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Investigating the localisation of teaching materials and the navigation of contextual factors by Native English Teachers' in South Korean learning environments

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the application of teaching material localisation theories by native English teachers (NET's) as a means of encouraging learner participation, raising engagement, and facilitating interaction, in the South Korean educational context. Literature is extensive in the field of material development but can be limited in reflecting the realities, difficulties, and cultural complexities of English teaching which are faced by many native teachers. Teacher training courses can also regularly fall short in providing sufficient information on the institutional obligations teachers may face. This qualitative e-research study highlights the initial need for locally developed teaching materials, investigates how teachers navigate complicated contextual limitations, and examines the impact these difficulties can have on the classroom materials produced. Through five individual interviews the study found a strong interest in localisation from both NET's and their learners, with results acknowledging an observed increase in overall engagement. The findings also raised concern over the significance of contextual limitations and the overwhelming and extreme degree to which individual teaching environments in Korea can vary, supporting the necessity for contextual assessments to be created and completed by teachers before the material developmental process can commence.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone associated with the MA TESOL course at the University of Brighton for a fascinating and insightful educational experience. The course has allowed my knowledge of English teaching to expand and will undoubtably be beneficial to my future career when I return to South Korea. A particular thank you is extended to Paul Slater, my research supervisor, who has been welcoming, approachable, knowledgeable, and extremely helpful from the moment we were introduced and throughout my time at the University.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the participants involved in this project, who spoke openly, honestly, and at length about their experiences in South Korea. Their stories from the country and their clear dedication to their work, provided fascinating insights both for this research and my own professional development.

A special mention must be paid to the wonderful students and my amazing colleagues from my previous position at Munjeong Middle School in Daejeon, South Korea. Most notably to the initial welcome they gave me, their continued interest in my teaching materials, and the freedom they granted me to create and pilot new innovative English teaching ideas.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends, family, and in particular my wonderful wife Jeeun, for continuing to encourage me and for tolerating my ups and downs over the last year. My time at the University of Brighton and completion of this degree simply would not have been possible without their unwavering support.

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CELTA - Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

DELTA - Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

ELT - English Language Teaching

EPIK - English Program in Korea

GEPIK - Gyeonggi English Program in Korea

MA - Master of Arts

NET - Native English Teacher

PGCE - Postgraduate Certificate of Education

TE - Teacher Education

TEFL - Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TESOL - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Project Outline

Rationale

The instigation of my interest into English teaching materials began from the beginning of my four years of employment between two thousand and six to two thousand and twenty as a guest English teacher in the English Program in Korea (EPIK), a program designed to 'improve the English-speaking abilities of Korean students and teachers' and allow novice teachers to 'launch their professional teaching careers.'

I quickly found myself thrust into a challenging educational environment and asked to supply a collection of various teaching materials for classes of teenaged Korean English students, armed with minimal knowledge of the methods and theories required to effectively develop engaging, encouraging, and inspiring English teaching material. Over these fascinating and rewarding, yet difficult and stressful four years, I was forced to develop my own strategies and techniques for maintaining the suitability of the localised materials I created for my specific South Korean teaching context. These strategies were developed through a dedication, interest, and passion for my job, with support from my institution, faculty and students, and the extensive trialling of new ideas and content. This experience led me to consider how other NET's navigated their way through their time in Korea, if they worked in similar contexts to my own, and if they felt as underprepared as I did when entering their schools.

A fundamental requirement of acceptance onto the EPIK program is the completion of a teacher education course, such as an education related degree, an online TEFL or TESOL certificate, or postgraduate education such as a PGCE or MA qualification. Novice English teachers without an established interest in the field, or long-term plans to settle in Korea may understandably select the quickest and cheapest of these options, as postgraduate study is a considerable commitment with regards to both finance and time. Personally, my online TEFL certificate did not prepare me in any way for the context I was entering, failed

to provide sufficient knowledge of material design, and faded into insignificance and obscurity when I arrived in East Asia. I found myself again considering what these courses are attempting to provide and if other teachers had a similar experience and learning outcome.

Gaps in Research

Literature on the field of material design would appear to be thorough, extensive, and informative. However, the transfer of this information to NET's through certain educational courses, along with the practical application of it within schools remains questionable and an area I wish to investigate further. Claims made by Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018) that the dominant material found in ELT classes remains a coursebook may indeed be true for the majority but did not correlate with my individual experience of English language teaching. With the use of narrative driven qualitative research and accounts from NET's in Korea, I am aiming to discover if my journey and the issues I faced were unique or are issues commonly experienced by teachers in similar positions, and what may be the causes behind them.

Contextual teaching concerns, such as the English language proficiency of teachers and learners, access to available resources, time limitations, and heavily exam-focused curriculums, may restrict the freedoms afforded to NET's and their ability to express themselves through their material development, frustrating teachers, imprinting negative impressions of a context, and even causing teachers to leave the field prematurely. It is my belief that literature and education courses contain insufficient references to situations reflecting the realities of ELT, and that an understanding of these realities is necessary for a NET to be prepared, to survive, and to thrive as a material designer and English teacher upon arrival in Korea.

Direction and Contribution of Research

Throughout this research project I intend to explore the diverse opinions and attitudes of other NET's in Korea towards the localisation of their own teaching materials and the complex environments that must be navigated to supply engaging and stimulating materials to their learners. I aim to discover if the teacher education courses which they completed had a significant impact on their ability to develop materials, their thoughts on the early

years of their teaching, and how they successfully navigated any contextual difficulties to establish themselves in the country and become an inspirational material creator. The project may be limited to a small selection of the NET population in Korea due to time and scope restrictions but will aim to reflect the diverse range of teaching contexts found in the country and provide examples and snapshots of current on-the-ground working environments. The findings may reveal the extent of material localisation knowledge transfer from pre-service courses and the application of material design theory in Korean schools, highlight where changes to ELT education courses are required, and should be beneficial to future novice educators with aspirations of working within ELT in Korea.

Project Structure

This project will be divided into five chapters following this introduction. Chapter two will explore the relevant published literature, define teaching materials and their function in the ELT classroom, and how the localisation of these materials aims to enhance a learners experience, engagement, and acquisition of English. This chapter will address the cultural significance of localisation and how the process can coincide with strict coursebook instruction and political requirements, before discussing the importance of contextual and learner considerations which stand as a fundamental stage of material design. I will then discuss the role teacher education plays in a NET's cognitive process and the problematic mismatches with 'idealised versions of teaching and the realities of the classroom' (Kanno & Stuart, 2011:237) they may cause.

The project methodology will be outlined during chapter three, including an overview of any important areas of interest which will be posed to participants in two research stages. The first, an online survey, will seek to reveal participant insights surrounding the Korean education system, a teacher's position in Korean society, their relationships with learners, their learners relationships with English, and the overall effectiveness of their teacher education. The second stage, a series of online interviews, will allow participants to expand and elaborate on their initial responses. These stories and experiences will be summarised through visual data in the results during chapter four, with a discussion around the potential implications on teaching materials outlined during chapter five. A detailed picture will emerge of the views NET's hold towards material localisation, the methods used by NET's

during the localisation process, how NET's navigate their own complicated contexts, what impact Korea has on them personally and professionally, and how teacher education has shaped their own teaching beliefs and cognitions. Finally, a series of conclusions and suggestions will be made during chapter six.

Hypothesis

I am predicting that NET's who invest time and resources into the production and delivery of localised teaching material will report higher levels of learner engagement, participation, and interest in their English language classes during the online interview stage of research. NET's applying theoretical suggestions towards the material development process; including completing contextual and learner analyses, employing evaluative material assessments, and establishing design criteria, are expected to reference an enjoyable working environment, enhanced relationships with co-workers and management, along with a deeper connection with their language learners. NET's who have participated in higher level teacher education courses such as Cambridge's CELTA or TESOL MA courses, may have developed a multifaceted approach to localisation and display a heightened awareness towards the importance of its presence in classroom materials. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to produce accurate in-depth measurements for these predictions, but through the collection and analysis of participant perspectives, a series of conclusions will be produced.

The following chapter is a review of the current literature surrounding English teaching material development and any findings drawn will assist in formulating the initial questions posed to my participants.

Introduction

Rationale

Large quantities of published literature are available surrounding the theoretical design, writing, implementation, evaluation and development of English teaching materials, and the field in recent years has become a popular area of academic study (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). My enquiry will explore the important theories surrounding the design and development of localised classroom materials which native English teachers (NET's) in South Korea (Korea hereafter) employ with the aim of increasing learner engagement, participation, and interaction during their English language classes, and is driven by three research questions:

1 - How is the localisation of teaching materials viewed and approached by NET's in the Korean context?

2 - To what extent do Korean social and political contextual factors impact on a NET's ability to produce localised teaching materials?

3 - How have pre-service teacher education courses and Korean teaching experience shaped and assisted the development of their localised teaching material?

The following literature review will explore the definitions, justifications and theories behind teaching material development, the role localisation plays within the classroom, and the space localisation is afforded within teacher education courses. The literature review will assist in the formulation of initial questions posed to NET's in Korea during the online survey stage of the project.

Context

Employed to assist with the teaching of communicative English in a variety of institutional settings and in contrast to their grammar and exam-focused Korean colleagues, NET's represent a substantial quantity of the foreign populace in Korea (Collins & Shubin, 2015).

Thousands of Korean language schools gripped by education and English fever (Park, 2009; Kim & Bang, 2017) offer attractive incentives to candidates who may hold limited teaching credentials or degrees unrelated to education, with the single academic requirement for a Korean E-2 foreign language teaching visa, a bachelor's degree in any subject. Previous teaching experience or qualifications are often overlooked in favour of nativism (Howard, 2019), yet an institutional expectation remains for NET's to create engaging, culturally relevant teaching materials and lessons without sufficient education in the appropriate methods required.

Education represents significant societal capital in Korea and impacts important life events such as 'gaining employment, marriage and even the formation of human relationships' (Kim & Bang, 2017:210). NET's entering Korean educational settings take on similar professional obligations, again without the knowledge of what exactly professional practice entails (Jolly & Bolitho, 2011) particularly in the field of teaching material development.

English teachers 'use materials in specific contexts, with specific learners, and to meet specific needs' (López-Barrios & de Debat, 2014:37) with the process of material localisation meeting these requirements in 'enriching, engaging and imaginative ways' (Gross, 1992:139. In: Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018:38) reflecting the objectives of Korea's E-2 visa program (Korean Ministry of Education). Institutionally supplied materials such as mass produced (Harwood, 2014; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018) yet widely criticised (McGrath 2013; Litz, 2005) coursebooks often require a level of 'adaption' and 'supplementation' (McDonough, 2012; Harwood, 2014; Mishan & Timmis, 2015) to align with specific classroom contexts and educational goals. The personalisation of these materials and the inclusion of relatable, engaging cultural content, defined as 'localisation' (McGrath, 2013:66; Mishan & Timmis, 2015:40; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018:102) stands as the focus of this research project and following literature review.

Teaching Materials

Defining Teaching Materials

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Classroom teaching materials such as the ministry-selected coursebooks regularly found in Korean schools are typically 'externally mediated' (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:163), may contain 'theoretical problems, design flaws and practical shortcomings' (Litz, 2005:8. In: Harwood, 2014:206) and may result in uninspiring and unengaging language learning. It is within localised 'unmediated' materials (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:163) where a NET, can 'engage directly with language learning principles without intervention from intermediaries' (Timmis, 2014:242. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:1) creating content more likely to stimulate their learners and inspire playful communicative interactions (McGrath, 2013). The process in which these localised materials, relevant to specific learning contexts, are designed, evaluated, adapted, and ultimately produced, represents the initial formulation of teaching beliefs and ideals into lesson planning and teaching practices (McGrath, 2002:217).

Teaching materials themselves can be defined as 'anything that can be used by language learners to facilitate their learning of the target language' (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018:2), or materials containing a 'built-in pedagogic purpose' (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:3) such as improving classroom engagement or linguistic abilities. McGrath (2002:7) separates teaching materials into four categories; materials designed for specific learning and teaching purposes and contexts; authentic materials; teacher written materials; and learner generated materials. The focus of this project is on materials designed specifically for individual contexts, and materials written by local teachers containing the 'pedagogic purpose' of raising learner engagement, participation, interaction, and enjoyment.

Function of Teaching Materials

English learners enter English language classrooms with a varying set of expectations. Perhaps the most common of these being the expectation of teaching materials to feature at some point during a class or course (Gill, 2010. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015). For many, these materials represent the 'visible heart of any ELT programme' (Sheldon, 1988:237), although their primary purpose goes far beyond an acknowledgment of their existence. Mishan & Timmis (2015:6) and Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018:2) both elaborate on how materials fulfil a range of critical language learning needs; a psychological need for organisation, an exposure to a range of vocabulary, a focus on grammar points and target cultures, act as motivation towards further study, and provide guidance and advice for

language teachers. Teaching materials, therefore, can be informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting or exploratory, delivering bountiful opportunities for learners to acquire language by a variety of means.

