

《論文》

アメリカのノンネイティブ英作文ティーチングアシスタントの
アイデンティティについて

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Constructing Identity as a Nonnative English Teacher at a U.S. University

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Nonnative graduate assistant teachers, Social identity, Language ideologies

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the identity construction of a nonnative graduate teaching assistant teaching English composition in a U.S. public university. This uses a phenomenological case study approach to analyze the experience of the research participant in relation to wider language ideologies and practices. The results of the study reveal that the nonnative teacher's identity construction, with its dynamic and contradictory nature, was challenging and remains changing, and growing over time. This study also suggests that the global spread of English has produced highly proficient nonnative speaker English professionals.

Introduction

It is to be expected that in England, the U.S, Canada and the other English language "Inner Circle" countries (Kachru, 1985) the majority of English teachers are native English speakers.

However, a phenomenon that attracts attention in North America is the fact that universities have been increasingly assigning freshman English composition courses to a growing number of nonnative graduate assistant teachers (GATs). Affirming this phenomenon, Braine (2010) points out that no discussion of the global spread of English is complete without reference to the movement of nonnative speaker English teachers, who are not only increasing in number in the inner circle, but voicing their teaching concerns in TESOL, the largest international organization of English teachers in the world.

At the same time, the various approaches to current applied linguistics research seek to explore native-nonnative distinctions in competence, philosophy, pedagogy, hiring process, and other practical and theoretical issues. It is an extremely murky and hotly debated area. In the end, however, the most important issue for nonnative English teachers is to establish a claim to professional teaching competency in the eyes of students and colleagues alike. In short, it is a matter of perceived identity and there

is almost no research that addresses this issue head on.

Thus, this study explores the experiences of a female nonnative GAT in her initial efforts to establish her identity as a qualified, competent teaching professional at a large American state university in the early 2000's.

Theoretical underpinnings of the study

The theoretical underpinnings of the study derive from three related bodies of knowledge: (1) native-nonnative dichotomies, (2) social identity, and (3) the study of language ideologies and their contextualization in the U.S. Regarding the native-nonnative dichotomy, a number of controversial issues have been generated in the area of applied linguistics. Among them, three are relevant for the study.

First, with the globalization of English and the recognition of World Englishes, the existence of a mere native-nonnative dichotomy has been challenged (Kachru and Nelson 1996). Kachru and Nelson approached the issue from the sociolinguistic grounds of the historical spread of English, and delineate the use of English in a global context in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles. By introducing a variety of the uses of English within each circle, they insist that every language variety can develop its linguistic and sociolinguistic norms that meet the needs of a particular speech community. They point out that the spread of English in these circles has created highly proficient speakers and professionals in English studies and second language education. Thus, Kachru and Nelson reject the idea of the perpetuation of the native-nonnative distinction at both a national and individual level; they argue that such a dichotomy creates a linguistic caste system and perpetuates both monolingual and

monocultural perspectives.

Second, the native-nonnative distinction is seen as a sociolinguistic construct that can be overcome under certain circumstances (Davies, 1991). Davies emphasizes a sociolinguistic aspect by placing the native-nonnative division within the context of larger power relations. He posits that the native-nonnative distinction, "like all majority-minority power relations, is at bottom one of confidence and identity" (pp.166-167). He also contends that for the L2 learner "the native speaker must represent a model and goal" (p.165). However, Davies believes that the L2 learner can acquire native linguistic competence of a language even though the L2 learner is out of the L1 environment. Thus, "successful second language learners can choose native speaker membership" (p.165).

Third, the native-nonnative distinction has been more or less embedded in the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession (Medgyes, 1994). Medgyes sees the native-nonnative contrast as a clear, categorical distinction even though he acknowledges the problems in labeling native and nonnative speakers of English in TESOL. He sees native speakers as those "who have acquired English in comparison with non-native speakers who are still acquiring" (p.12). He states that recognizing such differences should be an asset because those who see themselves as nonnative English teachers can work toward becoming native speakers. He does not conclude, however, that native speakers are necessarily more effective English language teachers. For example, he insists that nonnative speakers can "show empathy, provide a good model for imitation, and teach effective language learning strategies" (p.69). However, Medgyes' position seems to focus only on the difference of linguistic competence between native and nonnative English speakers.

