymond was thinking of engagement with society rather than mere survival in it. The picture is of someone who, due to his nature and/or values, is especially eager to learn things that not only expand his awareness and understanding but also facilitate further engagement and thus further learning, and who possesses certain identities that influence the direction of his learning (student of Korean culture; teacher).

This picture is reinforced by his choice of learning practices. He quit his Korean class because it was not helping him develop Korean he could use as a 'tool'. Here, he may or may not have been referring to purely instrumental language use. However, his subsequent self-directed learning focused on both language and culture, suggesting goals beyond the practical. Moreover, using his knowledge as a teaching resource while using his teaching as a chance to develop knowledge can be seen as a form of *self-practice* that enriched him both as a learner and a teacher – an integrated act of self-creation. Given this, it is not surprising that Raymond was so motivated to learn Korean in his first year. Had he left Korea after a year and then had no occasion to use the language, he still could have come away with linguistic and cultural knowledge to satisfy himself.

Furthermore, his comment about his students wishing to 'inform the white guy' hints that his drive to learn about Korea and Korean was welcomed on account of his race. If we interpret this in terms of a *mode of subjection*, we might suggest that there is a value attached in the Korean context to white people's engagement with Korean culture – perhaps because of an association between whiteness and the admired western world (Oh & Oh, 2017) – and this value permits white people such as Raymond to pursue a course of self-creation through access to Korean linguistic and

cultural learning. However, the context for this comment was classroom activities in which Raymond called upon his students to teach him. There was, therefore, something of an imperative for them to do so. So, while Raymond may be expressing insight into his students' perspectives, their desire to teach a white foreigner may or may not have been especially strong. As a contrast, we might consider the elderly women in Evelyn's story (section 6.2.5.1 of this chapter), who were inclined to 'invade (her) life' and 'show (her) how to be Korean.'

6.2.6.3. Over the years: Raymond's social network expands, as does his learning

As to why Raymond stayed in Korea beyond his first year: 'the Korean Vortex sort of sucked me in' (t151). A significant part of this vortex has been personal relationships. He describes meeting other, long-term expats in Korea as a 'major turning point' (w28) for him. These people encouraged his learning in various ways. Some of them had been in Korea as early as the 1960s, and they offered a tantalising historical perspective on the Korea of previous decades[46]. One of them, a translator, helped Raymond with his Chinese characters. This translator also gave Raymond access to his own extensive social network, and: 'gave me permission to take more risks, you know, study stuff, do the Korean thing, reach out with Koreans' (t788). In this way, his social connections fuelled his curiosity and supported his learning.

Over time, Raymond's learning continued to 'flower out' (t43). He acquired an ever more extensive knowledge of Korean society, culture, and history, and of the Korean language. He describes the language as a necessary part of this process.

> **Raymond**: If you didn't take the time to learn the language that speaks not to people's mind but to their heart, you're *only* going to scratch the surface, Koreans are *never* going to open up to you very profoundly (t449).

As he learned, new discoveries fuelled new curiosity. He built up historical corpora and glossaries of Korean terms from newspapers. By examining Chinese characters, he was able to explore the meaning of Korean words below the surface level, and ask:

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[46] The reader is invited to look up photographs of Korea in the 1960s and contrast those with modern photographs – the degree of change in the country has been astounding.

'how deep does this well go?' (t53)[47]. The practical Korean ability he acquired allowed him to do professional translation work for broadcasters and museums, and to appear on television, among other things. It may also have contributed to his hiring as a professor in the translation/interpretation department of a prominent university in Seoul. He ultimately acquired a PhD through the medium of Korean, one of several degrees he has, which, though their subject areas may seem disparate and unrelated, are in fact interconnected in Raymond's mind. For him, study is echolocation (t1030), an act of intellectually situating himself.

As to what he has studied *for,* Raymond identifies financial stability and intellectual satisfaction as his goals. The decisions he has made have been driven by a desire to avoid getting into a bad situation in his life, and they have led him to where he is (t363).

> **Raymond**: You want to find your corner in the world doing something meaningful to you and I was very cognizant of this early on. Maybe that's why I was spread out across all these different things, you know, just to exhaust all the other offers, and then whatever is left might be the right one (laughs) I guess (t359).

In line with this, Raymond expresses a sense that Korea is an incidental setting for his studies: 'Korean happens to be the geography where I'm at' (t99). Indeed, he 'tried to leave four times' (t101) but returned to Korea every time for various personal or professional reasons. He recalls he was once told by a veteran expat that Korea 'chose' him (t105), which he liked. As to what this might mean, Raymond is doubtful that people can really articulate what draws them to a place. He speculates that 'the *real* answer is more in the limbic system' (t119).

Moreover, despite his knowledge of Korean language and culture, Raymond has found himself 'generally viewed and thought of as an outsider' in Korea (w65).

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[47] Interestingly, one of Gearing's (2019) more persistent FET Korean learners also used metaphorical language to describe his Korean learning: a 'steady chipping away at the mountain' (p.213). Perhaps this sort of imagery is in some way an expression of the 'vision' (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011) that pulls motivated learners onward towards successful mastery.

Raymond: If you ask Koreans to define Korean-ness, you're not going to get a passport definition (t473). One can learn everything, become totally bilingual and bicultural, and even become a citizen, but none of us can force ourselves into/onto Korean society (w66-67). And even if you're *ethnically* Korean… (if) you don't have the full language repertoire or whatever, you're still going to be somewhat handicapped… Always, the perceived other tends to be the one that gets vilified (t479-481).

Raymond recalls that, shortly after a notable instance of vilification of foreign teachers in the Korean media, he was punched on the subway by a stranger who then demanded to know his visa status. Raymond speculates he may have been seen by this stranger as a 'symbol of oppression' (t537). An elderly man then intervened, threw the stranger off the train at the next stop, and asked Raymond not to judge Korea too harshly on account of such violent behaviour. This is an extreme example. More generally, Raymond has found it difficult to make friends with Korean men. He ventures this may be because foreigners fall outside of the 'five cardinal relationships' (t902) traditional to Korean culture (father to son, brother to brother, etc.) – that, or a 'latent competitive hostility' among men (t830). As such, Raymond's social interactions have often been with Korean women because, like foreigners, they are relatively marginalised in Korean society. Consequently, both his manner of speech in Korean and his view of Korean culture have been influenced by women.

Though he has had some difficulties, Raymond notes that he had some similar experiences in the US as well. Moreover, he sees a positive side to his position in Korea:

Raymond: I actually consider it quite a gift, I mean, if you have the whole unpacking… the White Backpack, white male privilege, kind of thing, in the States, if I grew up in this particular kind of bubble perhaps… it's *good* that I can be a minority. It helps me understand and have empathy. (t465-469)

6.2.6.4. Interpretive commentary (part 2)

In terms of *self-creation*, we can see that learning Korean language and culture served Raymond's pursuit of a *telos* in at least two identified ways: it gave him ongoing

opportunities for intellectual stimulation and contributed to his financial stability by giving him number of professional opportunities over the years.

On the first point, it is notable that Raymond strongly associates his learning with his social relationships, particularly veteran expats he met. These people represented a community of cultural experts in a similar position to Raymond (as foreigners in Korea), and they undoubtedly *scaffolded* his learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). But he did not need Korean ability to access this group. And, while he does at one point talk about the importance of language ability for connecting with Koreans, this is in the context of engagement with the culture rather than making friends. Moreover, while he did learn socially, he also engaged in an uncanny amount of individual study, creating his own glossaries and similar. Thus, it seems that intellectual satisfaction was predominant in Raymond's motivation over social satisfaction. Given this, it makes sense that Raymond has learned as much as he has. In teleological terms, social satisfaction through language learning is perhaps a more achievable goal than comprehensive cultural understanding, and therefore it is a more finite motivational resource. We might contrast Raymond with John, whose primarily social motivation only took him to an intermediate Korean level.

This is all despite the fact that Raymond seems sometimes ambivalent towards Korea. He repeatedly left the country, only to return. He hesitates to identify the reason he has chosen to engage with Korean learning beyond unconscious psychological factors. And he gives the impression it is a decidedly general pursuit of study and advancement that learning Korean serves. Nevertheless, the deep well of Korean culture has provided him with an unending chain of new opportunities for satisfaction, creating and supporting a motivational current, and this has apparently been enough. Moreover, per his statement, 'you want to find your corner in the world doing something meaningful to you', it can be inferred that his Korean studies are indeed meaningful to him, and/or he has been seeking meaning by studying. But, if there is a meaning in Korean language and culture that he could not have found in another area of study, he did not plainly articulate it in his narrative.

Raymond also highlights several ways in which he, as a white foreigner, is situated in Korea. The relevance of his whiteness is plain in the story of him being assaulted on the subway, and it may be of relevance to the limited integrational benefits of his Korean learning. From his description of things, he seems to believe that someone who lacks Korean ethnicity cannot surmount the position of *other* in Korea by any amount of language learning. And indeed, the limits imposed on him have shaped his Korean learning in as much as they have influenced who he has socialised with.

Nevertheless, as an English speaker and a person on the relative fringe of Korean society, he has had access to social groups who have supported and encouraged his learning, notably veteran expats and Korean women. Moreover, he demonstrates an ease with the limits on his integration to Korean society. He talks about it being impossible to 'force' one's way in, and notes that his perspective has been broadened by experiences as a minority. This aligns with the image of him as someone interested in privilege, class, and race, as outlined in the first section of this narrative. Thus, the mere fact that someone in his position may achieve only so much integration by learning Korean has not apparently hindered his efforts to learn it much.

6.2.6.5. Now: Raymond is a 'Koreanist', uses Korean in daily life

Raymond currently works as a professor of translation/interpretation. This allows him to study as a career, which he likes. He no longer teaches many EFL classes – rather, his classes focus on the history and cultural meanings of language. He uses little Korean in his teaching, preferring not to let his students fall back on their L1, as his aim is to encourage them to develop their English. But his Korean language and cultural knowledge do inform his teaching. He can identify students' weaknesses and understand their mistakes. He also uses his Korean knowledge to direct students as they reflect on the quality of their translations. In doing so, he encounters unfamiliar Korean slang, and thus gets a chance to learn.

Academically, Raymond considers himself a 'Koreanist' (t67) who finds something in Korea each day to interest him. While there are other foreigners of his acquaintance whose Korean 'banter' is better than his, he is more interested in what things 'mean' (t67) on a sociocultural, human level.

Raymond: I find these cultural dimensions that are, like, you know, the humanity, or the humanness of Korea makes it very interesting and exciting, whereas focusing on, you know, grammatical structures and having really fluent Korean can get you on TV, which I used to do. I don't particularly find it to be as rewarding an experience compared to even just having basic Korean and talking to people in the countryside, or whatever, who aren't used to talking to foreigners. (t79)

To this day, his studies are driven by curiosity akin to echolocation. He notes that North Korea is particularly interesting to him, because it is an important piece of the overall Korean puzzle, but hard to access. Another area of interest for him is the use of Korean language in racist, sexist discourse, and the potential for "different outcomes in the larger social… sphere" that might come from shining a light on the values, beliefs, and attitudes that underpin this language (t21-23). At the time of his interview, he is writing a paper on the #MeToo movement. He believes there is value to bringing an objective, outsider's perspective to a culture like Korea.

Beyond his studies, Raymond conducts his life largely in Korean. He uses Korean with his wife and children. He has Korean friends, the majority of whom are men, though it was not easy to build these friendships. With respect to Korean ability, he describes himself as functional and comfortable. He also says it is 'laughably clear' that his Korean could be better, but that this would require 'serious effort' for 'small gains' (w40). He imagines that if he were to return to actively developing his spoken Korean, it would likely be to gain access to some hitherto unexplored area of Korean society if a new study opportunity arose for him.

6.2.6.6. Interpretive commentary (part 3)

Here we see the effect that Raymond's extensive, decades-long learning has had on his identity. In terms of his *ethical substance* (the part of him that is *problematised*), his Korean linguistic and cultural learning has always served a desire for expansion of his knowledge and understanding, which originates in his burning curiosity and his interest in culture, humanity, and meaning. Learning the Korean language to a high level has been a *self-practice* that has allowed him to satisfy this desire.

Moreover, while the choice of Korean learning specifically was somewhat coincidental, his use of the label 'Koreanist'[48] for himself suggests that his broad learning has had a cumulative effect on his identity. The original appeal of Korean culture to him may be ineffable (i.e., hidden within his brain), but at some point he has come to identify himself as a student of Korean culture. This, in itself, is now a part of his *ethical substance* that is served by ongoing learning. It is also a *self* that is practiced not only in his research but also in his teaching, which on the one hand is informed by his linguistic and cultural understanding, and on the other provides him with opportunities to learn even now.

Also, in this final part of his narrative, we can note that Raymond sees value in the outsider's perspective. Recalling a point made in section 6.2.6.4 that inescapable *otherness* does not seem to have hindered his learning, this provides additional detail. Not only does remaining an outsider allow Raymond to reflect on his own privilege, it may also allow him to contribute a valuable perspective through his academic work. Thus, in terms of the *mode of subjection* (the relevant rules and values), Raymond has arrived at a point of alignment between what he values and the limited degree of integration permitted to him by Korean society. It is therefore understandable that he continues to be such a proactive student of Korean culture from the social fringe.

Finally, to Raymond's *telos* (ideal, self-transformational goals), learning Korean language and culture has clearly contributed to his identity of 'Koreanist' and to his stated goals of intellectual satisfaction and financial security (in that it relates to his job as a teacher and academic). Now, he is not working on his practical Korean language per se, but if he resumes learning, it will be in pursuit of new curiosities. This makes plain the value that the language has had for him: learning it has been a *self-practice* that has contributed to his drive towards an ideal, intellectually satisfied life situation.

Furthermore, given how actively he continues to study culture, it seems his ideal situation cannot be completely attained, or is very difficult to attain, and yet the striving seems to bring him pleasure. The fact that his goals are a source of motivation without

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[48] This is certainly a niche label. I have heard it only a handful of times since moving to Korea more than a decade ago.

an obvious end, combined with the fact that the value of Korean for these goals is high, is why Raymond has learned so much of the language, I propose.

Chapter 7: Discussion

In this chapter, I present my final analytical interpretations and relate these to the existing literature. This presentation is intended to provide an overall, summarised answer to research question (2) that compares and integrates all cases from the present study. Research question (2) follows, for reference: How have personal and contextual factors influenced participants' motivation to learn Korean?

As has been noted in previous chapters, this question attends to two sorts of factors (personal and contextual), but in this study I do not treat these factors as entirely separable. Rather, I understand the individual and the context to have an influence on each other. Therefore, I have chosen to present this chapter in two parts. In part (1) I attend to personal differences between participants and in part (2) I attend to the influence of certain contextual factors (value discourses, social/cultural/economic systems). In this way, I mean to say something about individual participants and about the context in which they have been operating. However, neither is totally understandable without reference to the other. Therefore, both parts of this chapter can be read as the story of individuals and context reacting to one another.

Before the chapter-proper begins, I must outline the organization of part (1). Part (1) is comprised of three subsections, each of which begins with a comparison between two of the six core participants from this study. The two participants in each instance are not the sole focus of their subsections – indeed, every subsection of this chapter reflects analysis of data from all participants. Rather, the two-participant comparison that begins each subsection of part (1) is meant to be illustrative of the main argument under discussion.

7.1. Personal factors in language learning motivation

In the following three subsections (comprising part [1] of this chapter), I examine three ways in which individual differences between participants relate to differences in their motivation to learn Korean. The individual differences I examine are as follows:

1. Participants for whom Korean learning was an essential part of their self-creation were more persistent in learning it than participants who learned Korean as a means to other ends.

2. Participants who attached less value to Korean learning were more dependent on circumstantial motivations, and more vulnerable to circumstantial demotivations.

3. Although high achieving participants differed greatly in how positive or negative their motivations were, what they had in common was a desire to achieve a personally important self-transformation through Korean learning.

7.1.1. Korean learning as essential to self-creation, or as a means to other ends

The first analytical conclusion of this study is that participants who valued Korean learning in itself as an act of *self-creation* were more persistent in learning it than participants for whom learning Korean was an indirect way of achieving other goals, even if those other goals were strongly desired. To illustrate this point, I present the cases of Lisa and Lauren.

Lisa and Lauren offer an interesting contrast, partly because they are similar in many respects. Both came to teach in Korea without any prior knowledge of or connection to the country, culture, or language. They both had a history of learning languages with some success but struggled to learn Korean, finding it difficult in similar ways (e.g., retaining vocabulary). Both studied hard, though with different objectives. And ultimately, neither was satisfied with the results of their learning. Neither was actively studying when interviewed, and both had concluded that mastery of Korean was likely impossible.

Despite these similarities, Lauren appears to have proceeded with Korean to a more advanced level than Lisa. Of course, as Blommaert and Backus (2011) note, language 'level' is a highly individual notion. What I have to go on is participants' self-declared levels (beginner for Lisa, intermediate for Lauren), and hints in their narratives. For instance, Lisa laments her inability to talk about her spirituality, while Lauren recounts an argument in Korean about religion. On this basis, I proceed with interpretation on the understanding that Lauren achieved something more than Lisa.

The argument I wish to make in this section is that the most significant difference between Lisa and Lauren is the nature of their self-creation goals, and therefore the contribution that Korean learning could make to them. Lauren's self-creation project is self-developmental and anthropological, such that learning Korean (or possibly another language) is essential. For her, there was no shortcut. This can explain Lauren's immediate commitment to Korean apparently for its own sake. Meanwhile, for Lisa, Korean is only a means to other ends. It is a barrier to the fulfilment of her social desires, but the language itself carries no transformative value for her at the level of her *self.* Moreover, her ideal situation can be approximated by other means when Korean proves too hard.