What would you like? - English teaching material created by participant LB.

Howatt & Widdowson (2004:210. In: McGrath 2013:4) state powerfully that language acquisition and communication is stimulated by three vital conditions; 'someone to talk to, something to talk about, and a desire to understand and make yourself understood.' Teaching materials stand as the 'something to talk about' with localised versions offering the vital interest, familiarity, and stimulation levels learners require to want to 'understand and make themselves understood' and underlining the importance for localised teaching materials to regularly feature during English language education.

Materials contain an extensive range of purposes and features (Mishan & Timmis, 2015) and can be presented in a wide variety of formats (Tomlinson, 2011), however the selection, creation, and implementation of them may be context dependant. Learners 'present receptivity' (Dat, 2013:413) to a set of materials within the emotional 'affective' and rational 'cognitive' domains (Mishan & Timmis, 2015) moves constantly, and a consistent re-evaluation of learner needs is an essential requirement for material creators. This re-

evaluation is where adapting and localising materials for specific geographical contexts (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:33) is at its most effective.

Localisation of Teaching Materials

The dominant material found inside EFL classes remains the coursebook (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:38), and for justified reasoning as McGrath (2013:5) explains; coursebooks offer reduced preparation time for teachers, provide coherent programmes of study for learners, supply convenient reference points and support mechanisms, are often visually appealing, and may be accompanied by optional supplementary material for teachers. Despite all these positive qualities, coursebooks regularly fail to recognise learners as individuals, may be unable to cater to varying personalities and differences in learning preferences (2013:8), and cannot completely visualise the complicated contexts in which they are used (Stern, 1983. In: Johnson, 2017:179).

Fast Fashion - English teaching material created by participant CB.

Localisation can 'situate English language learning' and include 'familiar cultural reference points' such as national events and popular celebrities (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:40), engaging learners with relatable materials and triggering the

desire 'to understand and make themselves understood' (Howatt, 2004:210. In: McGrath 2013:4).

The overuse of 'source culture' material (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999:204) which draws on the familiarity of a learners own culture does have drawbacks. The removal of 'target culture' material featuring cultures where English is spoken as an L1, deprives learners of 'foreign ideas' and information that may be of significant interest, stimulation, or value (McGrath, 2013; Eapan, 2014), and can impact their intercultural communicative competence (Wiseman, 2002). The balance between exposing learners to rich 'target culture' and relating materials to familiar 'source culture' through localisation can be problematic, dependent on geographical contexts, an individual learners language intention, and the significance of this dilemma cannot be understated.

Significance of Localisation

Coursebook Dissatisfaction and Contextual Limitations

Coursebooks are regularly selected by default as the main material for language learning in classrooms (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018) irrespective a of pre-selection contextual evaluation taking place. For some teachers textbooks are highly coveted and immensely 'valuable' (McDonough, 2012:52), with others viewing them as limiting or 'defective' (Harwood, 2010. In: Harwood, 2014:206) and only paying 'lip service' (Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013:445. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:46) to the engagement and cultural relativism which drives learners towards autonomous study. Despite their advantages and status as a 'time-saver for busy teachers and a guide for the inexperienced one' (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:45), along with the assurance they provide learners (McGrath, 2013), teachers often find themselves inextricably bound and over reliant on something they both 'hate to love and love to hate' (Sheldon, 1988:237).

There appear to be multiple contextual factors to consider before teachers or institutions select a 'mediated' or 'unmediated' approach to teaching materials, such as faculty language proficiency issues, a lack of resources and creative freedoms, minimal time

allowances, fundamental development skills, and measurable learning outcome requirements. It will be enlightening to discover if these limiting factors are raised by participants during the research, how they are navigated, and what impact they have on the implementation of their own material creativity.

Value of Engagement in SLA and Professional Development

The 'unengaging blandness of commercially published materials' (Tomlinson, 2012a:162) that are 'too safe, clean, harmonious, benevolent, and undisturbed' (Waijnryb, 1996:291. In: Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018:37) is possibly a major contributor towards emphasis placed on affective engagement in language learning theory. Engagement with learning materials is vital for sustained, autonomous language acquisition and educators can accelerate this by 'engaging the senses, emotions, and imaginations' (Gross, 1992:139. In: Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018:38) of learners, through a principled approach to supplementation, adaption, and creation of their own localised teaching materials. For inexperienced teachers, there are opportunities within localisation for individual professional development (Masuhara, Et Al. 2008) as the selection of language and tasks, awareness of language learning theories, and sociocultural appropriacy, are all essential aspects to successful material design and contribute towards an effective teaching experience (Jolly & Bolitho, 2011).

Supplementation and Adaption

Participants on language courses may expect to cover everything included in a supplied textbook (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), but literature suggests textbooks were never intended to be a 'straitjacket' for teaching; additions, alterations and even the removal of sections is to be expected and necessary (Bell & Gower, 2011:138. In: Harwood, 2014:221). Additional supplementary material facilitating extra experience or instruction (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018) alongside the coursebook often borrows from other mediated materials (McGrath, 2013), discouraging the participatory benefits provided by materials prepared by a teacher locally. Determining which sections of supplied material require alteration or adaption, demands careful consideration of the 'external' political, managerial, administrative, and educational contexts (McDonough & Shaw, 2003:85. In: Harwood, 2014:221) in which a teacher operates. The 'internal' classroom dynamics, personalities, syllabus constraints,

available resources, and learner expectations (Cunningsworth, 1995. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:68) can be equally significant. These 'external' and 'internal' factors represent key information a NET in Korea must obtain to implement localisation appropriately into their lesson plans and teaching materials.

Summary

A considerable amount of time, effort and freedom would appear to be required to produce successful and engaging 'unmediated' materials. Unfortunately, 'time is short, teaching schedules are heavy, and practitioners are not permitted to deviate from a rigid syllabus' (Harwood, 2010:4. In: Harwood, 2014:212). Therefore, as Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018:27) explain, teachers do 'need and benefit from textbooks' and would develop their own materials 'if only they had the time, resources, and confidence to do so.'

In Korea, it could be argued that the obsession with grading (Kwon, Et Al. 2017:74) and exam washback effect (Choi, 2008:58), places more emphasis on learning outcomes and social capital than material content and autonomous study. This may depend on the extent and appropriacy of material localisation, and the levels of engagement, participation, interest, and 'receptivity' (Dat, 2013) learners display. Research should reveal if Tomlinson & Masuhara's statements are consistent with the NET's employed within Korean institutions.

Localising Materials

Requirements for Development

Before the development of 'unmediated' localised teaching materials can take place, an accurate evaluation of supplied material should be undertaken if NET's are to base their localisation on justified rationale. This analysis is critical in determining the scope of localisation necessary, but unlikely to be carried out effectively without wide knowledge of 'the context in which the materials will be used' (McGrath, 2002. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:59). Institutional education goals, alongside specific intentions for language learning classes must remain central to any analyses or evaluations, or materials risk misalignment and ineffective learning outcomes, as Bax (2003:281) stresses, 'context is a crucial

determiner of the success or failure of learners.' A fundamental aspect of professionally recognised teaching is 'understanding and being able to analyse and reflect on the culture, the classroom, the pupil's needs, and so on' (2003:282), and these professional fundamentals can be applied equally to the development of engaging, localised teaching materials.

Context, Needs and Material Analyses - Context

Without complete recognition of the 'permeability of classroom walls' (Pennycook, 2016:33. In: Hall 2018:201), the acceptance that what takes place inside a classroom is inextricably linked to events taking place outside, a teacher cannot complete a comprehensive analysis of specific teaching contexts. Context analysis may not fully determine the required approaches or scope of localisation but can provide insights into how material content is likely to be welcomed. A thorough context analysis will also allow teachers to assess the appropriacy of their designs within multifaceted and complex learning environments. Apprehension towards innovative alternatives to traditional teaching methods, pressure towards exam-focused work, and limited creative freedoms (Allwright, 2005:14; Tomlinson, 2012:143. In: Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018:2) are some factors to be considered.

Figure 1 - Stern's (1983) contextual factors in language teaching.
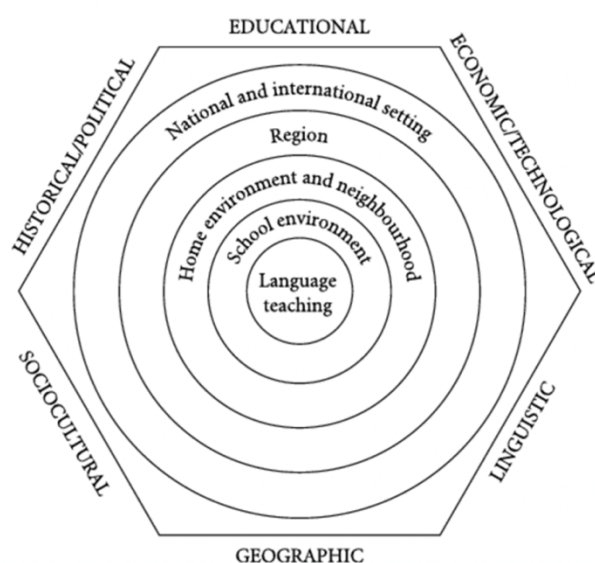
Stern (1983. In: Johnson, 2018:179) outlines in detail six external factors which impact English education in an individual teaching context *(fig. 1)*; Linguistic factors, the extent English is used within a specific community; Sociocultural factors, the perceived economic, political or cultural status of English; Historical factors, attitudes towards imperialism or current political powers; Geographical factors, views towards varieties of English seen as beneficial or holding importance; Economic and Technological factors, available resources and investment in technological equipment; and Educational factors, if English is a compulsory subject, the age children begin English study, and the extent of their studies.

Although many of the factors mentioned by Stern appear on the surface not to be visible inside a language classroom and may not be perceived to significantly impact language teaching, they are 'inextricably linked' (Pennycook, 2016:33. In: Hall 2018:201) as 'society and culture are more than background and even more than context' (Stern, 1983:283. In: Hall, 2018:205). The international setting, geographic region and language learning environments all shape the possible language teaching approaches and physical localisation of materials a teacher can implement. Again, It will be interesting to discover if NET's are aware of these factors, to what extent they report the impact they have on their work, and how they are navigated.

Context, Needs and Material Analyses - Learner Needs

Institutional learning goals are formulated by learner needs analyses, or in simple terms; 'why a group of learners in a particular environment' (McDonough, 2012:4) need to learn English. If a school is following government educational policies or curriculum, this can have vast implications and restrict the development of teacher produced materials (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:165), perhaps explaining why standardised coursebooks are found in a large percentage of English language classrooms in Korea.

The Korean Ministry of Education state their educational philosophy as; 'creating an education system that cherishes the great value of cooperation and co-existence, promoting the comprehensive growth of students.' Intriguingly, claiming that the provision of '*personalized* (emphasis added) education to meet the demands of different life cycles, while respecting unique aptitudes and capacities' forms a main educational objective.

Localisation of materials would then appear to fulfil Korea's objective of 'personalised education' and something which should not be subject to heavy resistance. Publishers of coursebooks are not in the classroom (Harwood, 2014), struggle to personalise sufficiently (McGrath, 2013), are not aware of 'internal' contextual dynamics (McDonough & Shaw, 2003. In: Harwood, 2014; Cunningsworth, 1995. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015), and therefore cannot complete an extensive and accurate context or needs analysis, whereas NET's are in the ideal position to do so.

McDonough (2012:7) *(fig.2)* lists a selection of typical learner characteristics and highlights how a completed needs analysis directly influences material writing decisions, with learner ages, interests, proficiencies, aptitude, mother tongues, academic levels, attitudes towards learning, motivations, preferred learning styles and personalities, all having a significant impact upon a materials appropriacy, design, and efficacy.

Figure 2 - McDonough's (2012) typical learner characteristics.
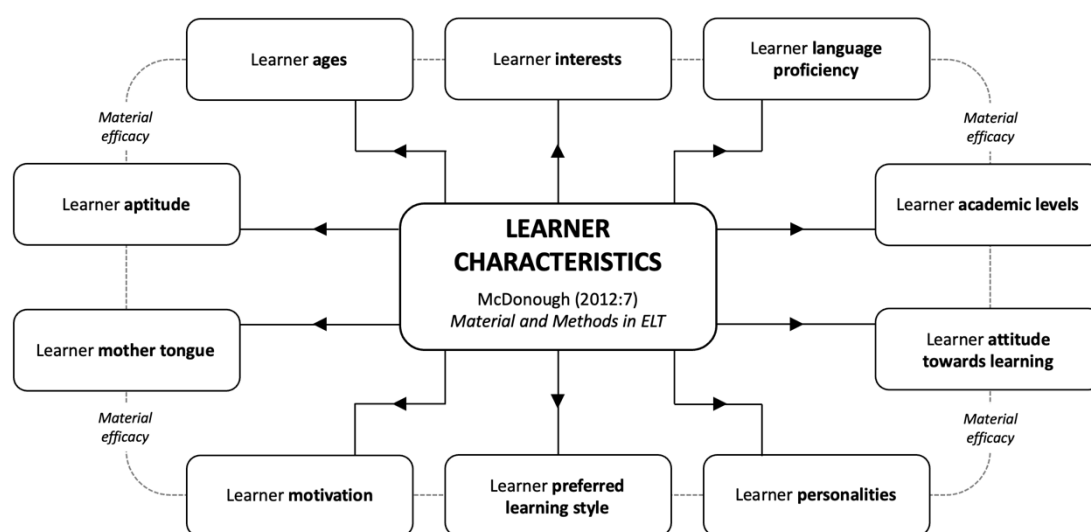
Communicative requirements and the overall rationale for English study (Johnson, 2018) is essential for NET's to understand and process. Research has shown that Korean teaching materials are regularly aimed towards communicative objectives but are instead often used for grammatical practice (Yuasa, 2010). Localised materials do indeed require alignment with McDonough's (2012) learning characteristics, but a thorough needs analysis may be accompanied by dialogue with learners to reveal hidden or reserved learning motivations.