All in all, Kachru and Nelson, Davies, and Medgyes' theoretical stances seem to acknowledge that determining the native/nonnative speaker construct is a difficult task that is not clear-cut. They eventually conclude that the perceptions of identity are central to the issues of the nonnative English teacher's profession. Thus, social identity theories are central to this study.

Among various disciplines in the research of social identity, including social psychology, linguistics, and second language acquisition studies, Peirce's (1995) social identity theory, which places a special emphasis on the social context for the language learner to invest in, is persuasive. She relies on the conception of social identity as multiple, a site of struggle, and changing over time, and proposes a concept of the language learner as "having a complex social identity that must be understood with reference to large and frequently inequitable social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social interaction" (p.13). For her, identity is "a site of struggle, produced in a variety of social situations, and open to change" (pp.14-15). Thus, her identity theory assumes that "power relations play a crucial role in social interaction between language learners and target language speakers" (p.12), and posits particular competing discourse struggles in which a person in a marginalized position might resist the subject position and even set up a counter-discourse that creates a powerful subject position. Affirming Peirce's theoretical stances of social identity, Kubota (2002), as a nonnative second-language specialist, demonstrates a strategy of setting up a counter-discourse that justifies marginality to advocate for diversity in U.S. higher education.

Peirce's identity theory focuses on immigrant women in Canada and can apply to the nonnative teacher's construction of identity,

because as with immigrants, nonnative English teachers come from foreign countries and need to construct their identity in a new social world. Given Peirce's theoretical stance, nonnative English teachers have complex multiple social identities, constantly organizing and reorganizing who they are against the social world that might have inequitable social structures. Therefore, the last theoretical stance to be explored is the social world wherein the nonnative teacher lives-in this case the context of dominant language ideologies in the United States.

Wiley and Lukes (1996) introduce two popularly accepted language ideologies that exist in the United States. One of them is the ideology of Standard English, which positions speakers of different varieties of the same language within a social hierarchy, and stresses the superiority of an unaccented variety of English. Lippi-Green (1994) also lists factors of discrimination based on English accents and points out that when members of a dominant language group communicate with people with non-standard accents, they tend to reject their role as a listener, quickly blaming the other for any communication difficulty and causing a barrier to effective communication. Thus, nonnative English teachers may conflict with the ideology of Standard English in the United States because they are multilingual and users of different varieties of English. However, they need to construct their own identities against those language ideologies.

The Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the identity construction of a nonnative GAT as a qualified, competent teaching professional in U.S. higher education. This study focused on a female Chinese graduate teaching assistant

teaching freshman composition to native and nonnative students at a major southwestern public university in the U.S. in the early 2000's.

Of the three qualitative approaches available, I decided to combine two of them. A phenomenological case study, using in-depth interviews and classroom observations, is one of the best ways to explore the identity construction of non-native GATs because it examines their lived experiences of teaching practices. Rossman and Rallis (1998) present the three broad qualitative approaches as: (1) ethnographies that seek to understand the culture of people or places; (2) case studies that seek to understand a larger phenomenon through intensive study of one specific instance; and (3) phenomenological studies that seek to understand the lived experience of a small number of people. Merriam (1998) states that phenomenology is concerned with the essence or basic structure of a phenomenon, and uses data that are the participant's and the investigator's firsthand experience of the phenomenon. Merriam also describes a case study as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system, and can be combined with other types of qualitative research.

In addition, Braine (2010) points out that the narratives of nonnative English teachers obtained by in-depth interviews that reveal backgrounds including education and training should be studied by applied linguists because every life story in narratives can add depth to the research base on English language teaching. He also suggests such narrative studies would provide essential data useful for curriculum design and teacher education. Furthermore, he emphasizes that the publication of these narratives empowers these often marginalized teachers by giving

them a "voice" and encourages them to incorporate their unique backgrounds and experiences into their teaching practices.

This study combines a case study with a phenomenological study, because it needs to explore a single entity of phenomena, that is to say, a nonnative GATs in U.S. higher education and explore how she constructs her own identity through self-reflections on her lived experiences of teaching. In terms of qualitative data collection procedures, the study relies on phenomenological in-depth interviews and classroom observations. The combination of these approaches to the data is of great help to increase the validity and reliability of the study.

