The Negotiation of Teachers' Sociocultural Identities and Practices in Postsecondary EFL Classrooms

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This article explores the complex interrelationships between language and culture, between teachers' sociocultural identities and teaching practices, and between their explicit discussions of culture and implicit modes of cultural transmission in their classes. A 6-month ethnographic study examined how teachers deal with institutional and curricular expectations regarding their teaching of (North American) culture in their EFL classrooms in a postsecondary institution in Japan. The study also explored the teachers' changing understandings of what constitutes culture and of how they viewed themselves in terms of their various social and cultural roles. Common themes included (a) the complexities and paradoxes associated with teachers' professional, social, political, and cultural identities and their (re)presentation of these in class; (b) their quest for interpersonal and intercultural connection in that EFL context; (c) their desire for educational (and personal) control in the face of contested cultural practices; and (d) disjunctures between teachers' implicit and explicit messages in relation to their cultural understandings and practices. We discuss these themes and make recommendations for teacher education purposes. We argue that the cultural underpinnings of language curricula and teaching must be examined further, particularly so in intercultural situations in which participants are negotiating their sociocultural identities as well as the curriculum.

Language teachers and students in any setting naturally represent a wide array of social and cultural roles and identities: as teachers or students, as gendered and cultured individuals, as expatriates or nationals, as native speakers (NSs) or nonnative speakers, as content-area or TESL/English language specialists, as individuals with political convictions, and as members of families, organizations, and society at large.

The identities and ideologies that become foregrounded depend in large measure upon the institutional and interpersonal contexts in which individuals find themselves, the purposes for their being there, and their personal biographies (e.g., Heath & McLaughlin, 1993; Johnson, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Louden, 1991).

But sociocultural identities and ideologies are not static, deterministic constructs that EFL teachers and students bring to the classroom and then take away unchanged at the end of a lesson or course (Kramsch, 1993a). Nor are they simply dictated by membership in a larger social, cultural, or linguistic group, the way many scholars approach the topic of language and social identity (e.g., Edwards, 1985; Giles & Byrne, 1982; Gumperz, 1982; see Heath & McLaughlin, 1993; Ochs, 1993; Roberts, Davies, & Jupp, 1992). Rather, in educational practice as in other facets of social life, identities and beliefs are co-constructed, negotiated, and transformed on an ongoing basis by means of language (Hall, 1995; He, 1995; Kramsch, 1993a; Lather, 1991; Ochs, 1993; Peirce, 1995). For this reason, applied linguists increasingly conceptualize identity as "a process of continual emerging and becoming" (He, 1995, p. 216), a social-constructivist orientation that "captures the ebbs and tides of identity construction over interactional time, over historical time, and even over developmental time. . . . [It] allows us to examine the building of multiple, yet perfectly compatible identities—identities that are subtle and perhaps have no label, blended identities, even blurred identities" (Ochs, 1993, p. 298).

In EFL classrooms, issues of sociocultural identity and representation are very important.

1. Foreign language teachers and students commonly discuss the social and cultural aspects of other ethnolinguistic groups, particularly those associated with the target language. Indeed, in some programs teachers are required to broach cultural issues. Hence, the nature of the cultural representations of others and the way the teachers and students position themselves with respect to those representations need to be examined.
2. Problems may arise when teachers' or students' identities and beliefs related to gender roles, nationality, ethnicity, teaching methods, and language use conflict with those of colleagues, students, professional publications, popular media, or local cultures. How are these problems then resolved?
3. The English language teaching industry is not culturally, politically, socially, or economically neutral; rather, in the international (EFL) sphere it plays a powerful role in the construction of roles, relations, and identities among teachers and students (Pennycook, 1994).

That being the case, how do EFL teachers reconcile their own perspectives of who they are—their linguistic, social, and cultural values and identities—with national stereotypes of their own and others' linguistic and cultural values? How do they negotiate the curriculum in terms of its cultural content?

This article reports on an in-depth study of four classes in an adult EFL program at the Kansai Cross-Cultural Institute (KCCI, a pseudonym), a large, well-established, private educational institution in a medium-sized Japanese coastal city. The lives of four EFL teachers and their students, both inside and outside of the classroom, were examined in order to obtain descriptions, understandings, and interpretations of teachers' multiply constructed roles and identities as instructors and purveyors of (American) English language and culture(s) in this socioeducational context. Although the focus of the study is teachers' construction, conceptualization, and interrogation of their own identities and practices, they cannot be fully understood without reference to the teachers' students and colleagues, who, together with them, co-construct their identities and communities of practice. For, as Jacoby and Ochs (1995) indicate, citing various linguistic anthropologists, the "co-authoring" of activities (e.g., in language classrooms) "helps to maintain and transform the social identities of the participants, the institutions in which these activities are embedded, and the ideologies that inform and legitimize their ongoingness" (p. 175).

BACKGROUND: RESEARCHING SOCIOCULTURAL IDENTITY AND SOCIALIZATION IN TESOL

Research on Learners' Identities

A number of recent articles have examined the role of learners' social and cultural identities in learning English and the role of the TESOL profession in reconstructing people's identities and roles. Peirce (1995) highlighted the importance of understanding adult immigrant women's personal, social-psychological investments in learning ESL and manifestations of those investments in their sociolinguistic interactions and in the foregrounding of certain identities and the backgrounding of others. Hall (1995), drawing upon sociohistorical theory (e.g., Wertsch, 1991) and social-psychological treatments of identity (e.g., Tajfel, 1982), emphasized the role of socialization in the construction of roles (and stereotypes) and the need to move beyond the narrow focus on native versus nonnative speaker as the only relevant identity in investigations of L2 use. Hasebe-Ludt, Duff, and Leggo (1995) considered the cultural messages conveyed through English language teaching materials and popular media in a multicultural community school in Canada as well as in Asian and South Pacific regions and raised concerns about certain trends associated with community building and globalization that may pay lip service to diversity without really confronting the tensions and misrepresentations that may accompany diversity or its historical antecedents. Issues of language and social identity have also been discussed in terms of gender, minority versus majority status, geographical setting, and age (e.g., McKay & Hornberger, 1996).