Both learner characteristics and needs develop constantly, and reflection on them should be an ongoing process for 'any teacher, in any subject' (Graves, 1999. In: Dat, 2013:413).

Once equipped with a comprehensive understanding of contextual factors and learner needs, NET's should be ideally positioned to appropriately develop their own emotionally engaging, localised teaching materials, which drives participation, interaction, and enjoyment. Although prior to this, supplied materials must be evaluated to determine the scope of localisation required.

Conducting Material Evaluation

Evaluating teaching materials allows a teacher to pinpoint deficiencies which may be misaligned with contextual requirements and 'involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of materials' (Tomlinson, 2003b. In: McDonough, 2012:50) against the needs of their students. At some stage in their employment a NET is likely to encounter situations where the development of their own localised material is justified based on these evaluated deficiencies (Jolly & Bolitho, 2011), with the extent of development varying from context to context (McDonough, 2012) and dependent on the type of 'mediated' material supplied.

Due to the varying nature of English education in Korea frameworks covering multiple environments may be difficult to produce, with evaluations best carried out locally by individual material designers. Evaluations should be brief, not 'demanding in terms of time and expertise' yet practical, comprehensive, and realistically useful (Mukundan & Ahour, 2010. In: McDonough, 2012). They should also be completed in line with an explicit pedagogic purpose outlined by the evaluator at the start of the process. This evaluation should be related to a specified context and the criteria used should represent learner needs, expanded upon by McGrath (2013), Mishan & Timmis (2015), and Tomlinson & Masuhara (2018). The extent to which evaluative criteria is applied by NET's in Korea will be investigated and forms an important point of interest in this enquiry.

Conducting Material Analyses

As mentioned, material 'evaluations' of teaching materials attempt to assess their effects in each context on a specific group of learners (Tomlinson, 2003b. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015). Material 'analyses' refer specifically to the content and features included in the work.

Littlejohn's framework *(fig.3)* shares a similar objective to that of this dissertation in analysing material objectives, determining if stated pedagogical goals are congruent with final products, and revealing if materials are effective in increasing engagement, participation, and classroom interactions. Littlejohn (2011:181) notes that although many analytical frameworks 'serve a useful purpose in guiding the selection of materials', they rely on 'general impressionistic judgements' rather than in depth examination of what the materials contain, such as those used in Dat's framework (2013:420) and may be open to bias. Littlejohn (2011:180) explicitly acknowledges that materials impact learners beyond the vocabulary they present, and that measuring this is not the aim (2011:181). Instead, the framework focuses on a 'close analysis of the materials themselves, to investigate their nature as a step distinct from evaluating their worth for specified purposes.'

Figure 3 - Littlejohn's (2011) preliminary framework for analysis, evaluation, and action.
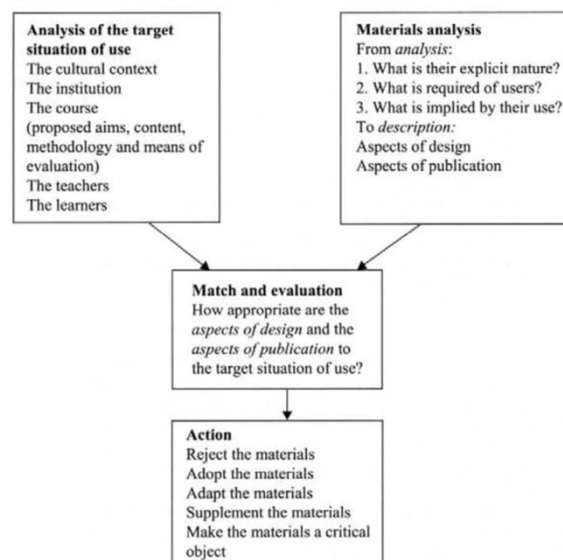
Additional advantages to completed analyses can lead teachers to redesign (2011:203), encourage 'piloting' (Mishan & Timmis, 2015:167) and allow teachers to investigate and reflect on their own teaching styles, beliefs, and overall way of working.

Summary

McDonough (2012:10) summarises the situation NET's may face in Korea by stating that teachers are ultimately on the 'front line attempting to promote learning and fulfil the stated goals against the background of a complex network of interrelated factors.' The realities of large classes, low motivation, inadequate coursebooks, lack of resources, heavy workloads, and exam pressures (Gaies & Bowers, 1990), along with long distances from home comforts, can dramatically increase stress levels, result in decreased motivation to improve language learning, and design playful and fun teaching experiences. By developing evaluative and analytical skills (Tomlinson, 2003; Bax, 2003) and applying appropriate levels of localisation, NET's can equip themselves with the tools to overcome restrictive difficulties and establish appropriate and interactive methodologies (Gaies & Bowers, 1990), in whichever context they find themselves.

Teaching material evaluation and contextual analyses should regularly feature as part of pre-service teacher training courses (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) for appropriate adaption and localisation to be implemented during employment. It is essential this research reveals the extent of teacher education NET's have received, and if material evaluation or contextual analyses were covered. If NET's are to base their localisation on justified rationale, the literature would suggest evaluation, analysis and adaption being critical inclusions on all teacher education courses.

Teacher Education

Context Based Teacher Training

NET's employed in Korea will be required to develop their own teaching materials for use in their classrooms at some point during their time in the country. This development may be motivated by independent rationale, through the adaptation and supplementation of coursebook material, or as a stipulation of their employment (Moodie & Nam, 2016). The development requires an acute awareness of design, knowledge of contextual concerns, and practical skillsets to complete successfully. With the educational benefits of engaging, interactive, relevant, and localised teaching materials established, 'this constitutes a

powerful argument for a sustained focus on material evaluation and design within teacher education programmes' (McGrath, 2013:82).

Any training a teacher undertakes must recognise the 'backdrop of teachers professional lives, the settings they work and circumstances of that work' (Freeman & Johnson, 1989:405), ideally combining these three factors during pre-service classes surrounding context (Burns & Richards, 2009), material evaluation and material design. For many teachers, the importance of this training only materialises during the whirlwind first years of in-service employment, resulting in a mismatch of expectations and a delayed realisation of 'teaching realities' (Kanno & Stuart, 2011:237). Although challenging and difficult to organise, realistic context-based education is essential to dispel the misunderstanding that education can be delivered in complete only 'through the transmission of academic subject matter' (Bartels, 2007. In: Burns & Richards, 2009:215).

Teacher Education Course Content

Pre-service courses vary in length and level (McGrath, 2013), attempting to prepare novice teachers for a variety of age groups, in a variety of contexts, in a variety of ways. As it is likely to be almost impossible to predict the future movements of a trainee, courses may choose to ignore the 'realities of regional context' (Stapleton & Shao, 2018:25), which should stand as the starting point for any material development procedure (McGrath, 2002. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:59), in favour of imagined scenarios. Contexts and by extension materials, can only be appropriately developed once a teacher is absorbed within a location (Stern 1983. In: Johnson, 2018:179), and therefore education courses should attempt to highlight predicted 'interactions between the individual and the context in which they will operate' (Tsui, 2009:422) as much as possible. They could also aim to develop trainees analytical skills towards coursebooks as the majority will encounter this form of material, to understand and exploit their benefits, compensating for their limitations and weaknesses (McGrath, 2013). Harmer (2001:9) summarises this concern appropriately, stating that the examination of coursebook design represents 'just about every theoretical and practical issue' trainee teachers will require.

Critical analysis of teaching material should be employed when a contextual situation demands it, and although trainee teacher may not initially possess 'sufficient experience' to accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of material (Brumfit & Rossner, 1982. In: McGrath, 2013:90), teachers are assumed to gather this over time. It may be advisable to inform trainees in advance of essential skills in authentic material sourcing, practical designing skills, (Richards, 2001), and encourage the avoidance of habitual practices such as the over reliance on suppled material (McGrath, 2013). In a similar vein to Harmer (2001), Jolly & Bolitho (2011:129) endorse the material writing and development process as 'raising every issue in learning to teach' with McGrath (2013:94) stating that this training 'needs to be backed up by the establishment of materials writing as a key component on initial training courses and a regular feature of in-service training programmes.'

These statements can be contextualised by Leung (2009. In: Stapleton & Shao, 2018:25) emphasising that 'regulatory bodies in different regions or countries have differing stipulations' and that purpose made materials may not always be feasible, allowed or required, and revealing a critical area of questioning the NET participants in this dissertation must elaborate on.

Realities of Teaching on Teacher Education Courses

Although the appropriate localisation of teaching materials is directly tied to the contextual factors and learner needs of a specific location, trainees may benefit from a raised awareness of this bountiful practice, with courses attempting to include examples of realistic, predictable situations where possible (McGrath, 2013). Should material development feature as part of a training course, it may also be preceded by an evaluative activity of some description to emphasise effectiveness, learning outcomes, and an outline of who and what the material is designed for. Canniveng & Martinez (2003:483) argue that this isn't taking place and teaching courses are feeding trainees generalised categories 'with little time paid to the process of how to develop personalised and specific criteria' aligned to their desired contexts.

McGrath (2013:95) also recognises these failings by determining that 'material evaluation and design is not a core component of pre-service curricula' only featuring as a small section

of a broader topic. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate all available options offered to potential NET's in Korea, although a brief assessment of the Cambridge CELTA and DELTA courses provides weight to McGrath's statement. It will be revealing to discover the extent to which education shaped the participant's teaching practices, established their ability to evaluate contextual factors, encouraged their own production of localised materials, and if they believe their education accurately prepared them for the 'realities of the classroom' in Korea (Kanno & Stuart, 2011:237).

Summary

Regarding localisation appearing on teacher education courses, Mishan & Timmis (2015:69) discuss the difficulties 'to judge what will be regarded as relevant and interesting in a given context' suggesting that teachers should wait until they arrive to complete context analyses. Despite these difficulties, pre-service courses could attempt to 'predict' the teaching roles and contexts trainees will be entering (McGrath, 2013:100). Teacher trainees may or may not be supplied with coursebooks, but will face expectations (Gill, 2010. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015) to create and use materials in some form and therefore must have foundation knowledge of sourcing, evaluating, exploiting, adapting, and supplementing institutionally supplied materials, as well as the design and development of their own.

Should a context or a set of learners require or demand further localisation, teachers may also wish to understand relevant design software and strategies to assist them. Ultimately, 'no two teachers work under the same conditions' (Cabrera, 2014:268) and teacher training can only offer a reference map to be referred to and exploited once in-service work has commenced.

Findings and Conclusion

Literature Review Findings

Throughout this literature review numerous questions have been raised about the real-world application of the theory behind material development. Although there remains an accepted process for materials writing including the assessment of needs, decisions over

language skills and vocabulary content, the sourcing of authentic content, texts and exercises, and the physical practice and production of materials (Harwood, 2014), the implementation of the process 'remains far from orderly' and partly an atheoretical activity (Samuda, 2005. In. Harwood, 2014:323).

Teacher training courses attempt to cover issues relating to material development, but the unpredictable nature of EFL employment in Korea, and the large number of 'external' and 'internal' contextual variables can produce gaps between expectations and teaching realities. How NET's apply the theoretical understandings of material design and apply it to their own chaotic and complicated Korean environments requires further investigation, as the institutions in which they teach will vary in terms of their educational goals and teaching objectives.

Conclusion

Throughout this literature review various arguments from esteemed authors in the field regarding the development and localisation of English teaching materials have been heard. Coursebooks and supplementary mediated material undoubtably serve a multitude of purposes for teachers and learners worldwide, and contexts exist where there are simply no other options for educators (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018:3). Access to resources, 'external' political factors, teacher aptitude, and learner expectations standing as some examples of such limitations (Harmer, 1998:116; McGrath, 2013:88). Regardless of the targets they achieve and the lifejacket they provide to some, coursebooks remain limited in the engagement, encouragement, participation, familiarity, and interaction they can provide to learners, and may be unable recognise learners as individuals with differing needs, interests, wants and talents, that can be harnessed during language education (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018).

