English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 16, No. 2 Summer 2010

Problems Encountered by Western English Teachers with the Paperwork and Feedback Mechanism

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Shin, Christian Youngwan. (2010). Problems encountered by Western English teachers with the paperwork and feedback mechanism. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 16*(2), 147-168.

Provided that the course offered to engineering students satisfies the accreditation requirement, faculty members are required to prepare a course syllabus and a report for each course, respectively, in the beginning and at the end of an academic term at a Korean university; native English-speaking teachers are no exception. Although the amount of work or time involved in doing the paperwork was not perceived to be of particular concern, it was found that the English teachers interviewed were quite frustrated with lack of communication regarding its purpose and use. Also troubling was the fact that instructions provided were incomplete and inaccurate. Consequently, these teachers were unable to provide entirely satisfactory documentation, a situation which rendered this quality assurance measure virtually meaningless. To take full advantage of this type of paperwork, it is urged that an inclusive environment be fostered by debriefing the teachers as needed, supplying them with comprehensible instructions, and engaging them, when possible, in pertinent decision making processes.

[native English-speaking teachers/perceptions/paperwork/course evaluation]

I. INTRODUCTION

As the English language is widely recognized as the lingua franca, teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language has gained in popularity in many Asian countries including Korea (Jeon & Lee, 2006). In conformity with a high social demand for fluent English ability, most colleges and universities in Korea require their students to take one or a series of English courses before graduation and heavily rely on native English-speaking teachers (called NESTs hereafter) to help develop the students' communication skills (Choi, 2008; Gang, 1999; Kim, 2006; Won, Lee, & Jeong, 2009).

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On account of a growing body of NESTs on college and university campuses, a number of studies that deal with their role in and impact on English education have been carried out (e.g., Chang, 2004; Gang, 1999; Kim, 2006; Kim & Jeong, 2008; Kwon, 2007; Lee, 2001; Park, 1997; Park, 1999; Won, Lee, & Jeong, 2009; You & Lee, 2008). The primary focus of these studies has largely been geared to evaluate the effectiveness of English programs as a whole (Kim, 2000), encompassing a wide range of issues affecting English programs. Many of these studies have proven valuable by shedding light on different aspects of English teaching and learning, thus capturing the big picture of the programs in question.

A paucity of studies however exists which exclusively and adequately explores the perceptions of NESTs (Choi, 2008; Hong & Jung, 2006). In other words, an in-depth account of concerns these teachers might have about teaching Korean students, performing teaching-related duties, and working with Korean teaching and administrative staff members is scarcely provided. This shortcoming inevitably forces Koreans involved in running English programs to depend on their own intuitions and experience in interacting with and supervising Western teachers, as opposed to relying on concrete understanding of the teachers' specific needs and wants in their professional capacity.

To the author's knowledge, there has been no study in the Korean educational context which attempts to scrutinize how NESTs perceive paperwork and feedback mechanism at the tertiary level of education. This present paper presents an exploratory study which taps into the NESTs' perceptions of completing the paperwork required for teaching engineering and computer science students at a Korean university. The inquiry is made with two research questions:

1. What is the perceived validity of the paperwork in relation to teaching students?
2. What difficulties, if any, are experienced in doing the paperwork?

This inquiry offers a rare opportunity to be privy to the way NESTs, and possibly Western faculty members who teach different subjects, view one of teaching-related administrative duties imposed on them by the institutions where they are employed, enhancing our understanding of their expectations regarding such paperwork.

Considering the ubiquitous presence of non-Korean faculty members on campuses, insights offered in this study can be of great value for designing and implementing quality management measures often involving some kind of documentation (mainly for the purpose of accountability). Given that such documentation of teaching practices and professional conducts can reflect, or at least show a glimpse of, what these instructors and professors do in and outside the classroom, care should be taken to make it also accessible to non-Korean teaching staff members. Such a move will increase the value of

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documentation for instructional improvement, which can in turn enhance the quality of education in the long run.

II. BACKGROUND

For the sake of better understanding the importance of making the paperwork more accessible to NESTs, a brief description of the paperwork itself is provided, and a rather significant scope of this requirement in Korean colleges and universities is illustrated. Two studies on engineering students' needs are also summarized, both underscoring the need for NESTs' active involvement in pedagogical and evaluative practices. Lastly, several pertinent management issues related to the instructional and administrative work done by NESTs at Korean institutions are briefly addressed.