Scholars in related fields sometimes conceive of social identity as a kind of positioning (e.g., Hall, 1990), a personal location and belonging (Turner, 1982; Weeks, 1990), something that is likely to become "an issue when it is in crisis" (Mercer, 1990, p. 43). Particularly relevant in the field of language teaching is the inevitable role of "the Other" in distilling and delimiting a sense of one's own identity:

> In the commodification of language and culture, objects and images are torn free of their original referents and their meanings become a spectacle open to almost infinite translation. . . . Otherness is sought after for its exchange value, its exoticism and the pleasures, thrills and adventures it can offer. (Rutherford, 1990, p. 11)

This notion of tribalizing and stereotyping others in the process of sociocultural identity construction is also found in Holliday (1996), who cited problematic, overly simplistic depictions of Japanese language learners and of a homogeneous Japanese culture by non-Japanese TEFL professionals (see Said's seminal work, 1978, on Orientalism; Kanada, 1995; Morley & Robins, 1995). The juxtaposition of identities leads to incommensurability and cultural hybridity, or what has been called a third space (Bhabha, 1990). Interestingly, geographical metaphors used in relation to interculturality—such as place, space, borders, and boundaries—capture the sense of distance, distinctiveness, and alienation that may exist across (and when crossing) ethnolinguistic and other identities; the terms themselves often signal that the geopolitical "border crossing" involved in migration (or being) in the world favors, forgives, or tolerates movement and difference in some directions but not others (see Ben-Rafael, 1994; Erickson, 1996, p. 294, following Barthe, 1969; Giroux, 1992; Morley & Robins, 1995; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1993; Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996).

Research on Language Socialization

The fundamental interconnectedness of the processes of learning language and culture in social contexts is emphasized in research on language socialization, which has in the past typically dealt with L1 socialization (e.g., Duff, 1996; Heath, 1983; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). In L2 education, the inseparability of language and culture has been discussed by many writers,[1] sometimes under the rubric of acculturation (Schumann, 1986) or language (re)socialization (e.g., Duff, 1995; Jupp, Roberts, & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Poole, 1992). Indeed, the rise of communicative language teaching in the 1980s and the concurrent globalization (and commodification) of education and business have placed a great premium on successful intercultural communication, much of it conducted in English. As a result, teaching about aspects of target cultures in the EFL classroom has become a vaunted function of EFL courses, and a plethora of frameworks, techniques, and materials for presenting culture have been developed.[2]

Some reported benefits of explicitly teaching about culture in the foreign language classroom are higher motivation and positive attitude changes (Halverson, 1985; Kitao, 1991; Morgan, 1993; Webber, 1987). However, what exactly should be taught and how it should be taught are still unclear (Kitao, 1991). Additionally, "the teaching of culture as a component of language teaching has traditionally been caught between the striving for universality and the desire to maintain cultural particularity" (Kramsch, 1993b, p. 5). But whose cultural particularities are maintained and promoted, and how? In EFL settings, what happens if the home and classroom/textbook cultures are at odds or when the values and even teaching methods presented in class are alien and unappreciated (e.g., Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Canagarajah, 1993; Pennycook, 1989, 1994)? Conversely, what happens when EFL classes expect to be exposed to a particular version of the target culture that the teacher does not endorse? In ESL settings, the questions have been somewhat different: Namely, how can educators incorporate minority students' diverse identities, backgrounds, and cultural traditions in the English (L1/L2) curriculum in order to understand, validate, and enhance the learning experiences of all students (see Baruth & Manning, 1992; Cummins, 1996; DeVillar, Faltis, & Cummins, 1994; Grant & Sleeter, 1986; Murray, 1996)? Other issues in the ESL context are related to the limitations of relatively superficial multicultural curricula and the need to deal more proactively and critically with societal inequalities reproduced through certain educational practices (e.g., Fleras & Elliott, 1992;

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[1] See, for example, Byram (1989); Crawford-Lange & Lange (1981); Damen (1987); Kitao (1991); Littlewood (1984); McGroarty & Galvan (1985); Morgan (1993); Oxford (1994); Seelye (1984).

[2] See Morain (1986); also see Abrate (1993); Byram (1990); Chan, Kaplan-Weinger, & Sandstrom (1995); Damen (1987); Diffey (1992); Evans & Gonzalez (1993); Heusinkveld (1985); Paulston (1992); Prodromou (1988); Rivers (1985); Seelye & Wasilewski (1996); Wegmann, Knezevic, & Werner (1994).

Grant & Secada, 1990; Ng, Staton & Scane, 1995; Sleeter, 1992). Whether teaching is in an EFL or ESL context, then, attention needs to be paid to cultural practices, referents, assumptions, processes, and consequences. For example, Kramsch (1993b) calls for an examination of the processes of acculturation and of becoming bicultural, suggesting that many foreign language classrooms focus on "what is on the other side of the border, but . . . [do] not yet [devise] ways to systematically reflect on the border crossing itself"; as a result, she observes, "in practice, teachers teach language and culture, or culture in language, but not language as culture" (p. 9).