Localisation allows teachers to construct an exciting environment and produce material learners cannot wait to 'talk about' (Howatt, 2014:210), filling the cracks produced by contextual pressures (Stern, 1983. In: Johnson, 2017), and potentially triggering a continued desire to invest in autonomous language learning. The extent to which educators produce

these materials may well rely on their evaluative abilities and the importance their teacher education has placed on material development.

The following chapter will outline the methodological approach of this dissertation, including information regarding the research design, participant sample, ethical considerations, stages of e-research completed, and the analysis of collected data.

Approach and Design

Methodological Approach

The primary goal of this project was to listen to personal accounts and attitudes towards the localisation of teaching materials from NET's in Korea, to discover if learner engagement, participation, and interest, increases because of the inclusion of source culture and higher levels of familiarity within ELT materials. For this reason, the qualitative paradigm of research placing importance on 'verbal rather than statistical' data (Hammersley, 2013:12. In: Cohen et al., 2018:287) represented the most appropriate research method to employ.

Research methods 'often have different goals' (Devers & Frankel, 2000:252) requiring 'distinct research designs' and the 'fitness for purpose' (Cohen et al., 2018:1) of the selected approach must remain the guiding principle for its selection. Here, with similarities to Howard's (2019) investigation into NET professional identities, I sought to understand the complicated Korean context from participant perspectives and explore the way in which teachers can develop localised teaching material, while simultaneously navigating Korea's challenging relationship with English learning. With an acknowledgment that there is 'no single blueprint for naturalistic, qualitative or ethnographic research' (Cohen et al., 2018:287) and numerous methods of investigation exist, the completed narrative qualitative study was 'mediated through the eyes of my respondents' (Howard, 2019:1482). People are capable of 'attributing meaning to events and their environment' (Bryman, 2012:399), contextualising complicated issues and providing interesting insights into sensitive topics.

The social and workplace experiences of NET's in Korea are inherently complicated, calling for an under the surface 'way of knowing' (Bryman, 2012:400; Freebody, 2003:38. In: Howard, 2019:1482) which qualitative investigations help facilitate. As I intended to document individual interpretations and accurately 're-present' (Sandelowski, 2001:235) an aspect of the lives of the teachers studied, the collection and scrutiny of verbal data allowed 'procedural and analytical rigor' to be displayed, with the coded and interpreted data then

transformed into visually informative results holding 'real life immediacy and resonance' (Mason, 2006:22) to current and future NET's in Korea.

E-research Design

The e-research used 'as a means of collecting data from individuals' (Bryman, 2012:654) for this project was divided into two stages. The first, involved the distribution of an online survey *(appx. E)*, beneficial when researching populations separated by great distances. Participants were introduced to this survey from a range of online communities; 'University Jobseekers in Korea', 'ESL Teachers in Korea', 'English Teachers in Korea' on Facebook, and Teaching in Korea on Reddit. These groups contain large numbers of NET's with experience of working under Korean E-2 visa regulations, with this visa category representing part of the project sampling criteria. The criteria ensured participants were university educated, held some form of certification in language or education, and were nationals from the inner circle countries. Posts *(appx. A)* to both 'University Jobseekers in Korea' and 'Teaching in Korea' required moderator approval *(appx. B)* which was granted upon request.

The online survey included a question *(Q1)* allowing teachers to register their interest for the second phase of the project, an online face-to-face interview, which proved to be the most revealing stage. These interviews facilitated 'convenient, easy, and comfortable' (Hinchcliffe & Gavin, 2009:333) in-depth discussions not possible through initial surveying and provided 'voices to participants, probing issues that lie beneath the surface of presenting behaviours and actions.' (Cohen et al., 2018:288).

Sampling

NET's in Korea with experience on an E-2 visa regularly designing and developing their own localised teaching materials formed the research sample. This visa is granted to applicants with certain attributes; citizenship from a country where English is the primary language, a native level of language proficiency, and a bachelor's degree qualification (Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The combination of an E-2 visa history along with current teaching and material development experience ensured any insights, distinctive findings, or fresh understandings of situations, events, or relationships (Neuman, 2014) remained grounded and relevant. It should be noted that one question *(Q3)* during the online survey asked if

participants had spent time on an E-2 visa with recognition that transferring from Korean E-series to F-series visas, which include permanent residence and family visas, is not unusual after spending time in the country.

Neuman (2014:247) describes the sampling process as 'picking a few to stand in for the many' with selected participants assisting with the main research question investigation. Although appropriate sampling is equally important in both qualitative and quantitative research (Punch, 2005. In: Howard, 2019), 'theoretical sampling' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998. In: Bryman, 2012:418) as used in this research, differs by avoiding mathematical selection in favour of contextual relevance and the discovery of interrelationships between participants and subject matter. The research did not apply random sampling found in many quantitative projects (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008. In: Howard, 2019) as the survey was offered to NET's in specific online communities, and as a result the findings do not represent English education in Korea as a whole.

Ethics and Accuracy

As this qualitative project involved discussions about materials which teachers may have invested significant time, effort, and emotions into, along with potentially sensitive previous teaching experiences, I held a responsibility to continue with a 'principled sensitivity to the rights of others' (Cavan, 1977:810). The University of Brighton (Brighton Research and Ethics Application Manager) granted approval for the research to be conducted and deemed that there were no serious ethical issues involved. Information sheets *(appx. C/J)* and consent forms *(appx. D/K)* for both stages of research were produced to negate any potential harm to participants, and Diener & Crandall's four ethical principles (1978. In: Bryman, 2012:135) were followed throughout. Transparency was maintained regarding data collection, including how data would be used, stored, and destroyed, and when entering established online communities, I remained aware of intrusiveness by obtaining gatekeeper approval, contacting moderators in each instance of advertisement, and fully respected the anonymity of all participants (Eysenbach & Till, 2001).

Quantitative mathematic measurement of data was not an objective for this project, therefore validity relied extensively on the 'quality, rigour and wider potential' (Mason,

1996:21. In: Bryman, 2012:389) of the collected insights. Yardley (2000:219), proposed four alternative criteria as a means of 'validating' qualitative research, and these proposals were rigorously adhered to throughout the project.

Table 1 - Yardley's (2000) Characteristics of good qualitative research.

Table 1 Characteristics of good (qualitative) research. Essential qualities are shown in bold, with examples of the form each can take shown in italics.

Sensitivity to context
Theoretical; relevant literature; empirical data;
sociocultural setting; participants' perspectives; ethical issues.

Commitment and rigour
In-depth engagement with topic; methodological competence/skill;
thorough data collection; depth/breadth of analysis.

Transparency and coherence
Clarity and power of description/argument; transparent methods and
data presentation; fit between theory and method; reflexivity.

Impact and importance
Theoretical (enriching understanding); socio-cultural;
practical (for community, policy makers, health workers).

These four criteria *(table 1)*; a sensitivity to the positions NET's operate in their institutions and foreign communities; a consistent engagement with the topic, research questions, participants, and data analysis; a constant openness and honesty with participants; and ensuring any findings remain valuable to NET's working in Korea, stand as a measure of validity for the research. Full consent was given by all NET's *(Q2)* during the survey, participants were regularly informed of their freedoms to withdraw without penalty, and anonymity was protected by initialling.

Research Stages

Questions for NET Participants

The two stages of research were designed to investigate and address the main questions which emerged from a review of relevant literature. Firstly, the views of NET's towards institutionally supplied teaching materials and the extent of their use, the details of institutional contexts are NET's operating within, the creative freedoms afforded to NET's,

the roles NET's believe they maintain in Korean society, the intrinsic desire of NET's to produce localised material, the awareness NET's possess regarding internal and external political conditions, the needs assessments carried out by NET's, and finally, the level of education NET's have received and the impact of that education on their material development.

Stage One - Online Survey

Online surveys gather large amounts of targeted data in a short window (Bryman, 2012), with multiple choice and close-ended questions (Neuman, 2014) further streamlining the process and reducing the 'possibility for errors' (Ritter & Sue, 2012. In: Howard, 2019:1483). The online survey initially contained forty questions, but concerns over 'respondent fatigue' (Bryman, 2012:679) revised the survey to thirty-two. I had initially overlooked the importance of reducing resource demands (Devers & Frankel, 2000) to encourage participation and adjustments were made before the survey went live.

The survey *(appx. E)* was separated into eight sections and along with gathering topic related responses functioned as a recruitment vehicle to collect the demographic data of participants. Two of the eight sections contained questions relating to participant backgrounds, with four relating to their views on the Korean educational system and their use of teaching materials. These sections were sandwiched between a landing page, containing the survey instructions, attachments and rationale, and a concluding page with completion receipts and contact information. A selection of questions facilitated a text response *(appx. G)* limited to three words, designed as an asynchronous method of collecting unique viewpoints, and forming discussion points for online interviews. The only contact information collected from participants was an email address entered on the front page of the survey *(Q1)* acting as a register of interest for stage two and was optional.

Stage Two - Online Interviews

Due to the geographical positioning of the participants and the impracticalities of focus groups due to scheduling concerns, online interviews *(appx. L/M/N/O/P)* represented the most 'viable means' (Bryman, 2012:494) of data collection, adding 'depth to breadth' (Hart, 2005:357. In: Howard, 2019:1484) to the key responses collected during stage one. These

interviews served as an 'interpersonal encounter' allowing participants to come to life, away from 'manipulable' (Kvale, 1996:11. In: Cohen et al., 2018:506) questionnaire contributions, and facilitated an accurate 'reconstruction of events' (Bryman, 2012:495) from participant perspectives. Participants were reminded that the interviews were recorded and transcribed as the project was 'interested in not just what people say but also in the way that they say it' (2012:482).

Selected quotations from large transcripts were taken through initial data reducing inductive open coding *(appx. Q)* 'broken down into their component parts' (Bryman, 2012:13) and categorised into 'manageable and comprehensible proportions' (Cohen et al., 2018:668) to help facilitate a discussion around the potential implications *(appx. R)* on teaching materials produced by NET's in Korea.

The following chapter will elaborate on the sample of participants, reveal the results of the online survey, and highlight some important responses discovered during the online interview stage.

Scope, Participants and Sample

Scope

The collected results of this dissertation are centred on the personal experiences of NET's in Korea, their relationships with 'mediated' teaching materials, and how the varied freedoms afforded to them foster their development of 'unmediated' localised materials. This investigation and the results included *(appx. F)* adopted a humanist approach with word clouds generated from the most common responses *(appx. G)* of an online survey, alongside individual interview responses which hold significant insights into the differing journeys NET's experience in Korea. Responses from a positive perspective are coloured in green, negative in red, and neutral in blue, with their positioning bearing no significance. Although the sample size is restricted, the information collected serves as a snapshot of NET experiences over a range of institutional contexts covering all stages of Korean education.

Participants

The survey participants held nationality from five countries aligning with the sampling criteria; The USA, UK, Canada, Ireland and South Africa, and all participants held teaching experience on a Korean E-2 visa which ranged from one year to over ten. The participants were diverse in age, ranging from twenty-three to fifty-five, with fifteen employed in public/state schools, seven privately, and two self-employed. All but three had experienced extended teacher education after achieving university qualifications, holding a selection of online TEFL certificates, Cambridge CELTA or DELTA awards, and language or education related MA degrees. Ten NET's were novice teachers when entering Korea with no previous teaching experience. The participants ranged in Korean language proficiency, with nine declaring they held conversational language ability. Although there are complicated issues in Korea with traditional gender roles for Korean citizens, this was not an area of investigation for the NET participants. The combination of these factors assisted with alignment to the sampling criteria, the collection of a variety of personal experiences and perspectives and resulted in purposefully information-rich data (Patton, 2002).

Sample

There were twenty-five completed responses to the first survey stage with one response delivering inappropriate offensive content and removed, leaving a total of twenty-four *(n=24)*. Fourteen participants declared interest in stage two and provided contact information. These fourteen were invited for short online conversations *(appx. H)* to elaborate on their survey responses, with six agreeing to take part *(appx. I)*. One was cancelled over time concerns leaving the sample size for interviews at (n=5).

The five interviewed participants were AC, a qualified British teacher with an MA TESOL degree working at a Korean University with nine years of Korean experience. LB, a CELTA educated British citizen working for GEPIK with two years of Korean experience. SD, a highly experienced self-employed British TEFL instructor holding MA TESOL and DELTA qualifications, with over thirty years of experience around the world. CB, an American EPIK Foreign Language High School teacher, holding a TESOL certificate and three years of experience in Korea, and TY, a Middle School EPIK teacher, holding a TEFL certificate and six years of experience in Korean education.

Results

All results found in this chapter are taken from the survey responses of twenty-four NET's and their experiences of working in a variety of Korean educational contexts. Also included are insightful selected quotations taken from online interviews with five of these teachers.

Perceptions of Korean Education

The first step in discovering why localisation may be a necessary task for NET's, required an understanding of how English education is approached in the country. NET's were asked *(Q11/Q12)* to recollect their assumptions before and after employment in Korea, and how their experience had altered their initial views.

