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A Critical Look at an English Conversation Class of a NEST

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Qualitative case study methodology was used for the current study to understand a class taught by a Native English Speaking Teacher (NEST) by examining how the university students taking this class perceived the instructor, the teaching materials, and the activities and the types of interactions. The purpose of the study was to understand what influence the NEST had on the participant's English learning, and what pedagogical implications could be drawn. The participants in the study included the teacher and 30 freshmen students who were required to take his "English Conversation" class. The data collected by two researchers included classroom observations, reflective journals, student surveys as well as e-mail correspondences with the NEST. Constant comparison and content analysis through coding was utilized for data analysis. As a result, four major themes were generated, including: 1) students' attitudes on the NEST's class; 2) the fit between students and language teaching and learning materials (under this category, the three sub-categories are provided); 3) teacher's decision on interactional type (pair conversation) and its' results; 4) meaningless interaction led by activity types. Conclusions and implications are also provided.

[Native English Speaking Teachers/English conversation class]

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I. INTRODUCTION

For effective foreign language learning, certain constituents ought to be met. These constituents include exposure to the target language, language use, motivation, and teaching approaches. Among these factors, exposure to the target language in natural contexts is seen as the most important factor to allow language learners to improve their communicative abilities (Willis, 1996). However, language learners who are in a context, where English is not a medium for communication, are not easily exposed to the target language. To construct a context where learners can maximize their exposure to the target language, native English speaking teachers (NESTs) through the program called EPIK (English Program in Korea) since 1995 have been recruited (Bang, 2007). In addition, since the 1990s, most of the universities have accelerated recruitment of native speakers of English from countries where English is a primary language, and the recent data show a dramatic increase in the numbers of these teachers in universities and colleges: 402 NESTs in 1990; 1310 in 2000; and 2397 in 2006 (Lee, 2007). The reports indicate that the numbers of NESTs are continuously growing every year.

Since the numbers of NESTs are increasing, English courses taught by NESTs in universities have formed a greater part of university courses. However, previous studies since the EPIK was introduced have focused on the roles of NESTS in elementary and secondary schools (Yoon, 2007), and there have not been many studies on NESTs in universities (Lim, 2012). To compensate for the scarcity of research, the present study will examine a class taught by a NEST by observing how the class is proceeded; how the teacher and students interact; what materials the class uses; how the teacher perceives the class; and what perceptions on the class of NEST the students have. The research questions are as follows:

1) How do the students perceive the class with the NEST?
2) How do teaching materials, interactional types, and activity types have influence on their English learning?
3) What are the educational implications drawn from the study?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Input, Interaction, and Output

Even though the nature and role of input in language learning has been viewed differently among researchers, there has been no doubt that language input to the learner is absolutely essential for L2 learning to take place (Krashen, 1985; Lightbown &

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Spada, 2006; MacKey, 2012; Long, 1983; Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Pica, 2013; Saville-Troike, 2008). Simply stated, input is language that the learner is exposed to either in its written or spoken forms. Input is the data, which the learner must use to determine the rules of the target language (Ellis, 1985). Within psycholinguistic approaches, language learning is a cognitive and individual process in which knowledge is constructed as the learners are exposed to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) and receive opportunities to negotiate meaning (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996; Pica, 1994) and are given feedback (Long, 1996; MacKey, 2012). Thus, even though there is no agreement on the type of input and the amount the learners need, it is clear that learners need to be exposed to comprehensible input in order to learn language.

Krashen (1985) proposed in his input hypothesis that in order for individuals to acquire a second language, they need to have adequate comprehensible input, and the language input needs to be at a level just beyond the learners' current level (i+1). In discussing learning conditions for young language learners, Lightbown and Spada (2006) have discovered that modified or adapted input is one condition that facilitates learning for learners of all ages. According to them, in a communicative instructional setting, modified input is a defining feature as teachers make every effort to speak to students in a level of language they can understand by modifying the language for successful communication. However, it has been debated that just being exposed to comprehensible input is not enough for language learning to occur, especially for those in EFL contexts where opportunities to receive comprehensible input is very limited. There are many cases of L2 learners who have failed to progress beyond a fossilized and deviant interlanguage despite abundant meaning-oriented input (Mitchell & Myles, 1998).

In response to Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, Swain (1985, 1995) claimed in her comprehensible output hypothesis that in addition to being exposed to large amounts of comprehensible input, learners need to make attempts at L2 production. Evidence found in Canadian immersion programs showed that even though the students received an abundance of comprehensible input, their abilities in speaking and writing skills were far behind those of their francophone peers. Swain (2005) pointed out that the teachers in the programs did not push the students to talk in the target language in a manner that was grammatically accurate or socio-linguistically appropriate. Thus she continued that "negotiating meaning needs to incorporate the notion of being pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately" (p. 472-473). In Korean EFL contexts, several studies have shown that the output-based instruction was more effective than the input-based instruction (Kang, 2003, 2011). Kang (2011) investigated whether the output-based instruction can make the target form, English relative clauses, more noticeable and

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affect learning in terms of L2 learners' proficient levels. The results indicated that output-based instruction helped learners notice the target form and the high level students significantly improved their L2 learning after the instruction. While in Krashen's input hypothesis, input comes from outside the learners; the sociocultural perspective emphasizes that learners co-construct knowledge based on their interaction with interlocutors. Psycholinguists have claimed that interaction helps learners activate the individual internal cognitive processes that allow them to access the comprehensible input they need to advance the acquisition of the L2 (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996). Long (1983) emphasized that modified interaction is the necessary condition for making language comprehensible. By interacting with other speakers, learners can reach mutual comprehension and in particular, beginner-level learners acquiring an L2 can benefit from modified native-speaker talk. Pica (2013) also pointed out that when interaction is modified by the negotiation of meaning, teachers, students, and other interlocutors request clarification or confirmation from the learner through utterances that attempt to understand the leaner's intended meaning. Thus, Long (1983) postulated that interactional modification accompanied by comprehensible input can promote language acquisition. Interactional modification addressed by native speakers in discourse with L2 learners provides significant help due to features such as repetition, paraphrase, expansion or elaboration (Mackey, Abbuhl, Gass, 2012; Saville-Troike, 2008).