The participant

The participant, Ms. J was raised in China. Upon graduation from a Chinese university with a degree in English language and literature, she began to teach English at the university level there. After teaching for six years, she then went to Canada and earned an MA in applied linguistics. After studying in Canada, she enrolled in the applied linguistics program as a doctoral student at a U.S. public university. There she began teaching freshman English composition to both native and nonnative English speaking students in the fall of 2002. Ms. J was 31 years old at the time of the study.

Procedure

The three-step phenomenological interviewing method developed by Seidman (1998) was used for the study. The first interview explored the participant's language learning and teaching experience from the past to the present (focused life history). The second interview reconstructed

Table 1. Information for the participant

PARTICIPANT	BIRTH PLACE	FIRST LANGUAGE	OTHER LANGUAGES LEARNED	AGE OF ARRIVAL IN NORTH AMERICA	FRIST EXPOSURE TO ENGLISH	CONTEXT OF FIRST EXPOSURE TO ENGLISH
Ms. J	China	Chinese	French	27	Junior high school	EFL

the details of the participant's current language learning and teaching experience (the details of experience). The third interview focused on the meaning of the participant's language learning and teaching experience (reflection on meaning). Furthermore, the fourth interview was conducted to explore again the relationship between being a nonnative speaker of English and teaching in the U.S. context (member checks with the participant) (see interview questions in Appendix A). The author reviewed the transcripts of the in-depth interviews several times and marked those passages that stood out as interesting and important regarding the participant's experiences in learning and teaching English. The interview data were divided into the following categories: Ms. J's cultural background and educational history, the social world of standard English ideology, Ms. J's process of adaptive transformation, creating a counter-discourse, and Ms. J's growth as a nonnative GAT. These interview data were supported by the notes of the author's classroom observations. The interviews are reported verbatim, including hesitations, repetitions, and grammatical errors.

Findings and Discussion

Ms. J's Cultural background and Educational History

The author conducted interviews with Ms. J during the spring semester 2003, with one additional interview in spring 2004. Ms. J was entering into her second semester as a nonnative

English teacher during the interview period. From elementary through university, Ms. J always attended some of the top schools in China, and was supported by parents who were both teachers:

"So I was born in a small city in China, but I am lucky because both of my parents, they are teachers, and so my mother works in a primary school, so I entered the same primary school, you know, where my mother worked and it is one of the best primary schools in our cities... I went to the middle school where my father worked and once again, this is we can say, one of the best, and so I went to high school... once again, the high school I entered is the best in that city, and so I think I could receive, you know, better education, comparatively speaking in my surrounding, you know, in my community, and then I entered, you know, the matriculation examination of China, you know, after you graduated from high school, all the Chinese students had to take the same examination and you will be assigned to university according to your scores you got from that examination... I didn't get quite a high score from the examination, and so I didn't enter the best university in China, but I think that university, we can say, this is a normal university, but it kind of ranks five or six in China of all the normal universities, and I chose English as my major because I like

English a lot.” (Ms. J, first interview, March 12, 2003)

Through iterative interviews, I sensed Ms. J's high intelligence because she always uttered her opinions very clearly with a clear and loud voice and responded to my questions precisely and quickly, which eventually produced long and rich interview data. Ms. J's parents were teachers by profession (a highly respected profession in Asian countries), and were very supportive of her education. Ms. J recalls her father's attitude toward education when she was in middle school.

“In second grade of middle school, I failed in the first quiz of the physics. I was so frightened and I didn't dare to tell my father, but then later on he knew all about this one, and you know, it's kind, you should have let me know earlier and so we could think about some way to help you, and so they were really supportive and they think, ok, you should, and you must receive good education, and to Chinese people, to a lot of Chinese people, you know, like receiving good education is the only way to improve your situation, and get you a decent job in the future, yeah, they are quite supportive.” (Ms. J, first interview, March 12, 2003)

This excerpt shows that Ms. J's father accepted her failure in the exam and gave her suggestions to help her, and that her parents held a strong belief that providing good education is the only way for their children to be successful in the future.

Ms. J began starting learning English in middle school and majored in English when she entered her first university. Ms. J reflects

on her experiences that made her feel good about learning English.