To summarize, this article aims to examine many of these issues: the explicit and implicit cultural content of L2 curricula; the cultural identities of teachers; and the processes by which both the curricula and identities are negotiated and changed, that is, the border crossings referred to above. In the next section, we present the cultural macrocontext for the teaching of EFL in Japan, to be followed by a description of the present study.

ENGLISH EDUCATION IN JAPAN

Economic growth and technological advancement have increased Japanese access and exposure to foreign countries, something relatively uncommon even 15 years ago. Currently, many Japanese study in English-speaking countries, and many others travel overseas for recreational purposes. In Japanese business and personal life, communication in English is more prevalent than ever before. Thus, the need for English communication skills among Japanese people has intensified in recent years, and educational reforms have reflected this (e.g., Rinjikyoiku Shingikai, 1987). Meanwhile, the shortcomings of traditional approaches to Japanese secondary school EFL instruction, such as grammar-translation, have become increasingly evident (Kawanari, 1993).

Among a variety of efforts to meet current needs, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program was established in 1987 (Ellington, 1992). The program has hired and maintained over 3,000 English-speaking nationals who team-teach English with Japanese teachers. The native English-speaking teachers in the JET program are expected to be actively involved in cultural exchange as well as teach English (Hughes, 1993), although the degree to which they are utilized and their role as "cultural showpieces" have generated some criticism (Thomas, 1993). Moreover, according to some scholars, the ostensible goal of internationalization being trumpeted this past decade simply promotes Japanese nationalism, superficial internationalization, or, conversely, westernization (see Brown, 1993; Edwards, 1989; Kawanari, 1993; Rinjikyoiku Shingikai, 1987; Schoppa, 1991).

In the private sector, the rise of private language schools has been dramatic. According to Yano Research Institute Ltd., there were 8,000–10,000 English language schools in Japan in 1992 (O'Toole, 1992), part of an industry reportedly worth several trillion yen a year (Nakazono, 1995). These language schools focus on communicative English courses with English NSs as teachers. One in 10 Japanese is reportedly learning English, the majority at special language schools (Ellington, 1992).

Despite the apparent popularity of these private schools, however, the activities transpiring within them and the qualifications and characteristics of EFL teachers—particularly those from other countries—have for the most part escaped scrutiny. A variety of native English-speaking teachers have been brought to Japan, ranging from those interested in Japan and its culture, to those with teaching experience or education backgrounds, to those whose primary motivation is an attractive salary and an exotic cultural experience. In 1991, it was estimated that 15,000–20,000 foreigners taught English in Japan (Holland, 1991). How do these teachers perceive their role in this sociocultural context? Given the high demand for instruction that deals explicitly with American culture in EFL classrooms, what do teachers do? How do Japanese EFL teachers conduct their classes? How do American expatriates conduct theirs? How do teachers gain explicit knowledge about their own and others' cultures? How do their preexisting (established) beliefs about culture, foreign languages, teaching, and learning interact with their lived experiences (Aoki, 1993) of teaching in that cultural milieu? These questions are very significant in light of the phenomenal political, economic, and sociocultural underpinnings and ramifications of the EFL industry in Japan.

THE STUDY

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were (a) how are teachers' sociocultural identities, understandings, and practices negotiated and transformed over time? and (b) what factors are associated with those changes?

Methodology

Four EFL teachers and their classes were the subject of an ethnographic case study. Ethnography seemed a particularly appropriate approach because of its orientation to cultural understandings, its attention to local contexts of practice and its recognition of the importance of incorporating multiple points of view in relation to observed phenomena (see Davis & Lazaraton, 1995; Hornberger, 1994; Spindler, 1987). Furthermore, relatively few ethnographic studies in TESOL have dealt with adult learners (Johnson, 1992) or with the teaching of culture (Kramsch, 1993b, Watson-Gegeo, 1988). Our research was also informed by methods used in studies of teachers' knowledge and biographies (e.g., Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Houston, 1990; Johnson, 1994; Johnston, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Louden, 1991; Powell, 1994).

Data were collected at KCCI, a well-known private institution, over a 6-month period by the following means: (a) teacher/student questionnaires administered at the beginning and end of the course;[3] (b) weekly retrospective journal entries by teachers about their classes and any noteworthy cultural experiences (11–16 entries were recorded by each teacher);[4] (c) 10 audio- or videotaped classroom observations of each teacher by a participant-observer (Uchida); (d) field notes; (e) audiotaped, postobservational interviews within a few days of each observation; (f) life-history interviews; (g) a review of instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, multimedia); and (h) the participant-observer's research journal. From the outset, the teachers were informed that the study was about "culture in EFL classrooms in Japan."

The Site

This research was conducted at a language school called KCCI Language Center in Minato City in Japan, a large, cosmopolitan city known for its ethnic diversity.[5] The KCCI Language Center was founded in 1886 in association with a Christian organization and is one of the oldest language schools in the country, with branches scattered all over Japan. However, religious activities have not been a primary function of the organization, and the English teachers and students are mostly non-Christians. KCCI offers a variety of English courses: communicative English, cross-cultural communication, business English, and study-abroad preparatory courses, for example. It also has courses in Japanese, French, Spanish, Thai, Korean, and Chinese and often organizes cross-cultural activities to promote international understanding through the learning of foreign languages and cultures.