In making this argument, I must first refer to the initial conditions (de Bot et al., 2007) of these participants: though they both have a history of language learning, only Lauren expresses a feeling of jealousy towards bilingual children. Lisa, who grew up bilingual, does not. This represents a difference in the *ethical substances* of the two. Consequently, Lauren's Korean learning could transform her life in a way that it could not Lisa's. Their lives were *problematised* differently (Gutting, 2005, p.1586).

As to the *mode of subjection,* neither Lisa nor Lauren suggested that anyone pressured them to learn Korean. They were not subject to external, disciplinary forces (Foucault, 1995). They were free to create themselves with reference to their internalised values. In these values also, there is a difference. Early in their residences, the guiding value for Lauren was desire for cultural/linguistic knowledge, while Lisa dismissed Korean as internationally useless. Later, Lauren talks about learning Korean to be a 'good guest', while Lisa talks about the importance of Korean for a full

life in Korea. These different value discourses exemplify the relatively identity-related vs. economic/pragmatic benefits that each sought.

Their choices of *self-practice* were also distinct. For example, while Lauren quit teaching and went to university only to learn Korean, Lisa retained her job and completed the KIIP only to get a visa. Furthermore, when both reached a point where the cost of pursuing Korean became too high, they engaged in alternative practices. For Lisa, this included memorising Korean choir songs without understanding them. For Lauren, it included resuming study of French. Thus, their *teloi* were different: a satisfying personal life vs. a multilingual self. Even their anxieties were distinct. Lisa seems frustrated with limits on her social life, teaching, etc., and desires enough Korean to overcome this. Meanwhile, Lauren is ashamed that her Korean is not better – fluency itself was the emotionally 'sticky' object for her (Ahmed, 2004).

The point of contrast here is between valuing the language as indispensable for one's self-creation and thinking of it rather as an indirect means to other ends. Elsewhere in this study, the three highest achieving participants, Evelyn, Raymond, and Thomas can all be said to have seen Korean as indispensable. Raymond has pursued knowledge of Korean culture as deeply as possible, eventually becoming a 'Koreanist'. Evelyn has aspired to resolve the disparity between her linguistic and ethnic identities as a Korean adoptee. Thomas is expanding to fit his environment (Korean society and academic linguistics). For them, Korean learning was a way to give their lives a 'special shape' (Hennig, 2010, p.308). Moreover, when the more persistent participants described an emotional imperative to learn relating to a *feared self* or an undesirable identity (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Clarke, 2009; Wolff and De Costa, 2017; Muir & Dörnyei, 2013; Motha and Lin, 2014), as Evelyn and Lauren did, language learning represented a direct means of escaping these identities. Korean ability itself was the emotionally 'sticky' object for them (Ahmed, 2004).

Thus, the pattern is broadly consistent within this study: the participants who were most persistent in learning Korean were those for whom it was an integral part of their *self-creation*.

Having made this point, there is a caveat. Participants for whom Korean was only tangentially valuable did not lack self-transformational ambitions. They often had compelling, identity-related goals (*teloi*) to which Korean could conceivably contribute (e.g., Henry's social self-development). In Dörnyei's (2005) terms, their motivations related in some ways to 'hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments' (p.101). In other words, their motivations were not wholly *ought-to* but also *ideal* in some ways (ibid). Research like Gu and Cheung's (2016) has shown that an 'L2 ideal self has a direct effect on intended effort' (p.14). And indeed, all participants in this study *intended* to learn Korean at various times (as, it must be noted, did all the FETs in Gearing's [2019] study). Yet, idealistic ambitions do not seem to have led to persistent motivation or effort for some of them. The reason, I believe, is that for these participants Korean learning was a tangential, optional, or less relevant *self-practice*.

As an example, we might consider Eric. His identity as an anthropologically inclined foreigner makes him subject to an imperative to demonstrate symbolic competence (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008), i.e., learn the language to be respectful. We might expect such a motivation to be compelling, as it originates in Eric's own philosophy and seems to have some emotional resonance for him. However, Eric displays respect through his Koreanised non-linguistic mannerisms. Moreover, his identity as a teacher leads to more compelling *problematisations*, and he prioritises professional development over Korean. This leaves him with only a lingering sense that his life would be more ideal with better Korean, enough to maintain a willingness to learn, but not usually enough to raise Korean learning above other priorities.

In this way, Eric is reminiscent of Miller, et al.'s (2017) participant, whose teaching philosophy came into conflict with the practical realities of his situation, leading to a shift of his position towards alignment with the dominant forces of his context and a 'narrowing of potential for his ethical self-formation' (p.98). Like Miller et al.'s teacher, Eric and other less persistently motivated participants in this study have aligned themselves with their situation – i.e., a situation in which Korean is not strictly necessary. By doing so, some of them have compromised their own belief that they should learn Korean (notably Lisa and Eric). However, Miller et al.'s (2017) teacher

compromised under institutional pressure, whereas participants in the present study were not obviously under pressure to refrain from learning Korean.

Thus, the present study elaborates on Miller et al.'s example by showing that even if one is free to engage in self-creation, and even if one is motivated to do so by one's identity, if the identity in question lacks imminent personal significance, or if the imperatives to which one is subject because of that identity can be satisfied by other, perhaps easier practices, then persistent, compelling motivation may not be fostered. In such cases, the ideal L2-self can be said to lack 'centrality' in relation to the overall *telos*, which, following the results of M. Cho (2020), may make the ideal a less substantial source of learning effort.

In contrast to the above, the most persistent[49] learners in the present study were those whose lives were *problematised* in such a way that they could add substantial, personally significant value to themselves by learning Korean. They possessed a certain identity (e.g., Korean adoptee) or acquired one (e.g., Koreanist), and were therefore privy to an opportunity (or imperative) to pursue a more ideal life through Korean learning (or, in Lauren's case, high competence in perhaps any language). For them, language learning was an essential *self-practice*.

Of course, it must be remembered that participants in this study belong to a group privileged in Korea due to their English ability. For them, Korean ability might be a 'culturally relevant social skill', but far from needing it to 'survive and thrive' (Furnham, 2010, p.88), they can get by largely without learning it. This distinguishes them from many other groups of learners and may explain why there is little evidence of compelling *ought-to* motivations (Dörnyei, 2005) in most of their narratives. Thus, the results of this study support the claim of Clarke and Hennig (2013) that in a situation where language learning does not primarily relate to 'necessity, struggle and survival', a learner's motivation may need to be conceptualised in terms of 'the ways in which learning is perceived as meaningful for learners' lives,' and the degree to which

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[49] Here, I do not mean 'persistent' in the sense of periodically sustained intense motivation (see for example Henry et al., 2015), as even the most motivated participants in this study were more and less motivated at different times. I am referring instead to overall persistence in learning over the course of several years.

'learning can support learners in their self-development and the formation of their 'selves'' (p.79). This insight that a desire for meaningful self-transformation can be a powerful motivator, and that this desire relates to the selves/identities and values of learners, has implications for how motivation should be understood and researched (and, potentially, how it should be approached in the language classroom), particularly as the language education field continues to pursue an account of how complexly interrelated factors shape an individual's motivation. I elaborate this point in Chapter 8 (Conclusions), section, 8.4.3., and outline the implications for researchers in section 8.6.1, and briefly, some implications for language teachers in section 8.6.2.

7.1.2. Circumstantial (de)motivation for learners who attach less value to Korean

The second analytical conclusion of this study is that participants who attached little value to Korean learning in itself were more dependent on conducive circumstances to be motivated to learn, and also more vulnerable to demotivating experiences. For these participants, social (de)motivations in particular had a noteworthy influence. I offer a comparison of John and Henry to illustrate this.

In several respects, John and Henry's cases are similar. Both came to Korea without prior connections to the country. Both came with transformational goals that Korean learning might serve (Henry: overcoming introversion, John: personal edification) but neither seems to have learned much Korean for these purposes. Rather, their primary motivations have been basic life convenience (Henry) and talking with friends/family (John). Neither seems to have experienced much external pressure to learn Korean, be it practical, social, or institutional. Nor was their internal pressure apparently strong. John does not identify with the desire to learn languages generally, and Henry does not see fluency in Korean as necessary.

Despite numerous similarities, John appears to have learned more Korean than Henry. Their self-described levels are similar (John: intermediate, Henry: low-intermediate), but their narratives suggest a substantial difference. John appears to have developed conversational ability; he communicates with his wife largely in Korean. Meanwhile, Henry does not use Korean much in his life; he seems to have acquired mostly basic, practical language for shopping and traveling.

To explain this difference, we may consider the role of circumstances. John explicitly attributes his learning to affordances, and Henry emphasises the fact that Korean is not necessary for his life. These are philosophical mirror images. In both cases, it was not an abiding personal desire, but happenstance that determined whether they felt the need to learn Korean or not. The argument I wish to make here is that the less value participants saw in Korean learning itself, the more their learning motivation was dependent on (and vulnerable to) circumstantial influence.

In the narratives of Henry and John, there are examples of *critical events* (Woods, 1993; Wirza, 2020) that added value to Korean or subtracted it. Early into his residence, John fell in with a group of Korean speakers (his football team) with whom he would need Korean to speak. In contrast, it appears that Henry socialised through English. Later, both John and Henry experienced a motivational boost from a romantic relationship. In Henry's case especially, this boost was large, as it catapulted Korean into relevance for him in relation to his newly relevant identity (boyfriend), values (smooth communication with his partner), and future (family life). But, before too long, Henry's relationship ended, which heralded both a change in identity and a motivational collapse. It is noteworthy that Henry, constrained by no external force, says that he lacks agency to practice Korean. To take a dynamic systems (CDST) perspective, we can say that in the absence of compelling circumstances, not learning is a deep 'attractor state' for Henry (de Bot et al., 2007, p.8).

Thus, as these participants attach no particular value to Korea learning in and of itself, they are motivated only if circumstantial changes in their initial conditions provide them with a new vision (or awaken a dormant one) that Korean learning can contribute to. When such circumstances arise, they may put these participants on what Muir and Dörnyei (2013) refer to as the motivational 'fast track' (p.363), but only as long as the conducive circumstances persist. When those circumstances turn against them, they may be demotivated. This aligns with the findings of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) that less-motivated learners, those lacking 'intrinsic motivation' or a 'goal to be a speaker (of the language)', may be more susceptible to demotivating experiences (p.67), a conclusion shared by Falout and Maruyama (2004) and Kikuchi (2015).

There are other possible factors to weigh here besides experiences/circumstances. Was John more naturally resilient than Henry? Did he possess a greater talent for language learning? Using only the data gathered, I cannot discount this possibility. However, putting aside the influence of social affordances, John's motivation does not seem to have been much stronger than Henry's. John has invested little effort in intensive study over the years, and when he reached a point where his preferred, social learning approach might have required supplemental study, his momentum seems to have faltered. In this way, both John and Henry are similar to Jean, whose motivation was sparked and maintained by social connections, and undermined by a break-up. They are also similar to Lisa, whose motivation picked up when she decided to stay in Korea and so began to anticipate a social future there[50], and then declined again when she found learning Korean hard and unpleasant.

One thing worth noting here is the prevalence among these four participants of social motivations. Of course, they were not *only* socially motivated, but personal interaction with friends, acquaintances, partners, and students seems to have been the predominant motivation for them. Much has been written about the motivational power of the desire for social access (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Bourdieu, 1993; Darvin and Norton, 2015), as well as the positive influence that actual contact with the L1 community can have on language and culture learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Yim & Hwang, 2018; Slagoski, 2018; Gearing & Roger, 2019). However, as multiple narratives in the present study demonstrate, FETs in Korea do not strictly need Korean for their social lives[51]. Thus, while social motivations make Korean learning personally meaningful, they are also essentially circumstantial. One must encounter people and form relationships, and those people must be Korean (or otherwise Korean speakers),

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[50] Gearing and Roger's (2019) participant Sharon's case is similar: 'her desire to fully integrate with her host nation, where she stated she would retire, was a gradual process driven by her relationships with her Korean family, communities and communities of practice' (p.130).

[51] The fact that FETs can get by socially without Korean – even, as the present study exemplifies, when they have many Korean friends – places the group in contrast with other foreign groups in Korea. For migrant spouses, for instance, Korean ability has been shown to be a significant source of social capital, necessary for community integration (see Jun & Ha, 2015). Thus, the freedom to thrive without learning the local language is a privilege for FETs. Though a social life in Korea without Korean is necessarily limited, as Lisa attests (Chapter 6, section 6.2.1.6.), these limitations are apparently often tolerable, as they do little to motivate many FETs to learn.

and the relationships must be maintained, and communication must take place in Korean. And even granting conducive social relations, if one primarily learns to talk with friends/family, one might reasonably achieve satisfaction at the level of comfortable conversation as John and Jean did. Moreover, if social motivation is primary, and English is sufficient for social purposes, it is reasonable to expect English to predominate. In the present study, Eric is a good example of this.

Thus, for all that has been claimed about socially integrative motivation, it may not amount to much for many FETs. It is perhaps telling that participants in this study who invested the most in Korean tend to describe social interaction as one motivation among several (Thomas), or as a means by which Korean was acquired more than as a goal of acquisition (Raymond and Lauren), or indeed, to hardly mention friends/partners at all in their narrative (Evelyn). Raymond is a particularly interesting case. His identity formation was aided by 'respected others who have acquired the L2 in similar circumstances and are seen to use it to good effect' (Lamb, 2012, p.1001). This somewhat undermines the proposition advanced by Ng, Wang, & Chan (2017) that 'strong social support from non-local friends may prevent integrationists from achieving long-term adaptation to the dominant culture' (p.28). Depending on the identities and values of the relevant actors, the effect may be decidedly positive, with non-local experts in the host culture able to act as a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) for newcomers to join.

Raymond's case demonstrates that participants who valued Korean highly as part of their self-creation were also influenced by circumstantial and social affordances, though in my interpretation were less reliant on, or vulnerable to them. Lauren, for instance, provides an excellent example of a learner pushing on despite circumstantial difficulties. However, it is also true that Lauren did not advance as far in her learning as Raymond, even though both were motivated in a way that made language learning a necessary *self-practice.* Why is this?

There are several possibilities to consider here. It may be that no matter how much a learner values a language, there is a level of difficulty, or cost, that will demotivate them. As I have argued, Lauren's Korean learning was highly valuable to her as an

act of self-creation, but her narrative makes plain that the cost of Korean learning for her rose in terms of the time and effort needed once she had moved to Seoul. Thus, she experienced difficulties that Raymond seems to have avoided. Meanwhile, she stated that she would have liked to continue studying Korean at university if she had had the resources, suggesting that circumstantial, demotivational factors reached a threshold for her. This interpretation gels with the argument that motivation and demotivation – or value and cost – are best understood as separate sets of factors in a person's motivational calculations (Barron & Hulleman, 2014; Kikuchi, 2015; Kim, T., 2020).

There are other possible factors that may play into Lauren's underperformance relative to Raymond. Personal aptitude is one, and another is a lack of 'expectancy'[52] (Barron and Hulleman, 2014) as Lauren doubts she will ever achieve her desired Korean level. It may also be that Lauren did not value Korean as much, or as directly as Raymond. Her *telos* as I interpret it involved development of a multilingual identity; Korean was relevant for her, but French was, too.

However, given Lauren's willingness to sacrifice time, money, and energy to learn Korean even while conscious of how difficult the language is, I believe that she valued Korean highly. She was ultimately curtailed by the rising cost of learning, but the value she attached to Korean, rooted in her self-creation ambitions, carried her further than many participants in this study even though she faced various challenges. This finding aligns with those of Kim, Kim, and Kim (2017), who identified 'resilience' as a contributory factor to language proficiency, along with motivational and demotivational factors. The present study elaborates this point, suggesting that the capacity for resilience may relate to one's identities, values, and ultimately to one's self-creation goals (i.e., one's *telos*). In this way, it broadly supports Kikuchi's (2015) conjecture that 'learners who have a clear goal or reason to study the foreign language and are therefore motivated might not perceive potential demotivators as demotivating...' (p.60). It also aligns with Gearing (2019), whose participants included those whose 'whose ability to manage situational demotivation was due to *sufficiently strong* future

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[52] Expectancy here is used to mean the perceived probability of success (see also MacIntyre, Mackinnon, and Clement [2009]).

L2 self-visions' (p.209, emphasis added). Indeed, the interpretations presented in this section offer an answer to Gearing's (2019) challenge to explain 'why some learners are more able to manage demotivating episodes' (p.219). There may be a relationship between how susceptible one's language learning motivation is to circumstantial influences (motivational and demotivational) and how much meaning/value one attaches to the language, with learners who attach more value being more independently motivated, and more resilient. This conclusion has implications for our understanding of demotivation. To date, research into demotivation has primarily focused on producing context-specific lists of demotivational factors affecting groups of learners (I elaborate this point in relation to existing literature in Chapter 8, section 8.4.3.). Given the results of the present study, a shift towards theorising demotivation/resilience in terms of an individual learner's identities and values may be profitable for future research (I make this argument in greater detail in section 8.6.1).