“When I first started learning English, I was rather lucky to have a teacher who was regarded as rather good at the middle school... praised me for the pronunciation, or for the progress I made in learning English... I guess this might be the primary initiative... so you are praised by the teacher, so your interest in this subject is increased... and my elder brother... in order to foster my interest... he would bring me little short stories written in English, so I was eager to know what was talked about, you just read and read and then I know, oh, my English is better than the other classmates and I am proud of myself ...” (Ms. J, second interview, April 9, 2003)

An encounter with a good English teacher directed Ms. J toward continuing English studies. Ms. J's elder brother, who was in medical school at that time, also motivated her to study English. After graduation from high school, Ms. J entered Central China Normal University in order to continue studying English comprehensively. She began to study English intensively, took core courses to develop four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and also took special courses, such as linguistics, socio-linguistics, American literature, English literature, translation, and language pedagogy. Pedagogy was the university's particular focus because it was a school to train students to be teachers. While there, she also had the opportunity to learn conversational English from American native speakers. In the university, Ms. J's approach to English studies changed from passive, such

as memorization of English grammar and vocabulary to active, such as expressing herself creatively in English. She obtained her BA in English Language and Literature in 1993. Since Ms. J was recognized one of the best students at the university, she was offered a teaching position at the same place.

“Oh, yeah, so, after I graduated from this university, you know, this system in China, they would hire the best student and employed them to teach in the same university in the same department, so I was just hired as a teacher of English to teach university students in China and their major is English.” (Ms. J, first interview, March 12, 2003)

At her alma mater, Ms. J taught core courses, such as intensive reading, writing, text analysis, and basic English grammar for six years.

Next Ms. J went to Canada and enrolled in the Applied Linguistics MA program at York University. Her Applied Linguistics training included second language acquisition theory and teaching, language assessment, language in contact, culture and education, quantitative and qualitative methods, research designs, and language development. She obtained her MA at York University in 18 months, graduating in 2000. Continuing her pursuit of second language acquisition expertise, she entered the Applied Linguistics Ph.D program at the aforementioned large public university in the U.S., supported by an international graduate assistantship to teach freshman English composition.

When I interviewed Ms. J, she was very active serving on a sub-committee of international graduate assistant teachers in English Graduate Union, in addition to her teaching and PhD studies. Furthermore, Ms. J planned to collect

data from her students in order to examine to what extent computer technology could enhance students' academic writing. Ms. J's cultural and educational history represents a typical story of a top school student who had received a good education in both domestic and foreign educational environments. Affirming Kachru and Nelson (1996), Ms. J's educational history demonstrates that the global spread of English has created highly proficient speakers and professionals in English studies and second language education.

Social World of Standard English Ideology

This section examines the social world in which Ms. J lives. Based on the study of language use of immigrant women in Canada, Peirce (1995) insists that inequitable power relations in the social world affect social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers. This study also places emphasis on the social world because nonnative GATs came to a new social world (the United States of America) from foreign countries like immigrants, and endeavored to construct their identities with the use of English, their second language, in a social world that might be comprised of inequitable social structures. The following excerpt depicts the social world of standard English ideology that might be a manifestation of inequitable social structures mediated through language.

“Students always have the written evaluation of the instructor... And I was kind of really depressed when I saw some of the students, “I cannot understand her English because of her accents, she is hard to understand, I don't know what she wants,”... They didn't pay attention in class.” (Ms. J, second

interview, April 9, 2003)

As a matter of course, a substantial part of a nonnative GAT's social world is manifested through interactions with her students in teaching practice. Through her teaching practice, Ms. J noticed her accent, the carryover of her native language intonation into English, might cause communication problems with her native English-speaking students who tended to reject their role as listeners and complain about accents. Ms. J's experience seems to support the study of Lippi-Green (1994) which found that the most salient feature of standard English ideology is to suppress variation of all kinds. Considering Lippi-Green's study and Ms. J's experience, the social world of standard English ideology seems to have a direct influence on the identity construction of nonnative GATs.

Ms. J's process of adaptive transformation

As a nonnative GAT, Ms. J underwent significant transition from her home country to North America, experiencing difficulty in adapting to the new teaching environment. She needed to go through a process of adaptive transformation through semesters. Liu (2004), as a nonnative English speaking professional himself, defines adaptive cultural transformation competence as follows.

Adaptive cultural transformation competence is the knowledge that enables an individual to communicate appropriately and effectively in the target culture by expanding his or her social identity to one that blends the new set of values, habits, and social norms endorsed in the target culture with those in the home culture (p.37).

In her teaching practice, Ms. J had difficulty

adapting to the U.S. paradigm of student-centered teaching, and experienced the following challenges.