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[3] The pre- and postquestionnaires contained the following information:

> The purpose of this research is to understand the interaction between teachers and students in EFL classrooms in Japan where various cultural orientations exist due to differences in the backgrounds of teachers and students, as well as the nature of foreign language education (materials, methods, etc.) itself. By fielding this questionnaire, the researchers would like to help teachers to better understand teachers' and their students' intercultural experiences and perceptions of culture, both in and out of class. This will shed light on the role of culture in foreign language teaching and learning.

[4] Teachers were asked to reflect on their classes each week and to identify and discuss any particularly salient cross-cultural incidents or insights they had had.

[5] School officials gave their permission for this study because of its perceived utility and relevance as well as their familiarity with the on-site researcher. All names are pseudonyms.

A description of the English conversation courses at KCCI follows.

> In our English conversation course, you will learn not only everyday conversation but also communication skills that can be applied in your real life situations. All our class sizes are small so you can learn English in a relaxed atmosphere. Speak as much as you can and make as many mistakes as you want! In the beginning and intermediate levels, a Japanese teacher and an English native-speaker teacher team-teach. . . . We believe that the pleasure of learning a new language is broadening your world view. In English courses such as [KCCI], the real-world materials from foreign countries, such as newspapers, magazines, and movies are used so that our students will be exposed to the cultures of English-speaking countries. (KCCI course brochure, n.d., n.p.)

The EFL course description highlights opportunities for exposure to information about (and from) different parts of the world, including "the cultures of English-speaking countries." It also underscores that learning is to be relaxed and communication-focused. At KCCI, adult English courses of that sort are normally held in the mornings (10:30–12:20) and evenings (6:30–8:20). The majority (70%) of adult students are women—wealthy housewives or single women in their late 20s or early 30s, who prefer to take morning classes. Evening students are more diverse in terms of gender, age, occupation, and sometimes ethnicity. As KCCI is relatively close to the main business district, many evening students work full time in the city. The evening classes are also popular among college students. EFL teachers at KCCI all have at least 2 years of EFL/ESL teaching experience. Some have TESL certificates or are in the process of becoming certified. The school regularly invites major publishers and authors of EFL/ESL textbooks to sponsor free workshops for EFL teachers in the area. For communicative English courses, a Japanese teacher and a native English-speaking teacher are paired up to teach the same class on alternate days.

The Participants

Four teachers were selected on the basis of their reputation as good teachers (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993) and their willingness to participate fully in the study: two Japanese females (Miki and Kimiko) and two Americans, a male and a female (Danny and Carol). All four were in their late 20s to early 30s and had roughly 1.5 years of teaching experience at KCCI at the outset of the study. A fuller description of the teachers is provided below.

Analysis

Analyses and interpretations were rendered in a recursive, reflexive, and triangulated manner, incorporating insights and feedback from the research participants as well as the researchers (see Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1994; Lather, 1991). One of the authors (Uchida), who had previously taught at the school for two semesters, resumed her teaching there for the duration of the study, conducting the observations and interviews as well. Those data were then transcribed and, together with questionnaire data, were coded for recurrent, relevant themes associated with the teachers' perceptions of their various sociocultural roles, identities—ethnic/cultural, social, professional—and conflicts.[6]

Findings

The teachers' perceptions of their sociocultural identities were found to be deeply rooted in their personal histories, based on past educational, professional, and (cross-)cultural experiences. They were also subject to constant negotiation due to changing contextual elements, such as the classroom/institutional culture, instructional materials, and reactions from students and colleagues. Teachers' appreciation for the complexities and paradoxes of their professional, social, political, and cultural identities, their quest for connection, and the need for educational (and personal) control emerged as common themes. Also, differences between teachers' implicit and explicit cultural messages became salient in examinations of each teacher's reflections and behaviors. What follows is a brief biographical profile of each of the four teachers and a discussion of general themes.

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[6] Coding followed procedures in Bogdan & Biklen (1982); Miles & Huberman (1994); and Tesch (1990).

Danny

> I guess I kind of almost learned [to teach] to be like David Letterman does his talk show stuff . . . . Like he teases his guests a lot. . . . So I'm Letterman, the student I'm teasing is the guest, the audience is the rest of the class. It's one of those things, everyone gets into it. (interview, June 10, 1993)

Born, raised, and educated on the West Coast of the United States with little previous travel experience, Danny had a strong attachment to U.S. popular media and was a committed vegetarian, nonsmoker, feminist, and environmentalist. Blond, blue-eyed, and in his late 20s, with a cultivated sense of humor and a dramatic flair, Danny had many admirers among the predominantly middle-aged, female students in his class. Danny had worked at KCCI for more than a year, had lived previously in Japan, and was currently teaching nearly 20 hours per week. His formal training was in the social sciences, however.