Saville-Troike (2008) pointed out that within social approaches, interaction plays a role of "providing learners with the quantity and quality of external linguistic input which is required for internal processing, in focusing learner attention on aspects of their L2 which differ from target language norms or goals, and in providing collaborative means for learners to build discourse structures and express meanings which are beyond the current level of their linguistic competence" (p.106). Within the socio-cultural approach, social interaction allows interlocutors to organize their cognitive processes that assist them in the co-construction of knowledge about the second language (Lantolf, 2000) within their zone of proximal development (ZDP). ZDP is defined as "a situation in which the learner is capable of performing at a higher level because there is support from an interlocutor" (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 47). In the process of co-construction of language development, interaction between expert and novice comes to play and scaffolding refers to the assistance provided by an expert and that enables novice or language learners to do activities they would not have been able to do without such assistance (Lantolf & Thome, 2006).

To sum up, in order for L2 learners, especially those in EFL contexts, to learn and acquire the target language, they need to first be exposed to input that is comprehensible and slightly beyond their current proficiency level and then through interaction with peers or adults who have deeper knowledge of the language, learners might be able to

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acquire language with assistance such as feedback on the learners' language use. In this process, it may at times be necessary, to motivate and persuade learners to produce the language that they aim to acquire and use.

2. Research on Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs)

1) Defining Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs)

According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (Richard, Platt, and Weber, 1985), a native speaker (NS) is a "person considered as a speaker of his or her native language" (p. 188). Similarly, Davies (1999) defined NES as a speaker of Standard English and it has long served as the norm for language teaching and testing. That is, if we follow the Chomskyan paradigm, a NES could be "the ideal informant in grammatical judgments and is therefore the ultimate authority on language use" (McKay, 2002).

However, the definitional challenge to the NS norm has continued due to the difficulty of making an absolute distinction between the native and non-native speaker (Davies, 1999; Philipson, 1996). Likewise, there has been on-going controversy concerning the assumption of NEST superiority in the field of ELT. Davies (1999) defined a native language as the first learned language, in which one achieves a high degree of competence and linguistic intuitions. Thus, NESTs are speakers whose native language is English with high level of linguistic competence, and teaching qualifications. In addition, they should be equipped with experience and attitude for understanding the language and culture of their students. Philipson (1996) claimed that non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) are potentially better ESL teachers because they have gone through the process of acquiring English as an additional language. Medgyes (1996) who conducted a survey of native-English-speaking teachers and NNESTs working in 10 countries to determine their success in teaching English concluded that the two groups had an equal chance of success as English teachers because NNESTs can be good learner models, having gone through the experience of learning English as a second (or third or fourth) language. Even though NESTs have a clear advantage as they generally have better English proficiency, this does not suggest that they are necessarily better teachers. Much of the knowledge that native speakers bring intrinsically to the ELT classroom can be learned by NNESTs through teacher training.

2) Studies on Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) in Korean Contexts

There has been a variety of studies on native English speaking teachers (NESTs) in Korean English education contexts because the presence of NESTs has been felt not only

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in primary or secondary schools but in university settings since the introduction of EPIK in 1995 and 7th reform of English education which emphasizes the communicative approaches in language teaching and learning. However, the efficacy of NESTs has remained controversial over the decades (Graddol, 2004; Medgyes, 1996; Park, 2009; Philipson, 1996).

Studies on NESTs' role and efficacy in Korean education contexts have been dichotomized into cognitive and affective areas, and mainly influenced by three factors: perceptions of either students or NESTs themselves on English language learning and teaching, contexts where NESTs practice their teaching, and the role of NESTs in ELT class as an assistant teacher or a main class teacher. Affective aspects of the studies involve students' motivation, interest, confidence or anxiety while cognitive aspects of the studies pertained to listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

With regard to perceptions of the role and effectiveness of NESTs, research has leaned heavily towards understanding the students' perspectives (Bang, 2007; Lim, 2012; Nam, 2011, Park, 2009; Yang, 2011). A few studies attempted to inquire into NNESTs' and NESTs' self-perceptions on learning and teaching English (Chin, 2002; Kim, 2011). Overall, the results of the studies examining the role of NNESTs and NESTs instructional efficiency and their efficacy were inconclusive, as no statistically significant correlation was established to indicate whether one group was more effective than the other. However, results do indicate the effective utilization of NESTs in certain areas of English teaching such as listening, speaking, and pronunciation.

Joh and Yi (2012) who studied the impact of NESTs on the English language learning of elementary and secondary school students indicated that the students' perception towards the usefulness of NESTs tended to be less positive as they proceeded to higher school years. What Joh and Yi were suggesting was that it might be prudent to re-allocate NESTs to lower grade levels. For the purpose of looking at the actual management situation and the effects of native English teacher policy, Kang and Kim (2011) did survey Korean English teachers in high school. The survey results unveiled mixed reactions from the teachers as they showed negative views on the present native English teacher policy, while replied that the best way to improve the students' English communication skill is a cooperative class between Korean and native English teachers.

Park (2009) found out that university students do not have overall preferences for NESTs over NNESTs, but they showed a preference for NESTs in teaching specific areas such pronunciation, culture and communication. Thus, they suggested a combination of NESTs and NNESTs is more appropriate. Lim's (2012) study also indicated that university students wanted NESTs in more conversation-oriented classes. However, lack of considering students' proficiency level, opportunity for oral communication between students and NESTs, and understanding the Korean language and culture were pointed

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out problematic in NESTs-led ELT classes. In congruence with the aforementioned studies, Yang (2011)'s study showed that except for speaking ability, university students did not express a strong preference for NESTs, but they have a preference in learning some specific skills such as pronunciation or listening. When it comes to learning grammar or test-taking strategies, university students preferred NNESTs to NESTs. This preference could be explored in further studied as NNESTs have traditionally held a monopoly on teaching test taking strategies while NESTs have for 'whatever' reason been excluded from doing so. In a similar vein, Bang (2007) discovered that there were significant differences between NESTs and students regarding opinions and attitudes towards the characteristics of effective teachers: while NESTs ranked proficiency of English as the most pivotal characteristic, students put more emphasis on the linguistic knowledge of English (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation).