“That is, to be precise, here we are using a kind of, you know process writing, and so you write from first draft to second draft, and peer review, you know, student and teacher conference, this is something I have never done before in all of my English learning till now, so when I learned writing, we were not learning in this way, and so challenge is that you learn something and then, you teach what you learned currently to the students. So it's not like something you have already had in mind, and so you just use it, but first of all you have to learn what to teach, and then you teach what you learned immediately to the students. This is a challenge. (Ms. J, first interview, March 12, 2003)

To adapt to this new approach toward teaching, she had to spend extra time learning the accepted essay writing process, as well as how to organize peer reviews and teacher conferences in order to meet the expectations of both of her students and the university. At the same time, through her teaching practice, Ms. J began to notice that her previous values and beliefs about teaching style did not work well in the new teaching environment. Changing the teaching style from teacher-centered to student centered comprised the essence of her adaptive transformation.

“Ok, if I try to speak from the beginning to the end for fifty minutes, students feel impatient... I will lose them. And this is something that happened to me last semester

... because of my teaching experience in China, and also in Japan, so teachers tend to speak a lot, and students just take notes from the lecture... I figured out this didn't work so well here. You could teach them something, but one thing is after you give this knowledge, you just ask students to practice in pair work or in group work, discuss... do not teach from the beginning to the end... if they do not practice something they learned in the class, they do not actually learn it." (Ms. J, second interview, April 9, 2003)

"So this semester, I decided that I would like to have more student and student communication instead of me being the main speaker in class, so I do want my students to be active in the class." (Ms. J, fourth interview, January 15, 2004)

To repeat, Ms. J's heritage is Chinese. In Asian tradition, the teacher is the authority and tends to speak unilaterally in front of the students. In addition, the class size is usually big in China and is not suitable for group discussion anyway. Freshman English composition classes in the U.S. typically run about 20 students. Thus, once Ms. J learned how to do it, she found student-centered teaching, such as group discussions, to be very effective.

I focused on observing Ms. J's classes during the fall semester 2003 when she was entering her teaching third semester. The author repeatedly noted that, "Ms. J always explained things clearly", or that, "the students actively participated in classroom activities". The following comment from the field notes presents a good example of group discussion.

"The teacher (Ms. J) asked each student to find a partner and also asked him or

her to find topics. The students formed a group of two and began to discuss their topics. The teacher visited each pair to give some advices. A pair (a male and female student) beside me seemed to be both serious (the male student once talked about "US submarines are not ready for female submariners," which caused a lot of discussion in class). The pair talked with each other seriously and took notes of topics...the male student said to the female student, "How tree grows... good organization..." The female student said to the male student, "Good pie structure ..." ...the teacher visited this pair and said to them, "Do you have something to talk with?" ...the pair answered the question." (Field notes, November 14, 2003, English 102 for native English speaking students)

In the group discussion, each group was given a sample essay and asked to discuss topics found there. The pairs in the above excerpt discussed topics seriously with each other. In addition Ms. J visited each group in order to support the discussion. This classroom interaction took place in every class during the author's classroom observation period. In his field notes, the author sometimes used the word "intelligent" for Ms. J, because she always explained information very clearly and answered her students' questions very quickly and logically. The next excerpt from the observation notes demonstrates this ability:

"The teacher got ready for the OHP (overhead projector) and a sample essay was projected on the screen. The teacher began to talk about the problems of the essay... the teacher said to the students, "What else do we come to see the writer's

own stance in the first paragraph?” Some students responded, “NO.” The teacher also said, “NO, OK, NO... probably this is just the rhetoric in English writing... this is totally OK in oriental language, such as Japanese and Chinese, because the rationale in that language is people are not... and implicit in expressions to some extent... but in academic journals in English, it is not the case, you have to have a clear stance, indicate your stance and why you come to your conclusion... so structurally this is something here, and what is the second paragraph talking about?” (Field notes, November 14, 2003, English 102 for native English speaking students)

In this class, Ms. J addressed the writer's rhetorical stance in English academic writing at length by comparing it with the rhetorical stances in Japanese and Chinese, reflecting her multilingual strength because she knows academic rhetorical structures in Chinese and was able to use the knowledge to explain rhetorical structures in English. Subsequently, effective question-answer interactions about the problems of the sample essay continued between Ms. J and her students. After each classroom observation, Ms. J would ask me to give her some feedback on her teaching because she was eager to improve her teaching skills.