1. Paperwork Required for Teaching Engineering Students

The Accreditation Board for Engineering Education of Korea (ABEEK) is a private non-governmental body which was established in 1999 to improve and assure the quality of academic programs in engineering and related disciplines in the country. By the end of 2009, this board had already accredited 513 programs, i.e., 498 engineering and 15 computer engineering/science programs, in 64 institutions of higher learning in Korea (ABEEK, 2010). Simply put, about a half of all institutions with one or more engineering programs are affected to date by the requirement set by the board. In addition, the board began in 2009 to extend the scope of its operation by accrediting an additional discipline labeled engineering technology.

In an effort to improve the quality of the academic programs, the board promulgated in 2006 a blueprint titled *ABEEK Vision 2020*. With the intention to facilitate innovation in educational practices, the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) procedure was established. This procedure was intended to provide a venue for the exchange of ideas and teaching methods between academia and industries (ABEEK, 2009). Although most of elaborate responsibilities entailed in the procedure for institutions are of no particular interest herein, one relevant procedure involves completing a set of documents for each class taught, whenever a class is designated as meeting the accreditation requirement.

More specifically, all faculty members, including NESTs, must complete the course syllabus and the CQI report (referred to hereafter as the report) online for each designated class, respectively, in the beginning and at the end of an academic term. This syllabus is largely similar to the one to be prepared for all courses that are not specifically designated (e.g., basic information such as the instructor/professor's name, office hours, and weekly

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lesson plan). Nonetheless, there are some considerable differences from the regular syllabus. For example, teaching and assessment methods are to be included in this syllabus.

The report covers a full range of teaching practices including, but not limited to, pedagogical methods, assessment criteria, the professor's course evaluation, and recommendations for course and curricular improvement (loosely translated; see Appendix A for the abridged version of the report). This online report is to be completed only for the designated courses.

2. Needs Assessment of Engineering Students

With the ever increasing rate of technological advancement and diffusion, future engineers should be able to provide reasonably detailed explanation of engineering concepts and products and make a sales pitch to prospective clients and investors on demand (Park, 2006). Because English is "the language of international science and engineering" throughout the world (Kaneko, Rozycki, & Orr, 2009, p. 1), competence in the language is nearly as crucial as one's technical knowledge and skills. Accordingly, English education is provided to all engineering students (Moon, Park, Oh, & Choi, 2009). Two noteworthy studies delineate the needs of engineering students.

In one study dealing with the needs analysis of engineering students, approximately 300 engineering students and 40 faculty members at a university participated in the survey, and 16 working professionals were interviewed (Park, 2006). After showing that the majority of engineering students were found to be eager to learn everyday English to meet the high social demand for communicative ability, the study reported that there was also a perceived need to prepare students for "real-life tasks in future" (Park, 2006, p. 191). A point is thus put forth that communicative skills for both general and specific purposes should be developed, and this could be done by adopting "a content-based teaching and learning model" which incorporates "communicative English for general and specific purposes" in the curriculum (Park, 2006, p. 191). In essence, the integration of language and content, i.e., English immersion education, is proposed.

Considering the fact that English has been increasingly chosen as the medium for presentation and discussion at Korean universities in the last decade, a Web-based survey was administered in another study to more than 350 engineering students, where their opinions on English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in their content courses were sought (Kang & Park, 2005). It was found that the perceived proficiency of these university students was directly related to their performances in EMI courses. This finding indicates that the students' proficiency in English has an immediate impact on their university course work, which carries an implication that English education has taken on a new role of growing importance. This latest move toward a heavier emphasis on EMI

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clearly calls for a greater need to teach English for an academic purpose in order to enable students to succeed in school, apart from the traditional, long-term goal of providing English education to prepare students for future encounters with English speakers outside the school.

To better prepare future engineers for highly successful careers in the international engineering community, it is proposed in the aforementioned studies that proficiency in English for everyday, academic and professional purposes ought to be achieved through a well-balanced curriculum (As an aside, the needs assessment, as done by Kaneko, Rozycki, and Orr (2009), taking into account the future career or workplace needs of these students can augment the merit of the proposal). To accomplish this, a diverse assortment of English classes should be offered to engineering students as electives in which the learners are given ample opportunities to use English in a meaningful way. NESTs can provide invaluable service in this regard, and every effort should be made to maximize the benefits derived from having native English speakers on the teaching staff.

3. Administrative Demands and Supports

As NESTs are the ones who offer learners both instruction and practice in English in the classroom, the way the teachers are managed can have a substantial influence on the quality of education provided across classes (Park, 1997). Thus, the management of NESTs can evidently play a significant role in the overall effectiveness of English programs. Nevertheless, this aspect of managing Western teachers has been largely overlooked, in practice, by Korean scholars and individuals in charge of the programs, partly owing to a propensity among them to attribute the teachers' poor performances to their lack of qualification and teaching experience (You & Lee, 2008), in case the teachers' performances come into question.