7.1.3. Positive and negative motivation towards a strongly desired L2-self

The third analytical conclusion of this study is that both positive and negative factors contributed to the motivation of the highest achieving participants. This suggests that negative factors such as marginalising experiences, feared selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), etc. can contribute positively to a learner's motivation, provided the learner in question is learning to achieve a 'highly valued end' (Dörnyei, Ibrahim, & Muir, 2015, p.98). To illustrate this, I present a comparison of Evelyn and Raymond.

Evelyn and Raymond were similar in that Korean learning was an integral part of their *self-creation* projects. And indeed, they both learned a lot of Korean. What is striking about them, however, is how dissimilar their narratives of Korean learning are in the details.

For Evelyn, Korean learning has been an especially Foucauldian experience. Her life has been emphatically *problematised* from early on. As a Korean adoptee, she has been subject to constant normalising judgements (Foucault, 1995) that have pushed her to transform herself into a Korean speaker. Her Korean learning has been part of a difficult, life-long negotiation between what she wants and what is wanted of her (Butler, 2004; 2009). The associated emotions have been shame, anxiety, and

frustration (as well as a 'tiny' sense of pride ultimately acquired). Moreover, on multiple occasions, Evelyn has tried to divest herself of the whole process, only to find she was not permitted to do so. She has been consistently pushed by others towards Korean on account of her identity. In this sense, what Evelyn calls 'negative motivation', Foucault would ironically call 'positive' (Foucault, 1995, p.23). The ideological forces to which Evelyn is subject are not merely oppressive – they are *productive*. They have limited her options for self-determination, but they have also provided a clear imperative to create herself in a particular way.

Raymond's case, meanwhile, is essentially different. For him, learning has been part of a life-long process of exploration. The value of Korean was not impressed upon him; rather Korean has become valuable to him as his identity has grown to embrace it. His life has also been *problematised* in that he has sought to develop himself as a teacher, and to achieve intellectual satisfaction and financial security, and because having ultimately become a Korea-focused academic he has had to acquire Korean as part of his developing understanding. However, unlike Evelyn, nobody demanded of Raymond that he transform himself in this way. His learning seems to have been self-directed, not only because he chose to learn (this could also be said of Evelyn), but because he chose *what* to learn. Curiosity has moved him. Also, to the extent that others have been involved in his learning, they have acted as resources and facilitators, not as judgmental observers. Over time, he has built an identity in relation to his Korean linguistic/cultural studies, but nevertheless, he recognises that Korea just happens to be the 'geography where (he's) at'. Korea was not inevitable for him. He chose it, and it chose him.

One implication to be taken from this contrast is that it is possible to learn a language to a high degree of proficiency whether one is positively or negatively motivated. That is, whether learning means crafting a new self with agency, or resolving issues with one's identity; whether one learns to position oneself, or to resist positioning by others (Davies & Harre, 1990; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Thompson, 2017a); whether one is free to choose a language for enjoyment (Kubota, 2011), or feels compelled to learn a certain language (Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005); whether one learns to talk with people, or to stop them from talking; indeed, whether one predominantly

expresses positive sentiments about the language learning process and the community of speakers, or not. In all these cases, extensive language learning is possible, in principle.

Of course, positive/negative dichotomies are oversimplified, and it is difficult to fit these participants into categories such as those found in Dörnyei (2005) and Thompson (2017a); *ideal* (agentic), *ought-to* (submissive), or *anti-ought-to* (resistant) language learners. For instance, Evelyn was pressured to learn by others but also by herself. She learned Korean to create a more ideal identity for herself, but in response to the values of others. Still, nobody directly forced her to learn. Also, she did not like the way others treated her, but learned Korean in line with those people's expectations – but not always, as she sometimes tried to quit. So, was her learning an idealistic choice, or an obligation? Was she an agentic, submissive, or resistant learner?

In fact, as cases like Evelyn's show, the individual and the context are complexly interrelated, and the self-creation process is a negotiation between them (Foucault, 1984; 1985; 1995; Hennig, 2010). Raymond and Evelyn demonstrate how language learning can be part of this negotiation, and that both 'positive' and 'negative' motivations can be found in individual, high-achieving language learners. Another example of this in the present study is Thomas, who tended to foreground positive motivations, but also noted that he disliked being stereotyped as an American in Korea and sought to escape that. Moreover, given that Evelyn characterised her own motivation as 'negative', it seems reasonable to argue that high achievement is possible when negative factors predominate.

It must be noted that negative attitudes towards a language and the community of speakers have been identified as demotivating factors in previous literature (Dörnyei, 1998; Kim, et al., 2017), as have negative learning experiences such as 'negative gatekeeping encounters' with native speakers (Gearing, 2019, p.214) and experiences of failure and struggle when learning (Trang and Baldauf, 2007; Barron & Hulleman, 2014). Not to suggest that Evelyn's case casts doubt on all of this – such things are surely demotivating – but Evelyn does show that a learner can persist and succeed despite such negative experiences. Evelyn demonstrated great resilience, achieving

a high level like Raymond despite facing many more potentially demotivating circumstances. How can this be?

Given all the differences between them, it is worth reflecting on what Evelyn and Raymond have in common. As I have alluded to previously, both Evelyn and Raymond had *teloi* for which Korean learning was an indispensable *self-practice*. Whether to integrate one's ethnic and linguistic identities, or to pursue an ever-greater understanding of Korean culture, the Korean language was the thing to acquire. Even Lauren, who sought to develop herself multilingually, could switch to French for the same purpose. For Evelyn (a Korean adoptee) and Raymond (a 'Koreanist') it was a different matter.

It should also be noted that while the *teloi* of Evelyn and Raymond were different in the specifics, they were both large, nebulous, and not entirely achievable projects. Consequently, Evelyn and Raymond had not only motivation but also *scope* for learning. By comparison, other participants such as Henry and John had goals that could be achieved with modest to moderate Korean ability. On the other hand, Eric arguably had a relatively large goal – to achieve fluency, even after twenty-three ambivalent years – but it was not necessarily linked to the more immediately significant aspects of his identity. He cared about being polite and respectful but assigned more value to his teacher identity when choosing his *self-practices*.

Thus, for all their differences, what Raymond and Evelyn had in common was that Korean learning was a central activity in a multilateral, long-term project of self-creation. This finding aligns with those of M. Cho (2020) that 'learners are motivated to exert effort when they believe the L2-related self is important (i.e., [it has] centrality)…' (p.2041). It appears that the relationship between Evelyn and Raymond's identities and the values (internal and external) to which they were subject created a large gap between their current selves and their desired selves and gave them the drive to close that gap. This interpretation gels with the argument found in Muir and Dörnyei (2013) that 'a learner's ideal self must be sufficiently different from a learner's present self' to 'trigger motivated action' (p.362), with the addendum that even a 'sufficiently different' ideal self may need to be 'central' for a learner to be motivating.

Also, in terms of learning outcomes, it does not seem to have mattered whether closing the gap between the current self and the desired self involved promoting something or preventing something. It has been argued that emotions and desire drive the identity formation process (see Wolff and De Costa [2017], and Motha and Lin [2014]). The present study aligns with this viewpoint, with the additional note that the relevant emotions need not be positive as long as they attach to a 'highly valued end' (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p.98) or *telos* (Foucault, 1984) to be achieved by learning.

However, the positive/negative distinction may have consequences from a motivational point of view. Evelyn did try to abandon Korean out of frustration more than once. While she went on to learn a great deal of Korean, it is realistic to imagine her giving up entirely. That is, quitting (or disidentification[53] [Steele, et al., 2002]) is not a desirable behaviour from a language pedagogy standpoint, and so the relative value of negative motivation is questionable. It is also worth noting that the negative experiences that prompted Evelyn to quit were related to the same identities and goals that fuelled her motivation. For instance, she was moved to learn by the desire to realise her assumed Korean identity, and was hurt and discouraged when people pointed out her failure to live up to that identity. Thus, it may be that the factors/experiences that will demotivate a learner will vary depending on the learner's identities and future visions in the same way that motivating factors do (I explore this point in greater detail in Chapter 8, section, 8.2.2.).

Finally, the positive/negative distinction may be of relevance in social justice terms. The fact that one learner should be subject to such agonising pressure, and another learning the same language should not – that one should be so trapped, and another so free – is troubling. Theorising this situation requires examination of values in context. In part (2) of this chapter, I give attention to some of the relevant contextual value

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[53] 'Disidentification' as I use it here is a defensive strategy that involves a change to one's identity. When one values an activity (such as learning a language) highly but one is perceived by others to be deficient at that activity due to stereotypes, one suffers emotionally. As a defence mechanism, one may cease to care about – to identify with – the activity in question. I take my understanding of this idea from the work of Steele (2010) on 'stereotype threat', particularly the paper cited above (Steele, et al., 2002).

discourses reflected in participants' narratives, and how they responded to and drew on these discourses.

7.2. The role of the discursive context

Discourses play a core role in identity formation. The collective discourses of a given context form what Foucault (2005) terms an *episteme* – a system of interrelated power and knowledge that defines the limits of the identities it is possible to claim. Thus, to understand the *mode of subjection* (Foucault, 1984) in reference to which participants have created themselves when learning Korean, it is necessary to examine the discourses at play in their narratives.

Moreover, discourse acts as a medium for identities to be assigned and performed, and identity can be the basis for the distribution of privilege, and of marginalisation (Butler, 2009; Hemmi, 2014, in Gearing and Roger, 2017, p.9). To show how the desire for advantages may or may not have played into participants' Korean learning motivation, and to make visible some of the ways that the Korean context might apportion privilege based on identity (as Appleby [2016] recommends we do), the following three subsections present some notable threads of discourse drawn from the interpretation of participants' narratives.

7.2.1. The neoliberal valuation of Korean by FETs

Neoliberalism has been called the 'central organising principle' in the language education industry (Jenks, 2019, p.518). Under this philosophy, language/culture knowledge is a commodity, the acquisition of which is more valuable or less depending on its role in economic self-development and in maximising a person's market value (Kramsch, 2014; Jenks, 2019). Since it has been argued that desire for economic capital and material resources is a potential source of language learning motivation (Darvin and Norton, 2015), it is worth revisiting participants' economic valuations of Korean learning. Although, in my interpretation, neoliberal discourses appear in all participants' narratives, there was a great deal of diversity among them.

One common sentiment was that language learning was an act of professional self-development, and that language knowledge may improve a teacher's employability and effectiveness. However, many participants ascribed this value to language learning generally rather than to Korean. For example, Lauren and Raymond both

recalled a belief that it would behove them as early-career teachers to travel and become more worldly. Meanwhile, although John was not a teacher before he left England, he nevertheless saw language learning as an act of general self-development and expressed the view that language knowledge might be a professional distinction for an FET in Korea. The specifics of a given language and culture did not apparently matter much. Rather, language/cultural knowledge were acquisitions that, in Foucault's (1995) terms, help to maximise a teacher's 'utility'. As an example, Lauren talks about wanting to learn about the world so she could prepare students for life in it.

As for the economic benefits of Korean specifically, participants offered varying perspectives. Raymond talks generally about developing himself (by learning Korean, among other things) for financial security, while Evelyn notes that her advanced bilingual ability makes her more employable as a translator. In contrast, Lisa explained her early lack of learning by pointing out that Korean is not an internationally useful language, with the comparison being French. As for Henry, he made it clear that he acquired Korean on an as-needed basis for transactional purposes. For his self-development, he prioritised his MA-TESOL over Korean learning, one of several participants in this study to do so.

In these and other examples can be seen some of the ways that participants drew on neoliberal discourses. For both Lauren and Raymond, language learning provided a direction for their ongoing professionalisation. As has been extensively outlined previously, these two pursued language and culture knowledge anthropologically. They used what they learned in their teaching, and in turn learned from their students. In this way, their teacher identities incorporated linguistic/cultural knowledge acquisition as an 'organising element' of professional practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, in Yazan, 2018, p.2). Meanwhile, Evelyn and John both characterised language knowledge as a point of professional distinction, with John contextualising this with reference to the Korean ELT market's undervaluation of teaching qualifications (also attested in Iams [2016]). A participant in the pilot study for this project expressed a similar view – his Korean learning provided symbolic capital (Kramsch, 2009), as it showed he was 'not just partying' in Korea (Gray, 2018, p.16). As for Jean, she related

her ongoing learning to a desire to keep moving forward and avoid stagnation. In this way, learning helped her fulfil the essential neoliberal requirement to always be adding value to herself (Clarke & Phelan, 2015; Rabbidge, 2020). In contrast, Lisa, Henry, and Eric all employed discourses of an economic nature to explain why, at certain times, they had *not* felt the need to acquire Korean. For his part, Eric used the phrase 'opportunity cost' to explain why he de-prioritised Korean.

The ubiquity of these discourses in the present study lends support to the view that neoliberalism is a significant force in the ELT industry, as Jenks (2019) argues it is. Furthermore, from these participants' diverse narratives, it can be argued that they associated Korean knowledge with little economic capital, overall. In contrast to Hennig's (2010) participants who had some very specific ideas about the value of German, participants in the present study most commonly describe the value of Korean in general terms of language learning as a means of ongoing self-development (Clarke & Phelan, 2015; Rabbidge, 2020). This, along with Lisa's unfavourable comparison of Korean to French, suggests that at least for these participants Korean may lack the sort of commonly recognised, indexical value that certain, more prestigious European languages may have[54]. This finding aligns with Hadid (2014), whose participants (students of Korean in Korea) mostly viewed Korean as useful within Korea only.

It is true that some participants identified benefits of Korean learning in terms of symbolic capital (Kramsch, 2009). However, not one participant in this study declared that they learned Korean with a view to earning money or getting a job or a promotion. This aligns with Gearing and Roger (2017), who suggest that Korean offers little in the way of hard capital for FETs. Conversely, a contrast can be made with another

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[54] A possibly related opinion was expressed by an FET in Gearing (2019): 'The (Korean) language does not seem beautiful. I love Spanish so much more' (p.210). One wonders, however, if unfavourable comparisons between Korean and European languages might be harder to find among FETs entering Korea in the coming years. The increasing global popularity of Korean pop culture has apparently been accompanied by an explosion of interest among students in other countries. For example, enrolment in UCLA's Korean program is reported to have increased dramatically between 2013 and 2016 (ostensibly by '53,000%'), while European language classes floundered in the same period (Watanabe, 2021).

immigrant group in Korea, foreign students in Korean universities who, according to Kim, J. (2020), see Korean ability as essential for their economic integration into Korea.

It makes sense that FETs might not economically value Korean. As has been discussed, they can often get by with English in Korea. Meanwhile, they can access jobs and improve their professional security by gaining further academic qualifications (as shown also in Gallagher [2018]), or secure their residencies in Korea, which are often tenuous (Lee, H.S., 2020; Lerner, 2020), by pursuing better visas.

Overall, it is difficult to say exactly how influential cold economic calculations were for participants' Korean learning motivation. To take a single example, Evelyn's learning seems to have been driven foremost by deeply personal, identity-related motivations, and it is possible to interpret the economic benefits she attaches to her knowledge as an *a posteriori* valuation. But, how sure can we be of this? Would she have pursued her learning if there had been absolutely no hope of money in it? Due to the deficiency of the data gathered, and/or a degree of ineffability, I cannot say for sure that even the most motivated participants in this study were not guided significantly by neoliberal values.

With that caveat, it is my interpretation that, like social capital (discussed in section 7.1.2. of this chapter), economic capital was not among the more motivating factors that sustained participants' Korean learning. Due to their positions as FETs, and perhaps to the global status of Korean, participants attributed far less economic value to Korean than many learners in Korea and elsewhere attach to English, the language of the global economic community (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Park, J.S.Y, 2009; Park, S.J. & Abelmann, 2004), or indeed to French, or German (Hennig, 2010). Neoliberal discourses certainly played a role in shaping participants' *self-practice* decisions, as is reflected in their narratives. But, to the extent that Korean learning satisfied the demand for 'relentless and never-ending self-development' (McWilliam, 2008, in Clarke & Phelan, 2015, p.261) it was often valued the same as, or less than, learning perhaps any language at all, or self-developing in other ways. Moreover, this state of affairs can be characterised as a privilege (an 'escape from' an obligation; see Minarik,

2017, p.56) for FETs, as other foreign groups in Korea may not be able to take such a light view of the language's economic role, as J. Kim (2020) shows.

Overall, in this section I have attempted to offer insight as to why economic motivations have been of such little significance in comparison to a desire for meaningful self-transformation for participants. In doing so, I submit that I have also illustrated something of broader significance for motivational research: it is necessary to take account of the context and the ideologies therein when researching motivation. That is, to understand why certain motivational factors (in this case, economic) might influence some learners and not others, a researcher can examine the discursive context and explore the ways different learners are positioned within it. I elaborate this argument in relation to the wider motivational literature in Chapter 8, section 8.4.3. Moreover, the fact that insights into neoliberalism in society could emerge from a study of language learning motivation affirms Foucault's view that self-improvement decisions are made in relation to, and therefore reflect, larger ideologies (Foucault, 1984; 1985). This suggests that language learning motivations and actions could be the object of fruitful future studies into ideologies in various contexts, particularly if those studies were to employ a Foucauldian theoretical perspective as I did in the present study (I argue this further in section 8.6.1.).

7.2.2. The complex relationship of the FET professional identity to the Korean language

As discussed previously, FETs may not strictly need to learn Korean for economic or social capital in Korea. However, given that 'language teaching is identity work' (De Costa & Norton, 2017, p.7), and that some participants described language learning as part of their professional development, we can ask what associations are made in participants' narratives between the FET professional identity and Korean language ability.