One day during the observation period, Ms. J's teaching advisor visited her class in order to evaluate her teaching. When the class was over, a female student said to the teaching advisor, “She (Ms. J) is an awesome teacher,” (Field notes, October 31, 2003, English 102 for native English speaking students), and left the classroom. Ms. J's adaptive transformation competence enabled her to develop effective

practices in the new environment by blending her previous teaching skills and approaches, such as her ability to explain information clearly and logically in front of the students and her knowledge of the difference of rhetorical structures in Chinese and English, with the use of the U.S. paradigm of student-centered teaching, such as lively group discussions.

Creating a counter-discourse

For the theoretical underpinnings of social identity, this study relied on Peirce's (1995) conception of social identity as multiple, a site of struggle, and changing overtime. She insists that multiple subject positions, such as teacher, mother, and manager are structured by relations of power in particular social sites and are conceived of as both subject of and subject to relations of power within those sites, such as school, community, and society. She describes the multiple and contradictory nature of subjectivities as follows:

Thus the subject positions that a person takes up within a particular discourse are open to argument: Although a person may be positioned in a particular way within a given discourse, the person might resist the subject position or even set up a counter-discourse which positions the person in a powerful rather than marginalized subject position (pp.15-16).

Peirce's conception demonstrates a site of struggle in which even a person in a marginalized position can place her/himself in a powerful position by creating a counter-discourse that can challenge an existing discourse that privileges the dominant social world. Through her teaching practice as a nonnative Asian applied linguist in the inner circle, Kubota (2002) also admits the

effectiveness of creating a counter-discourse against a discourse that privileges a white teacher with a native command of English. Kubota created a counter-discourse by expressing her cultural and linguistic background clearly to her students and letting her students know that they have a good opportunity to learn intercultural communication by interacting with her.

Ms. J reflected on how to establish her credibility as a nonnative English teacher in the new teaching environment, and found the creation of a counter-discourse to be effective:

“But this semester I try to put myself, put my image, set up my image, OK, I am a nonnative English speaker, but I am your instructor, in the first semester I was afraid of facing this problem, all students don't trust you because you do not speak so well, and so in the first semester, I was trying to hide this background, and I found out it didn't work so well, and in this semester, right at the beginning, I tell them, you know, I am not a native speaker, and if you have trouble with my accent or my expression, if you find it's not clear, just come to see me and I can clarify it to you, but in terms of the writing, definitely I can do better than you... and so I figured out at least from the surface level... they show respect in class.” (Ms. J, second interview, April 9, 2003)

“OK, I will tell students clearly, do not judge from my accent, from my spoken English, but I will tell them about my educational background... my professional background I have been a teacher, you know I got my master's degree, I am in a PhD program in language education...” (Ms.

J, second interview, April 9, 2003)

The multiple sites of M. J's identity formation were comprised of being Chinese, a nonnative GAT, a graduate student, and a wife. As a nonnative GAT, she was afraid of confessing her background in the first semester, but refused to be silenced by the dominant social world, decided to explain her educational and linguistic background clearly to students as different from that of a native English speaker, and let her students know that this difference was not a handicap but a strength for a professional instructor. In the process of creating a counter-discourse in front of her students, Ms. J's social identity as a nonnative GAT led her to challenge what she understood to be the dominant discourse that privileges the social world of standard English ideology. By resisting the subject position as a marginalized nonnative GAT in favor of the subject position as an international GAT with strong professional background, Ms. J seemed to gain a powerful position vis-a-vis the new teaching environment. Ms. J's identity construction as a nonnative GAT demonstrates the multiple nature of identity formation and a site of struggle produced by day to day classroom interactions with students.

Ms. J's growth as a Nonnative GAT

Through these challenging experiences, the growing nature of M.J's identity construction is clearly evident in the interview data.