As a result, much attention is paid only to the recruitment and employment of *qualified* NESTs while the proper management of and adequate support for the teachers are often overlooked. Yet, ensuring that NESTs can carry out their duties to their best ability through management may be as important as efforts to recruit highly qualified teachers (Won, Lee, & Jeong, 2009). Indeed, little effort is evinced in English programs with regard to teacher training and professional development in order to improve the NESTs' capacity to better perform as language teachers. In the same vein, the working conditions and parameters of NESTs are not given due attention it deserves, according to You and Lee (2008) who make a suggestion that some aspects of the teachers' working environment ought to be improved to empower those who may feel marginalized and dispensable.

Provided that difficulties experienced by NESTs are not satisfactorily addressed as implied earlier, the fact that NESTs have a reputation for being unable to cooperate with

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Korean colleagues (Lee & Im, 2005) may also indicate the inadequacy of the Korean faculty and administrative staff to effectively deal with or manage Western teachers. Administrative management policies and practices sometimes create problems for these teachers (Ahn & Dickey, 1999). Simply put, with little understanding of the problems, real or perceived, facing NESTs, it would be difficult, if not seemingly impossible at times, for Korean educators and administrators to work with and supervise the Westerners in a mutually beneficial manner, a point to bear in mind.

III. METHOD

This study was conducted in 2009 as a part of a project which intended to identify and address concerns of NESTs with regard to teaching Korean learners of English at the tertiary level of education. More specifically, the present study was undertaken, from an insider's perspective, to explore the NESTs' perceptions on the paperwork required for teaching English to engineering students at a Korean university (where the author worked in the past).

1. Participants

To gain some general insights into the teaching practice of NESTs and also choose potential participants, the reports completed by all NESTs in the previous year were examined (all reports from the previous year were accessible online by faculty members at the time of study). After finding the reports of value, an e-mail request was made in writing to the director of the in-house accreditation center as to whether the reports completed by NESTs could be used for research purposes. The request was apparently discussed during a regular faculty meeting with other engineering professors, and a permission to use these reports was granted with a condition that permission from individual teachers who wrote the reports should be obtained.

All 20 teachers whose report(s) were available were contacted via e-mail to inquire whether their reports may be used for academic purposes, and 12 of them gave written permission to do so. This is a fairly high response rate considering the tendency of teachers to remain reticent out of disinterest or suspicion (Shiozawa, Simmons, & Noda, 1993). Based on the quality of the contents in the reports completed by these 12 teachers (irrespective of topics covered in the reports), six teachers (five male, one female) were invited for in-depth interview to clarify and elaborate on their written responses.

In the end, five teachers accepted the invitation. It was deemed an appropriate sample size which is defined to be "one that adequately answers" the given research questions

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(Marshall, 1998, p. 522). These native speakers of English were Caucasian male with the age ranging from late forties to mid fifties. They had been in the field of education for 18 years on average and had extensive experiences of working at the tertiary level of education. All of the participants had taught more than a few engineering and/or computer science classes during the last few years at the university (computer science classes were regarded as engineering classes in all of the reports and shall be treated accordingly in this paper for all intents and purposes). Pseudonyms were given to the participants as follows: Bruce, Carl, Jack, Pete and Rubio (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Participants' Profiles

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Years of Teaching
Bruce	late 40's	male	England	13
Carl	early 50's	male	New Zealand	17
Jack	late 40's	male	the U.S.A.	27
Pete	late 40's	male	Canada	13
Rubio	mid 50's	male	the U.S.A.	20

2. Data Collection

As stated above, the reports completed by the NESTs who granted permission were retrieved as a source of qualitative data. Based on the contents in these reports, a list of open-ended questions was compiled to guide semi-structured interviews. A time and venue for interview was arranged individually with the participants at their convenience. During the interview session, each participant was encouraged to talk freely about various issues related to teaching university students in general and doing the paperwork for engineering students in particular. More specifically, the opportunity was presented to discuss what aspects of the paperwork and feedback mechanism pleased, or possibly bothered, the participants at the university in question. The session was typically held for approximately one hour and recorded with permission on a digital voice recorder. Each participant was debriefed at the end of the session.

3. Data Analysis

As a colleague of the participants at the time of study, the author had some preconceived notions regarding participants' responses. Rather than ridding data analysis of the standpoint of self, the author decided to take full account of his own viewpoint and

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incorporate them into the analysis and interpretation of data gleaned from the reports and the transcripts of the interview recordings. Reflexivity, described as "reflection with self-critical analysis" by Somekh and Lewin, was vital in the process of exploring the subjectivity of the researcher which can have its impact on the data and their interpretations (2005, p. 348).