When it comes to the students' motivation and anxiety toward NESTs' classes, Nam (2011) discovered that unlike previous studies on foreign language anxiety, university students' anxiety level was not significant and anxiety and motivation were negatively correlated. Kim and Ko (2008) who evaluated the utilization of native English teachers through surveys by Korean teachers, principals, and vice-principals in elementary schools discovered that students considered the most positive effect of learning with NESTs was the fact that talking with NESTs allowed them to reduce their anxiety level. Kim (2011) explored NESTs' beliefs about learning and teaching English in the Korean university setting, and the findings showed that the teachers believed that students' active participation and motivation was the key to successful L2 learning; and that differences in the learning experiences between the teacher and students may cause difficulty in the ELT classroom.

With regard to the cognitive aspects of NESTs, the overall results revealed the positive effect on the students' listening and speaking in particular. In examining the effectiveness of co-teaching between English teachers and their native assistant teachers in elementary school English classrooms, Kim and Han (2009) revealed that co-teaching between a special teacher and native assistant English teacher had positive effects on the students' communicative abilities. In examining the effects of the differentiated learning with an NEST on the children's speech ability and attitude, La and Kyong (2003) discovered that children were able to extend their listening and speaking abilities.

Despite the increasing number of NESTs in Korean education system, there has been dearth of studies on the role and efficacy of NESTs in ELT in Korean contexts, which showed the perspectives from both NESTs themselves and students (Bang, 2007). Further, in order to have in-depth understanding of how NESTs practice and interact with students in class, there should be direct observation from outsiders who can objectively look at the phenomenon and behaviors of both NESTs and students in the classroom.

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III. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative case study methodology was used for this study. A case study is defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The purpose of qualitative case studies, according to Becker (1968), is "to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study and to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process" (p. 233). The case study methodology was appropriate on this study because it gave meaning and insight to classroom teaching and learning with a native English-speaking teacher.

1. Participants

The participants in this study were freshmen university students who were required to take an English conversation course with a native English-speaking teacher. Thirty five students took this course, but 15 females and 15 males only participated in the current study because five students missed the class the day survey was conducted. All students majored in Marine Biology. These students had studied English an average between ten years and twelve years. All of them had never been to English-speaking countries to study English, and 21 students had previously experienced classes by native English speaking teachers. The teacher (Brian) is 38 years old and is from Britain. He has been working in Korea for the past five years and has a Korean family (wife and child). As an undergraduate he majored in political science and international relations. He had prior ESL teaching experience before coming to Korea.

2. Data Collection

The data were collected in the spring semester of 2011 by two researchers. The data included class observations, their reflection papers, e-mail exchanges with the teacher, and a survey from students. To strengthen the internal validity and reliability of the findings, the data were triangulated by using multiple sources and methods to confirm the findings. The researchers observed 5 different classes, 90 minutes for each class. The two researchers observed the same classes, sitting in the back of the class, in order to avoid interrupting or disrupting the participants. The two researchers completed field notes, which included commentaries, assumptions, questions, reactions, hunches, interpretations, descriptions of activities, and the behaviors, and language use of participants. The observations led to a number of questions, which resulted in e-mail

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exchanges with the teacher and the development of the survey. Each researcher wrote five different reflections for the classes that were taught. A survey was administered at the end of the observation period to collect information on the students' perceptions of the teacher's instruction.

3. Data Analysis

As the data were processed, constant comparison (Glaser & Straus, 1967) was used to compare new phenomenon in a category with all other items in the same category to see if new relationships emerged. To draw the data's meaning, the two researchers read and reread all the data from field notes, reflection papers, email exchanges, and a survey. We began coding the data set of each case (field notes, reflection papers, email exchanges, and surveys). Coding entailed reading the data and assigning codes, or short descriptions that identified topics from a fine level of detail. In the first round of coding, the data set of each case produced a different number of codes. In the second round of coding, color-coding was conducted; as a result, we started to pull out codes that were similar across the data set of each case. The similar codes were merged as larger categories, so the data were reduced. Some of the codes were excluded because they did not directly answer the research questions. Throughout the process of data analysis, the confirmed categories were emerged and these categories (themes) became the findings of this study. The categories are as shown: students' attitudes on the NEST's class; the fit between students and language teaching and learning materials (under this category, the three sub-categories are: relationship between textbook choice and students' learning perceptions; the importance of teacher's materials adaptation; and relevant teaching materials and students' interest and motivation in learning); teacher's decision on interactional type (pair conversation) and its' results; and meaningless interaction led by activity types.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Students' Attitudes on the NEST's Class

In the survey, the students were asked how they viewed the class delivered by a native English speaking teacher in terms of degrees of satisfaction, of understanding, and of exposure to English language. The following table demonstrates the students' views on the class taught by the native teacher.

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TABLE 1

Students' Views on the NEST's Class

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Mediocre	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Satisfaction with the class	11(37%)	15(50%)	4(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Degrees in understating of the class	5(17%)	11(37%)	1(3%)	13(43%)	0(0%)
Facilitation in learning	6(20%)	14(47%)	0(0%)	10(33%)	0(0%)
Enough exposure in English language	2(7%)	10(33%)	1(3%)	17(57%)	0(0%)
Seriousness on this class	4(13%)	10(33%)	2(7%)	14(47%)	0(0%)

Of the students (N=30) who participated in the survey, most students (26) were strongly satisfied or satisfied with the class. Only 4 students responded moderately satisfied. In regards to how much of the instruction participants understood, 16 students indicated they had understood the materials being presented by NEST, and one student indicated that his understanding was mediocre, while 13 other students believed that they had not fully understood the purpose or instructions given in the class. 20 students believed that the class with the NEST facilitated or helped their English learning; on the other hand, 10 students responded the class with NEST did not facilitate their learning. In the question whether their exposure to English language was enough, 12 students believed that they were strongly satisfied or satisfied with exposure to the target language; in contrast, 17 students were not much satisfied with the English exposure. 14 students took this class seriously; however, the rest did not take it much seriously. These students explained the reasons why they were serious about the class; for example, this class is the only class where they can have contact with native speakers of English; they had an expectation that they could improve their English language skills from the NEST. Student 3 recounted "I am serious about this class because I do not have the opportunity to contact with native speakers of English, except this class."