In many participants' narratives, Korean ability is construed as outright antithetical to the FET identity. The most striking example of this comes from Evelyn, the only participant to have had her FET legitimacy questioned on the basis of her ethnicity (related examples in Charles, 2019) and her Korean language, which sounded 'too

Korean'. Evelyn alone describes subjection to certain marginalisations (denied certain employment opportunities), obligations (additional work responsibilities), and even opportunities (a directorship). Thus, she presents a mirror image of Henry, who recognised that he could avoid unwanted responsibilities so long as his Korean was not better. These examples demonstrate some of the ways that Korean language ability may be related to privilege and marginalisation for FETs.

However, this is not a simple relationship, as various intersectional identities (see Collins, Bilge, & Bilge, 2016) are involved. Evelyn was also a native speaker of English, which, despite the judgments she faced, was still the basis for her employment as an FET. Meanwhile, the white participants in this study know Korean to varying degrees, but do not describe similar experiences of negative appraisal by employers. Thus, this situation represents a complex interaction between native speaker privilege (or 'native-speakerism' [Holliday, 2006a]) and the Korean ethnolinguistic identity.

Furthermore, the results of this interaction are difficult to pin down in terms of privilege and marginalisation, as the relevant identities can be sources of both (Park, G., 2015). Of course, to be denied a teaching job on the basis of ethnicity (see also Lee, T-H., 2014; Iams, 2016) is an injustice (I make an argument for abandoning such employment practices based on this thesis in Chapter 8, section 8.6.3.). However, it is also true FETs in general often end up in 'segregated job niches' (Lan, 2011, p.1688) in Asian contexts, with FETs in Korean public schools (such as Henry) subject to career limitations stemming from the perception that they cannot teach without the support of a Korean teacher (Yim & Hwang, 2018; Lee, H.S., 2020). In this sense, the Korean ethnolinguistic identity may bestow privileges unavailable to non-Korean teachers. Then again, Henry seemed happy with his situation, and even professional opportunities were at times burdensome for Evelyn.

While this is a complex situation, it does demonstrate at least that non-Korean FETs may be expected not to be able to speak Korean. It is therefore understandable that some participants' narratives include suggestions that the FET identity/position, in itself, may exempt one from learning Korean. Henry agrees that the support he received from employers/colleagues may have precluded Korean learning to a point.

John expressed sympathy with FETs who do not learn Korean, as they often find their lives conducted largely in English, a point related to Eric's claim that English speakers might learn less Korean than certain other foreign groups. As for Evelyn, she explicitly construed her move into English teaching as an attempted escape from the Korean-language social environment.

Given all this, it is unsurprising that the idea that Korean should be (more or less) excluded from FETs' classrooms was expressed by most participants. In this, Henry was unequivocal. He saw it as his job to create what might be called a 'rich target language environment' (Chaudron, 1988, p.121), and believed that students would not speak English if they knew they could speak to him in Korean. So, he did not show them the Korean that he knew, save for a few simple class management phrases. Curiously, a similar view was expressed by participants who had invested far more in learning Korean. Both Lauren and Raymond talk about the need to make English predominate in class to prevent students from falling back on Korean.

Evelyn said this also, but uniquely she lent support to her view from a racial identity perspective. As she looks Korean, she must keep speaking English in her current job, or students will respond to her as they would to a Korean professor. It is perhaps understandable that white FETs would not explicitly name their race as a reason for Korean students to speak English with them, as among FETs white is arguably the normative (Javier, 2014; Charles, 2019) and therefore unmarked (Kubota and Lin, 2006) racial identity. Yet, a clear connection can be made between what Evelyn says and what Henry says: the imperative for students to speak English comes not only from classroom rules but from a perceived ethnolinguistic distance. *Otherness* is construed as a pedagogical resource that can be used as a guarantor of student discipline[55]. The degree to which participants' views on Korean use were influenced by their employers or other factors (as opposed to being entirely their own views) is hard to discern from their narratives. However, it is true that a preference for English medium education is pervasive in Korea. For example, it is notable that the Korean government, which employs or has employed many of the participants, has enacted

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[55] A similar view was also expressed by an FET in McMillan and Rivers (2011): '…my inability to use students' L1 made them more motivated to use L2' (p.256).

education policies such as 'Teaching English through English' (Choi, 2015)[56]. In this context, it is understandable that most participants take the 'maximal position' on English use (Macaro, 2014), seeking to use it and to encourage students to use it as much as practically possible.

Despite this, there are numerous suggestions in participants' narratives that Korean knowledge is part of a complete pedagogy. Lisa makes this most explicit by pointing out that she uses Korean to manage class efficiently, and to teach without a co-teacher – a direct counterpoint to the usual perception of FETs (Lee, H.S., 2020). She also says she would need better Korean to completely fulfil the teacher's role as she sees it (to counsel students, etc.). Though Lisa was one of the more evidently pro-L1-in-the-classroom teachers, other participants such as Lauren, Evelyn, and Jean shared her view that Korean could be used with struggling lower-level students. Evelyn recalled that she used Korean in a job where fun, rather than English, was the class objective, and Thomas talked about cracking jokes with students to build rapport (reminiscent of Forman [2011]). Henry also used his Korean knowledge for rapport building, listening in on students' conversations in Korean and chiming in with English, and for class management. Meanwhile, Jean suggested that her Korean use in class provides students with a model of L2 meaning negotiation. These results align with a great deal of existing literature that supports the use of L1 by teachers, especially those working with beginning English learners (Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015), for rapport building (Hsin, 2015), classroom discipline, and time efficiency (McMillan and Rivers, 2011).

Furthermore, considering the results of the present study, I argue that the professional imperative to speak only in English and encourage students to do the same imposes limits on FETs as teachers, and arguably as people. Knowledge and use of Korean is associated in participants' narratives with easy communication with students, fun, rapport building, and effective, independent teaching. Yet, most of them use it sparingly if at all, and in some cases obfuscate the extent of their Korean knowledge.

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[56] This policy entails training Korean teachers to use only English. It does not target FETs, but I include it as evidence of the government's position. From my own experience, I can affirm that FETs are often expected (or forced) to use only English when teaching by both public and private employers.

Thus, participants have constrained their own identity, and in some cases their own philosophy, in the performance of the English monolingual identity, a membership categorisation device (Zhu Hua, 2015) that provides access to their privileged employment. Paradoxically, they thereby also 'contribute to their own subjugation' (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p.47). They may 'keep the customers (and employers) happy' (Farrell, 2011, p.59) by maximising English use (O'Reilly Hayes, 2020), but this requires them to maintain a distance from students and to impose pedagogical limits on themselves.

Of course, participants were not passive in this situation. They all made use of varying amounts of Korean for specific purposes in class. In doing so, they carefully negotiated their identities and language repertoires in pursuit of the best available position. To varying degrees, they transgressed against the imperative inherent in their employment to use only English for the sake of fulfilling their role identities as communication facilitators, entertainers, and socialisers[57]. Thus, it can be argued they benefitted from the preference for monolingual English speakers without fully subscribing to it (see also Jenks [2019]). In terms of self-creation, the learning and use of even a little Korean could give participants lives a 'special shape' (Hennig, 2010, p.308) – their effectiveness as teachers related to both monolingual *and* multilingual identities.

Overall, the present study supports the idea that there are benefits to incorporation of the students' L1 into classes. As a result, it works against the common preference for English-only education in Korea, which, as Lowe (2020) argues[58], strips people of their language autonomy, positions 'monolingual' teachers as ideal, and defines multilingual communication as a form of deficiency. The pretext for this is that English-only classes are a 'selling point' for education, and that a monolingual approach may force students to develop their English fluency (Lowe, 2020, p.129-131). However, given the results of the present study as well as numerous others (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.2.), it would arguably be more beneficial (and less dehumanising) for

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[57] I selected these three teacher role identities from a longer list in Farrell (2011).
[58] Contextual note: Lowe's (2020) work was done in Japan, not Korea. However, upon reading the relevant chapter (beginning on page 129 of his book), I am inclined to believe that the Japanese situation he describes is effectively the same as that in Korea.

teachers and students if education providers would dispense with the English-only approach and, instead, encourage teachers to make judicious use of the students' L1. Indeed, given that participants in this study are not monolingual, but are in fact all plurilingual in and out of the classroom, there is arguably something inorganic about the English-only approach, and something unsound about the policy of preferentially employing presumed monolingual English-speaking teachers (I outline implications of this point in section 8.6.3.).

As to how English-only education in Korea can be undermined in practice, I agree with Zheng's (2017) point that it is not enough to simply employ multilingual teachers. There was no obvious correlation in this study between a participants' Korean ability and their willingness to employ Korean in class as part of what might be called 'translingual practice' (Canagarajah, 2013, in Creese & Blackledge, 2015, p.21). This ambivalence may have to do with the complex position FETs occupy, as outlined above: hired for their native speaker status, but more effective as teachers for their knowledge of Korean.

However, Zheng's suggestion (2017) that teachers should engage in 'critical reflection' to undermine the 'dominant English monolingual-oriented discourse' (p.40) is, I believe, partial at most. Participants in the present study might benefit from such reflection (see section 8.6.2. for more details on this point), but changes at the level of institutional and governmental policy are also crucial. Identities such as the FET as monolingual *other* are often imposed by context (Pinner, 2018), and pedagogical practices are the outcome of a negotiation between teachers' beliefs and contextual values (De Costa & Norton, 2017). Thus, along with numerous other elements of policy in the current practice of hiring FETs in Korea (notably, the importance of nationality, race, and native-speaker status), the value and role of the Korean language for English educators and the 'Teaching English through English' policy (Choi, 2015) should be reconsidered (I present a case for this, based on the findings of the present project, in section 8.6.3.).

7.2.3. FETs' self-creation in the Korean context: Imperatives and limitations

In this final section, I discuss the wider Korean context in ways that may not relate to teaching but may have relevance for participants' Korean learning decisions. Foucault notes that disciplinary forces (as reflected in the discursive context) function both to compel/encourage identity formation and to impose limits on the identities that can be claimed (Foucault, 1995; Infinito, 2003) in order to maximise people's social value and reduce their unpredictability. So, to begin with, what external forces in Korea have compelled or encouraged participants to learn or use Korean?

The answer, for most of them, is very few. Their narratives make few references to the 'approval of others' (Hennig, 2010, p.308). One example of such a reference comes from Lisa, who pursued a better visa by completing a Korean-medium social integration program. The added security such a visa grants suggests that the Korean government approves of her Korean ability in principle. However, she was in no way obliged to enrol on the program, nor did it do much for her Korean.

For most participants learning and using Korean, external actors in Korea seem to have been either indifferent, supportive when called upon to be, or approving. Consider Henry, who received Korean e-mails from his school but was not expected to read them; or Lauren and Thomas, who were helped with learning by friends and colleagues, but were in no way compelled by them to learn; or John, who describes the tension felt by Korean cashiers upon seeing him that he was able to relieve by speaking Korean.

The point about tension among Korean cashiers is also one mentioned by Lauren and Jean. There is a suggestion here that a visible foreigner identity (presumably, white) is associated in Korea with the English language, that it may be incumbent on Koreans to speak English with foreigners[59], and that they must speak English well or face embarrassment. This is a power differential that a foreigner can address by using Korean – but this is far from an imperative. Since the pressure is on the Korean

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[59] This pressure on Koreans to speak English is also described by a participant in Gray (2017): 'I don't know, it's just a thing, like (Korean) people feel like even if they can speak Korean (when talking with foreigners), they really should be speaking English' (p.19).

interlocutor to speak English, it is only the pro-social inclination of a given English-speaking foreigner that might factor into their Korean use decisions. Thomas exemplifies a related philosophy, saying that he, and not his Korean wife, should be obliged to develop his language for the sake of their relationship[60]. Eric, too, talks about learning to show respects to Korean friends, even though he himself acknowledges they are not concerned about his Korean ability. This aligns with Gray (2018), whose participants all shared a vague belief they should learn Korean despite the absence of external pressure.

Overall, for many participants, if their lives have been *problematised* in Korea with respect to Korean, it has been due to their own values and goals. They have been largely free from pressure, and broadly at liberty to learn Korean or not to the extent that they wished. Hence, perhaps, the motivational importance of the personal meaning of Korean (detailed in section 7.1.1, and summarised in section 8.2.1.). FETs' relative exemption from learning compared to other groups (Jun & Ha, 2015; Gray, 2017b; Kim, J., 2020) may have to do with the construction of the white, western, English-speaking identity in Korea. As representatives of rich countries, white westerners in Korea are ranked highly among foreign groups (Lee, C., 2014; Kim & Kim, 2015). Moreover, the English language carries a great deal of prestige in Korea (Park, J.S.Y, 2009), hence the pressure on Koreans to speak English with foreigners, and the anxiety thereto attached (Gray, 2017b; Yim & Hwang, 2018). Thus, it is understandable that participants' engagement with Korean language and culture might be basically welcomed in Korea (a point also made by Oh & Oh [2017]), but it is not necessarily expected or demanded, especially in light of the ethnolinguistic exclusivity of the Korean identity that Watson (2012) has described (as in section 7.2.1,, examination of contextual ideologies proves fruitful for understanding motivation, here).

The exception among participants was, of course, Evelyn, who *was* under external pressure to master Korean. She could be characterised as a mirror image of the white participants, subject to the same discursive context in opposite ways due to ethnicity. However, this would be an oversimplification. As has been noted, Evelyn was not

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[60] This philosophy closely mirrors one expressed by one of Gearing's (2019) participants: while some Koreans can speak English to foreigners, 'they shouldn't have to' (p.209).

merely submissive, but negotiated her own values and those of others. Furthermore, Gray (2018) provides an example of another Korean adoptee FET who did not learn much Korean, and apparently did not feel much pressure from others to do so. Thus, while Evelyn presents an interesting example of ethnolinguistic value discourses playing a role in language learning motivation, her case must not be assumed to reflect the way things are for Korean adoptees returning to Korea. Further study on the Korean learning decisions of that group would serve to elucidate the way that its members are or are not subject to disciplinary forces in Korea.

As mentioned previously, disciplinary forces not only compel but also limit self-creation (Foucault, 1995; Infinito, 2003). And indeed, in participants' narratives there are some descriptions of value judgments that imply or impose limits on them. For example, both Raymond and Evelyn express a belief that no amount of Korean learning will enable them to be fully embraced by Korean society. This suggests a degree of ethnolinguistic exclusiveness in Korea that cannot be surmounted by Korean learning, even if one possesses the requisite *jus sanguinis*. This aligns with the aforementioned argument of Watson (2012). It also fits the experiences of Killick (1995), who found that people in Korea expected him to behave as a white westerner, and not as a Korean. Relatedly, in the present study Lauren and Thomas also note certain stereotypes that may exist about Americans in Korea: that they will behave in a certain way, and that they cannot learn Korean.

However, the discourses that have positioned participants as *others* in Korea do not seem to have had much impact on their Korean learning decisions. Rather, they seem to have been mostly at ease with being 'always the *other*' (Gray, 2017b). Raymond, for example, points out that his position as a partial outsider lends his research a valuable perspective. Indeed, apart from Evelyn, there was little evidence that participants wanted to be treated as Koreans, with Lisa in particular balking at this, as to her it would imply giving up her own way of thinking.

Meanwhile, it is true that stereotypes can play a role in L2 mastery (Paladino, et al., 2009): a person might learn a language to work against a stereotype (Thompson, 2017a; Gray, 2017b) or lose their motivation due to being subject to stereotypical

judgment (Steele, 2010). However, participants in this study mostly did not experience this. Lauren describes a stereotype of Americans' inability to learn Korean, but she does not suggest that a desire to change this view motivated her at all. Meanwhile, Thomas was content to respond to disagreeable stereotypes by choosing to socialise with people who would not stereotype him. Again, Evelyn is an exception, as a desire to stop others from judging her was a substantial factor in her motivation.

The pattern is thus consistent in the present study: white participants largely did not feel worried about being positioned as *others* in the Korean context, even though they were so positioned[61]. Those who commented on the idea of being fully embraced by Korean society judged it impossible or undesirable. Moreover, their position as native English-speaking westerners is a relatively prestigious one in Korea. They are not under substantial pressure from Koreans to learn Korean, and for them a lack of Korean does not preclude a satisfying social and professional life. They are therefore free to learn Korean as much or as little as appeals to their respective self-creation ambitions. It is only reasonable that a person would not feel an urgent need to resist such a positioning, even if it does involve certain tolerable limits and marginalisations. Thus, it is understandable that the most decisive factor in white participants' Korean learning motivation was not external pressure, but the attribution (or lack thereof) of personal value to Korean learning as part of the process of self-creation.

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[61] I do not mean to say that white FETs are unlikely ever to be bothered, or indeed motivated, by a sense of discomfort at being an *other*. I myself was motivated in part by that very discomfort (Gray, 2017a). Gearing and Roger's (2019) participants also noted that they felt a pressure to use English at work in a way that they took to be socially marginalising (p.130), and I have also had this feeling. Based on the present study, I mean only to suggest that white FETs might find social marginality in Korea quite a liveable condition (consider Henry's case). The position of a permanent outsider who need not learn Korean may be more tolerable than the position of a permanent outsider who is nonetheless pressured to learn Korean to transform themselves into an insider (i.e., Evelyn).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In this final chapter, I summarise the main conclusions of the present study in two sections. The first section relates to language learning motivation. The second relates to the context of ELT in Korea. I include a summary of the conclusions here:

Language learning motivation conclusions:

1. A desire for self-transformation can lead to persistence in language learning.
   → Learners for whom language learning, in itself, is a personally meaningful, transformative activity may be more persistent in learning than those for whom learning is a means to other ends, even if those other ends are highly valued.
   → This may be particularly true in situations where an agreeable life situation can be (at least partially) achieved without engaging in language learning.
   → Learners for whom language learning is *not* a personally meaningful activity may be more dependent on conducive circumstances to be motivated.
2. The value of a language to a learner is counterbalanced by the cost of acquiring it.
   → Learners who value a language highly may be more resilient in the face of a high cost of learning. However, there may be a degree of cost that will demotivate even a highly motivated learner.
   → There may be a relationship between the identities and goals of a learner and the sorts of cost that will demotivate them.