Danny believed that culture played a minimal role in communication and that all that mattered were "politically correct" behavior and attitudes and a teaching environment rich in animated, spontaneous language use. His classes therefore included a good deal of laughter, joking, sarcasm, and explicit references to social issues. Themes taken up in class included nonsmoking campaigns, gun control, women's rights, and the technical production of television situation comedies. U.S. television shows, videos (e.g., *Superman, Indiana Jones*), and cartoons were featured in his class on a regular basis, a favorite being *The Simpsons* (e.g., an episode dealing with Marge's problems being a housewife). Despite his fascination with certain aspects of Japanese popular culture, Danny was critical of Japanese culture for its lack of creativity, individualism, and progressive social values and for the indirectness with which perceived problems, in his view, were broached. However, he saw these issues as more social than cultural. That is, issues of social justice, equity, morality, and responsibility were independent of, or perhaps superordinate to, cultural considerations. Danny perceived Japanese women to be unhappy and unfulfilled because of constrictive societal norms and expectations; he therefore sought to liberate them through his teaching. His class was characterized by humorous monologues, with Danny on stage at the front assuming the role of talk show host (see the excerpt above). The well-dressed, upper-class housewives in the audience sat in a row watching attentively and responding on cue. But Danny's charismatic, exuberant, and often mischievous social/cultural role in class was not a unidirectional creation. His students' identities were naturally transformed through membership in that local classroom culture, and they too played a role in ratifying his identity as fun-seeking entertainer and social commentator as well as language educator. Indeed, at Danny's encouragement and by his example, they were socialized into a local culture quite at odds with the external norms for upscale Japanese women. They began to play tricks on Danny, much as he did on them, locking him out of his classroom, teasing him, throwing things, hiding his materials, and so on, much to his—and their—delight.

Danny was a teacher deeply committed to his personal sociopolitical and educational values. Culture for him was not a spectrum of acceptable alternatives but rather a dichotomy of right or wrong moral choices. He sought to help students make "correct" choices by providing appropriate models. The talk-show format proved to be an amusing but also highly persuasive, fundamentally U.S. manifestation of popular culture and classroom culture.

Carol

> I think [teaching culture is] a BS issue. When people are teaching culture or things like body language, who cares? . . . . [It] comes down to a very personal interpretation. That's what I don't like about it. . . . It's basically teaching what's inside you. And I don't want that much power. (interview, November 4, 1993)

Carol was also American, the same age as Danny and, as it turned out, from the same hometown. Occasionally mistaken for a Japanese woman because of her size and hair color, Carol embraced strong feminist convictions and a positive self-image as a resourceful, well-educated, committed TESL professional. She had grown up in a home with frequent international visitors and a good deal of overseas travel, and had attended a West Coast high school with a large proportion of African American students. Therefore, she had a decidedly multicultural upbringing. However, it was only during a subsequent period of residence on the U.S. East Coast that she developed a strong, latent identification with her Jewish American roots. That experience also contributed to her relative lack of identification with what might be portrayed as conservative mainstream (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) U.S. cultural values. The marginalization that she and some of her classmates had experienced in the public school system contributed to her rejection of her ostensible role as a teacher of U.S. culture.

> As I've been thinking about this style of teaching [mainstream Western culture explicitly] and reviewing books, I get surges of memory from public school. . . . I have lots of memories of teachers talking about common experiences that I didn't share. Endless good cheer Christmas stuff or, worse, being asked to explain myself, "And what do Hebrews do for Christmas? I guess—Ha—Ha—no Pork Roast with pineapple." (journal, March 10, 1994)

Her distaste for and fear of discussing—and thereby possibly imposing—her personal sociopolitical and cultural beliefs on others prevented her from being as close and accessible to her students as she—and they—might have wished. Interestingly, she surmised that teaching about culture in a class in the U.S. would be less problematic for her because students could then bring their own cross-cultural experiences, discoveries, and issues to class. She resorted, instead, to a rather formal, structured curriculum, in part to avoid the kind of self-disclosure and contrived intimacy and familiarity that characterized many conversational EFL classes with young foreign teachers. Her reticence also stemmed from the fact that she was experiencing some personal problems she was not prepared to discuss in class. Another factor was that, like many ESL/EFL teachers, she taught at several different institutions at the same time, which proved both emotionally and physically draining. Striving to maintain both classroom control and egalitarian relations within the KCCI class as well as her sense of professionalism, Carol also resisted the prevailing local expectation that EFL teachers should be entertainers and conveyers of Western (e.g., White, middle-class, Hollywood) cultural values and that classes should first and foremost be fun.

An avid reader, Carol's intellectual interests were broad and ever changing, particularly in relation to things Japanese. However, she struggled with aspects of life in Japan, such as the sexist attitudes toward Japanese females held by some American and Japanese males and the pressures of conformity (within the Japanese institutions where she worked, e.g., to socialize after hours with colleagues). A role that Carol believed English learners in Japan expect from their teachers—but that she did not want to assume fully—was that of guidance counselor. She found that EFL programs such as KCCI attracted students with interpersonal difficulties, people looking both for a hobby and emotional support, for a safe haven in which to vent their frustrations and find companionship. However, eschewing the counselor identity and its attendant responsibilities, and in an attempt to create common ground with her students, Carol incorporated Japanese themes (e.g., Okinawan music), artifacts, and Japanese formulaic expressions in her lessons; she also had a penchant for grammar. She wished to highlight her identities of English language teaching specialist and student of Japanese language/culture. As a consequence, however, and in part as a result of students' exposure to other EFL teachers' instructional styles at KCCI, such as Danny's, her students became critical of her methods, displaying their resistance by such means as arriving habitually very late for class (see Canagarajah, 1993). Thus, Carol's experiences and identities in that context not only were based on her own biography, beliefs, and so on but were also defined in contrast to those of certain U.S. colleagues:

> [When Michiko said that both her former teachers just played a lot of games,] I felt, "Oh shoot." In this class, you know, I've been trying to do other things than just playing games. And I wonder if the kind of things I've been trying to do are just too far away from what the students want to do. (interview, February 24, 1994)

Carol's struggle to find the ideal teaching method resulted in continuous frustration and fluctuation on her part. Ultimately, she accepted the teaching of culture (albeit Japanese culture) in order to better bridge the gap between herself and her students. She began to incorporate more discussion topics, role-plays, storytelling, brainstorming, and other interactive activities, a compromise that seemed to work. Nevertheless, in her final journal, reflecting upon the teaching of culture, Carol remained adamant about the politics of culture teaching and her disdain for being implicated in the transmission of U.S. cultural values: "[That] style of teaching . . . seems mired in the multicultural debate without reference to canon selection . . . . [It] is pulling me away from what I love about language teaching, which is language" (journal, March 3, 1994).