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and provided to the participants via e-mail for member checks. For data coding and analysis, the marginal remark approach was adopted (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Key topics that frequently emerged were coded and categorized while taking "adequate account of contextual conditions" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 82). Emergent themes in the interview were compared to the responses in the reports for data triangulation.

IV. FINDINGS

Of the two major paperwork requirements, i.e., the syllabus and the report, most participants were mainly preoccupied with the latter during the interviews (only one participant briefly mentioned the syllabus). This is mostly likely due to the fact that being a distinctive addition to teaching engineering students, the report left a greater impression in the participants' minds. Consequently, the findings below focus primarily on the report requirement.

1. General Perceptions on the Report

Most participants regarded this report as an additional paperwork that was a bit cumbersome but not so terribly unreasonable. According to Pete, some parts of the report helped him reflect on his teaching:

> Well, you know, there is a certain amount of bureaucracy involved in teaching at a large institution. And, just keeping that in mind, it doesn't really take that much time, and it's not really a bad report. . . . Some of the questions are okay in terms of . . . formulating thoughts.

However, all participants were annoyed with this requirement because it was seen as a waste of time to a greater or lesser extent. Although the majority of the participants were able to speculate possible purposes of doing this report when asked, they were puzzled over why they really had to do it, not being informed of the rationale behind this report and its application.

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> It was just an extra burden that I had to do that report, of which I really didn't see . . . the point of doing it. . . . We did pretty much [the] same thing every semester. They want the same report for every class every semester. It doesn't make any sense that I have to do that as far as I can see. I can understand that they want to maintain some kind of standard and have some reference point for the standard. But no one has ever explained to us how it's being used. You know, it's just a bit of additional paperwork. And, you know, if we're using the same material for the same classes all the time, and each time we have to submit that same report. Then it seems totally pointless. (Carl)

Without having been informed of the aim of the report, the participant above thought that the intention of the report was to maintain standard across courses offered to engineering students and thus felt dismayed that he had to repeatedly show how he conducted his classes. To him, the report was just "a burden" especially in the absence of resultant change and feedback.

There was no noticeable change over the period of several years despite requests and recommendations made by NESTs as bluntly stated by Bruce: "Nothing has changed anyway. [It is] [s]till the same." The absence of any tangible changes which could have had an impact on language teaching and learning seemed to have exacerbated the participants' attitude that the report was nothing more than a meaningless exercise of filling out blank spaces, in compliance with the university policy. Also, there had been no feedback given to the participants, a situation which will be addressed below in more detail.

Other participants thought that the report merely served the purpose of documentation for the accreditation of the engineering programs.

> I just think they [professors and administrators in the engineering departments] want to use it [the report] for evaluation purposes to see what we're doing in [our] classes, the engineering classes for the purpose of accreditation. It gives them some documentation that they can show to the accreditation committee, should they be asked. . . . For the practical value, I wonder anybody even looks at it. But, if it's for some document for accreditation, which I'm only assuming it is, then I guess they have to have something. [In case the accreditation committee demands,] "What's your English program like here?" [Then, people in the departments can produce papers in reply to the question,] "Oh, we have documents from our teachers. We have some documentation which shows what some of our teachers do in their classes." (Rubio)

This participant had a suspicion that the reports were being compiled for the sole purpose of record keeping and leaving an audit trail, without ever being read by people in

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and outside the engineering department, a notion which was shared by another participant.

> I have a feeling that nobody reads it [the report]. . . . I have a feeling it's just something for the file. In a way, it's bothersome. . . . I just don't see any communication happening here. Maybe somebody does read the report, but I don't see it. . . . My impression is that the reports are being made so that the people oversee, this might be wrong, . . . see that the reports are being made. (Pete)

Evidently, Pete also conceived that the reports were collected purely for the sake of collecting them. This seemingly sarcastic attitude was not groundless though as there was no open channel of communication whatsoever between NESTs and "the whole chain of people that are involved in" the process. The reports turned in year after year had not generated any perceivable change or feedback, and it was as if there existed an information black hole.

> Well, we [NESTs] answered that here [pointing at a sample of the syllabus]. And we wrote in [the syllabus] about our methodologies and how we are going to do. We already told them . . . the ten ways we're going to teach. And here [in the report] they are again asking us, "How do you teach it?" "How do you evaluate?" Well, look at this syllabus [waiving the copy]. We already did that work. So, this becomes what I call "monkey work," clerical work, work to fill in file cabinets. That's the problem. . . . My perspective was actually in this elaborate syllabus: We do tell them [those involved in handling the papers] what we are going to teach, how we are going to teach and what materials we are going to use. . . . I pretty much told them how I'm going to do it, and what I'm going to do. Here [in the report] they are again asking it. . . . That's when it becomes laughable. It's like "we didn't hear you the first time", but the reality is that I don't think they read it or cared the first time. I don't think they read it or cared the second time. (Jack)