English teachers and Korean learners operate within a stressful yet seemingly effective 'feverish' environment (Park, 2009:50; Kim & Bang, 2017:207), with the NET responses

reflecting a similar outlook. Participants described their initial perceptions of Korean education as 'strict, hard, rigorous' and 'competitive', with the 'regimented, uniformed' approach delivering 'disciplined' and 'good' students. AC clarified these seemingly contradictory perceptions by stating 'South Korean education has a lot going on. Ninety percent of students have a positive attitude towards education which is completely different than the UK where ninety percent are pretty negative. It's just a culture, it's in the background, nobody really questions it' *(C-1)*. The feverish environment appears to be fed by a combination of external influences, with no singular reason emerging as root cause. 66% of participants declared over 5 years of Korean teaching experience *(Q6)*, using strong language to explain their stressful experiences *(Q12)*. SD reported that Korea has a 'different kind of standard' *(C-2)* with AC elaborating that 'the goal is not necessarily the actual learning. It doesn't match your schema essentially; it doesn't match your model of what education should be like' *(C-3)*.

*NET responses to **Q11** - Assumptions about Korean education before arrival.*

The 'bureaucratic' nature of Korean education which TY explained as having to 'ask three people to go to the doctors' *(C-4)*, can include dealing with certain 'unfair, cut-throat' and 'insane' aspects, which often results in 'bland, ineffective, monotonous' and 'sad' classroom experiences. When pressed about why education continues in this manner, CB stated 'I've seen the way the system works, it doesn't seem like studying. It seems like they're memorising to do well on the test and once that's done, they forget everything and

don't care about it' *(C-5).*

There were minimal positive responses, claiming that Korean education remains 'innovative' and 'rewarding' but overall NET's viewed schooling as 'strict, long, rote' and 'hard.'
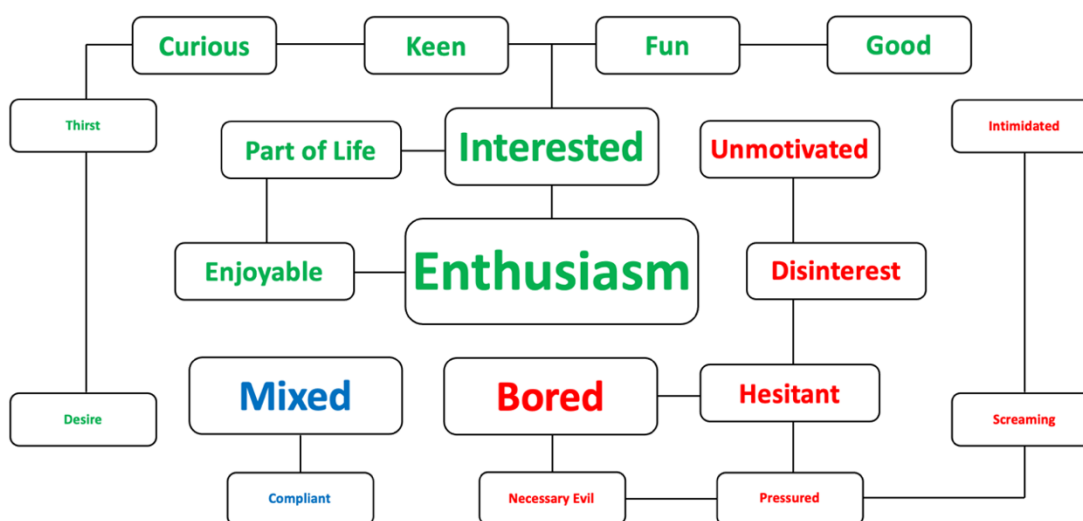
NET responses to Q12 - Views towards Korean education after gaining experience.
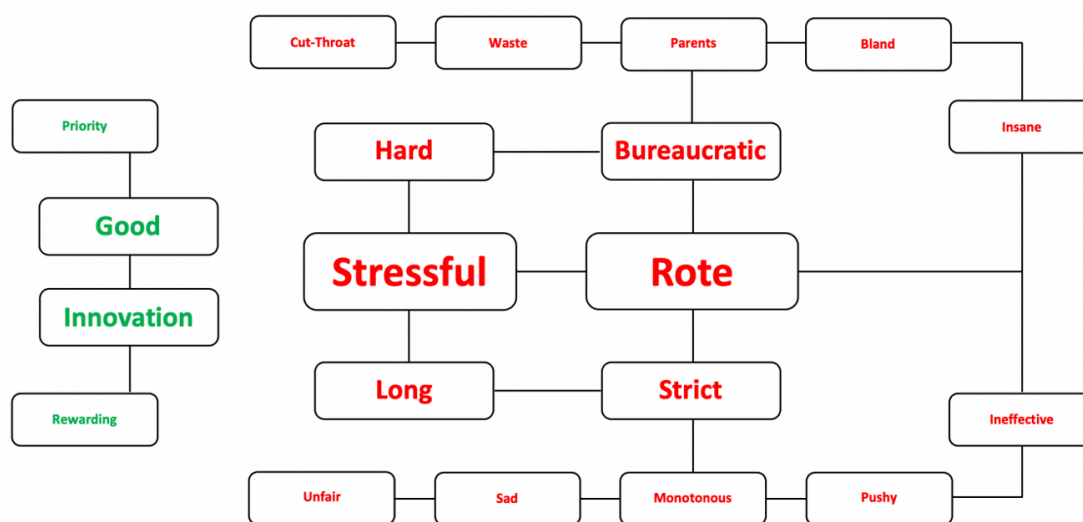
Student Attitudes

After discovering how Korean education is viewed by NET's, it was important to reveal how English is viewed from a learner perspective. NET's were asked to describe their students

*NET responses to Q28 - Reporting of learner attitudes towards English language study.*

attitudes towards English *(Q28),* resulting in 'mixed' opinion. Many referenced strong 'enthusiasm' for English, with students 'interested, curious, keen' and even 'thirsty' to learn. LB confirmed that Korean students do 'want to know more' *(N-1)* about English, but SD noted that while motivation is 'no problem at all' for most students, university students remain 'very motivated by grades. They don't really care if they can speak English properly' *(N-2)*. This view was also echoed by TY who stated that 'they don't feel the need to learn English. There is a lot of work to be done, at least with convincing the kids why English is necessary' *(N-3)*.

Participants also revealed that there remains an unavoidable selection of 'bored, disinterested, unmotivated' and 'hesitant' language students in almost all English classes.

NET Roles

For unmediated NET materials to be determined as fit for purpose, a teacher's role and aims should ideally be clearly defined. For this reason, participants were asked to identify this role or 'primary purpose' in Korea *(Q21).* AC specified that 'GEPIK has official goals from the organisation' *(N-4)* and CB explained that 'EPIK tries to paint an idealised picture' of your responsibilities *(C-6)*, indicating government regulation. TY elaborated on both claims by stating that their TALK coordinator at 'The office of education, made it very clear that we

*NET responses to **Q21** - Primary purpose in Korean education.*
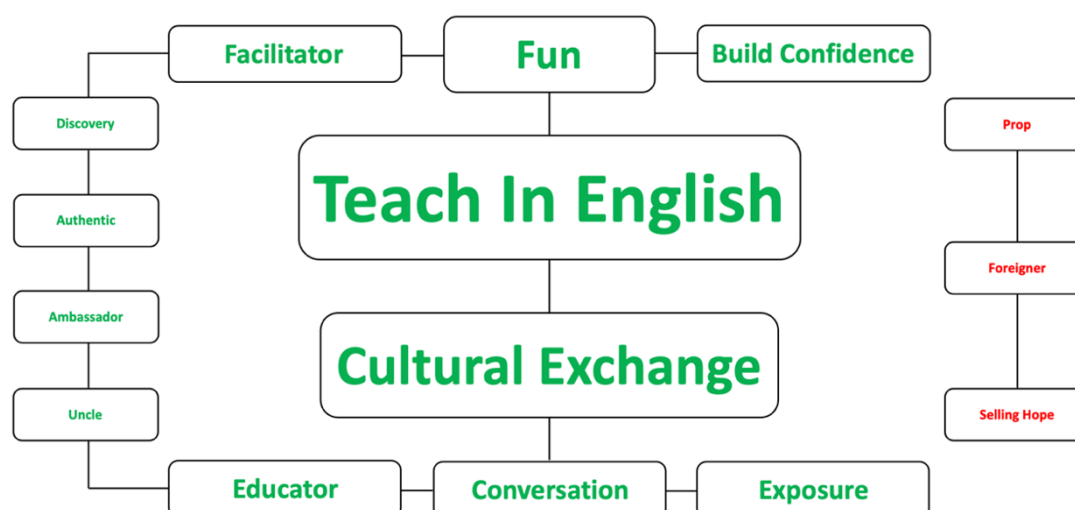
were guests' *(N-5)*. The survey responses for NET roles were overall positive, with 'teaching in English' and 'cultural exchange' commonly mentioned alongside 'building confidence, conversations, facilitating fun language use' and 'exposure' to language features. LB claimed that 'a combination of co-teachers, conferences, experience in school' and 'material from the ministry of education' forms a NET's primary purpose and hinted at community decision making 'we basically all agreed that our students learn the best when they are having fun' *(N-7)*.

There were several strong emotional survey responses here too, with two positive NET's adopting an 'ambassador' and 'uncle' role and alarmingly, two negative NET's believing they were 'props' and 'selling hope.'

Coursebook Use

75% of participants were instructed to use a supplied coursebook on a regular basis *(Q22)*, adding support to Tomlinson & Masuhara's (2018:3) 'main aid' statement. With coursebook use appearing to be a common practice, opinions towards these materials *(Q22a)* were gathered.

Participants largely agreed that coursebooks served a purpose as a 'starting point' and were

*NET responses to **Q22a** - Views towards institutionally set coursebooks.*
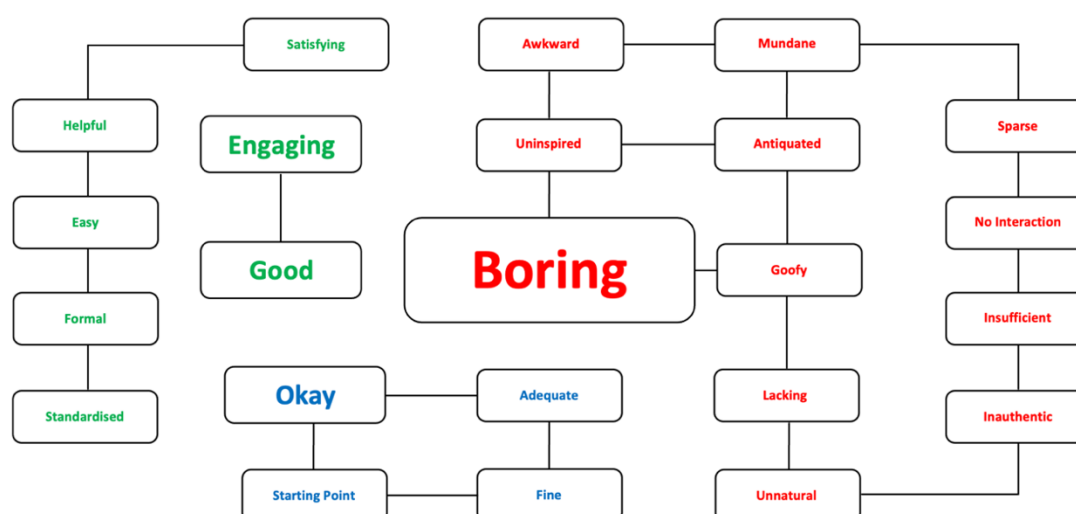
'adequate' for that objective. LB recognised this, but also had concerns over the included vocabulary, claiming that 'It makes my job easier to have a very clear, laid out structured curriculum, but I think some of the textbooks… They're not wrong, but there are definitely some places where they're not exactly right. The English that's used is not necessarily always the most natural kind' *(D-2)*.

Survey participants revealed that the features or vocabulary included in books often results in 'antiquated, uninspiring, awkward, inauthentic, unnatural' and 'mundane' classes, 'lacking' in facilitating natural 'interaction.' TY also had concerns over suitability, stating 'when they (students) open that book, their first feeling is not going to be, I can do this. It's going to be I don't know what I'm looking at. That's why it can be limiting' *(N-8)*. AC elaborated on these concerns by explaining 'coursebooks are generally restrictive… Valuable in giving you a frame, but they tend to be a lot more work than they might first appear' *(D-3)*. Although the selection of this material is often out of a NET's control, participants considered coursebooks to excel in 'standardising' and 'formalising' English education, representing the 'easy, helpful' or 'satisfying' option. From an experienced perspective, SD agreed that coursebooks are most beneficial for novices, summarising 'I've got all my own materials and things I like to use. If somebody tells me you've got to use the coursebook, I find it a bit of a negative thing' *(D-4)*.