Korean ELT context conclusions:

1. FETs occupy a negotiated position of privilege in Korea.
   → Learning Korean can be a form of self-development for an FET, but it is unlikely to be economically necessary, and can be neglected.
   → FETs' experiences learning and using Korean in Korea may be shaped by discourses that tie ethnic and linguistic identities together.
2. Knowledge of Korean (the students' L1) is a valuable pedagogical resource for English teachers.

I describe these conclusions in more detail in this chapter. I then outline the theoretical contributions this thesis makes to the field of L2 motivation and demotivation research, as well as certain contributions for teacher educators, the English education industry, and narrative researchers. I also outline the limitations and implications of this study and suggest some directions for further research. I then close with a personal reflection.

8.1. A prelude to the presentation of conclusions

Before I launch into making claims about the present study, I offer an ongoing caveat: the ideas I describe are not necessarily generalisable. Seeing as this is a narrative study, a lack of generality is to be expected. Everyone's story is unique. But then, everyone's story also exists in relation to the stories of others, as Bruner (2004) argues. For this reason, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that the goal of narrative research can instead be something more like 'transferability' and 'verisimilitude' (p.8). Such research can provide a reader with something recognisable, and thus encourage reflection and understanding. Having read this far, I hope the reader feels that I have given them something tangible, something humanly comprehensible with the narratives I have prepared for this study.

In this final chapter, I mean to offer some 'transferable' ideas – some things that I believe are true for participants in the present study, and might be true for others, or at least provide a contrast for dissimilar cases. I hope the ideas in section 8.2. about language learning motivation will act as an illuminating comparison/contrast for anyone who is curious to know what moves the hearts and minds of language learners. I also hope that the ideas in section 8.3. about FETs in the Korean ELT context will prove interesting not only to those with an interest in Korea, but also to those interested in the global English industry and its inherent issues (see Chapter 1, section 1.3). Without further ado, here are the main conclusions of the present study.

8.2. Conclusions: Language learning motivation

8.2.1. Desire for self-transformation can lead to persistence in language learning

In promoting the theoretical framework that I used in this study (Foucault's *ethical self-formation*) for studies of language learning motivation, Clarke and Hennig (2013) write:

> (*Ethical-self formation* allows us to) capture the ways in which learning is perceived as meaningful for learners' lives… (and) focus on how learning can support learners in their self-development and the formation of their 'selves', in ways not necessarily linked to necessity, struggle and survival. (p. 79)

The implication of this statement is that personal motivations might trump social, economic, or other indirect or mercenary learning motivations in some situations. The present study confirms this. The participants in this study are FETs in South Korea, privileged as native speakers of arguably the modern world's most prestigious language. As such, they (we) are indeed a group for whom language learning is not about survival.

Consequently, motivations that may have a lot of currency for others have not necessarily amounted to much for the present study's participants. There are other, non-western groups resident in Korea for whom Korean learning may be quite beneficial, if not outright necessary, for employment (Kim, J., 2020) or social integration (Jun & Ha, 2015). However, participants in the present study do not belong to such a group. For FETs, employment, friendship, and an overall satisfying life are possible without Korean.

For this reason, as I have argued throughout the preceding chapters, it is the degree to which participants have viewed learning Korean as a central activity in their own self-creation (i.e., self-development, or identity formation) that best explains the different degrees to which they have invested in learning Korean. The most persistent learners (and indeed the highest achievers) in this study learned Korean as an act of self-creation, because for them learning the language appealed directly to salient

identities and values. This was true even in cases where learning Korean was emotionally burdensome (e.g., Evelyn) or technically difficult (e.g., Lauren).

Conversely, those participants who valued Korean more as a way to satisfy circumstantial needs were less persistent, in no small part because they could survive without the language, and so always had the option to defer learning it in favour of other priorities. When circumstances were conducive – when Korean somehow became valuable – they might learn, but only so far as circumstances required and allowed[62]. Meanwhile, those who did learn Korean as part of a self-creation project, but only as a tangential, optional, or minor part, also were not especially persistent in learning.

As I write this, I am struck by how well these conclusions align with certain historical examples of language learners. For instance, there was King William I, a French speaker who conquered England, and then tried to learn English in later life. He never succeeded, though (Huscroft, 2009). The records suggest he preferred hunting to study. On the other hand, there was Cleopatra. Her family ruled Egypt for centuries without ever learning Egyptian. Yet, she chose to master Egyptian anyway, as she fully embraced the culture and customs of her domain[63] (Schiff, 2011). I include these examples to illustrate the point I wish to make here. For people in a position of privilege – or perhaps, isolation – it is possible to live a long time surrounded by a language and yet not learn it, as it would probably offer little in the way social or economic advantage. When a person in such a situation learns the language extensively anyway, it may be because the language (and/or the learning process) holds some salient personal meaning and occupies an important position in that person's project of self-creation.

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[62] Other studies of FETs have yielded similar results, showing for example that FETs who lack ideal future self-images as Korean speakers may still learn for socially 'integrative' reasons (Gearing & Roger, 2019).

[63] I hope the reader will forgive this sudden injection of history. For context, Foucault himself was a historian whose objective was to trace the descent of ideas and values from history to modernity. Hence, my inclusion of these two famous historical figures, who would perhaps have made good participants for the present study. One can almost imagine William the Conqueror questioning the need to learn English with all his new subjects so eager to learn French.

8.2.2. The value of a language is counterbalanced by the cost of acquiring it

When Foucault wrote about *ethical self-formation*, he illustrated it with examples from the classical age: the Athenian warrior who was to have sex only as much as was considered correct in order to pursue a *telos* of self-mastery and sexual health (Foucault, 1985). Implicit in this process is the cost paid by the warrior as he refrains from doing what he would rather. It is safe to assume that not all Ancient Greeks achieved this *telos*.

Likewise, in the present study, even some participants for whom Korean learning was a central, self-creational activity were demotivated by circumstances. I have Evelyn and Lauren in mind. At different times, distressing emotional experiences and insurmountable financial and circumstantial difficulties (respectively) raised the cost of learning Korean, and so worked against the motivation of these participants, even though they saw Korean learning as central to the pursuit of their ideal goals.

As to how cost might function in relation to motivation – where the threshold might be for individual learners – the results of this study offer a few insights. First, it must be noted that Lauren and Evelyn proceeded further with their Korean in the long run than many other participants, and demonstrated a greater willingness to push through and move past their difficulties. They were more 'resilient' (Kim, et al., 2017). This may say something about the power of salient, identity-related motivation. We might compare John, who cited his job as a drain on his time that keeps him from studying, with Lauren, who quit teaching to continue studying. If we take the viewpoint of Barron and Hulleman (2014) that people make learning decisions on a cost/benefit analysis basis (p.8), we might say, simply, that learners who value the language highly will conclude it is worth continuing to learn even when the cost is quite high. However, there is a limit to the cost that can be tolerated, perhaps in all cases.

Second, it can be noted that cost (demotivation) seems to have related to participants' identities and values – to their self-creation ambitions – just as motivating factors did. It is, for instance, no doubt significant that the emotionally traumatic experiences that repeatedly led Evelyn to give up on Korean over the years were themselves related to her identity as a Korean adoptee. That is, Evelyn's motivation and demotivation hung

on the same desire for a resolution of her ethnic and linguistic identities. A rather different example is Henry, whose desire to advance himself professionally led him to prioritise his MA studies over Korean learning. At least, he cited his MA studies as a reason he had not been learning Korean. A contrasting example comes from Raymond, who was *not* apparently demotivated by the idea that he would always be on the fringes of Korean society, as the fringe position appealed to him in some ways.

This is to say that what does or does not demotivate a person might relate to that person's identities and goals, just as motivational factors do. Thus, as researchers, we might theorise experiences of demotivation (or indeed amotivation) in the same manner as motivation: by asking who the person is, what they value, and what they want to become.

8.3. Conclusions: The Korean ELT context

8.3.1. FETs occupy a negotiated position of privilege in Korea

One of my central aims in conducting this study has been to understand how individual FETs interact with the discursive context when deciding whether or not to invest in learning Korean. A detailed treatment of the context makes up part (2) of Chapter 7 (Discussion). Here, I provide a summary centred on two points supported by examples of discourses identified in participants narratives.

8.3.1.1. Learning Korean can be a form of self-development for an FET, but it is unlikely to be economically necessary, and can be neglected

Relevant discourses from participants' narratives:
- Language learning is one possible approach to general self-development.
- Language learning is an appropriate professional development option for language teachers. It may be a mark of professional distinction, particularly in an industry that underemphasises qualifications.
- While living in Korea, FETs often conduct their lives largely in English. Korean may be necessary for full independence, but an FET may be supported by Korean employers, friends, and spouses if they do not learn it.

- If one does not intend to remain in Korea, Korean may not be worth learning when compared to other, wider spread (European) languages.

- In Korea, an FET may profit more from pursuing further education in the field of TESOL than by investing in Korean. Indeed, Korean learning may offer such slim returns that it can be subordinated to any other approach to personal development, or simply neglected.

- FETs who do learn Korean might be able to access certain job opportunities, but they might also be obliged to take on additional work responsibilities.

8.3.1.2. FETs' experiences learning and using Korean in Korea may be shaped by discourses that tie racial, ethnic and linguistic identities together

Relevant discourses from participants' narratives:

- In Korea, people who appear white may be presumed to be English speakers. Furthermore, Korean people may feel obliged speak English when faced with a white person.

- Foreigners in Korea who learn Korean may demonstrate respect for the culture by doing so. They also may be able to put Korean interlocutors at ease.

- The Korean learning of white westerners in Korea may be basically welcomed, but not necessarily expected or demanded by Korean friends or employers.

- White FETs who speak Korean to any degree at all may be worthy of compliments. However, ethnically Korean FETs may be expected to speak Korean flawlessly.

- No matter how much a foreigner learns Korean, they may never be fully embraced by Korean society. This may be true even for foreigners of Korean heritage.

- To live on the fringes of Korean society may have social benefits, while 'becoming' Korean may mean giving up one's own way of thinking.

8.3.1.3. Overview

At this point, I would like to make something explicit: my inclusion of the above discourses is not intended as a valorisation of the ideas they reflect, nor is it an attempt to make general claims about the beliefs and experiences of anyone who did not participate in this study. It is an outline of the discourses in participants' narratives as I interpreted them. Moreover, this outline reflects a mix of discourses taken from all

participants, and it must not be assumed that all of them would agree with each other on all points.

That being said, my overall conclusion is that participants were operating in a context where global economic discourses and local ethnolinguistic identities shaped their self-creation process. The most prominent theme in these discourses is that FETs in Korea are privileged on account of their identities: linguistic (native English speaker), cultural/national (western), and, in relevant cases, racial/ethnic (white). Because of the capital these identities confer in Korea, FETs, particularly those who are white, may be at liberty to choose whether to learn Korean or not, and to thrive, more or less, whether they choose to or not. This privileged lack of obligation is clearly reflected in existing research on FETs (Gearing & Roger, 2018; Gearing, 2019) with Korean being characterised as 'not necessary in order to survive' (Gearing & Roger, 2018, p.9). However, this is not a straight-forward privileging. It is a negotiated position the participants occupy within the context of Korea's drive to embrace English ('English fever' [Park, J.S.Y, 2009]) and the context of value systems within and beyond Korea that serve to commodify and hierarchise languages, countries, and peoples, and to exclude certain people from certain identity positions on the basis of language and ethnicity. We might say that FETs with their temporary visas and linguistic identities are both *forced* to live on the fringe of Korean society (see also Gearing & Roger, 2019, p.130), and *allowed* to do so. The fringe comes with its own benefits, as noted by Raymond and Henry (for very different reasons) in the present study.

Negotiated as the FET position is, it is arguably quite an enviable one compared to that occupied by many other people in Korea. Participants' freedom to choose whether to learn Korean is in sharp contrast to the position of the Korean majority, who experience tremendous pressure to learn English (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.2.). It is amidst the fevered drive towards English that participants (and I) have been employed, and it is within an English-obsessed social context that we are able to get by in life largely using English (and not Korean) should we choose to. Furthermore, there is another identity-related dimension (racial/ethnic/national) to this privilege of exemption. Other studies have shown that foreigners from other (non-western) countries may indeed need to learn Korean for social access and employment

purposes (Jun & Ha, 2015; Kim, J., 2020) because they may occupy an 'inferior social position' (Shin, 2016, in Lee, 2018, p.23).[64]

All this is to say that FETs' Korean learning decisions and experiences must be understood in the context of an 'institutionalized hierarch(y) of racial and linguistic legitimacy' (Rosa & Flores, 2017) wherein a degree of Korean ethnolinguistic 'purism' (Lee, 2018, p.23) serves to keep FETs at arm's length from Korean society but positions us relatively well on account of our racial, national, and (perhaps above all) linguistic capital. Furthermore, the reality that learning Korean might add little social or economic capital to an FET in Korea emerges from a neoliberal philosophy, embraced by the Korean majority (Shin, 2016) and (at least implicitly) by many FETs, that places English higher than Korean in the 'hierarchy' (Mozenter, 2021) of languages.

8.3.2. Knowledge of Korean can be a valuable resource for English teachers

In the ELT industry, FETs/NESTs are sometimes characterised as monolinguals (Ellis, 2016) and objectified as idealised representatives of the English-speaking/western world, clearly and firmly distinguishable from the cultural majority of the country they inhabit (Rivers & Ross, 2013; Rivers, 2019; Lowe, 2020). And indeed, I set out on this study prepared, if necessary, to compare those FETs in Korea who had contrived to remain entirely untouched by Korean culture with those who had embraced it. I was prepared to meet FETs who had lived in Korea for decades without learning any Korean at all and hear their perspectives. Such FETs may exist, but none of the participants in this study qualify as such. Moreover, even the participants who valued Korean hardly at all for themselves and had learned only the basics nonetheless made use of their Korean knowledge in their English teaching.

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[64] It must be remembered that FETs are not unique in being able to live and work in a country without learning that country's predominant language. Indeed, there are many such people in the modern world (see Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017). However, it is perhaps noteworthy that FETs can live in Korea long-term and make local social connections using English. Purely for hypothetical purposes, we might imagine a speaker of Polish in Korea. If this person were to decline to learn Korean, they would likely be confining themselves to a very narrow social bubble for the duration of their residence. Unless, of course, this person chose to use English, which is rather the point.

This study affirms that Korean knowledge can be viewed as somewhat antithetical to the FET identity and position, and that FETs might explain a lack of Korean learning with reference to this identity/position. Participants in the present study demonstrated an awareness of their monolingual role, and most claimed to keep their own overt use of Korean to a minimum for the benefit of their students. This approach is common among FETs, and narrative examples can be found outside the present study; for example, O'Reilly Hayes (2020):

> I feel obligated to produce... a rich target language environment, one that does not deprive learners of valuable input in the L2. I am constantly and consistently found to be encouraging students: 'Use English! Speak in English! Class, use your English.' (p.11)

While something very like O'Reilly Hayes's perspective can be found in the present study, it is also true that there was some diversity among participants. They represented a spectrum of perspectives on using the students' L1 in class, ranging from fairly liberal (Lisa) to only-as-a-last-resort (Lauren). Yet, all participants, even those who made of point of limiting their Korean use, nonetheless did use it. They used it for class management, rapport building, to save time, or simply to understand their students.

In a paper on the complex linguistic identities of English teachers (including those designated 'native'), Ellis (2016) makes the following argument:

> Not all native speakers are monolingual—both they and so-called non-native speakers possess rich plurilingual identities grounded in experiences in classrooms and in life that mirror those of their students. These identities are currently underrepresented in the literature and undervalued in the classroom. (p.626)

Ellis argues we 'ignore (teachers' language) identities at our peril' (p.626), as they do a lot to shape pedagogical practice. In the spirit of this argument, I offer in this study several examples of teachers negotiating their linguistic identities and their pedagogies, balancing expectations (those of employers, students, and their own) in pursuit of the most effective and most human teaching approach.

It could be said that participants in this study are trying to have their cake and eat it, too[65]. FETs are teachers who benefit from hiring privileges on the understanding that they (we) are somehow advantaged as educators simply for being 'native'. The employment of FETs in Korea seems to be founded on the discursive construction of the foreigner/native English speaker. It is believed that Korean students will practice English more if they do so with a foreigner. This view is explicitly articulated or implied in the narratives of several participants. To be an outsider (an *other*) is pedagogically advantageous.

However, participants in the present study are not pure others. In fact, they walk the line between otherness and Korean-ness. They engage with the language and culture of their students strategically. This finding calls into question the practice of hiring FETs from 'inner circle countries' (Kachru, 1996) and pigeonholing them as a distinct kind of teacher, worthy of both privileged hiring and of arbitrarily limited teaching responsibilities and curtailed career advancement opportunities in Korea and elsewhere (Lan, 2011; Rivers & Ross, 2013; Lee, H.S., 2020). It also calls into question the wisdom of the strong emphasis placed on English-medium education by the Korean government (Choi, 2015). If language teaching is a process of linguistic identity negotiation, as this study suggests, then a language teacher may be more qualified by their ability to engage in this negotiation in a way that helps students to learn (see Ellis, 2016) than by the country the teacher was born in, or their race, or their presumed monolingualism.