Miki

> There was a confrontation between one male foreign teacher and one female Japanese teacher and it ended up involving other people at work, too. The cause for such confrontation seemed so trivial (almost ridiculous) to me but because of the differences in cultures, languages, and personal values of those two people, it became an ugly fight . . . . Communication involving two parties with different cultures and languages demands high level of cooperation from both sides. Experience and some kind of skill is also necessary. . . . You cannot just push your opinions to the others in a cross-cultural setting. Keeping your mouth shut and waiting does not solve any problems, either. (journal, November 30, 1993)

A petite, fashionable Japanese woman in her early 30s, Miki was a native of Minato City who worked full time at KCCI as both an EFL teacher and a program coordinator. Her upbringing was relatively privileged; she had attended a prestigious Japanese private school and college, came from a well-to-do family, and was single and financially independent. Her overseas experience included working as a summer camp counselor in America; she had also traveled a little within the Pacific Rim. The longer Miki worked at KCCI, the stronger she felt that, even in a cross-cultural setting, interpersonal relationships are determined by individuals' personalities and values rather than culture per se.

> There must be a general tendency found in each cultural group. For example, Japanese are less assertive. But in a long-term relationship, the

> personalities rooted deep inside individuals are more important [than their cultural backgrounds]. (interview, March 10, 1994)

Nonetheless, in her role as program coordinator, Miki dealt with many cross-cultural confrontations. Ironically, she felt at odds with the institutional goal of KCCI to promote internationalization through the exchange of culture and "having a good time in English." Part of her ambivalence derived from her identity as a teacher of language, not culture. She viewed language learning as a legitimate end in itself, not necessarily as a tool for the transmission of culture, values, and philosophy. If culture was transmitted, it was best left to NSs of English or to international programs rather than to Japanese teachers. Miki therefore saw a clear role division between American and Japanese EFL teachers: She was a "linguistically oriented Japanese teacher," and native-speaking English teachers provided jokes and cultural content. Miki's education in a traditional Japanese school with an emphasis on learning language as a grammatical system clearly contributed to this belief. Yet Carol's and Miki's views and linguistic priorities were quite similar in this respect, although their perspectives on the role of native English-speaking teachers were different.

However, Miki's teaching was not unproblematic. She and her young (17- to 22-year-old) students grew bored with the course textbook, leading, in her assessment, to nagging problems of attrition and lateness in her evening class. College final exams also accounted for some absenteeism and lethargy in January and February. This situation compelled her, somewhat reluctantly, to include more games than before. For example, the newfound communicative focus in her teaching was evident in interactive pair work, the analysis of advertisements by students, trivia quizzes, and grammar games using dice. Nevertheless, she felt a lesson "doesn't have to be a carnival all the way through" and she continued to promote grammatical accuracy through a variety of exercises and correction strategies (something she felt distinguished her approach and NSs'). She liked to use magazine pictures and other props for descriptions of people and discussions of marketing strategies, for example.

According to Miki, only Japanese teachers could assume the role of empathetic counselor that Carol had resisted. Being a former EFL learner herself, now fluently bilingual, Miki felt uniquely qualified to give advice on how to study and recognized that young female students often look to female Japanese teachers as role models. Her interactions with expatriates at KCCI made her somewhat critical of certain attitudes held by young Japanese women (e.g., dependence on parents), yet she did not always see eye-to-eye with her international colleagues, either.

Kimiko

> I want to respect some Japanese ways in the class because some things in Japan are very good. If I adapt some good Western things because I thought they were really good, it is often taken as "westernized" by Japanese people, right? . . . It's your choice. . . . I don't want to insist that my way is the only right way to live. (interview, November 15, 1993)

Kimiko was a part-time teacher in her mid-30s with considerable experience at KCCI and other schools and, indeed, internationally. She had attended college and university in the U.S. at a time when it was rather uncommon. Later, she had worked and travelled extensively elsewhere. These experiences abroad, however, had left her feeling somewhat alienated from mainstream Japanese society upon her return. Her sense of adventure and independence differentiated her from her peers, yet she did not want to be viewed as either feminist or westernized, nor did she want to impose on her classes the U.S. and other values she had appropriated. She saw grappling with current world affairs and lifestyle issues, expressing opinions, and learning and accepting differences as integral aspects of English language teaching and learning at KCCI. For Kimiko, the English classroom was a place for communication, and KCCI was a cross-cultural cocoon of sorts. For the students who were housewives, she felt, it was a place "where they can release all their stress"; it thus served social, affective, and educational purposes.