Localised Material Impact and Enjoyment

90% of participants *(Q18),* believed localised materials can have a 'partial', 'considerable', or 'dramatic' impact on their English classes, with all participants stating that they find development *(Q17),* 'somewhat enjoyable', 'enjoyable', or 'highly enjoyable.' SD explained these views by stating 'if I had to rank all the different aspects of teaching, (material development) would probably come pretty high' *(A-1)*. CB also referred to enjoyment and satisfaction when using material 'that is important to real life' *(A-2)* versus 'predetermined' textbook material.

Interestingly during their responses *(Q16)*, participants described material design as incredibly 'fun' but 'time consuming.' AC referring to time limit 'pressures' *(D-5)* which 'could be something limiting the enjoyment' of material development, an issue LB admitted

to being concerned with. 'I'm just really slow at doing things. I tend to overthink and second guess a lot' *(D-6)*. LB's response could indicate that teachers may spend longer on development due to self-confidence or inexperience issues. NET's against development cited the process as 'hard, challenging, frustrating' and 'arduous', even describing it as 'pointless, a hassle' and regularly causing encounters with 'midnights.' LB referring to the uncertainty of material effectiveness, 'I'll never know until I actually use the materials, how well my students will respond to it. That's always a big worry' *(D-7)*.

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*NET responses to **Q16** - Attitudes towards designing and developing teaching materials.*
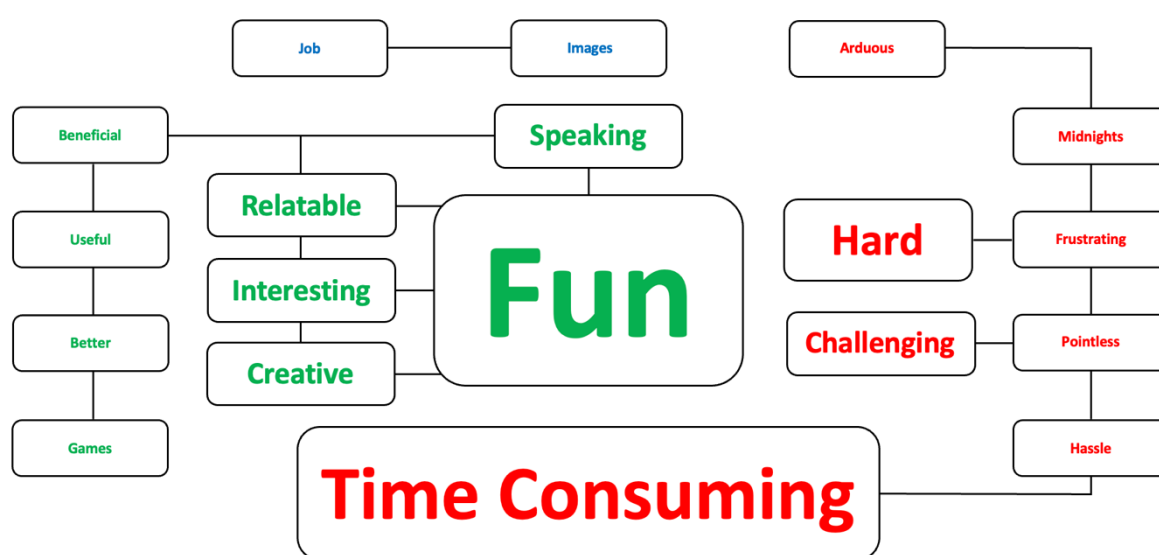

Positive responses included development being described as a chance to be 'creative, relatable, interesting' and 'encourage speaking', ultimately creating 'better, beneficial' and 'useful' materials. TY explained that 'The best part is that I have control. I can choose the most common words to teach, or I can create my own activities which follow the students interests' *(S-1)*.

Creative Freedom and Restrictions

Material development may form part of NET's contractual obligations, as exposing students to alternative methods forms one of the Korean Ministry of Education's educational objectives. However, only 25% of NET participants *(Q23)*, confirmed this to be their experience. All but one participant *(Q25)*, claimed they had 'substantial' or 'total' freedom

at their workplace and when probed about limitations *(Q26)*, 'time restraints' and issues around 'standardisation, curriculum' and 'fairness' all surfaced. AC noted that courses 'need to be standardised so that there is a minimum standard everyone is reaching' *(D-8)* when assessments are involved. CB also referenced 'a balance to strike' *(D-9)* between freedom and restrictions, *(localisation)* 'can work before you evaluate students, but when you evaluate students all the same way for different courses, it can be a bit tricky.'

*NET responses to **Q26** - Limitations on creative freedom.*
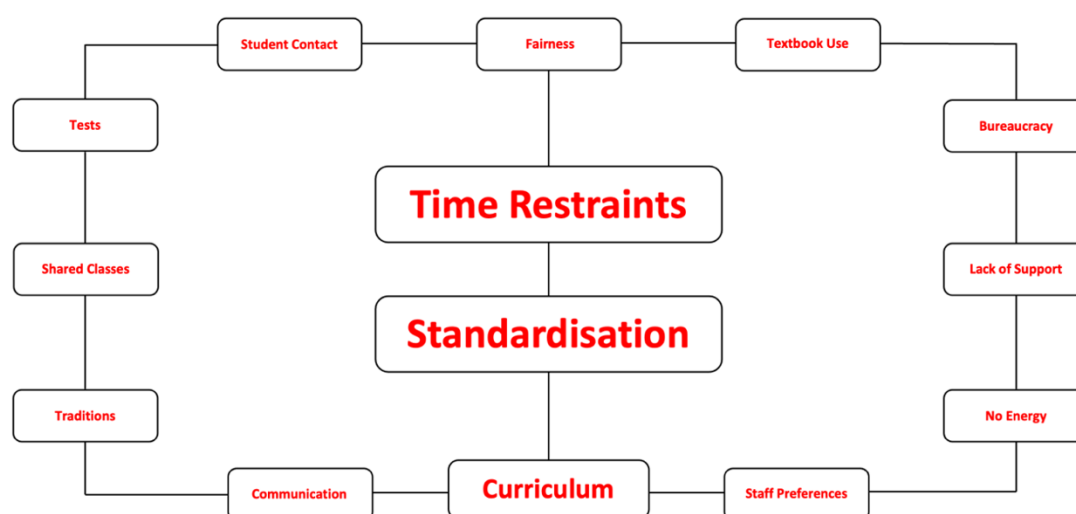
'Bureaucracy' was mentioned, with a 'lack of support, energy levels' and 'communication' all stated as reasons for restricted material development. Unavoidable contextual factors such as 'staff preferences, co-teaching, traditions, tests' and 'contact with students' also causing obstructions. LB explaining firmly that they 'always, always' *(D-10)* had to seek their Korean colleagues approval before developing material for classroom use, something not experienced by CB in a similar government program. TY also had an alternative experience and praised their co-workers, 'they inspire me to become better because they are older and more experienced' *(A-3)*.

Learner Response to Localised Material

In educational environments where localisation can be facilitated, is required, or encouraged, NET's reported an increase in 'interest' and higher levels of 'engagement' *(Q29)*. SD explained that by avoiding unfamiliarity with unknown cultural features, local

materials helped encourage communication and participation. 'You avoid the… Who's that? I don't know that person, and they *(students)* immediately think, I could talk about that' *(S-2)*. Participants found that increased 'relatability' with their materials aided with student 'participation' and overall 'fun' factor. CB powerfully stated that they 'would always try and have an activity that would involve everyone in the class, where even if they can't speak English, they can still try and participate… Depending on what you do with your materials, you absolutely can get them to be a bit more confident. It's not going to be life changing, but it's something' *(A-4)*.

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*NET responses to **Q29** - Reporting of learner response to localised materials.*
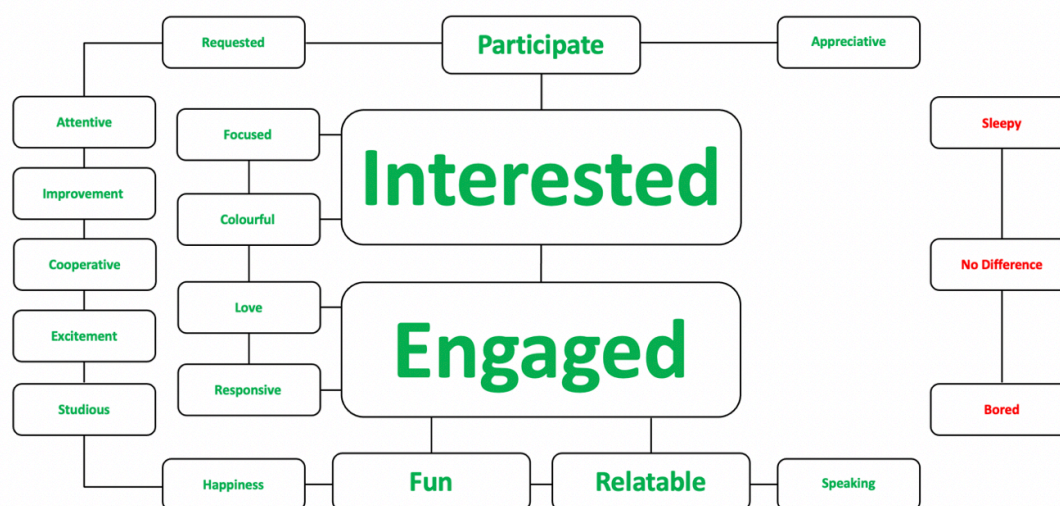

There were notable survey responses which mentioned 'excitement, happiness, responsiveness' and 'attentiveness' improving, with some colleagues and learners 'requesting' localised materials. Survey participants did argue that localised materials made 'no difference' to 'sleepy' and 'bored' students, but feedback did indicate an overall 'engaged' learning environment when localised materials were used.

Colleague Response to Localised Material

The response from colleagues towards localised NET materials is also of significant interest as NET opportunities in Korea often involve team teaching. Participants were asked to state the reaction to localised materials from their Korean counterparts *(Q24)*, resulting in an overall 'good' but mixed response. From a positive perspective, colleagues were stated as

being 'intrigued, amazed, engaged, positive' and even 'astounded' at some of the localised material produced, with NET's receiving 'praise, love' and encouragement. LB explained that colleague reactions do vary depending on the co-teacher and material, 'I've definitely had some activities where they were like, I'm not sure about this one, let's try something else, but most of the time, they're very positive. I don't know if they're actually feeling positive, or if they're just trying to be nice and not hurt my feelings' *(S-3)*.

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*NET responses to **Q24** - Colleague response to teacher made materials.*
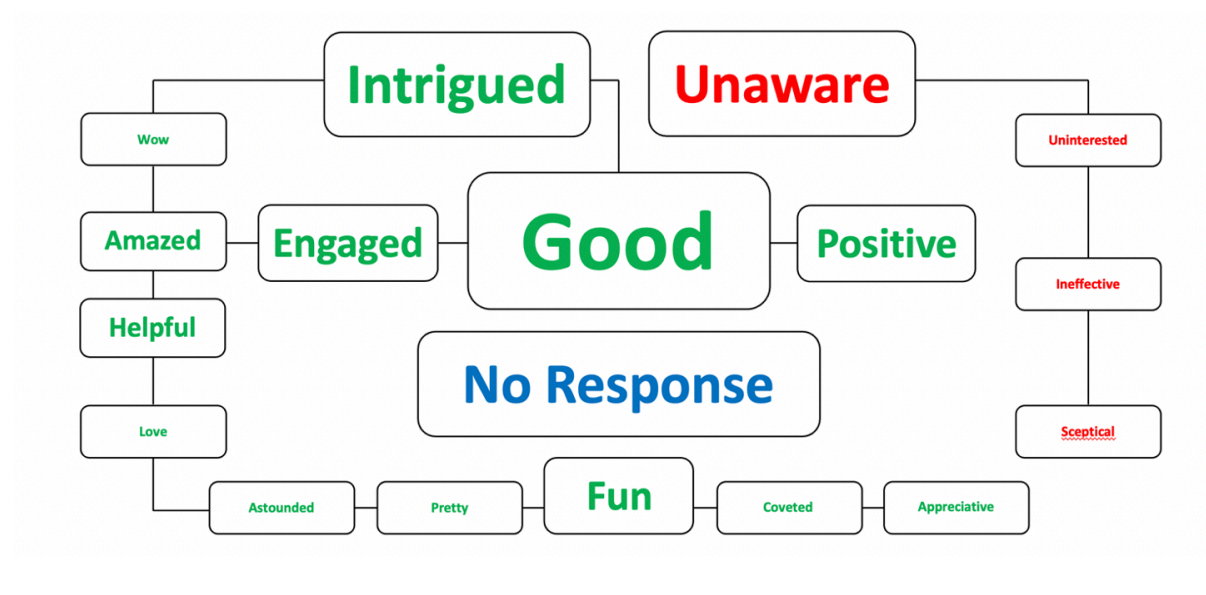

From a negative angle, survey participants reported that they received 'no response', or their co-teachers were 'unaware, envious, sceptical' and even 'uninterested.' CB seemed particularly concerned by this. 'It's not a good feeling. I think if there is any aspect about this job, the worst part is the work culture. It's either a positive response or no response at all. They just don't care, and that hurts a bit, especially when I know a lot of the Korean teachers don't develop their own materials' *(D-11)*. There is value here in acknowledging that the workload and responsibilities of Korean English teachers may impact on their time to give constructive feedback or reactions to NET's.