In an open-ended question of why they were satisfied with the class or not, positive and negative responses were given by the students. 24 students responded to this question. The positive reactions include: opportunity to direct contact with NEST (in terms of culture and pronunciation) (N=10); opportunity to communicate with friends in class (N=5); opportunity of English learning in English (N=3); interesting and fun class (N=3); and reducing the fear of speaking English (N=3). Some examples of students'

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comments are as follows:

> "I do not usually have an opportunity to communicate with native speakers, but I was given a chance to contact with native speaker through the class." (Student 2)
> "It is fun to have a chance to communicate with my friends in class." (Student 1)
> "I am getting familiar with native speakers so I think I can get away from the fear." (Student 25)
> "It is interesting and fun." (Student 18)

Some students also provided negative responses to this class. The followings are the students' comments:

> "I do not mostly understand what the teacher said. English instruction only does not help me understand the class." (Student 4)
> "In fact, I do not have many chances to communicate with the teacher. Conversations are mainly accomplished between non-native students." (Student 6)
> "Because of the large size of the class, we do not have enough time to communicate with the teacher. So, we usually repeat the dialogues after the teacher. This kind of activity would not help our communication skills." (Student 9)

When looking at the students' reactions to whether they are satisfied with the class or not, some students were satisfied with the class because they were given a chance to contact with native speakers of English and also they could take advantage of reducing the fear of speaking English by familiarizing with them. These results are congruent with the findings of other studies (Kim & Ko, 2008; Nam, 2011) as the students were able to level down their anxiety communicating with native speakers of English. In contrast, some students (especially, lower levels in English language proficiency) did not fully understand the teacher's instruction. A few students complained that they did not have opportunity to communicate with the native speaking English teacher because of the large size of the class. Even if opportunity for communication was given, the conversational opportunity was accomplished between non-native students. This result is likely to indicate that the students were aware of their need for more input from and interaction with their NEST. This comment was also found from the two researchers' field notes of class observations. Based on the survey results and the researchers' class observations, it can be interpreted that opportunity for the students' linguistic input is much greater than that of linguistic output. To heightening linguistic input and output, some students suggested that the class time should be extended to at least twice a week.

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2. The Fit between Students and Language Teaching and Learning Materials

1) Relationship between textbook choice and students' perceptions

The survey demonstrated the importance of teaching materials, and this was closely connected to the students' perceptions towards learning. When asked whether they were satisfied with the textbook utilized, five students indicated that they were either strongly satisfied or satisfied with the textbook; three students recounted somewhat satisfied; and 22 students were not satisfied with the textbook. The result indicated the students did not like the textbook much overall.

In an open-ended question as to why they were satisfied with the textbook, 4 students thought that the topics in the textbook were mainly based on everyday activities, which every student in the class could relate to. The students were able to easily relate to the topics and it peaked interests. Also, the textbook was perceived as easy and this led lowered anxiety. Students 8 and 16 recounted that colorful illustrations in the textbook allowed them to be more interested in their learning; for example, student 16 said, "there are many colorful illustrations that make me interested in learning and make me easy to get access to learning." This implies the importance of both text content and text image (structure, appearance, face) as Hill (2003) pointed out that students today prefer the colorfully decorated pages of pages because they are used to being surrounded by visual images in all areas of everyday life.

When asked why they were not satisfied with the textbook, the two categories based on their responses were found: 1) defocused text construction (N=12) and 2) relatively easy content compared to their level of language proficiency (N=9). For example, student 19 recounted that "It is too easy so I do not think I learn something from this textbook," and student 14 said, "It is easier than the textbook in the high school, and the textbook structure is very distracted. It also has too much information." The two categories the students pointed out were confirmed by the two researchers' observations. Researcher 1 wrote in her field notes:

> "When teachers select their textbook, they need to make a careful decision. The textbook they chose is too easy to facilitate the students' learning in this class. I have asked one of the students who is sitting closer to me about the textbook. He said it is easy so he is easily distracted. This means that relatively easy content can be one of the factors that can cause students to be distracted. Yes, I can see the students are making noise. I wonder why…. Text structure is also composed of traditional way of learning, which is based on pattern drills of questions and answers."

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Her comment explains that textbook should be chosen to fit to students' level of proficiency or somewhat beyond their level to encourage their potential learning. Otherwise, textbook can have negative influence on the students' perceptions on their learning (ex., distraction and lack in potential learning) (Tomlinson, 1998). In spite of the importance of textbook choice, the teacher in this study (Brian) recounted that he did not have a right to select the textbook for his own class, saying:

> "We are presented with textbooks from publishing company representatives, but mostly do not have the final say in chosen textbooks. We give out opinions freely about the effectiveness of the textbooks to our department director."

This implies that the teachers need to have ownership or authority to choose their own textbook that best fits the needs, interests, and language proficiency levels of the students; and not those of the head of a department or of a publishing company representative. If native English speaking teachers do not have expertise on textbook choice, they need to gain some advice from experts in this field.

Two things which are debated from the findings are that first of all, easy contents for some students lowered their anxiety; on the other hand, the simplicity of the content was either trivial, belittling, or a disincentive for some students to take seriously. It can be presumed that there is a discrepancy in students' level of English language proficiency. Secondly, with regard to text structure, text structure with colorful illustrations for some students helped them be interested in learning and easily get access to learning; in contrast, for some students, defocused text structure distracted their learning. This means that in text choices, both text content and text structure can play a crucial role in students' perceptions on and outcomes to their learning.