Over time, the EFL classroom became a place of learning for both the students and Kimiko; it connected her with mainstream Japanese culture, and her students were also her mentors and cultural informants. She assumed the role of listener, choosing topics of likely interest to the housewives and single women in her class (e.g., alternative/comparative education, fortune-telling, single parenting, working mothers, health care, issues surrounding the naming of children). Raising the learners' cross-cultural awareness became Kimiko's educational goal, based on the belief that language and culture are inseparable, and it also expanded her own cultural awareness. For Kimiko, communication was part of language, and language was part of culture. She did not consider grammar teaching bad or boring as Danny, her team-teacher, did. However, because they shared the same group of students, she also felt pressured to conform to students' expectations based on their contact with Danny. She especially wanted students to learn to express their opinions. She respected the students' growing assertiveness and requests for certain activities in the class but still considered herself to be the final arbiter. In short, Kimiko saw the roles of Japanese and American English teachers as different but complementary, as did Miki. Japanese teachers could be good role models, and expatriates could offer students sociocultural knowledge that Japanese teachers lacked. Because of her tolerance of different opinions, ideas, and cultures, Kimiko could be considered a relativist. Discussion about cross-cultural issues increased in her class when the students rejected the textbook. Many requested Kimiko as their teacher for the following term, although their mixed messages sometimes confused her: "Although they gave me a positive comment at the end, I still suspect that they might not really like my way of teaching. Their attitude changed too quickly from one extreme to the other" (interview, November 15, 1993).

In fact, students had become accustomed to Danny's direct style of confronting problems or expressing disapproval and in follow-up questionnaires indicated that many Japanese teachers were too grammar-oriented, serious, organized, and humorless compared with foreign teachers like Danny.

Teachers' Profiles: Summary

None of the teachers in this study perceived their roles as EFL teachers as necessarily involving the explicit teaching of cultural content, although the course description did mention that objective. However, in their observed practices and materials, implicit cultural transmission was very evident. Danny emphasized sociopolitical issues and popular (U.S.) cultural media. Carol sought to foster autonomous learning by using communicative EFL teaching methods from American and British TEFL programs and publications, although she preferred Japanese themes during discussions. Miki's classes were largely structured around the interactive activities suggested in the textbook, including a game each lesson, and she attempted to bridge the cultural gap between Japanese high school EFL teaching and KCCI. Finally, Kimiko engaged students in discussions of current, meaningful topics and had them express their personal opinions through public speaking activities.

CONCEPTUALIZING AND CONTEXTUALIZING TEACHERS' SOCIOCULTURAL IDENTITY IN TEFL

Teachers' sociocultural identifications and displays appeared to develop along at least two dimensions: a biographical/professional basis and a more immediate contextual basis, which are discussed in turn below.

Biographical/Professional Basis

The biographical and professional basis of identity (and image) construction and negotiation relevant in this study included (a) past learning experiences, (b) past teaching experiences, and (c) cross-cultural experiences. Studies of relationships between preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching and their student teaching experiences have shown that beliefs were often based on past learning experiences (e.g., Almarza, 1996; Bailey et al., 1996; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Kagan, 1992; Powell, 1994). Preservice student teachers normally bring to the programs "an internalized role identity through which they make sense of the environment" (Kagan, 1992, cited in Powell, 1994, p. 362; Bullough, 1989). Not surprisingly, therefore, the four teachers in this study also drew upon their own learning experiences as they developed as teachers of EFL and culture (Johnson, 1994).

Danny's frequent reference to his college experiences (papers, speeches, and classroom arrangements) in his spontaneous minilectures and other activities was evidence of the historical basis for his choice of specific tasks and issues. From an unpleasant high school French course, he vividly recalled the stilted bookishness of the largely decontextualized examples in the textbook. His personal experiences in a university course also made him wary of relying too heavily on any one textbook in his KCCI English lessons. He was convinced that the English in his class should be real, natural, and engaging and that students should practice colloquial English by means of intonation exercises and a range of other activities.

Carol's preference for having students sit in a circle stemmed from her experiences at an alternative school with seminar-style classes. Also, because it had been worthwhile for her as a TESL student, she had students circulate and sit next to different people in class. Compared with Danny, Carol did not have as much formal experience in learning foreign languages. However, once she started taking private Japanese lessons, she became conscious of her preferences as a learner of Japanese compared with those as a teacher of English. As a teacher she had become preoccupied with making her class fun, but as a student she wanted to study grammar.

Miki, always conscious of her role as a former learner of English, saw herself as a bilingual role model. She could give advice on how to study because she knew what students needed; looking back on her experience, she could identify precisely which stage they were at. She knew students wanted more correction and feedback from teachers because she had felt the same way as a student, and she therefore complied.

Kimiko's rich and colorful English learning experiences in various target language contexts gave her a solid foundation as a teacher of EFL and culture. Learning English had been recreational for her, not an end but a means: first to survive at a U.S. college, then to work in Australia, and later to make a successful speeches at Toastmasters, an organization devoted to improving public speaking. She learned English to express her ideas. Unless one has an idea first, one can never be assertive, and for Kimiko assertiveness was the ultimate goal in learning English. Therefore, being interested in current world affairs—not usually a highly valued goal for Japanese women—played a crucial role in the process of learning, she said.

Contextual Basis

In addition to teachers' biographical and professional backgrounds, the contextual basis of teaching included the local classroom culture, the institutional culture, and the textbook or curriculum. The teachers were continuously negotiating the curriculum, the institution's expectations of them, their own teaching/learning preferences, and their comfort level in dealing with (cross-)cultural issues and materials. Observations of the teachers revealed their particular seating arrangements, use of audiovisual equipment and materials, organization of lessons and activities, break-time behaviors, viewpoints on issues, and conflicts. They also showed how teachers projected themselves as teachers, as foreigners, as Japanese nationals, and so on. Importantly, all four teachers had been pressured by their classes to create an entertaining, mind-broadening, nurturing, exciting classroom environment. End-of-term dinner parties were common (indeed expected), and students who had been away were accustomed to bringing edible souvenirs to share in class, a sign of students' group membership and contentment with the course (according to one teacher). Other contextual factors responsible for some differences across classes were the time of day (evening students were often quieter, perhaps because of fatigue) and composition in terms of age, gender, and occupation.