This participant went on as follows:

> They [those involved in handling the papers] are filling some file cabinets so when some international engineering certification committee comes in, they can say, "Look, look at … all these English stuff we have here." But if that's not the case, then, it's their fault that the perception exists. (Jack)

Jack had a firm conviction that the reports were neither read nor given any attention they deserved. Although his reasoning behind this deduction about the relationship between the syllabus and the report might be erroneous (perhaps, a teacher was supposed to describe

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what she/he was going to do in the syllabus and then subsequently report what she/he had actually done in the report), this error as well as his conviction was obviously begotten by a lack of communication and clear instruction as he rightly put it.

Beyond a sneaking suspicion that the reports were kept in file cabinets or in boxes somewhere solely for record keeping, the participants had no idea about what would become of their reports once they completed them online and clicked the save icon on the computer screen. As evident in the words of the participants above, they doubted that the reports had any practical value (It should be mentioned that there was at least one forum, called CQI Workshop, in which a presentation of the results of various paper requirements was made to Korean faculty members, refuting the notion prevalent among the participants). Also, it should be noted that all completed reports were available online for viewing as stated earlier, a fact of which none of the participants was aware.

2. Issues Related to Doing the Report

With regard to the actual process of completing the report, most participants agreed that it was pretty straightforward with the help of the English translation of the instruction (see Appendix B). The responses were however baffling because there were several problems with the instruction provided. For one, the incompleteness of translation was found to be highly problematic.

> We [NESTs] rely heavily on these translations. And, when they say things like "the ability of English conversation in suitable situation," or when it says "the ability of English conversation with terms desired" [in the report], these things require more clarification. So, you go to the person [one of the teaching assistants] in the office [that supports NESTs] and ask, "What are they talking about?" And they [the teaching assistants] give you their [take] or she [one of them] gives you her take on what this means.

As pointed out by Jack above, the meanings of instruction were rather ambiguous due to patchy translation, a situation which probably forced NESTs to arbitrarily make sense of or read into what was being asked (it should also be noted that no additional instruction was provided in writing or verbally, probably based on a mistaken assumption that the translated instruction was self-explanatory). That is one of the reasons why it was puzzling how these teachers were able to decipher the meaning behind the largely incomprehensible instruction and follow it with little trouble.

Not only were English equivalents incomplete but they were also in some instances far from their intended meanings. For example, "[r]equest about [*sic*] entire [*sic*] your course ex) the way to evaluate – I want to change … ect.. [*sic*]" was given as the English

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equivalent when it should have been translated as "recommendations for curriculum improvement and support" (see Appendix A and B for comparison). When a question of who translated the instruction in the report was casually posed, one of the two teaching assistants who manned the office that supported NESTs explained that the document was originally translated by a former teaching assistant, because the engineering department declined to provide translation despite multiple requests. The entirety of this claim could not be confirmed, but two things became clear that someone with a fairly low proficiency had apparently translated the instruction (from looking at the translation) and that the teaching assistants apparently had no qualms about the quality of translation.

Another concern was owing to the fact that relevant materials necessary for the completion of the report were not accessible as they were only available in Korean which was beyond the working knowledge of nearly every participant. Pete pointed out below that the students' comments—given as a part of course evaluation— were left in Korean, and it was very difficult for him to comprehend his students' comments. Although he understood that the proficiency levels of his students were not high enough for them to articulate their thoughts in English, he wished he was able to fully grasp the students' comments.

> The most difficult part is . . . about the students' comments and talking about the students' comments. . . . [T]his is my limitation really. Because I cannot read the students', I cannot really understand the students' comments. . . . I don't really know for sure what the students think. . . . [I]t's a problem in terms of handling that part of the report accurately because I don't really know for sure what I'm responding to.

Moreover, none of the questions themselves—being asked of students on their course evaluation—were available in English, and thus those who were unable to read Korean probably had to trouble someone to help translate and/or paraphrase the questions (to grasp the gist). Without having a clear idea of what questions were being answered by students, the results of course evaluation cannot possibly serve any meaningful purpose. For NESTs, because the outcome of course evaluation—represented by some obscure scores—could be nothing but a set of meaningless numbers, the questions ought to be made available in English as articulated by Jack.

> I don't even know what . . . the questions students answer. We have the clerks [teaching assistants] downstairs sitting and reading the Agatha Christie for half the day. It wouldn't take them forever to type this up in English. At E University [a previous workplace], we had four clerks in the office, [and] basically the whole web site was in English for us. They had translated everything. So, I knew the fourteen questions that students were

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> asked [at the previous workplace]. And then, they gave a scale of 1 to 5. Here [at the university in question], I don't even know what the scale is. . . . they give us a number [for each course taught]. Here is your evaluation. And I. . . . [the participant crumples a piece of paper and tosses it aside]. I don't know what it means. I don't care. Put it in some file. It becomes irrelevant like this [report] almost.