2) The importance of teacher's materials adaptation

Throughout the class observations, the two researchers acknowledged that teaching materials should be adapted to the needs of students and to manage the class effectively. We found good and bad examples of materials adaptation and development. Using PPT was a good example of materials adaptation. In each class, the teacher, Brian, utilized PowerPoint presentations for several purposes: introducing today's lessons; giving sessions for questions and answers; and introducing major points of grammar and contents. Researcher 2 commented on her reflection paper, writing "even though it might take some time for the teacher to prepare PowerPoint slides for the class, its visual effect seems to be positive as it draw students' attention and useful tool for the teacher to use in class." Researcher 1 shared a similar sentiment by indicating that the PPT was a "useful

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visual aid. I think it is easy for students to follow up the class, and it may increase the students' understanding." Brian recounted that PPT was necessary to deliver his instruction in a clear way in a large-sized class, saying "as an instructional strategy, PowerPoint presentations are used for large numbers of students. I somehow believe PowerPoint presentations help students' understanding." Tomlinson (1998) supported the comment that material adaptation is to make necessary changes to materials to improve them or to make them more suitable for a particular type of learners. Some of the students additionally mentioned about the effectiveness of PPT. One of the comments is explained by student 11, recounting "the class used by PPT is very interesting, and it could help me to follow his instruction." As explained so far, PPT use has some purposes: boosting students' understanding; useful tool of delivering main points of lessons in a large-sized class; and drawing students' attention. It is concluded that adapting or developing materials can play a crucial role in filling the gap between the existing instructional materials and the need of the students and teachers.

Before mentioning bad examples of materials management, as already indicated, the textbook structure was defocused and had too much information that somehow resulted in distracting the students' attention. In spite of the students' dissatisfaction with the textbook they utilized, the teacher could have adapted or developed materials that fit to the students' needs by adding, deleting, modifying, simplifying, and reordering existing materials (Gabrielatos, 2004). As Brian recounted, "The curriculum is taken from the textbook—based on a selection of chapters," he covered all sections (including speaking, listening, grammar, reading, and pronunciation) on each page without trimming parts that could be deemed as superfluous or unnecessary. Researcher 1 commented on her reflection paper:

> "For effective teaching, I believe that materials which have too much information in each page should be modified by cutting out some parts. In terms of grammar parts, students can learn grammar in a grammar class so he needs to more focus on communicative practices. Covering everything seems to waste time. Some of the activities seem to be too easy for these students. So some parts should be trimmed."

Researcher 2 also thought, that "there are too many activities and exercises in each page, but I do not think they do all activities in the textbook. Teacher needs to select some activities necessary for the students." This implies that when materials are adapted to the students' needs, the class instruction will be more effective, and students' attention will be more drawn.

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3) Relevant teaching contents and students' interest and motivation in learning

The topics in the textbook include greetings, movies, daily activities, future jobs, families, nationalities, trips, birthday, and so forth. The students were asked questions about the textbook contents, whether the contents induced their interest in learning, whether the contents were helpful for their learning, and if cultural references in the textbook were appropriate to their personal interest and culture. The following shows the results.

TABLE 2
Students' Views on the Textbook Contents

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Mediocre	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Inducing students' interest in learning?	2(6.5%)	5(17%)	3(10%)	18(60%)	2(6.5%)
Helpful for their learning?	0(0%)	6(20%)	3(10%)	19(63%)	2(7%)
Appropriate cultural references that fit to their interest and culture?	1(3.5%)	7(23%)	4(13%)	17(57%)	1(3.5%)

As displayed above, only seven students believed that the text contents helped them induce their interest in English learning; three students said slightly satisfied; 18 students said they not much assisted their interest in learning; and the rest negatively responded to this question. In a question if the contents were helpful for their English learning, six students were positive about the contents; three students said mediocre; 19 students said the contents were not helpful for their learning; and two students negatively responded. In regards to cultural references of the contents, eight students strongly agreed or agreed; four students said average; and 18 students strongly disagreed or disagreed.

When students were asked if the content of the textbook was culturally inappropriate, 20 of the 30 respondents noted that the textbook emphasized: 1) western-based cultural references (N=8); 2) different from our culture (N=6); 3) not familiar with names of celebrity (N=4); and 4) feeling distance from the content (N=2). Some comments are as follows.

> "I think most contents are related to England-based or American-referred cultural contents." (Student 11)
>
> "I am not familiar with the names of movies stars. So I feel that I am disconnected with

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them. If they talk about Korean movie stars, it will be more interesting." (Student 7)

"I can feel some distance from the contents we are learning because the contents sometimes have nothing to do with me. I want to talk about the things I like or the things related to Korean culture." (Student 22)

As indicated, the students were culturally disconnected to the references in the textbook; thus, they hoped to talk about Korean-related issues in class. This supports the findings of Jolly and Bolitho (2003) who have argued that if the 'contents' of a text are largely outside the cultural experience of students, it becomes become effectively useless. This implies the importance of textbook content that is closely connected to the students' interest and related to cultural issues that are happening around them. Brian (the teacher) emphasized that "the book is invariably aimed at smaller sized international language classes; and so are not ideally suited for a large Korean-only student classes. A textbook with more Korea references would be good for this reason."

The two researchers also commented on culturally relevant topics and contents from their classroom observations. In the field notes of researcher 1, she wrote that:

"Before they move on to the chapter 4, the teacher prepared for four different movie slides with four questions. The four questions were that 1) what is this movie character's name?; 2) the famous actress starred in Roman Holiday. Who is she? Take guess; 3) What is the title of this movie?; and 4) What is the English title of this Korean movie—1. The Host 2. Monster. Through this activity, I found that the students did not much participated in answering the three questions because, I guess, the movies he showed seem to be old. I even do not know the movies and characters. As usual, the students did not pay attention. However, when he showed the Korean movie slide, the students really paid attention to it and engaged in. I have never seen the students paying attention, but they did for this activity."