Sociocultural aspects of learning were also infused in EFL materials that emphasized discussion, social issues, and games, the very components that attracted many KCCI students to EFL classes. Although normally the two coordinators (one expatriate and one Japanese) selected commercial textbooks for all the communicative English courses, teachers were not required to use them all the time. However, the table of contents in the assigned commercial textbooks was the de facto course syllabus (or curriculum-as-plan), because teachers were too busy to create their own syllabi. The majority of them worked on a part-time basis, dividing their time among other jobs; the full-time teachers had other institutional duties as well.

Course textbooks are rich repositories of both explicit and implicit cultural and linguistic messages (Risager, 1991), and some researchers have therefore begun to analyze textbooks for cultural content (e.g., Alptekin, 1993; Byram, 1989; Canagarajah, 1993; Hasebe-Ludt et al., 1995; Kramsch, 1993a; Kubanek, 1991). Risager noted that "foreign language teaching textbooks no longer just develop concurrently with the development of foreign language pedagogy in a narrow sense, but . . . they increasingly participate in the general cultural transmission within the educational system and in the rest of society" (p. 181). Thus, texts provide a focal point and medium for teachers' negotiations with aspects of the foreign language culture and their own (dis)identification with certain representations.

In the observed classes, two commercial textbooks published by major U.S. and British publishers were used. Danny, Miki, and Kimiko used *New Wave 3* (Maple & Ong, 1992), whereas Carol used *The New Cambridge English Course 2* (Swan & Walter, 1990). However, the teachers were not uniformly committed to these materials, because of a perceived overemphasis on discrete linguistic points, the cultural content (e.g., finding a suitable nonsmoking U.S. roommate), or the structural sameness of chapters.

New Wave 3 emphasizes oral fluency and accuracy in the development of American English. Designed specifically for older teenagers and young adults at an upper elementary or lower intermediate level of EFL, the eight units follow the same pattern: warm-up exercises related to the theme of the unit; a dialogue among young adults taking summer health and fitness courses at a Canadian university; a listening exercise and comprehension questions; grammar exercises; role-play, interview, and information-gap activities; and other tasks. The characters—an American single mother/store manager, her teenaged daughter, a Japanese medical doctor, a U.S. university student, a Canadian lawyer, an English physical therapist, and a Brazilian university student—and content represent a multicultural world in which health concerns loom large.

The New Cambridge English Course 2, designed for elementary and lower intermediate learners of English, especially Europeans, stresses balance and variety across activities. Topics include economic and political development (e.g., prices of food, changes in a country), personal traits and physical appearance (e.g., babies of interracial couples), and personal and professional relationships. Each lesson starts with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation and ends with communicative exchanges, dramatizations, or writing exercises.

Through course materials such as these, teachers and students are confronted with portrayals of Western culture, issues, and interculturalism. They must react to them, thus positioning themselves and articulating their own sociocultural (dis)identification with the characters and themes, by participating in certain pedagogical tasks (i.e., cultural practices). In order to understand cultural transmission through education, it is therefore very important to examine the content, activities, and ideologies represented in textbooks.

EMERGENT THEMES

The aim of the study was to understand teachers' construction, negotiation, and transformation of their sociocultural identities and practices in this context. The study also aimed to uncover the various factors associated with culture transmission in EFL classrooms, the mixed messages, the incongruities, and the border crossings (if any). Although the research took place over a 6-month period, those processes of socialization had begun for the teachers long before the study commenced and have continued to evolve since its completion.

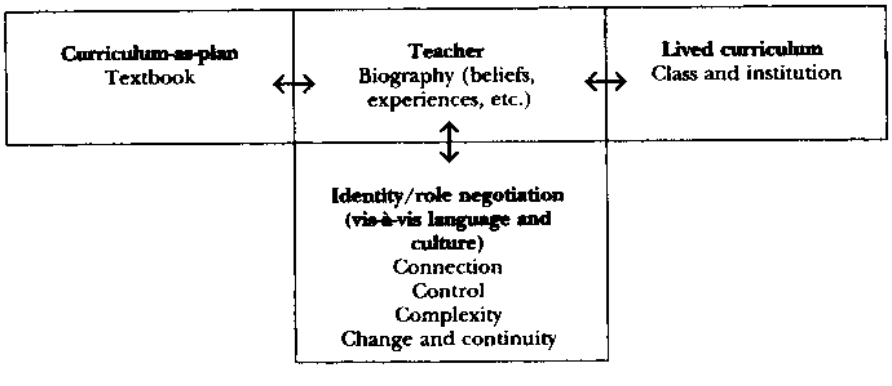
Despite unique aspects of their personal circumstances, histories, perceptions, and identities as teachers (Britzman, 1986), common themes or issues confronted by teachers in this study emerged (see Figure 1).

The Complexity of Sociocultural Identity Formation, Cultural Transmission, and Change

Complexity is inherent in any study exploring the interrelationships among language, culture, and teaching—all the more so when people's

FIGURE 1

Processes of Identity/Role Negotiation


Curriculum-as-plan
Textbook
Teacher
Biography (beliefs, experiences, etc.)
Lived curriculum
Class and institution
Identity/role negotiation (vis-à-vis language and culture)
Connection
Control
Complexity
Change and continuity