As incredulous as it may sound, this participant was at first unaware that a list of the questions (in Korean, of course) was available online. Although the list was just one click away, he probably failed to register the option of viewing the questions owing to his inability to read Korean. Besides, he and other participants were not sure of how to interpret evaluation scores given, as alluded to above. Incidentally, the teaching assistants themselves were not certain of what the scores meant either.

In the end, the course evaluation held no practical value for many participants even though they were keenly interested in getting feedback and using it to tailor their teaching practices to meet the specific needs of their students. While a couple of the participants knew where to find the course evaluation scores, many NESTs in the English program were probably accustomed to seeing their scores as a part of a document which was printed, signed and submitted annually for performance review and evaluation, never being informed of where to find this particular information.

Jack vaguely recalled that he was also unable to look up the course evaluation at the time of doing one part under the heading of "self-assessment (reference to students' evaluation)" in the last section of the report.

> When I have to go in [to the office] and ask, "What do you mean by this?" Well, that's telling. . . . [O]bviously, there's something wrong here [flipping through the sample pages of the report]. Well, this one I still don't understand. I have no idea what the hell that was. Um, where do they keep the reference to evaluation, the reference to students' evaluation? We don't see the students' evaluation when we're doing the report. . . . They're doing the evaluation when they're checking for their grade? . . . But we do this [report] before we put their grades in. So, we cannot reference as they haven't done it [the evaluation] yet.

The participant resented the whole situation because it was a waste of a course evaluation system, potentially a great learning tool for teachers. Individual teachers could use the outcome of evaluation as a basis for improvement, and it could be further utilized for professional development of all teachers. Effort should be made to provide feedback in a way the NESTs can truly understand and appreciate.

To recap, the report was viewed chiefly as a futile and pointless exercise because, to the participants' knowledge, this report apparently served no particular purpose to their

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knowledge. More specifically, the following problems existed: (a) the goals, usage and storage of the report remained unknown; (b) the translation of instructions in the report yielded ambiguous and inaccurate meanings; and (c) supporting materials necessary for the completion of the report—i.e., the questions asked of students on the course evaluation, the meaning of course evaluation scores, and students' comments—were beyond NESTs' comprehension.

V. DISCUSSION

Perhaps, a systematic approach to solve the aforementioned problems needs to be adopted in order to help NESTs complete the syllabus and the report as intended. Once the problems are resolved, it will be possible to obtain a clear picture of both what these English teachers do and what they should do in their classes. Until then, the documents will serve no useful purpose and the investment of time and resources to do the paperwork will not be fully justified. In this section, some measures to tackle and rectify the problems are discussed, and a reflection is provided to keep the present study in perspective.

1. Facilitating Communication

The exploration of the participants' perceptions indicated that there were some problems with doing the report. Most of these problems could have been easily prevented at the outset if NESTs were involved in the decision making process (You & Lee, 2008), prior to the implementation of this quality assurance measure.

> They [those who oversee the report] . . . have not been communicative enough. This is not communication. Do this. That's what you tell cleaning women. Clean this floor. Clean that sink. [With] [p]rofessionally trained educators, you first invite them into the educational process. . . . Well, we aren't invited into any process, and I guarantee you not one native [English] speaker was invited into this process. I'm convinced of that. And, um, the school of engineering was told, "This is what you should do to get this kind of international certification." And somebody translated some text and came up with this monster. They lost the spirit of education in it because this has absolutely nothing to do with education. Um, that's about my biggest scrape about the paperwork. (Jack)

The representative of NESTs could have been invited to have a discussion with administrators and faculty members who were in positions to adopt, implement and change policies. These teachers could in turn pass on information to other teachers and help make

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their voices heard. This way, all NESTs could have had an opportunity to understand the details of the requirement and contribute their input and ideas into it.

Such an arrangement can be mutually beneficial. Besides becoming knowledgeable about the details of the requirement, NESTs would have been highly motivated to do the paperwork as intended because the active involvement could instill a sense of ownership into them according to Eckley (as cited in You & Lee, 2008), resulting in superior syllabuses and reports to the ones done purely for the sake of meeting the minimal requirement. When the records are carefully prepared, they can be readily utilized by the faculty in both the engineering and the foreign language education departments for assessing the NESTs' teaching practices and gaining insights into how language classes are conducted. New insights could then be passed on to individual teachers for reflection and further discussion on their own. Yet, for the reason that the requirement might have been more or less standardized across engineering programs at Korean institutions of higher learning, it would have been technically infeasible in reality to get NESTs involved from the outset.