This means that culturally relevant contents can encourage students' attention and change their attitude in class participation. In addition, culturally appropriate contents can boost students' communication and interaction. Researcher 2 also indicated that:

"One point noticed from this observation is the effectiveness of contents which are familiar and culturally relevant to students. During the movie/movie quiz, students showed the most positive and active reaction toward than any activities done during the semester and that is because they have background information about movies or music and some questions related to Korean culture (e.g., BIFF (Busan International Film Festival) are relevant to them. This might boost their interest and confidence."

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However, the two researchers found irrelevant cultural contents from the textbook; for example, unfamiliar movie stars' names including Gordon Ramsay, Salma Hayek, Bob Dylan, and Ewan McGregor; daily activities (sausage, bacon, and eggs for breakfast; places for trips (e.g., Edinburgh); and movies and TV programs (Roman Holiday, Star Wars, As Good As It Gets, and The Simpsons). All of the above-mentioned content is distant from Korean cultural norms and thus requires learners to familiarize themselves and learn about movie stars and movies with which they are likely to have little interests simply because such examples were used in the textbook. Even if the teacher mentioned Korean movies (e.g., Monster which Song Kwang-Ho starred) and movie event (BIFF) that allowed the students to pay more attention, it was very limited. If the students deal with Korean movie stars, musicians, movies, and TV programs, the potential for learning can be intensified since the content is likely to familiar and motivating, and thus facilitate student engagement in conversation. The students' learning outcomes can be influenced by materials adaptation and development.

From the results of the students' comments and the researchers' field notes, it is acknowledged that textbook contents should be connected to Korean-oriented cultures and students' personal lives in a specific context. Additionally, the teacher in this study should have more customized materials to his students' cultural issues and lives. When materials adaptation is not an option to choose in a given instructional context, teachers turn to their attention to developing their own materials.

3. Teacher's Decision on Interactional Type (Pair Conversation) and Its Results

The class size played an important role in the teacher's pedagogical decision, as Brian recounted, "large class size for conversation geared English lessons is a constant obstacle. Smaller class sizes and more frequent contact hours would be an immediate improvement for students. The teaching is divided between teacher led and pair work time, with occasional group work."

To overcome the large size class, pair conversation between students (non-natives) was dominant. Example activities for pair conversation include warm-up conversation, ask and answer practice, and dialogue practice. For example, as a warm-up conversation, the teacher gave them a question "what are you most frightened of?" The teacher provided different kinds of phrases (such as frightened of, terrified of/ scared of) that are the same meaning with the phrase "be frightened of." One student asked this question and the other student answered it, and vice versa. One minute (which usually seems to be a short to do the task) was given to complete the task.

Most of the pair conversations with pattern drills were accomplished between two

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Korean students. They did not have much opportunity to communicate with the only native speaker, the teacher in the class. In this class, the audio-lingual method, inspired by behavioristic principles, was used by focusing on pattern drills and conversation practice (Brown, 2007). Researcher 1 wrote in her reflection paper:

> "Interaction between students is a kind of interactional pattern in this class so interaction with the teacher is usually available with whole class. I just wonder how this interactional pattern influences students' learning outcomes. The opportunity for students to interact on a one-to-one basis with the native teacher is somewhat limited due to the large number of students per class. I believe that the teacher would benefit by employing teaching strategies that would allow for an increase in one-to-one student to teacher interaction.

Researcher 2 also worried about lack of interaction between teacher and students by saying:

> "Teacher led the class by giving instruction and students received the instruction as whole. Then interaction between students took place through pair work activity and it was followed by teacher's confirmation through asking questions to some individual student. Because there are too many pair work activities between students, and there are not much interaction going on between teacher and students."

From the classroom observations conducted by the two researchers, what we have learned was that the large class size allowed the teacher to do pair work activity between the students; as a result, the students did not have much opportunity to interact with the only native English speaking teacher. Consequently, the students may not increase their learning opportunity with genuine conversation, implying that their language learning may not be scaffolded by the teacher's feedback through interaction and conversation. The conversation between non-native students is not usually being corrected because they do not know whether their language output was correctly or appropriately produced. As Long (1996) claimed, in order for L2 learners to learn and improve their L2 learning, they need to receive feedback from their teacher. In addition, along with being exposed to comprehensible input, the students should be pushed to make attempts at L2 production (Swain, 1985, 2005).

4. Meaningless Interaction Led by Activity Types (Teacher and the Students as a Whole)

The class did diverse types of activities including: listening and answering the

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questions, reading and completing the dialogues, studying grammar (e.g., completing the sentences with object pronouns), asking and answering the questions in exercise in pairs, putting dialogue in the correct order, practicing pronunciation, writing sentences using the phrases in the box, and checking homework. All activities they did resulted in one type of conversation between the teacher and the students as a whole: Teacher's initiation and whole students' responses.

For example, in an activity (listening and answering questions), the students listened to the dialogues through the CD and answered the given questions: What are Leo's two suggestions? Which suggestion does Anna say yes to? After the students answered these questions, the teacher checked whether they answered them correctly. Researcher 2 commented on this kind of activity by writing:

> "Usually students answered the questions as a whole, but this kind of activity limited an opportunity of meaningful interaction. Not just listening and answering the questions, teacher needs to utilize other teaching strategies to maximize students' meaningful interaction. Rather than doing activity by activity given in the textbook, teacher should cut some unnecessary activities, but modify some activities to allow students to share meaningful communication with teacher or students."

Research in second language acquisition suggests that interaction, which occurs as speakers clarify their intended meaning, such as when speakers have an opportunity to negotiate and reword what they are trying to say, is a significant factor in language development (Ellis, 1994; Swain, 1995). However, meaningful interaction in this class was very restricted, and there was little opportunity for the students to expand their language repertoire. In spite of this weakness, there were three simple examples and interpretations that led to meaningful interactions.

TABLE 3
Examples of Meaningful Conversations

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
T: What's soft drink?	T: Where do you study most?	T: Where do you live?
Ss: Coke.	S: Library.	S: I live in Dadapo.
T: Yes in Korean, Soda. In English soda is quite a strong drink, so be careful.	T: In the library.	T: Where?
		S: Home.
		T: Where's that?
Ss: Oh, wow.		S: It's in Saha.
		T: Where's Saha?
		S: South Busan.