8.4. Thesis contributions

8.4.1. Illustrative contributions for the field of language teacher education

This thesis includes several detailed narratives of in-service EFL teachers describing their careers, philosophies, and identities. Within these narratives, there are examples of teachers gaining employment, moving and living abroad, adapting culturally, interacting with students, peers and employers, and progressing through their careers. In these narratives, and the analyses thereof, particular attention is paid to the way

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[65] And of course, if this is true of them, it is also true of me.

that a teacher's identity/philosophy may relate to their backgrounds (i.e., other aspects of their identity), and how such things can influence classroom pedagogy and a teacher's own language learning and use decisions. Participants in the present study exemplify the use of identities as a 'pedagogical resource' (Morgan, 2004, in Creese & Blackledge, 2015); for instance, to organize practice, to build rapport with and to maintain distance from students, and to encourage students to speak English. Participants' narratives will therefore be of interest to those working in language teacher education, a field that has begun to see language teaching as identity work (Sarasa & Porta, 2018). As Motha, Jain, and Tecle (2012) show with their own narratives, 'identity always serves as pedagogy, whether by design or inadvertently' (p.17). I offer the narratives in the present study as further, hopefully edifying examples of this point in the EFL context.

Also, in this thesis, I attend to participants' use of Korean (their students' L1) in their English classrooms, and to the benefits and drawbacks to using it that they perceive. Thus, this thesis answers the call of Ellis (2016) to examine how English teachers come to learn and use 'other' languages. The narratives I have included represent several examples of multilingual pedagogy enacted selectively by teachers with reference to their own pedagogical principles and the expectations of students. Many participants favoured 'maximal' use of English (Macaro, 2014), even those that invested heavily in learning Korean. Others proactively used the students' L1, even if their confidence in Korean was limited. However, all participants recognised benefits to using, or at least knowing Korean. This will be of interest to academics whose work focuses on multilingual pedagogies, as it supports the argument that teachers can make use of their diverse language repertoires for a flexible pedagogy that responds to students' needs (García & Wei, 2014) even if the teachers' competence in their students' L1 is 'truncated' (Blommaert & Backus, 2011).

Finally, these narratives may be of interest to in-service FETs, and those who work with them. Such people may recognise their own experiences in this thesis. This recognition might serve as a catalyst for reflection, and ideally improved self-knowledge and understanding between FETs and others in the ELT industry.

8.4.2. Critical contributions for the English education industry

In section 4.1.6.3. of Chapter 4 (Methodology), I outlined the critical aims of this study. These included the intention to explore some aspects of the unfair distribution of privilege in the English education industry, and to undermine the dehumanising idea that FETs are monolingual and, as such, effectively interchangeable with one another (see Gallagher, 2018). I submit that I have achieved both aims with this thesis.

First, I have attended extensively to certain advantages that may come with being a white FET in Korea, not only in employment, but also in the form of a relative exemption from the obligation to learn Korean for social, professional, or economic purposes. This thesis includes the narrative of one Korean-heritage FET whose experiences offer a sharp contrast[66]. As such, it adds to the growing body of work that examines the ethnicity/nationality basis of privilege (and marginalisation) in the English education industry of Korea (e.g., Javier, 2014; Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Gray, 2018, Jenks, 2019; Charles, 2019). Many of the specific insights in the present study align with what has already been presented in other studies: for example, that white FETs are often advantaged in hiring, particularly over ethnic Koreans (Jenks, 2019), and that westerners can get by without learning local languages in Korea and elsewhere (Lan, 2011; Gearing, 2019). What is comparatively new in the present study is the examination of the complex ways that identities and values have influenced (and are reflected in) active language learning decisions and practices. For critically inclined teachers and researchers in the language education industry, this suggests two things: (1) that language learning practices may be a fruitful avenue of study in order to gain insights into larger issues; (2) that language practices can be a site for the reification or contestation of value systems. Participants in this study variously learned and used Korean as an act of resistance against undesirable identity positions (Evelyn), and for their professional independence (Lisa), or declined to learn/use it because it was outside their job description (Henry). These and other examples in this study suggest that language practices might be a good place to begin when seeking to examine and, potentially, to change an unjust situation.

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[66] It is worth reiterating at this point that I did not intend to recruit participants on the basis of ethnicity. I happened to get all white participants except one, but not intentionally.

Second, I contend that this thesis undermines the notion that FETs are necessarily monolingual. Even though the aim of this study was to gather the perspectives of FETs who had learned little Korean (as well those who had learned a lot), all participants in this study narrate ways in which they learned Korean, engaged with Korean society and culture, and made pedagogical use of their Korean knowledge. Not one of them was 'purely' monolingual, and none of them refrained entirely from using their students' L1 in their teaching. This should be of interest to anyone critical of the English-only approach to ELT, and of the 'monolingual fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992) according to which languages are best taught monolingually by 'ideal' (i.e., native) speakers. This fallacy is the philosophical foundation of native speakerism – one of our industry's most persistent injustices. If we are to move past this injustice, we must do away with the dichotomy of native and non-native. One way to go about this is to criticise the idea that 'natives' are monolingual speakers of English and demonstrate instead that all people possess diverse linguistic resources that can be employed in various ways for effective language teaching (Leung et al., 1997; Ellis, 2016). This, then, is a contribution of the present study: it further discredits the monolingual fallacy, and calls into question the rationality of employers who would choose not to hire somebody as an English teacher because, for example, they speak Korean too well (see Evelyn).

8.4.3. Theoretical contributions for the field of (de)motivation research

As described earlier in this chapter, the central theoretical contribution of this thesis is the affirmation of Clarke and Hennig's (2013) contention that it is profitable to examine language learning motivation in terms of the personal meaning that learning may have (or lack) for a learner. An identity-, meaning- and value-focused analysis proved profitable in the present study. This is not only because such an analysis helps to understand the decision making of any person who can choose for themselves whether or not to learn a language, but especially because the subjects of this thesis are so positioned that monetary and social rewards for learning are limited. This point may be important for academics studying language learning motivation to consider. Literature to date has argued that a 'robust vision' of one's future may make one a more persistent learner (Gearing, 2019, p.211), but the present research goes beyond this by suggesting what may go into making a vision robust: the personal meaning that

the language holds for the learner in a given time and place, and the contribution the language can make towards their *telos.*

Much existing motivational literature argues for the motivational value of 'vision' (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.130), and a future orientation. However, I would argue there is something lacking in the concept of a future vision presented in certain motivational literature: namely, an outline of how visions are formed and reformed in dynamic relation with the context. As the present study has shown, the 'meaning' that Korean has for participants is dependent on their identities and values *in relation to* their context – for example, Henry choosing to rely on help from his colleagues/employers, and Evelyn learning in response to the judgments of others. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) acknowledge the role of context, writing that '...(identities) are not independent of contextual and temporal variation...' (p.90), and that a 'person-in-context' view must be taken of motivation (p.74). However, the definition of 'vision' that they provide focuses largely on the individual, listing 'hopes, wishes, ...fantasies' and fears as contributors (p.80). They also describe the formation and maintenance of a vision in terms of individual psychology, e.g., 'imagery' and 'developing an action plan' (p.131-132). As to how a vision may function in context, Dörnyei and Ushioda offer certain generalities, such as that the vision should 'not clash... with the expectations of the learner's... social environment' (p.84). Yet, as I have shown in this study, the process of self-formation is highly individualistic. Participants in this study variously embraced, resisted, or ignored the expectations others had of them in making their language learning decisions.

The present study therefore contributes to the motivational field in several ways. It includes examples that affirm the broad contention that vision can be a powerful motivator, and that vision is related to identity, which is related to context. However, it goes beyond this, showing how the 'meaning' of a language for a person (and the future self-image that comes with this meaning) is a complex, variable outcome of the shifting relationship between that person's identities/values and their circumstances/experiences. Descriptions of the context or experience of learning in motivation have, to date, often been quite general ('interactions both in and out of the classroom... successful and unsuccessful experiences' [Thompson, 2017b, p.484])

and quite restricted ('the *immediate* learning environment' [Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p.86, emphasis added]). Such descriptions may be of little use for ongoing research. In recent years, motivational researchers have begun to recognise that uncountable contextual factors conspire to shape motivation. These include geographic location (Thompson, 2017b), the particular language being learned (Hennig, 2010; Thompson, 2017b; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017), identity-related social pressure (Thompson, 2017b; Gray, 2018), global and local discourses of economic value (Shin, 2016; Ushioda, 2017), macro- and micro-level sociopolitical factors (McEown, Sawaki, & Harada, 2017), and, of course, teacher/peer support and pleasant learning experiences (Huhtala, Kusiša, & Vesalainen, 2019). Even the experience of being researched has been shown to influence a learner's motivation (Lamb, 2018). All these things can be influential, as can the 'personalized reasons' (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017, p.465) and 'emotional aspects' (Huhtala, Kusiša, & Vesalainen, 2019, p.304) of individual learners.

As it happens, the narratives in the present study include examples of every one of the above factors (apart from the effects of being researched[67] [Lamb, 2018]). The most important thing to note in this study from a theoretical standpoint is that different factors have had different influences on different participants. They were all FETs in Korea, but Korean was more or less meaningful to each of them, and for different reasons. This indicates that an open theoretical perspective on motivation, one that examines the meaning/value (or lack thereof) of a language to a person *in a context* can allow for examination of the situational complexity of a person's motivational profile and their 'vision' of the future.

The examination of person-in-context motivation in this study was facilitated by a Foucauldian analytical framework. Adding to previous work using this framework (e.g., Hennig, 2010), the present study shows not only how language learning might add value to a person – to give their life a 'special shape' (Hennig, 2010, p.308) – but also how it might be judged to add little value, and how both of these things can be related, as Foucault suggests, to discursive dynamics of value and power. This study will be

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[67] Of course, participants may have been affected by this research, but only time will tell.

informative for researchers who wish to employ a Foucauldian framework to analyse both motivation and demotivation.

As to *de*motivation specifically, I attend in this thesis to the nature and role of cost in language learning motivation. The cost paid by a person when engaged in self-creation is not an explicit part of Foucault's 4-axis model, though as mentioned in section 8.2.2 of this chapter, it is implied. In this study I have shown that it can be enlightening to examine demotivating costs as a counterbalance to the value one expects to add by learning a language. This will be of interest to researchers studying demotivation, as it aligns with existing work that treats demotivation, or cost, as a distinct factor in the overall motivational tapestry (e.g., Kikuchi, 2015; Kim, T., 2020), and that characterises learning decisions in terms of cost-benefit analyses (e.g., Barron & Hulleman, 2014).

Research on demotivation to date has overwhelmingly focused on learners in language classrooms (e.g., Dörnyei, 1998), often younger learners (e.g., Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009), and often mandatory language classes (Karaca & Inan, 2020). Moreover, extant research has largely omitted identity, and has not often examined demotivation in terms of a broad, flexible notion like 'cost'. Instead, most studies have focused on testing and refining a set of 'common demotivating factors' (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009, p.57) in various formal academic contexts using quantitative methods (e.g., Kim, et al. 2017; Kang, S.G., 2019; Karaca & Inan, 2020). As Gearing (2019) points out, such prior research, which often attributes a large portion of a learner's demotivation to teachers, class materials, and test scores (e.g., Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Kang, S.G., 2019), may do little if anything to explain the (de)motivation of voluntary learners such as FETs in Korea. Gearing suggests that 'considerable practical advantage would be gained by knowing why some learners are more able to manage demotivating episodes, while for others amotivation results' (2019, p. 219). The present study offers a response to this call, providing a layer of individual explanation that is missed by larger-scale, quantitative studies.

Previous studies have commented on the role of 'internal forces' (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009, p.67) such as affect and attitude (Trang & Baldauf, 2007) in demotivation, and

the importance of one's 'resilience' in facing and overcoming demotivation (Kim, et al., 2017). The present study enriches our understanding of 'internal forces' and a person's capacity for resilience by showing how these things relate to an individual's identities, values and self-creational ambitions. Thus, it provides insights for the field of demotivational research, and suggests profitable directions for future, qualitative study of demotivation and identity.

8.4.4. Methodological contributions for narrative research

Narrative data collection in the present study took place over two rounds: (1) writings and (2) interviews. The interview schedules were developed from initial analysis of the written narratives. Interview questions were appended to direct quotes, which I read out in the interviews before asking each question. Furthermore, to the greatest possible extent, I waited for an opportune moment to pose a question rather than asking the questions in a set order. I believe this approach helped to ensure that my research interests always related to what participants had to say, rather than crowding out their perspectives. Furthermore, participants had two chances to respond to my position and my interpretations – once when they wrote their own narratives having read my own, and again in the interviews when I demonstrated my interpretations in the process of asking questions based on their writings. Overall, I found this approach to be relatively organic and transparent. Therefore, I recommend it for narrative researchers.

Also, data analysis in the present study involved a novel tool: a chronology template that organised data not only in temporal order but also in terms of cause-effect relationships. Such a template may be useful for narrative researchers, as relationships between points in the data across time and space can be made easily visible. An example chronology and a description of the process of chronology generation are included in section 5.2.2. of Chapter 5 (Data analysis). Furthermore, the analytical stage that followed the chronologies, whereby the data was distributed across the four axes of Foucault's framework of *ethical self-formation*, may also be considered a contribution, as it represents an accessible approach for future researchers to employ the same framework. The approach in question is outlined and exemplified in section 5.2.5. of Chapter 5.

Finally, based on my experience of transcribing interviews, I would like to suggest that the voice-to-text function of an online Google document is an excellent, time efficient method – substantially quicker and less stressful than keyboard typing, and more accurate than might be imagined.

8.5. Limitations of the present study

There are limits to this study that are self-evident. For instance, the sample size is small. Also, because the data collected was narrative, it is necessarily a study of participants' narrated experiences, and not the experiences themselves. However, I would like to refrain from suggesting that other researchers conduct a similar study to this but with a larger sample and a quantitative methodology. As I outlined in the Methodology chapter, identity and experience are narrated things. Humans live narrated lives. Thus, the present study is a study of human experience in a natural form, albeit curated and represented for readers by me. The realities represented are subjective rather than objective, and individual-specific – but it is participants' subjective understandings that inform and valorise their language learning decisions.

Having said this, there are certain changes/additions that might have enhanced this study.

- Though the narrative data I gathered represented years (even decades) of experience, it was collected in two rounds that occurred less than a year apart. If data collection were conducted over the course of several years, beginning early in an FETs' career, it might better capture the ways that their identities and positions change over time.

- One area that was perhaps underexplored in the present study was cognitive/affective differences between participants. This study was based on what participants chose to narrate, and a minority of participants described mental and emotional struggles as a factor in their Korean learning decisions and experiences. Such psychological factors have been identified in previous

studies as relevant to a learner's resilience against demotivation (Kim, et al., 2017). More time spent questioning participants about these things might have yielded information that would clarify the influence of such internal experiences on participants' cost-benefit analyses re. Korean learning. In retrospect, I could have included certain, focused questions in my interviews: e.g., do you believe it is possible for you to master Korean (and why, why not)? Would you say learning Korean has been easy or difficult for you? Would you have invested more in learning Korean if it were easier to learn? A smaller sample size might also have facilitated a closer examination of individual factors.

- Intentionally sampling participants for a greater 'range' of ethnic/racial identities might have been profitable. I have said a lot about white FETs in this study, but that is principally because most of the participants in this study have been white, not because I have many narratives from FETs of other races to offer, except of course for Evelyn's. I am left wondering how FETs of other races approach the Korean language. No studies that I know of have explored this in depth[68], and if the sample of the present study had been more diverse, it might have been possible to separate out the influences of the general FET or western identity from those of the white identity more clearly.

8.5.1. The lack of final approval from participants

A noteworthy limitation of the present study is that after the second round of data collection, I did not give participants the opportunity to review the final analysis or the restoried versions of their narratives before the thesis was completed. Consequently, the final conclusions largely depend on my own analysis and are presented from my perspective only. This issue might have been mitigated if I had requested that participants review and respond to the final narratives as I prepared them.

When I was weighing the possibility of making such a request, I was swayed against doing so by certain lines of thought and prior experiences. I recalled writing my MA thesis, at the end of which I had sought participants final review of their data as I had

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[68] However, it is touched upon in the pilot study (Gray, 2018).

analysed it. In that case, few responded to the request, and those that did stated that they had nothing to add and no revisions to suggest. Having had that experience, I was aware of the possibility that participants' responses to my review request might add little to my thesis besides giving me the ability to declare that they had either agreed with my findings or declined to comment. Of course, participants might also have disagreed with my analysis. However, I reasoned that if my analytical process was thorough and transparent then the results should, in principle, stand up to scrutiny without necessarily being dependent on the participants' approval for validity.