Perhaps, a more realistic approach should have been, and should be still, to provide a forum for discussion between the language teachers and those who oversee the accreditation. For example, a compulsory workshop can be held annually or biannually as a venue for establishing a channel of communication and laying the foundations for adequate two-way communication. The success of relatively large English programs may depend on whether a channel of communication between NESTs and those involved in management is established or not to a large degree (J. –E. Park, 1997). A chance for NESTs and people in authority to make decisions by consensus or strive to do so is far preferable to a top-down approach to decision-making (Gang, 1999). At the workshop, engineering professors can discuss matters related to the documentation or other relevant issues on the agenda, address any questions that NESTs might have, and make specific requests to the teachers.

On a cautionary note, discussion should be regarded as a means to an end rather than the end itself. In other words, discussion should be productive lest NESTs should perceive it "all talk and no action." As evidence of good faith, it is vital for the teachers to recognize that their questions, comments and suggestions are being addressed and put into use in a meaningful way, bearing fruits and bringing about positive changes. In case it is not feasible to incorporate their thoughts and viewpoints due to financial, administrative and/or other constraints, a reasonable explanation should be offered so that viable alternatives can be explored together to the point where a consensus is reached.

Efforts to abide by any kind of agreements and deals with the teachers need to be made. The following anecdote given by Rubio exemplifies a situation in which NESTs' opinions were asked, only to be ignored without good cause. NESTs at one university where Rubio

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used to work were asked to give their opinions as to the selection of a new textbook for the first-year English course.

> [T]he funny thing was all the teachers voted to keep the textbook. . . . 29 teachers, all voted unanimously to keep the textbook. . . . But they changed it anyway. They went to something called [the title of a new textbook], but that textbook is gone out of print already. Yeah, the one that they changed, it's out of print. . . . I have [a] sneaking suspicion that somebody was getting some kickback somewhere.

After this incident, many teachers—being turned off by the act of flagrant disregard—reportedly withdrew from school functions. There is no need to put on a show of caring about the teachers' thoughts and feelings if a decision is already made or would be made notwithstanding the teachers' thoughts, opinions and preferences.

With a channel of communication established, there has to be a means of close liaison. In addition to a seminar or workshop given on a regular basis for the exchange of information, there has to be a system of communication between individual NESTs and people who manage the documents as the need arises (J. –E. Park, 1997). Although being in direct contact with one another would be ideal, this setup could cause considerable confusion over who is ultimately responsible for responding to a group of teachers with different ideas about how things should be done. Furthermore, it could be troublesome for the ones in management positions, provided that the invitation unleashes an inflow of concerns and grievances (Yom, 1997).

In this regard, teaching assistants or the equivalent, being the first point of contact for NESTs, could serve as a go-between—only if they are capable of providing satisfactory explanations adequately and willing to seek requested information with due diligence whenever it is necessary. Rather than assuming the role of all-knowing supervisors to dish out presumptuous advice, teaching assistants should play a part in assisting NESTs in carrying out their duties by obtaining factual, reliable information and passing it on to the teachers.

2. Slotting Other Pieces of the Puzzle into Place

While communication is the key to the success of the quality assurance program currently in place, there are other practical issues to consider. First, without making an assumption that NESTs would eventually find out what they need to know, all pertinent information should be made available in English as put forward by Grass and Ilon: "a top priority of the institution should be to assure that all instruction-related materials are translated" into English so that foreign faculty can "operate independently on this front"

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(2009, p. 190). It would be prudent to have native English speakers proofread and copy-edit translated texts as well, to reduce errors in translation. Translated materials can be distributed to NESTs in the form of brochures or be made accessible online.

As NESTs "are functioning at work in English all the time" as pointed out by Pete and tend to socialize with Western expatriates after work in general, they are not particularly proficient in the Korean language. Therefore, effort should be made to compensate for their lack of Korean to the extent that they can achieve success as educators. Korean universities ought not to make the assumption that information will be automatically passed on to these teachers in time (Grass & Ilon, 2009). Accurate and up-to-date information should be fully communicated in English.

Another issue concerns how the participants regarded the completion of the documents, i.e., the course syllabus and the report, as extra work because it was neither entailed in their job description nor mentioned during the interview and orientation in the beginning of their employment. Therefore, it may be prudent to explicitly list all the things required of NESTs as an extension of an employment contract which frequently does not, and cannot, delineate all responsibilities and privileges. When their responsibilities besides teaching and office hours are spelled out from the outset, the teachers would not feel short-changed for their time involvement, nor would they feel that they had been unfairly exploited.