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Interpretation: This kind of conversation could give students an opportunity to learn cultural information about soft drink. The students could gain new cultural information through this discourse.	Interpretation: The student's learning could be scaffolded through the teacher's feedback on the student's response.	Interpretation: The conversation was continued by the teacher's reinforcement.

The three conversations as shown were good examples of meaningful interaction between teacher and students; however, the conversations they shared were very simple, and this kind of conversation throughout the semester was rare. Researcher 1 wrote in her reflection paper, saying:

> "There lacked in meaningful conversations in this class. Most of the time, the teacher played the CD and checked whether the students answered the questions correctly. I believe that a Korean English teacher can do this kind of work. We have to utilize native English speaking teachers at most for real communication."

This implies that more meaningful interaction should be applied, and teaching methods to accomplish this kind of interaction need to be developed by professional development or training.

Learning grammar and vocabulary was a big part of class activity including completing sentences, completing the Grammar box with certain grammatical features, and word bank. The students were asked whether grammar points they learned were helpful for their English conversations. Five students said learning grammar was very helpful for their conversation; 20 students recounted it was helpful; and eight students believed that it was not helpful. 20 students recounted vocabulary they learned in the class was helpful; and 10 students said the vocabulary was not helpful. The students were positive about grammar and vocabulary learning; however, based on the two researchers' classroom observations, we acknowledged that it was evident they learned grammar features (such as properly using prepositions and object pronouns) in a receptive way, but not in a productive way. The following table is the examples.

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TABLE 4
Exercise Examples

Look at the Grammar box and complete the sentences.	Study the dialogue in Exercise 4 again. Complete the Grammar box with the pronouns.	
Example: When is US Independence Day? It's in July. (Months)	Object pronouns	
	Subject	Object
It's on 4th July. (Dates) When is your birthday? It's on Sunday. (Days)	I	Me
	You	You
	He	_____
	She	_____
1. New Year's Eve is _____ 31st December.	It	_____
2. Thanksgiving Day in the USA is ____ the fourth Thursday _____ November.	We	Us
	They	_____

The point here is that building up linguistic knowledge through these exercises is quite different from language use in real conversation. As demonstrated, they learned grammatical points through these receptive activities; however, they did not have much opportunity to use the grammar or vocabulary they learned in authentic conversation. Because it was a conversation class, the purpose should be more focused on language use than language usage. In addition, the grammar and vocabulary learned was too easy for a number of the students with high level of language proficiency. Researcher 2 wrote in her reflection paper:

> "Linguistic features such as grammar points, or vocabulary introduced are not challenging enough for the students and it failed to elicit students' interest and motivation. Teacher needs to supplement materials to upgrade the level of linguistic and lexical items in order to challenge students so that they can move up to the next level of language learning."

To reach the potential level of learning over current level, linguistic and lexical items should be challenged as socio-cultural theory emphasizes that "mental functions that are beyond an individual's current level must be performed in collaboration with other people before they are achieved independently" (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 112). Learning items that are beyond the students' current level through interaction with others (including teacher and students) can also encourage students' interest and motivation in learning.

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Homework review was also part of class activity. Every time the researchers observed the class, the teacher checked the homework. For example, the teacher checked the homework about making questions on page 92 if they completed or not. Exercise on page 92 is as follows:

TABLE 5

Exercise Example

Making question. Each *=one missing word	Homework checking between teacher and students
1. *Bob Dylan * famous American singer?	T: *Bob Dylan * famous American singer?
2. Where * Nicole Kidman from?	Ss: Is Bob Dylan a famous American singer?
3. How old * Fidel Castro?	T: Where * Nicole Kidman from?
	Ss: Where is Nicole Kidman from?
	T: How old * Fidel Castro?
	Ss: How old is Fidel Castro?

Researcher 1 wrote in her field notes:

> "While doing this activity, the students are usually making noises and chatting, not paying attention to the homework checking. During the break, I have asked the students to do their homework, and the students sitting around me said they usually do not do their homework. Some said they did not know whether there was homework. Some said they do not care because it is easy enough to do it in class."

Researcher 2 additionally recounted that:

> "It is kind of waste of time. As students come to class without doing it and teacher seems to know it. Students do not much pay attention to it. Some students who did not do their homework did not answer the question correctly. It is a mess. Instead of doing this, the teacher needs to design more meaningful communicative activities."

Noteworthy, it is the fact that the teacher struggled to manage the classroom environment. His failure to do so led to an excessively noisy classroom. It would have been prudent and beneficial if the instructor has been sterner with learners who intentionally or otherwise interrupted the flow of the lessons.

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V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study examined a class of NEST by investigating how the students see the class with the NEST, whether teaching materials, interactional types and activity types are influential to students' learning, and educational implications drawn from the study. The study generated four main themes, including: 1) students' perceptions on the NEST's class; 2) the fit between students and language teaching and learning materials (under this category, the three sub-categories are: students' perceptions on textbook; teacher's management of teaching materials; and textbook contents); 3) potential learning opportunity led by teacher's decision on interactional types; 4) lack in meaningful interaction led by activity types.

With regard to students' perceptions on the NEST's class, the students (N=26) were satisfied with the class, and the reasons for their satisfaction include: opportunity to direct contact with NEST (N=10); opportunity to communicate with friends in class (N=5); opportunity of English learning in English (N=3); interesting and fun class (N=3); and getting away from learning anxiety (N=3). Four students were not satisfied with the class because of not understanding what the teacher said and of not having many chances to communicate with the teacher. Most of the students (N=20) believed that the class facilitated or helped their English learning; however, 17 students said that exposure to the target language was not enough. Half of the students did not understand the class very much; and half of them did not take the class serious. The students who took the class seriously believed that this class was the only way for them to interact with a native English-speaking individual and so they tried to benefit from this situation. The reasons why half students did not take the class seriously was not shown because respondents did not answer this question. The findings show that the students had positive views on the class with the NEST; unfortunately, the exposure the students received was relegated to the contrived and highly scripted language of the text as opposed to the more diverse forms of vocabulary and utterances founds in one-to-one conversations. They did not fully expose to English language. Thus, enough exposure to the target language should be provided by the teacher.