I was also conscious of the possibility that participants, if asked, might venture to add information not included in the narratives I had collected. This would then be a third round of data collection – potentially a fruitful additional round – but I was wary of seeking to collect more data. In the present study, I have treated a narrative not as the story of participants' lives itself, but rather as a situated instance of them telling their story (a constructivist ontological position [Ritchie, et al., 2013, in Mann 2016]). I recognised that it would always be possible to collect further rounds of data, not least because participants' identities, values and contexts would shift over time, and I ultimately felt it would be reasonable to limit the contents of the narratives in the present study to the data collected over two rounds. Those rounds had given me the opportunity to collect substantial details of participants' experiences, and, in the second round, to engage in dialogue with them, to make plain my understandings of their narratives from the first round, and to invite responses, clarification and elaboration. A third round, I believed, would merely be extending this process to include another instance of dialogic narration, and would therefore be more suitable as the basis for a follow-up study rather than an extension of this one.

Having completed this thesis, I now recognise several flaws in my thinking. For example, I neglected the possibility that I had made some outright mistakes in my construction of participants' narratives. I endeavoured to be rigorous in my chronologising, and to ensure the narratives in this thesis reflected the data gathered, but I am certainly capable of error, and it would have been worthwhile to give participants the opportunity to point out any mistakes. Also, though I doubted the necessity of receiving participants' (dis)agreement in response to my analysis, giving

them the chance to comment would, at the very least, have provided a place for their voices in the final analysis. Because of the decision I made, this project, which was dialogic through the data collection rounds, concludes in a monologic fashion with only my voice. I have, in a sense, laid claim to participants' stories. This is an ethical issue in my chosen approach that I did not fully appreciate until the thesis was already complete.

There is a further ethical issue to account for. As I had informed participants that they could ask for data to be withdrawn within three weeks of providing it, and none asked for this, I assumed I was ethically justified in using the data I had to produce the narratives in this thesis. Moreover, I exercised discretion over what details to include, sought to ensure participants' anonymity, etc. (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.7.), and so I felt confident that no harm would come to them from the inclusion of their narratives in this thesis. However, in retrospect, I denied them a final opportunity to assess the potential harm for themselves, because I did not provide them with the finished versions. Upon viewing the narrative I prepared, participants might have asked for parts to be withdrawn or further anonymised. In denying them the chance to ask for this, I have asserted authority to share their stories in a form I have created without explicit approval of that form. Consequently, the odds are that much greater that this thesis contains details that participants would rather not be shared or represents those details in a way participants would find objectionable.

In light of all this, if I were to conduct this study again, I would invite participants to review the final analysis/narratives. Whether or not this would lead to any revisions, it would be a step towards greater transparency, an extension of this study's dialogic dimension to the very end of the research process, and an additional safeguard against harm to participants.

8.6. Implications and future directions

8.6.1. For researchers/academics interested in language learning (de)motivation

One implication of this study is that researchers studying language learning motivation may do well to examine how the identities and values of individual learners and the

values of their context interact to shape motivation. This is especially true for researchers with critical intentions.

In the present study, I have shown how language learning was (or was not) seen by participants as a means to develop themselves in deeply personal, individual ways. Moreover, I have argued that personal meaning was the most consequential motivator for participants because they happened to be situated in a context that offered little in the way of social or economic imperatives to learn. To understand the motivation of learners such as them, it is necessary to study their identities, and how these identities cause them to 'respond in a myriad of ways' (Chong, Renandya, & Ng, 2019) to motivational stimulus. It has been noted elsewhere that people 'differ in how they can generate a successful possible self' (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 34), but such an insight is of limited use to language teachers and researchers unless we can say *why* people differ. As the present study shows, one such *why* is a person's self-creation ambitions. Thus, we need a framework that helps us examine how they construct their vision of the future; how their vision is built on their identity and in relation to their values and the values of their context.

As we conduct further motivational research, we also need to keep in mind that the individual relates to and interacts with their context (their experiences, circumstances) in producing their ambitions for the future. Many studies, particularly in demotivation, have explicitly separated 'internal and external' factors. Consider the following quote from Karaca and Inan (2020) summarising the results of their recent survey study of more than 500 EFL writing students in Turkey: 'Overall... in this study, *the external (demotivational) factors were more prominent compared to the internal ones'* (p.13, emphasis added).

What does this insight bring to us? While the study itself may be valid in its own terms, it leaves a lot of questions. Take the factor the authors named at the 'most demotivating': 'writing skill is not given importance in national examinations in Turkey' (p.10). Is this really an external demotivator? Surely this result suggests *a lack of internal motivation*. And what does this result say about the 'value' of English writing in Turkey? And were there students who declared the exam contents irrelevant to their

motivation? And if there were, what distinguishes them from the majority? My point here is that if we wish to understand (de)motivation and not merely describe its averages, we must do person-in-context research. Detailed examination of an individual learner's negotiated self-creation process in context has the potential to tell us *why* a given learn might or might not be 'future-oriented' (Dörnyei, Henry, & Muir, 2016, p.29) with respect to learning a certain language.

Therefore, in response to Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2011) observation that 'developing a practical strategy of enquiry for a person-in-context relational approach remains a key challenge...' (p.78), I offer the present study, a narrative research project employing Foucault's framework of *ethical self-formation*, which focuses attention specifically on people shaping themselves in relation to their context. As a framework, *ethical self-formation* is wide open, suitable for analysis of any sorts of identities and contextual rules and values that may factor into motivation.

Furthermore, this framework has a lot of potential as a facilitator of critical analysis of language learning/use in a social context. In the present study, the framework was particularly comfortable to apply to Evelyn's data, because her own learning was so influenced by what Foucault would call 'disciplinary forces' (Foucault, 1995). The relative absence of such forces from the narratives of others led me to conclude they had been at liberty to learn or not as they wished. Thus, this framework may be suitable for considering people whose identities make them subject to imperatives to learn, and those who are not subject in this way. Recognising the distinction between these two groups may be one way to get a look at how advantages and disadvantages are apportioned based on identity.

Of course, it must be noted that Foucault's notion of *ethical self-formation* assumes a certain amount of agency. As Foucault points out, slaves cannot do self-formation because they are not invited to grow towards a *telos*; they are merely forced to work. On the other hand, modern language learners are all somewhat agentic – even children in classrooms can choose to defy their teachers. It would therefore be highly interesting to explore how language learners in mandatory contexts might also be engaged in self-formation in their classrooms (whether by learning the language or

not). To my knowledge, such studies have never been done. If someone were to conduct such a study – perhaps by collecting the narratives of younger learners in the style of the present study – it may reveal how younger learners create themselves in response/reaction to the demands of their context. This revelation, in turn, may be informative about the effect that the modern education system as a disciplinary force (Foucault 1995) has on young learners[69].

The final recommendation I make is for further exploration of the role of cost in language learning (de)motivation. In this thesis, I have argued that even a high personal valuation of a language may not be enough to overcome a certain volume of cost, or certain sorts of cost, notably when the costs themselves relate to a learner's identity. This could be researched in a more detail to determine the sorts of cost that are most demotivating for different learners. If value and cost (motivation and demotivation) are distinct sets of factors that make up a person's motivational profile, as has been argued elsewhere (see Barron & Hulleman, 2014; Kikuchi, 2015, Kim, T-Y., 2020), research into cost may be crucial for our developing understanding of motivation. Moreover, I believe further qualitative study of cost/demotivation is warranted, as are studies that examine resilience against demotivating experiences in relation to identity. Such studies are currently very much the minority of demotivational research, yet as I have shown with this study, detailed examination of individual learner's identities and values – or cost/benefit analyses – may help to explain why it is that some learners are more persistent than others in learning despite challenges.

Qualitative, identity-focused demotivation research might even be conducted in young learners' mandatory language classrooms. As Kang (2019) points out, large sample-size research 'may not be able to provide a specific solution for relieving demotivation from a particular class' (p.24). In-depth study of individual learners has perhaps greater potential to equip teachers with an understanding of how demotivation works at the student/classroom level. Thus, I recommend it for classroom contexts. I also recommend this sort of research for learners similar to the participants in this study:

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[69] A caveat: It seems unlikely that students would engage in conscious self-formation before a certain age, and so I would recommend studies be conducted with students in mid- to late adolescence.

adults making voluntary decisions about language learning. Though the relationship between student (de)motivation and teacher factors – i.e., their pedagogies (Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2018) and their own level of motivation (Lamb, 2017) – has been examined, it is a simple fact that not all learners have teachers. Further study of voluntary learners in various contexts may help us broaden and deepen our understanding of (de)motivation, and potentially the identities and values that relate to it, as the present study has for FETs in Korea.

8.6.2. For language teachers and teacher trainers/educators

An implication of this study is that a language teacher's multilingual competencies can be considered a potentially useful pedagogical resource. As such, this study offers support for the trend in teacher education towards a focus on teacher identity.

The narratives in this study include a variety of perspectives on how the students' L1 should or should not be used, as well as a wide range of benefits that come from knowing it and using it judiciously. This suggests a direction for teacher training. Pre-service teachers might be encouraged to make judicious use of their language resources and those of students in their practicum, and to explore the ways in which their own philosophies of language use may or may not contribute to desirable outcomes in the classroom. Furthermore, the present study includes accounts of teachers negotiating their positions as *others*[70] with students, and existing research shows that a teacher can use identity strategically to, for example, counteract students' stereotypical views (Morgan, 2004; Charles, 2019). Thus, teachers could be encouraged to explore how their various identities (not just linguistic) may function, or be made to function, in their teaching. The end goal of such training is articulated by Tanghe (2016): 'to prepare teachers to teach in classrooms that not only tolerate, but genuinely value, discussions of race, where people can share personal backgrounds and histories with pride, where diversity truly is celebrated' (p.214).

That said, this study also provides examples of language teachers negotiating their own identities and language competencies with the expectations of their students and

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[70] I have Henry and Evelyn in mind, but this could be said of most if not all participants.

employers. The reality that teachers do not enact pedagogy in isolation is something that should be covered in the education of language teachers if it is not already being covered. The fact that a teacher may be expected to use certain languages and not others, and the fact that teachers may be subject to identity-related judgments by employers and students should be conveyed to teachers early, especially to those who may travel to teach abroad. Doing this may help to mitigate 'praxis shock' (Farrell, 2016), the emotional strain new teachers experience when they encounter unanticipated and undesired expectations and pressures.

Furthermore, there is the question of what to do about the privileging of FETs in Korea, as described in the present study. Academics have argued that phenomena like native speaker privilege, language hierarchies, and raciolinguistic biases are the consequence of 'long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism' (Maldonado-Torres, 2010, p.97), and that teachers are complicit in the maintenance of these patterns when they uncritically accept FET jobs and teach English (Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Mozenter, 2021). This would suggest that FETs can play a role in undermining the systems of unfairness we participate in. Then again, Freire (1970) and those that came after him (notably Holliday [2006b] and Kumaravadivelu, [2016]) have contended that it is not within the power of privileged people to undo unfairness – only the marginalised can by refusing to legitimise unfair systems. Moreover, the current ELT industry in Korea is both a product and a source of neoliberal ideology (Shin, 2016). Against such a force, what can an FET do to 'unsettl(e) the terms of race and language as part of broader efforts toward decolonization and the eradication of white supremacy' (Rosa & Flores, 2017)?

Given what I have found in the present study, I recommend that FETs, such as myself, engage in critical reflection on their own linguistic beliefs and practices, and make changes to these as may be necessary, perhaps in the direction of a less hierarchical, more 'translingual' practice (Creese & Blackledge, 2015) that respects and embraces Korean and other language resources as part of our students' identity and our own as teachers. When we make decisions about learning Korean, using Korean, and (dis)allowing Korean in class, we are participating in a system with which, in many ways, we should not be comfortable. As individuals, we may be powerless to change

the overall system. Indeed, the ELT industry has failed to resolve native speakerism despite decades of grassroots effort (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). However, for those of us (such as myself) who conceive of our industry as a colonialist system, we at least have the opportunity and the responsibility to decide what stance we wish to adopt, and whether we wish things to remain as they are. As shown in this study, language learning and teaching practices reflect and are shaped by the value systems of the context – thus, language practices may be one way for us to uphold or disrupt those systems.

Finally, there is the question of what the present study's discussion of motivation might mean for practical classroom language teaching. Participants in this study learned in classrooms at times, but this study is focused foremost on long-term motivation in and out of classes. That said, given the potential significance of personal meaning to language learning motivation as illustrated in this study, I can suggest that language teachers strive to allow students to make meaningful connections between their identities, their hopes and dreams, and the language they are learning. This might involve strategies to encourage students to recognize themselves in the learning material (Higgins, 2015), such as by frequently asking them to draw connections between the materials and their own prior experiences and beliefs (Gold, 2021) or by encouraging them to visualise their future with the language in detail (Morel, 2019). The present study does not confirm that such strategies will work. However, the findings of this study do demonstrate that circumstances and experiences can lend meaning to a language for a learner where meaning was previously lacking. So, it may be worth the effort for teachers to encourage students to foster their own meanings in language classes.

8.6.3. For employers of FETs, including the Korean government

Presently in Korea, the government, universities, and private English education all engage in hiring FETs from a narrow range of countries, and of promoting English-

medium and often English-only teaching approaches[71]. An implication of this study is that these practices should be revisited and revised.

This study provides two compelling reasons to revisit these things. The first is the ethical argument for fairer employment practices – so humanly self-evident that it hardly needs to be stated. The complicated experiences of Evelyn in the present study illustrate the racialised approach to hiring taken by some employers in Korea. It is neither reasonable nor moral to judge someone's worthiness for employment or professional advancement on the basis of their apparent ethnicity. I hold no hope at all that profit-minded private education providers will respond to an ethical appeal. However, at least the Korean government and universities in Korea, dedicated as they claim to be to human rights and truth (respectively), must ensure that no racial judgments are allowed to influence their teacher hiring practices. An essential step in this process is to do away with the label of 'native speaker' as a standard for employment, as it is precisely this label that justifies discrimination of the sort that Evelyn experienced. The idea that the Korean identity is dependent on blood and that it disqualifies a person as a native English speaker is not something I can blithely suggest be discarded. However, the Korean government can certainly begin by resetting the standards for language teacher visas so that they are not dependent on nationality.

As I have said, the above is the ethical argument. Hiring on the basis of ethnicity, race, and nationality is morally outrageous. However, the present study offers another reason to reconsider such hiring practices: Korean employers may not be getting what they think they are getting when they hire 'native' teachers. Far from being ideal, monolinguistic and monocultural foreigners, the FETs in the present study are culturally and linguistically complex human beings, negotiating their lives and their pedagogies in another country. Moreover, as all of them made clear, judicious use of the students' L1 carries numerous pedagogical benefits. Indeed, even if one refrains from using Korean as much as possible, it can still be advantageous to know it.

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[71] For reference: English-only instruction at universities (Kang, H.S., 2012; Mani & Trines, 2018; Kim, J., 2020); the government's nationality-based hiring policy (Ministry of Justice, Korea Immigration Service, 2017) and 'teaching English through English' policy (Choi, 2015); private, English-medium schools (Lee, C., 2018; Mani & Trines, 2018).

Thus, based on the present study, I assert that the Korean government and other employers should move away from promoting monolingual teaching towards a more realistic, more humane, plurilingual philosophy – an 'optimal' position that sees Korean as a useful pedagogical resource (Macaro, 2014). A growing body of research in Korea and elsewhere shows English teaching approaches that include some use of the students' L1 are often favoured by students (Macaro & Lee, 2013; Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2015; Song & Lee, 2019) and by teachers (Inal & Turhanlı, 2019); that the pressure to speak only English may contribute to stress (Lee & Gray, 2019) and even suicide among Korean students (Kang, H.S., 2012); that teachers and students can and do use the L1 effectively in English classes (Chu, 2019; Lee & Gray, 2019; Song & Lee, 2019); and that judicious L1 use may lead to better learning outcomes than an English-only approach (Lee & Macaro, 2013; Song & Lee, 2019).

Add to all this the present study, which casts doubt on the supposed monolingualism of FETs and illustrates numerous pedagogical benefits to FETs' Korean knowledge/use, and the practice in Korea of hiring only native teachers (NESTs) from a handful of countries and obliging them teach exclusively in English is difficult to justify. One remaining case to be made for this practice might be the idea that Korean students (customers) expect or demand teachers who are *others;* representatives of western culture whose very identities force students to speak English (a view found in the present study) and promote a positive inclination towards Anglophone culture (as argued by Lerner [2020]). This case may not be without merit. After all, students learn different things from different teachers. However, research on student attitudes towards native and non-native teachers has produced mixed results (e.g., Mahboob, 2004), with some studies showing a preference for 'native speakers' (Timmis, 2002, Rivers & Ross, 2013), and others finding no significant difference in how students perceive these teachers (Aslan & Thompson, 2016; Wang & Fang, 2020). Given this ambiguity, it is fair to argue that 'NESTs cannot be deified merely due to their native-speaker identity' (Wang & Fang, 2020, p.1).

In closing this argument, I must point out that there are already numerous non-white FETs working in Korea whose stories can be found in the literature (see Javier, 2014; Gray, 2018; Charles, 2019). There are also English teachers from countries such as

the Philippines, Nigeria and elsewhere working in Korea, with visas and without[72]. And this is to say nothing of the countless Korean teachers of English[73]. Diversity in Korean English teaching is already a reality to an extent. It now falls to the government and to employers to undo exclusionary policies and practices founded on dubious notions of nativeness. Since the ethnic makeup of the student body in Korea has diversified enormously in recent years, and the Korean education system has struggled to produce a curriculum that reconciles multiculturalism with the Korean ethnolinguistic identity (Tanghe, 2016), employing teachers from a range of backgrounds with diverse linguistic repertoires – including Korean – would be a step in the right direction.