“It is also very challenging...you have to prove to them that you are credible, you are the authority...” (Ms. J, third interview, May 17, 2003)

“Personally I did see my growth from the first time I started teaching here up till

now...you see your growth...you learn something just from this experience a lot ... it is closely related to my major... as a nonnative speaker, although I am teaching something, I am still learning something, you know, culturally, linguistically, and I am also kind of, you know, changing and growing.” (Ms. J, third interview, May 17, 2003)

“I incorporated a lot of the teaching materials I have used... I teach several times, you get a better understanding... so you can predict what their problems might be... another thing I think is the growing confidence accumulated from the past.” (Ms. J, fourth interview, January 15, 2004)

“So this semester...I would like to have more student and student communication instead of me being the main speaker in class, so I do want my students to be active in class...I am an instructor, one source of information, but I believe that the other students, their classmates function as other sources of information, so they could help each other and they could learn a lot in this way...” (Ms. J, fourth interview, January 15, 2004)

Reflecting on her first semester of teaching English composition, Ms. J confessed that she was depressed and even cried before her teaching advisor because she faced disrespectful behavior that she had never experienced in her home country. However, through her teaching advisor’s warm encouragement, spending a great deal of time preparing for classes, and by displaying her strong academic background to her students, she gained credibility. Ms. J gradually gained confidence and admitted that

she was still changing and growing into a credible language instructor. Through the increasing confidence accumulated from teaching practice, Ms. J developed her own advanced student-centered classroom practice in which everyone in class functioned as useful resources of information to both her and her students for academic English writing. Thus, Ms. J’s growth in teaching practice manifested the changes in her identity over time.

Conclusion

The results of this phenomenological case study approach reveal that Ms. J’s identity construction as a nonnative GAT remained challenging, growing, and changing over time in the context of power relations imbued with the standard English ideology in the U.S. The development of her identity construction was driven by her rich educational background, adaptive transformation, and resilience by setting up a counter-discourse. Ms. J’s identity construction remained challenging due to the multiple and contradictory nature of subjectivity. Her site of struggle sets up a counter-discourse that reframed power relations between her and her students while adapting to the U.S. paradigm of student centered teaching. Through this action, she seemed not only to empower herself in establishing her credibility as a teacher, but also to give her students opportunities to recognize the diversity of English speakers in the world. Her identity construction continued to change and grow over time as she developed her own teaching style by blending her previous and new teaching experiences with the clear goal of becoming an extremely effective language teaching specialist.

At the same time, Ms. J’s rich cultural and educational background demonstrate that the

global spread of English has created highly proficient speakers and professionals in English studies and second language education. Given the complex and dynamic nature of her identity construction in the inner circle, applied linguists should focus more on the role of nonnative English speaker teachers and what they can do in each English speaking circle rather than reducing the rich and dynamic role of these teachers to the simplistic native-nonnative distinction. To do so, more case studies are needed in the inner, outer, and expanding circles. Such studies are essential for developing English language education in an era of the global spread of English.

Notes

The qualitative data of this paper came from part of the author's unpublished doctoral dissertation; Saito, T. (2005). *Exploring Nonnative-English-Speaking Teachers' Experiences in Teaching English at a U.S. University*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, the University of Arizona, Tucson.

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Appendix A

A. Interview questions for the first interview

1. Could you tell me about your previous language learning experiences in school and at home?
2. Could you tell me about your educational and socio-cultural background?
3. Could you tell me about your past teaching experience?
4. Could you describe your teaching experiences working with your students in English composition?
5. What challenges have you experienced in teaching English composition as a nonnative English speaker?

B. Interview questions for the second interview

1. Can you explain a little bit more about how your language learning experience in China is reflected in your current teaching practice?
2. Can you explain a little more about how your language teaching experience in China is reflected in your current teaching practice?
3. Can you explain a little more about how your learning experience in Canada is reflected in your current teaching practice?
4. Can you explain a little more about how your teaching experience in the first semester is reflected in your current teaching practice?
5. How do you establish your credibility as a nonnative English teacher?

C. Interview questions for the third interview

1. Given what you have said about your education and language learning/teaching experiences through the first and second interviews, how do

you understand teaching English composition as a nonnative speaker of English? In what ways is it important to you? What is the meaning you give to teaching English composition as a nonnative English teacher?

D. Interview questions for the fourth interview

1. Through three interviews and classroom observations we have done so far, I think highlights of your comments are (1) your high intelligence, the ability to explain things quickly and clearly, the ability to understand students precisely (2) you gained confidence as a nonnative teacher (3) as a nonnative English teacher, this is a great experience to teach in the US, and you are growing, learning, and facing challenging, is there anything else you would like to add about the relationship between being a nonnative speaker of English and teaching in the U.S. context?