Reacting to Negativity

Participants voiced their reaction to negativity in *(Q27)*, citing that making 'adjustments, modifications' and taking part in 'discussions' around how to 'improve' their materials was natural. Others suggested 'explaining' the aims of their work, and 'listening' to or

*NET responses to **Q27** - Dealing with resistance towards localised materials.*
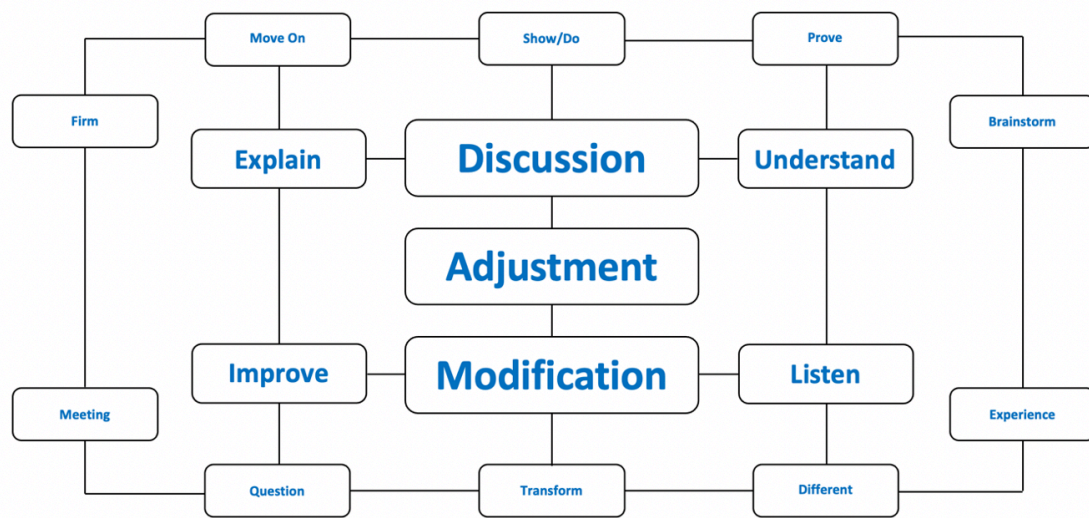
'understanding' Korean co-workers is also a regular occurrence. AC's insights were particularly valuable here, having been previously employed as a teacher trainer. 'By working with Korean teachers, you get a slightly alternative perspective than just being a teacher yourself. When you are on the other side talking to teachers and trying to help them improve their own teaching, you need to build empathy, trying to understand their logic of why they might be running through the education system in their own way' *(C-7)*.

There were also comments indicating that being 'firm' and 'proving' that their localised materials were more effective than coursebooks, was the correct direction to take. Interestingly, SD reported experience with their students stating directly that they 'are not keen on the book' *(N-9)* and moving on to other versions of teaching material.

Ensuring Suitability

For a NET to be confident in their localised material aligning appropriately with their context, would suggest the requirement of a strategy or framework. All but two participants believed their materials were suitable for Korea *(Q30)*, and when questioned about their negative response CB interestingly explained 'I think that within the context of working in Korea, it's stuff they weren't used to. I don't know if it necessarily works within the system, because it is a bit of an outlier. This is not what they consider normal. They have to adapt

the way they learn, which I realise is hard for them to do' *(D-12)*. AC responded positively but also made an interesting observation. 'Realistically, you can't *(confirm alignment)* because I'm using my own idea of the Korean context. Different people interpret the goals of English education in Korea differently. You can easily trick yourself and say that what I'm doing is right, because there is so much flexibility in what you see as the goal of the context' *(S-4)*.

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*NET responses to **Q32** - Strategies ensuring localised materials remain suitable.*

All participants determined their material suitable for classroom use *(Q31)* and when questioned *(Q32)* about how this is confirmed, the overwhelming method was 'asking colleagues' as they are assumed to hold sufficient 'experience' or as AC explained, using feedback from students. 'Not formal feedback, the broader idea of feedback. Not student surveys or anything' *(S-5)*.

Other participants mentioned doing their own 'research', aligning with the 'curriculum, age group of students' or simply using their own 'experience.' Interestingly, SD claimed that this experience required to make such decisions takes a long time to naturally generate, linking their answer to their lack of Korean language proficiency and that of new arrivals. 'It's difficult to put a number on it, but a long, long time. At least five years, possibly longer. It would have been shorter if I'd learnt the language properly' *(D-13)*. There were also mentions of piloting new creations, LB stating that material suitability increased the longer

they worked with their students, 'I think it does get easier. It does get better. I definitely feel a lot more confident in what I create, but definitely the start when I don't really know my students that well, it's tough' *(D-14)*. TY also described piloting to ensure suitability, 'If I had a stamp that was like, this works, it would be for the activities or materials that I have tested. I don't have any like specific tool or self-assessment thing to measure it, but it was just kind of be a feeling' *(S-6)*.

Most notably there was only one NET who mentioned any type of 'rubric' or measurement technique, instead of colleague feedback or feeling-based methods.

Teacher Education

The previous education and experience of the participants in this project may have impacted on their abilities, confidence, and knowledge, regarding localisation and the development of teaching materials.

Six teachers holding significant experience outside of Korea felt that their previous employment had not prepared them enough for Korean education *(Q13)*, with eight declaring that the education they had previously experienced, did not provide enough information about Korea *(Q14)*. AC went into detail here, explaining that 'having a teacher education *(a PGCE)* was definitely enough for the foundation to build on with experience through teaching *(in Korea).* I think it is the experience which beats everything' *(E-1)*. Referring to culturally unprepared teachers, AC continued 'you could have Korean specific ESL training and it would be very useful to have that cultural element. Because of demand, because so many people want to come over now, you could actually create that program and it might do very well.'

Most importantly, sixteen participants *(Q15)* stated*,* that education 'partially', 'barely', or did 'not at all' prepare them for creating their own work. Despite completing a CELTA, LB described the course as giving 'a lot of experience creating worksheets' *(E-2)* but not providing 'practice in designing the kinds of activities that children would be able to do.' CB had similar concerns over their TESOL course, 'It never talks about how to use the materials provided and using your own method in learning how to combine them' *(E-3)*. AC however,

believed their PGCE adequately prepared them for creating English teaching materials, 'It almost doesn't matter what we trained in. We didn't have a specific materials development course. When I've got my base activity, how can I work around that to make it more interesting or more challenging. I just came with a bunch of abstract activity frameworks, nothing specific to language teaching, but that doesn't mean that they didn't work' *(E-4)*.

Clarification

Context of Results

Before the implications of these findings can be discussed it should be clarified that the nature of English teaching positions in Korea, and the local context or institution NET's operate within, can vary to a large degree. Although the results have been categorised to form a snapshot of ELT and EFL in Korea, individual positions and therefore experiences, may continue to differ to a great extent. The five interviewed NET's represent an example of the positions available to NET's in Korea and the impact these positions can have on their ability to design, develop, and localise English teaching materials.

In the following chapter I will discuss in detail some of the key points which surfaced during analysis, along with identifying six areas of concern which emerged from the collected data.

Findings

Initial Research Aims

In line with the research aims stated during the literature chapter, localisation is viewed in an overall positive manner by NET's with many participants declaring that they feel their English teaching and learner participation is considerably improved with its use. However, multiple challenges remain with identifying exactly how localisation is carried out by teachers, as each individual teaching context and experience is so unique. Due to the sizeable challenges caused by these variable educational environments, the focus of this enquiry has shifted from an initial investigation into the content of NET's created materials, to a focus on the contextual complications a NET must navigate and negotiate.

Initial Hypothesis

My original hypothesis predicted that NET's in Korea who implement localised teaching materials in their classrooms, will report higher levels of learner engagement, participation, and interest, in English language classes. Verbal data appear to support this, although the metrics remain extremely difficult to measure mathematically and my findings are based heavily upon NET perspectives. A learners ability to relate to materials, the real-world application and examples of language, and the importance of English study to be clearly outlined, were recorded as key factors for improving learner engagement, opposed to the small inclusion of surface level source culture.

In terms of the theoretical processes for material development, minimal evaluative procedures were reported with NET's opting for a feedback driven approach either from students or colleagues when assessing the suitability of their material. Pre-service courses which were predicted to have significant importance were downplayed by most participants, with the 'real-life' education taking place during the first years of a teachers career in Korea, bearing more significance.

Six Areas of Concern

It has become increasingly apparent throughout this research that the process of material localisation in Korea is incredibly complicated and far more complex than initially anticipated, with data clearly indicating that the use of localisation is not a straightforward task for NET's.

The responses and insights collected from participants during the E-research stages have highlighted six areas of concern *(Fig. 1)* which must be considered before the process of material design can commence. Context, the cultural roles NET's operate in their given contexts and how localisation assists in constructing teaching identities; Need, how the attitudes of NET's and learners towards published materials and the regularity of their use forms the initial recognition and need for localisation; Difficulty, limitations faced by NET's when attempting to localise their own teaching materials; Action, the overall stance and action plan of NET's towards material design and development; Education, how previous education helps NET's develop their own materials; and finally, Suitability, how NET's determine their localised material remains as fit for purpose.

Figure 1 - Six areas of material design concern.
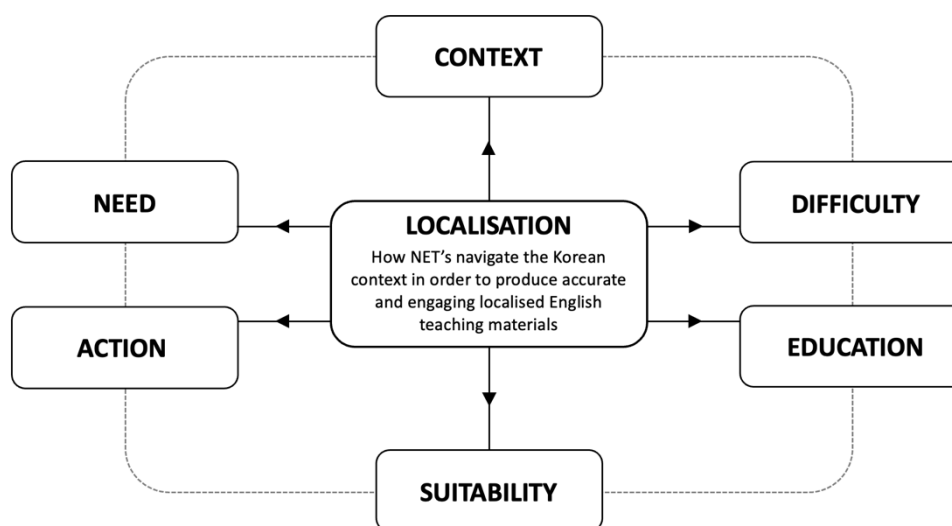
The findings highlighted that experience of Korea, the education system, and knowledge of educational responsibilities, develop over several years and often places novice teachers in confusing and difficult positions. Novice teachers are regularly asked to create engaging,

interactive, localised materials by employers, and without an in-depth understanding of the context, tend to base content on preconceived cultural reference points (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015) which they believe stimulate and interest Korean learners. Experienced NET's may localise with greater accuracy, developing materials with higher relatability and include provisions for students to dictate material themes. Interestingly, minimal knowledge appears to transfer from teacher education courses, and may simply be natural evolution after spending time absorbing Korean culture.

As mentioned at the start of the chapter, the 'external' (McDonough & Shaw, 2003:85. In: Harwood, 2014:221) educational contexts, and 'internal' (Cunningsworth, 1995. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:68) faculty relationships NET's develop can vary significantly, highlighted by LB, CB and TY's alternate experiences in similar government programs. This variation is in addition to the existing complexities of preparing teaching materials and personalising unique activities for specific groups of learners prior to arrival, or during the opening weeks of teaching.

Interpretation and Contribution

The research followed a narrative approach as stated during the methodology chapter to collect data, insights, and information. As a result, the findings and subsequent discussion and implications are drawn from the responses of twenty-four diverse NET's who completed the initial online survey and can be determined as an accurate representation of the educational landscape for NET's in Korea. The interpretations cannot be referred to as a guide for all NET's entering or working in Korea, as the contexts in which they work remain varied and unique. However, the interpretations may provide some benefits or reference points for new teachers beginning their journey in the East Asian country, acting as a bridge from their pre-service TESOL education to the extensive requirements of the Korean context.

Literature around approaches to localisation and material design can be criticised for providing unrealistic recommendations for teaching environments, although the findings have revealed that even within the same country, province, or city, teaching environments can provide unique challenges and complexities, it is understandable why this is the case.

The same rationale can be applied to TE courses, which attempt to offer solutions for prospective NET's, as there are simply too many teaching contexts which exist, each requiring a teacher to analyse, identify, and implement their own strategies, frameworks, and techniques, to navigate successfully. Localisation of teaching materials therefore may only be completed to best effect locally by a NET, when they have arrived, observed, and understood, who, where, and why, they are teaching.