8.7. Personal reflection

Conducting this research has given me fresh perspective on my own Korean learning experiences and led me to broaden my view of FETs who do not invest in learning Korean. A younger version of me might have judged such FETs harshly on the belief that not learning is disrespectful, and that it established a standard of FETs' linguistic ignorance in the minds of Koreans. Now, having spoken with the participants in this study and listened as they explained how and why their valuations of Korean varied, I am more inclined to be magnanimous.

I am aware that many FETs, including Lisa, Lauren, and Evelyn (and myself), have at times found learning Korean to be a painful process. It would please me if these FETs were to read this thesis. I hope they would note, among other things, that the kind of motivation that can drive an FET to mastery of Korean is rare and individual-specific (e.g., Raymond), that even near-native proficiency does not guarantee unconditional social acceptance in Korea (e.g., Evelyn), that not everyone's circumstances are conducive to motivation (e.g., Henry), that it is possible to feel dissatisfied even after much learning progress (e.g., Lauren), and that learning more than one immediately needs is difficult (e.g., John), especially if one does not attach much value to the

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[72] Here I speak from my own observations.
[73] For context: my own partner is a Korean teacher of English, who even with a PhD would be ineligible for my current job (teaching English conversation classes in a Korean university) – a job which, thanks to current hiring practices, I got with only an M.A.

language itself (e.g., Lisa). If insights such as these inspire reflection and encourage understanding among FETs, I will be happy to have made a difference for my group.

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Appendix A: Notice of ethical approval for research

ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds

6 August 2021

Dear Stewart

Title of study:	**A narrative study on the experiences and perspectives of 'foreign English teachers' in South Korea making decisions about learning Korean**
Ethics reference:	**AREA 16-176**

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and following receipt of your response to the Committee's initial comments, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
AREA 16-176 Ethical review application form (Stewart Gray).doc	1	27/06/17
AREA 16-176 Participant information letter and consent form (Stewart Gray).doc	1	27/06/17
AREA 16-176 1. Stewart Gray - Response to ethics committee.docx	1	22/09/17
AREA 16-176 2. Revised ethical review form.doc	1	22/09/17
AREA 16-176 3. Revised participant information letter and consent form.doc	1	22/09/17

Committee members made the following comments about your application:

- Thank you for your detailed responses and for approaching this in such a constructive manner. The committee happy for this to be approved. We would just suggest that you ensure that you keeps the coding file/ details of names and contacts details to pseudonyms in a separate password protected file in a different folder to any anonymise data.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the information in your ethics application as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation and other documents relating to the study, including any risk assessments. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie
Senior Research Ethics Administrator, the Secretariat
On behalf of Dr Kahryn Hughes, Chair, AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Participant information letter

Participant Information Letter

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. In it, I'd like to explain my research project to you so that you're able to decide whether or not you'd like to participate.

Who are you? My name is Stewart Gray, I'm a 29-year-old British man, and I've been teaching English in Korea for 7 years. I'm teaching at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and I'm a PhD (Education) student at the University of Leeds. I used to self-study Korean a lot, but no longer do.

What is this research and why are you doing it? This research is all about foreign English teachers in Korea, and why it is that we choose to learn Korean, or not to. By gathering stories from people such as yourself, I'm hoping to answer this question in depth. Partly, I'm doing this because I enjoy hearing teachers tell their stories, and I wish to understand how those stories relate (or don't) to each other and to my own. More broadly, I'm hoping to explore the language learning beliefs and practices of English teachers and what shapes these.

What does participation involve? I'm planning to gather stories over three rounds. This first round is written – I'll send you a narrative of my own experiences, and ask you to write one for yourself and send it to me. The second round will be 1-to-1, in-person interviews – I'll travel to meet you in your local area at your convenience, and discuss the narratives you wrote in-depth. The third round will be group interviews – Group discussion will allow us to see how our experiences and perspectives relate/compare to those of others. These three rounds will be spread out over about a year, and I estimate your total time commitment to be 4-10 hours.

Are there any risks and benefits to participation I should be aware of? In terms of benefits, my hope is that everyone involved will have the chance to reflect on and understand their own experiences, and to share those experiences with the wider world. One potential risk is that discussion in the group interviews could lead to conflict where people disagree – I will be designing the interviews carefully to avoid such an event.

Will anyone know that the stories I provide came from me? Nobody will know you are participating. I will use a pseudonym for you in all the data that I store or share with anyone (If you wish, I will use your pseudonym in the group interviews, also). Moreover, I won't share information such as your workplace or city of residence with anyone.

How are you planning to store and use what I tell you? Everything you share with me with be stored on password protected computers and secure cloud storage services. University of Leeds auditors and my research project supervisors may look over the data, but they won't see any of your identifying information. I plan to use the data you give me in published research papers and academic conference

presentations – you'll be anonymous the whole time. Also, I'm receiving no funding from any organizations for this research, so nobody will be using your data but me.

Can I withdraw from participation after I've started if I choose to? Absolutely. If you decide you no longer want to take part, you can withdraw at any point during the research process, and you don't have to give a reason. As to the data you provide, you have the right to see what I have gathered should you wish to. You also have the right to withdraw consent for particular data to be included in the project for up to three weeks after the date you provided it.

Please let me know if you've any further questions. Feel free to call me (010-6285-2199) or e-mail me (ec_391@hotmail.com) – I'll be happy to answer any questions at all. Thanks again, and all the best. --**Stewart Gray**

Appendix C: Consent form

Consent to take part in a narrative study on the experiences and perspectives of foreign English teachers in South Korea making decisions about learning Korean

	Add your initials next to the statements you agree with
I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information letter explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I agree to take part in the above research project.	
So long as data collected from me is anonymised, I agree for it to be stored and disseminated through conference presentations and published research articles, as described in the letter.	
I agree to inform the lead researcher should my contact details change during the project and, if necessary, afterwards.	
I understand that the anonymised data collected during the study may be looked at by auditors from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to this data.	
I understand that I may withdraw from participation at any time, and that I may withdraw my consent for data gathered from me to be used in this project for up to three weeks after the date on which I provided it, and that I am under no obligation to give a reason should I choose to do this.	

Name of participant	
Participant's e-mail	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of researcher	Stewart Gray
Signature	
Date	2017.12.07

Appendix D: Example narrative

My experiences with the Korean language

I come from Newcastle in the north of England, and growing up I was always interested in foreign languages. I enjoyed studying them, and I learned them fairly easily, I thought. Growing up in Newcastle, it seemed to me that people mostly could only speak English. Because of this being a bit multilingual always made me feel confident in myself.

I took Spanish all through school and university, but when I graduated I felt I wasn't good enough for my own satisfaction. I was hungry for the chance to go and live in another country so I could really master a language, maybe. It didn't matter much at the time exactly which country I would go to. That was the reason I chose to come to Korea at first - That and the fact that getting a teaching job here when I was 22 and had no experience was, in my case at least, quite easy. I applied online and was quickly hired to come and teach at a kindergarten-elementary hagwon, to my surprise, without even an interview per se.

I didn't really study Korean during my first year in Korea. My first experiences with the language were all connected to the students I was teaching: Kindergarteners, mostly. They taught me a lot of basic phrases just by saying them to me often. 'I'm finished,' 'I'm hungry,' that sort of thing. In the back of my mind at that point, I was still wondering whether I would stay in Korea long-term, which held me back from properly studying, but by the second year I felt I really needed to invest myself. At the time, the idea of living long-term in a country without learning the language made me quite anxious, and I wanted desperately to learn it.

So, for about three years, I kept a notebook in which I would write words I found in street signs and then memorise them. I would push my colleagues at work to speak Korean rather than English with me. I self-studied through a few thick grammar books, and I made a point of using new grammar in conversation. Eventually, I took to watching short comedy clips in Korean on YouTube, which sharpened my listening ability tremendously. I was even reading the news in Korean at one point – that was about my peak.

Then, after I passed the TOPIK test at level 6, I relaxed out of these habits and stopped studying completely. That was about 2 years back, and my Korean isn't too bad these days. I use it for all my business, shopping, banking, talking to students (when needed), and

occasionally with friends. Mostly, my friends these days are foreign and/or speak English, so I don't use Korean with them often.

Thinking back on my Korean learning over those years, I'm surprised by how much of it was driven by conflict. From the very start and up to the present day, I've always felt a resistance from Koreans. They complimented my Korean back when I was just getting started, which felt nice, but they haven't ever stopped complimenting it. 'Your Korean is so good!' they say, often multiple times in a single conversation. People see my face (I'm white) and presume I can't speak Korean, and there's nothing I can do about it. For a long time now, the constant compliments have grated on my nerves. Every time I order a coffee, even these days, I find myself waiting for a compliment, and I often get one.

I remember when I tried to speak Korean with my Korean colleagues from about four years ago. They were initially accommodating, but over time grew awkward, and ultimately confrontational. They applied a constant pressure to me to speak English with them. Sometimes this pressure was mild, and sometimes it wasn't. A colleague once told me, angrily, 'If we'd wanted someone who could speak Korean, we wouldn't have hired you!' I had assumed early on that people would value my learning Korean, but for the most part I don't feel that many people have. Quite the opposite. To be fair, some foreigners have valued it (I can be useful to have around), but Koreans mostly want me to speak English – want it, expect it, and demand it.

I have been explicitly instructed not to speak Korean with students at every one of the many teaching jobs I've had here. This always made me upset (and still does, though not nearly as much as it once did). I was upset because I felt I was being designated an outsider in my school (which I sort of consented to by taking the 'foreign teacher' job, it could be argued), as though the Korean teachers were allowed to appear normal to the students, while I was to be seen as necessarily and inescapably abnormal.

I was also upset because all of this was so contrary to how I felt about myself: I'm a language learning guy, and it stings to be valued only for my first language. Partly, my Korean learning was always inspired by a desire to *show them*. I slaved over passing the Korean test because I wanted to prove that the highest available level was possible for me. Also because that test helped me get a better visa, one that wasn't in my employers' hands.

It wasn't all negative, of course. I've been in Korea for seven years now, and being reasonably competent in the language has helped me to make a home here. I can do anything I need to without the aid of a native-speaker, and learning the language entailed understanding the culture, so I feel like I now *get* how things are here so much better. I often understand Korean jokes and puns, and things like that. I'm doubtful that I'd feel nearly as at home if I'd never learned the language, though I'll never know for sure. Plus, I've had so much fun drinking with Koreans on so many occasions. It's an odd thing to mention, but I'm glad to have been able to drink with Koreans in their own language.

As I write this, I admit I'm a little disappointed in myself. I'm still in Korea, but I never quite achieved that 'native-ness' in a foreign language I wanted when I was younger. I've totally stopped studying, I got my visa, and I can speak when I need to. All the goals I had for my Korean are achieved, and that has happened before I got as good as I dreamed. Over time, I've mellowed in many ways. I no longer have any (particularly strong) opinions about whether we, foreign teachers, *should* learn Korean, and I'm not nearly as upset by Korean people complimenting my most basic Korean expressions anymore (I still am, though, often).

One thing that makes me wonder is what all my Korean-language-related experiences *meant*, and what sorts of experiences other people in a similar position to myself have had with the language – hence, this research project. I am very curious to hear other foreign teachers' stories, so as to better understand what has shaped their situation, and my own.

Appendix E: John's written narrative

I don't really consider myself much of a language learner, by which I mean I don't think I have ever felt any burning desire to speak another language extremely well, nor especially enjoyed the experience of speaking in another language for its own sake. I had French lessons from early childhood and then studied it at school all the way until I was sixteen years old, but only because taking one language was mandatory. I don't think French for me ever made the jump to a real language. It was largely just learning vocabulary and grammar. For about the next ten years of my life, I was almost completely monolingual.

After losing my job in London in the financial crisis of 2008, I was feeling like I needed an intellectual challenge. I had always quite wanted to travel in South America, so I thought that I could do that and learn Spanish at the same time. I wasn't especially connected to the language, I just wanted to exercise my brain. Also, I have always felt that seeing people operate in another language was literally awesome and a little like magic, so an arrogant part of me may well have wanted other people to feel the same watching me as I did watching speakers of other languages (native or non-native, fyi). My aim was poor, and I missed South America and wound up teaching English in Guatemala instead. I did get to study some Spanish; I would say I got to a lower-intermediate (maybe CEFR B1) level, but I was a pretty terrible learner, looking back. I was only really any good at conjugating verbs and dropping unnecessary subjunctives into sentences. My pronunciation was Home-Counties English transferred wholesale onto Spanish (I recall an ex-girlfriend with her fingers in my mouth trying to put my tongue in the right place to trill an 'rr' without success), my vocabulary miniscule, and my listening virtually non-existent. Despite all of these problems, I felt that Spanish was a little easy because of its similarity to English (really this was a result of convincing myself that I was good at it), so when I decided to move to Korea, I was looking forward to tackling something a little more challenging.

I self-studied Korean for a couple of weeks before coming to Korea using Rosetta Stone (useless, if you're interested: an electronic argument against the natural approach/deductive learning) so I could read (in the sense that I could make the sound of words from *Hangeul*) and I could handle greetings and counting and other basic operations. That meant I got the survival stuff (restaurants, transport) down and then stalled for a while. I didn't have a great deal of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to go further. I should say at this point that I have a good degree of sympathy for English teachers in Korea who don't learn the language. Very often

you find that your work and social life, and even relationships, are all conducted in English. It often takes great determination and discipline to seek out and use Korean, and as you found, this often meets with resistance. Thankfully, I have rarely met with such in my time in Korea.

I tend to characterize any success that I have had in language learning as one of affordances; in other words, I have been lucky. The first affordance was joining the football club in the tiny mountain town that I lived in. People there were extremely good to me despite an almost total language barrier, and having friends with whom I couldn't communicate gave me the drive to start studying again. I did an hour or two a day from there, mostly using *Talk To Me In Korean,* and then used weekly nights out with the team for conversation practice. By winter of my first year in Korea I could stumble my way through a conversation in Korean, especially after a bottle of soju. The following year, I started a distance MA, and so my studying rather tailed off. I tried to keep up a little bit by studying vocabulary through flashcard apps, but from then on most of my Korean learning was just through using the language socially. Like you, I found that as my proficiency increased, I was able to pick up expressions from students and co-workers as well, and that is how I continued for my second year living in the country.

Then came the second, and biggest affordance. Not getting a new job at a university in a Seoul satellite city, but deciding that I would do a language exchange to make friends and keep up my Korean. I looked on a website and found only one person living in the area. We exchanged a few emails and then met in person. We kept up a fairly serious language exchange (meeting once a week and doing 30 minutes in English, then 30 minutes in Korean, and so on) for about three months before we decided that there might be more to it than just language study and started a relationship. Six years later we are happily married. We predominantly communicate in Korean, with the percentage varying from anything to 60% to 100%. A slightly strange point is that we have always texted entirely in Korean, and it feels totally wrong to compose a text to my wife in English. Another interesting thing is that since we have been in a relationship, we have never really wanted to teach each other language. We will occasionally ask questions, or help if one or the other of us is writing in our second language, but language lessons as such never happen. I think the unequal power relationship in a teacher-student relationship does not mesh well with the more equal power balance of a relationship. I consider myself lucky (in language learning terms) to have met someone who was willing to speak both languages. So many people I know meet Koreans who speak English, and this becomes the home language. Once you get started, I am told, it is incredibly hard to change (my text messaging feelings give me some insight into what this must be like). Since

we got married, I have also had much more contact with her family, and I feel that this has pushed my Korean on a little, especially in terms of listening.

I suppose this is a good point to talk about my Korean ability. I tend to classify myself as "intermediate conversational proficiency". I have a fairly limited range of vocabulary (maybe 5,000 word families) and grammar, but I would guess that I use it relatively accurately. I am told that my pronunciation is decent but I would never be mistaken for a native speaker (except once on the phone, but only as far as "여보세요"). I am fairly literate but slow to read and write (I read and write very little longer than a text in Korean). Where I really struggle is when topics of conversation get outside of day-to-day topics and into more specialist areas like politics or science, or when I have to string a long, complex sequence of ideas together. Basically, I have very few problems existing day to day in Korean, but I could be so much better.

In terms of meaning, I think of my Korean in largely practical terms. I have no great love for the language, or any language really. I find that a bit of a strange view honestly. And there is not much in the culture that particularly attracts me either (no slight intended here, by the way). One of the things I do appreciate is the ability to put Koreans at ease. I'm sure most non-Koreans have experienced the look of terror in an out-of-the-way restaurant owner's eyes when they walk in. It's nice enough to be fluent enough that they realize that there won't be any communication problems, and visibly relax. This might be revealing of some kind of not-wanting-to-be-a-burden-related motivation. In the first few years of learning I was quite proud of my Korean abilities, but that pride has dropped away with the amount of effort that I put in to learning the language these days (i.e. minimal). If I get complimented on my Korean abilities, I tend to say something like "아 그냥 하는 거예요", when perhaps I should be more grateful.

In the future, I would like to try to improve. One major factor in not actively trying to improve my language skills has been a lack of time, but I am moving jobs to a slightly friendlier schedule now, and I feel that if I did some intensive listening and reading practice, I might be able to make the jump up to being able to use the language in more complex ways. I don't think I would take a class now: my only formal Korean learning experience was a 3-week intensive course at (*redacted*) University, which I felt was not effective (very heavily vocab and grammar focused, and almost no interaction). Anyway, I do feel like I have a greater practical need to improve my Korean now because my family and social life revolves around it more. Again though, this is a very practical motivation.

I think that covers most of my experience with Korean. I hope that can be in some way useful to you, and I'm happy to answer questions about or clarify anything I have written above. Best of luck with your project!