Secondly, this study found that there was a relationship between teaching materials (including textbook choice, teacher's materials adaptation, and textbook contents) and students' learning. The study showed the importance of teaching materials. For example, most of the students (N=22) did not like the textbook they utilized because of the two major reasons: defocused text construction (N=12) and relatively easy content compared to their level of language proficiency (N=9). These reasons distracted the students. On the other hand, a few students liked the textbook because it was easy so they could lower their anxiety. This implies that textbook that fits to students' level of proficiency should

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be chosen, and content or learning display of textbook is closely connected to the students' attitudes in their learning because textbooks are for students to meet their needs as learners of English (Byrd, 2001). In addition, the teacher in this study did not have authority to select his own textbook, but decision made by someone else in the division. Even if the teacher did not like the textbook much, he had to use it because it was obliged to utilize it. His ownership in terms of his own teaching was taken away so he has to have a right to choose his own textbook, at least.

The two researchers acknowledged that teaching materials should be adapted to the needs of students and also to manage the class effectively. Some good and bad examples were noticed throughout the study. PPT use was a good example of materials adaptation. The purposes of PPT use included: boosting students' understanding; being useful tool of delivering main points of lessons in a large-sized class; and drawing students' attention. This implies that adapting or developing materials can play a crucial role in filling the gap between the existing instructional materials and the need of the students and teachers. Not a good example of materials management was that the teacher covered all the parts and exercises without trimming some unnecessary exercises. Covering too much information and defocusing instruction led to students' distraction. Thus, teachers need to add, delete, modify, simplify, and reorder existing materials (Islam & Maries, 2003) to fit to the students' needs and to manage the class efficiently.

Students' views on the textbook contents leaned more toward negative on whether the contents induced their interest in learning, if the contents were helpful for their learning, and whether cultural references were appropriate to their personal interest and culture. Students in the study provided the reasons why some content was culturally inappropriate. This included western-based cultural references; different from the students own culture; unfamiliarity with celebrity names; and feeling distant or removed from the content being presented in the text. For these reasons, the students were somehow culturally disconnected to the references in the textbook, implying the importance of textbook content that are closely connected to the students' interest and related to cultural issues that are happening around them. One good example was when a Korean movie "Monster" was introduced. The teacher drew the most attention from the students throughout the semester. However, this kind of relevant cultural reference to the students' interest was limited. The finding shows that the students' learning outcomes can be maximized by modifying content to meet/bridge/approximate the cultural comfort zone of students.

The class size played an important role in the teacher's pedagogical decision on interactional type. Pair conversations between students were utilized to overcome the large-sized class. Pattern drills and conversation practice between non-native students (Koreans) were emphasized and dominant; as a consequence, there was not much

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opportunity for the students to communicate with the teacher, who was the only one native speaker. It was a kind of vicious cycle that the class size led to pair conversations between the students; pair conversations resulted in lack in genuine conversation with the teacher; and lack in learning opportunity with the native teacher did not allow the students to learn the target language. It is implied that the class size needs to be reduced to increase the ratio of speaking opportunity with the teacher, and that the teacher also needs to develop some other teaching strategies to maximize conversational opportunity with him despite the large-sized class.

Lastly, activities or exercises in the textbook also resulted in one type of conversation between the teacher and the students as a whole: teacher's initiation and whole students' responses. All the activities shown in the textbook fixed the teacher's and the students' role. The teacher usually played a role as a checker whether the students answered the questions correctly or appropriately. The students, on the other hand, played roles as respondents to answer to the teacher's questions. Thus, it was hard for the two researchers to notice meaningful interaction, which occurs as speakers clarify their intended meaning, such as when speakers have an opportunity to negotiate and reword what they are trying to say (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Long, 1996). Even if three good examples of meaningful interaction were demonstrated, this kind of interaction was very restricted, and there was little opportunity for the students' language to be stretched. Another interesting finding was that the students were positive about grammar and vocabulary learning because they are helpful for their English conversation. Based on our observations, what they meant was that they learned them in a more receptive way through the exercises, but not productive way by using them in real conversations. In addition, linguistic and lexical items were not challenging enough to reinforce the students' learning. Providing students with more challenging tasks or items can encourage students' interest and motivation in learning.

The study has some implications. First, universities need to have well-developed screening systems when hiring native English speaking teachers, especially with regards to qualifications. English teachers who have expertise to teaching English as a foreign or second language should be hired over those who have not received such specialized training. The ideal teacher would be the teacher who can manage large-sized classes with diverse proficiency levels, be able to design appropriate teaching materials, have the ability to selectively choose from multiplicity of teaching methods available to create meaningful interaction, encourage, motivate, develop and apply relevant and culturally appropriate content to spur learner interest. To design more relevant topics and issues fit to Korean students' cultural references, teachers also need to learn Korean cultures that might appeal to young generations, and this cultural learning process will be good asset for these teachers' teaching resources. Further, teachers should encourage or push

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students to talk in the target language in a manner that is grammatically accurate or socio-linguistically appropriate (Swain, 2005) by providing ample feedback, which can serve as both input and interaction.

The universities or the divisions in charge of these teachers also need to play a role as supporters. First of all, administration should try to reduce the number of participants per class so as to facilitate efficient personalized meaningful engagement and learning. The classes also need to be divided according to language proficiency levels so that learners can become aware of the importance of self-directed, autonomous learning. Teachers should be given a voice when it comes to selecting texts to be used in class.

Lastly, when universities do not hire qualified teachers because of reality in hiring system, universities need to manage these teachers in a systematic way. For example, universities should provide a conversational space for sharing teaching experiences and teaching expertise with professors and colleagues. Regular meetings and discourses should be continued throughout the semester to exchange ideas for appropriate teaching to Korean students. Consistent effort and cooperation is needed to make sure NESTs understand Korean students, culture, and learning styles, attitudes, expectations and outcomes.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: College

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