However, such list should be concise enough and refrain from listing every minute responsibility a teacher might or might not need to perform during his/her period of employment. Inserting a clause such as "the list is subject to change" at the end of the list is probably more acceptable to NESTs. For Westerners who generally view a written contract as a binding agreement, the superfluous can be rather distasteful.

3. Putting the Findings into Perspective

It is important to keep in mind that the intention of the present paper was not to criticize a reporting practice done at one particularly university, even though it was anticipated, in the study design phase, that findings could expose the system's complacency in assuming that all faculty members can successfully document their work with minimal instruction or inadequate supervision. If that were indeed the study's aim, then the discussion given here would hold little value for the reader in the field of language education. Rather, it was intended to shed light on the Western teachers' expectations of and specific needs for doing work-related documentation, using the report as an example.

Moreover, while the author can attest to a fact that an accurate description of the difficulties in doing the paperwork was given by the participants, their viewpoints do not necessarily represent the experiences of all NESTs working in the program as the sample for the study was purposively selected. To corroborate the findings, a questionnaire with a

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combination of Likert rating scale and open-ended questions—dealing with issues pertaining to the documentation work—can be designed and administered to all teachers in the program, followed by focus group interview sessions to clarify and expand on the results of this survey. Such study would precipitate a discussion among faculty members and could prompt an effort to improve and optimize documentation practices.

Also to be clarified is the narrow scope of this study owing to the study design. Considering that the perceptions of several NESTs working at one particular university were explored, its findings are contextualized and may not be generalized to represent the efficacy of the quality assurance system in and outside the institution beyond the English program in question. On the other hand, the study findings evidently indicate that administrative policies and practices in many Korean institutions of higher education may be laden with problems from the perspective of Western faculty members, warranting further study to examine the working conditions and parameters in Korea and other Asian countries with similar educational contexts.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study takes a look at a course evaluation procedure involving NESTs at a Korean institution of higher education. While recommendations and suggestions provided by these teachers can obviously complement evaluations performed by students and definitely contribute to quality management of English education, several impediments stand in the way of the procedure's success, as identified from the perspective of NESTs. Particularly troubling is NESTs' belief in the futility of their efforts with regard to the self-reported course and curriculum evaluations, a belief which stems from a perceived indifference on the part of management who apparently fails to acknowledge the teachers' effort, and even to provide the means for successful completion of required paperwork.

This paper also proposes several measures for improvement, which, when taken together, will allow foreign faculty members to better reflect on and account for their teaching practices, and generate practical input for improving English curricula over time. Input from these teachers, when coupled with the institution's commitment to actively respond to it, can help improve the effectiveness of English education over time. More importantly, in the face of globalization and internalization, these measures would facilitate discussion on educational philosophies and practices between Korean and non-Korean faculty members, making a new beginning on the road to success in higher education nationwide.

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Appendix A

Abridged Version of the Report

* 교과목 교육목적

* 학습성과별 수업 및 평가방법

프로그램 학습성과	수업진행 방법	평가방법
효과적으로 의사를 전달할 수 있는 능력		
평생교육에 대한 필요성의 인식과 평생교육에 참여할 수 있는 능력		
세계문화에 대한 이해와 국제적으로 협동할 수 있는 능력		

1. 강의평가에 의한 요청사항
2. 교과목에 대한 교수 자체 평가
3. 교과목의 개선 및 지원 요청사항
4. 교과과정 개선 및 지원 요청사항
5. 위 각 항목의 전 학기 요청사항에 대한 반영결과

Appendix B

English Translation Typed over Korean Instruction

* [No translation provided]

* [No translation provided]

[No translation provided]	The way to teach[1]	The way to evaluate[2]
The practical ability of English conversation		
The ability of English conversation with the terms desired		
The ability of English conversation in suitable [*sic*] situation[3]		

1. Request of students [*sic*] about your class (reference [*sic*] to evaluation)[4]
2. Self-assessment (reference [*sic*] to students' evaluation)
   ex) your teaching style, ect.[5] [*sic*]
3. What you want to improve in your classes [*sic*]
4. Request about [*sic*] entire [*sic*] your course
   ex) the way to evaluate – I want to change … ect.. [*sic*]
5. Just write down "none"

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Note. The following words were also handwritten on the paper copy possibly for clarification:

1. How did you teach?
2. How did you evaluate for your Ss [*sic*] grades?
3. How much your Ss will [*sic*] use English-Conversation [*sic*] in their life … [*sic*]; (about future) [*sic*]
4. ignore it
5. From here, Do it! [*sic*]

Examples in: English and Korean
Applicable Language: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary

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Received in April, 2010
Reviewed in May, 2010
Revised version received in June, 2010

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