A combination of relevant literature containing theoretical suggestions, educational courses featuring realistic examples, contextual insights from experts with knowledge of a particular location, and a NET's own interpretation of their location and learners *(Fig. 2)*, may result in the most appropriate approach to localising English teaching materials.

Figure 2 - Appropriate approach to material localisation.
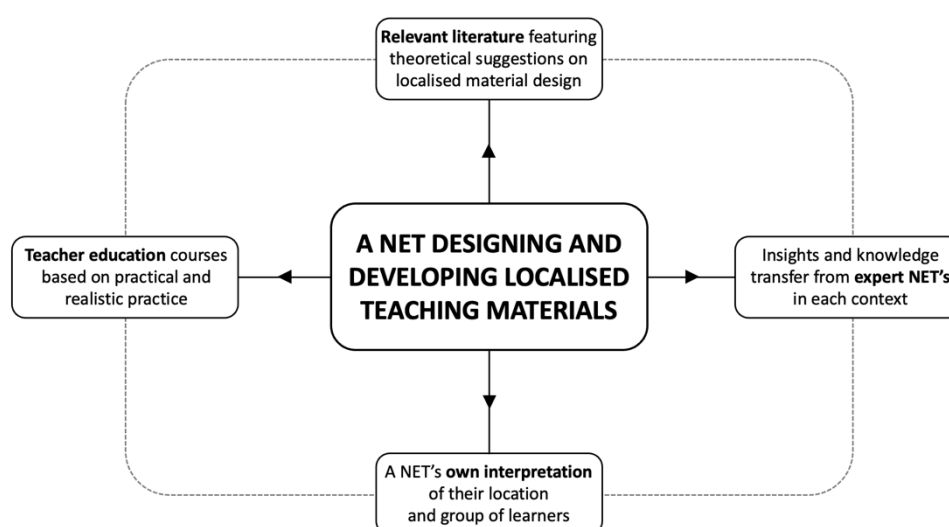
Synthesis of Findings

NET Process of Localisation

The successful localisation of teaching materials appears to be dependent on a NET's observation and understanding of numerous cultural factors before the process of development can begin. Without this 'wide knowledge' (McGrath, 2002. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:59), a NET is at risk of localising material in a mismatching way which fails to

deliver intended levels of learner engagement and success. As Bax (2003:281) declared, 'context is a crucial determiner of the success or failure of learners.' The dilemma is that this knowledge may take years to accumulate, perhaps not emerging throughout the entirety of a transient NET's stay, and is extremely challenging to accurately predict, as each Korean educational context vary.

The synthesis of findings below represents NET thought processes when navigating through the range of complicated Korean contextual dilemmas, to produce what they perceive to be appropriate and engaging localised English teaching materials. These findings have been divided into six areas and will be discussed in turn, beginning with the context itself.

Context

The contextual considerations *(Fig. 3)* which a NET must understand and adhere to when employed in Korea provide the initial foundation for any future localisation of teaching material. It is critical for NET's to internalise the differences in attitudes towards education, teaching approaches, teaching standards, and learning objectives, which the Korean education system operates under, when compared to western schooling. These differences can impact dramatically on the content of work and the ability for teachers to express themselves freely through their material development.

NET's may also prepare for alternate workplace realities than those provided within literature or education courses, as Korean schools can vary to a great degree in terms of facilities, learners language levels, freedoms, faculty enthusiasm, and adherence to suggested coursebook use and curriculums. The portrayal of ideal teaching environments to new arrivals painted by government programmes are unlikely to materialise, and NET's must prepare for the unexpected. Korea stands as a modern example of a hierarchical society, and educational institutions are not exempt from the strict, bureaucratic ways in which the country operates. NET's will occupy a designated position in their workplace, which comes with both benefits and restrictions over how English teaching can be approached. It is essential then, that novice teachers be prepared for this eventually to avoid frustration and be equipped with acceptance that societal roles are fundamental to the historical and traditional workings of the Korean peninsula.

Figure 3 - Contextual considerations before localising teaching material in Korea.
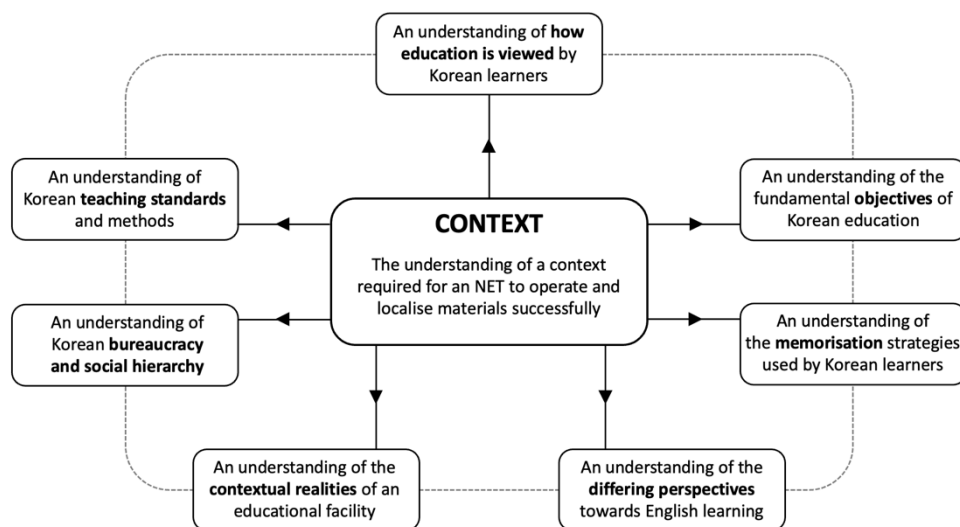
To learners, grading is incredibly important, and stands as a student's main motivator or inspiration to continue their rigorous educational pursuits. It is not uncommon for students to memorise vast amounts of text or vocabulary for an exam, only to put to one side this information the moment a test has concluded. Both Korean students and teachers navigate society with heavy burdens and obligations, and a transient NET would be advised to remember that their lived experience may be entirely different than that of a Korean national.

With these contextual considerations considered, a NET can advance to discovering the needs a learner has for English, the linguistic features which therefore should be included in their work, and how their localised materials should be constructed.

Need

Identifying the need for localised materials stems from a NET's perception of their role or primary purpose as an educator in Korea *(Fig. 4)*. Public school positions are often accompanied by some form of induction where both cultural exchange and the inclusion of foreign culture are stressed as essential aspects of Korean English classes with NET's. Private institutes also tend to follow this approach, with relatability critical for hesitant learners to have 'something to talk about' (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004:210. In: McGrath 2013:4). This

has been recognised as a successful way of reducing hesitancy, helping learners to understand why a foreign language such as English is important for their personal lives and careers, and how the use of English can build relationships when interacting with speakers from other countries. NET's may also be responsible for expanding on the vocabulary covered in coursebooks, supplementing activities with real-world examples of language in use as an act of validation.

*Figure 4 - Varying needs for localised teaching materials in Korea.*
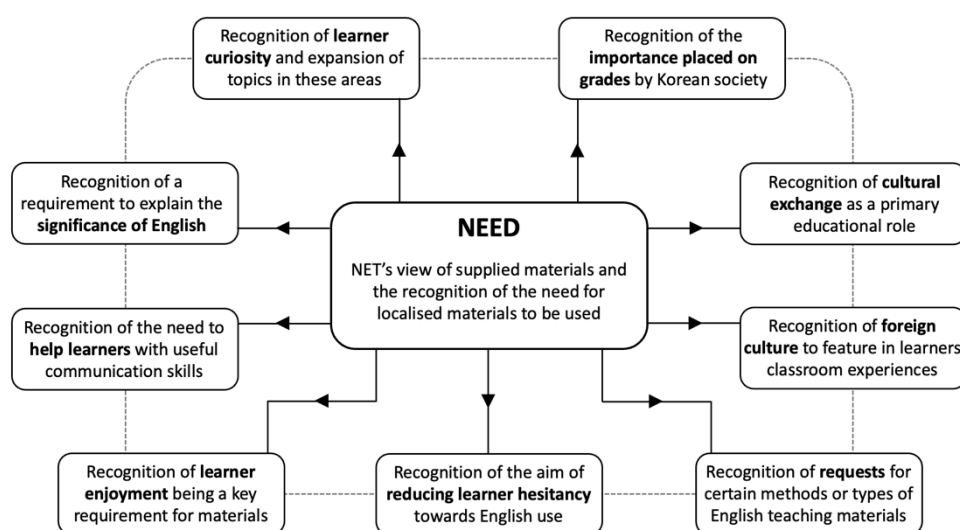
Raising learner enjoyment of English may be achieved by recognising and manipulating learner curiosities and interests, which often materialise in the form of trends and other examples of source culture. However, this approach faces drawbacks as trends move rapidly in Korea requiring a constant updating of social events and pop culture. Facilitating groups to have freedom in defining a materials content has also been mentioned as an effective method of localisation. As mentioned, the significance of grades cannot be understated, with assessments representing significant social capital and bringing with them additional stresses and complications to overburdened students. Depending on the objectives of a teacher and the motivations of a group of learners, grading may either be avoided entirely or harnessed as a highly effective way of encouraging participation.

Difficulty

Due to the hierarchical nature of Korean society and visa related concerns, NET's can be faced with numerous limitations, restrictions or obstructions when attempting to design and develop engaging localised materials *(Fig. 5)*. Management, co-teacher relationships, concerns around contractual obligations, assessments and renewals all play their part in limiting the extent to which a NET can push the boundaries in material design, with innovation or creativity coming at the cost of security. Institutional or governmental insistence on restrictive coursebook use and the unnatural examples of language found inside, can contribute to both teacher and learner frustrations, lower motivation levels, and in extreme situations, apathy towards English language learning.

Figure 5 - Difficulties faced by NET's in Korea when localising materials.
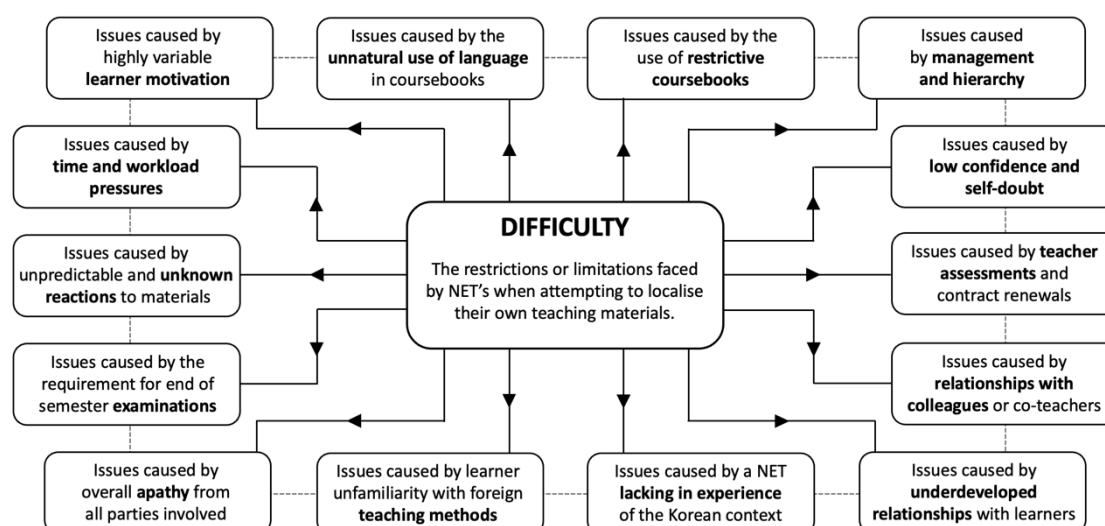
There are also issues surrounding low confidence and self-doubt, mainly from novice teachers, which may be attributed to a lack of teaching experience, underdeveloped relationships with students, or minimal piloting of materials, resulting in unpredictable reactions. Time and workload pressures reduce the amount of energy a teacher can commit to material development, although this concern does appear to reduce in severity the longer a NET stays in Korea. Similarly, clashes with Korean teaching methods and extensive testing are a familiar experience for NET's upon arrival in the country, although the regularity of these should again decrease over time as familiarity is established.

Upon reflection, the requirement for NET's to balance sensitive contextual factors, the diverse language needs of their learners, and navigate the difficulties and obstructions to localisation appears to be too complex and difficult to predict. With recognition of these complications, it is understandable that questions may be raised about localisation being advantageous, beneficial, or even worthwhile when compared to simplified, concise, and safe textbook instruction.

Action

Despite the difficulties surrounding material design and development, NET's continue to value localisation as one of the most enjoyable aspects of teaching in Korea *(Fig. 6)*. Acknowledgement that delivering vocabulary and material which learners can understand, produce, and participate in, despite the contextual difficulties is encouraging and aligns with Korea's established educational aims for the native teachers employed there.

Figure 6 - Action taken by NET towards localisation of teaching material in Korea.
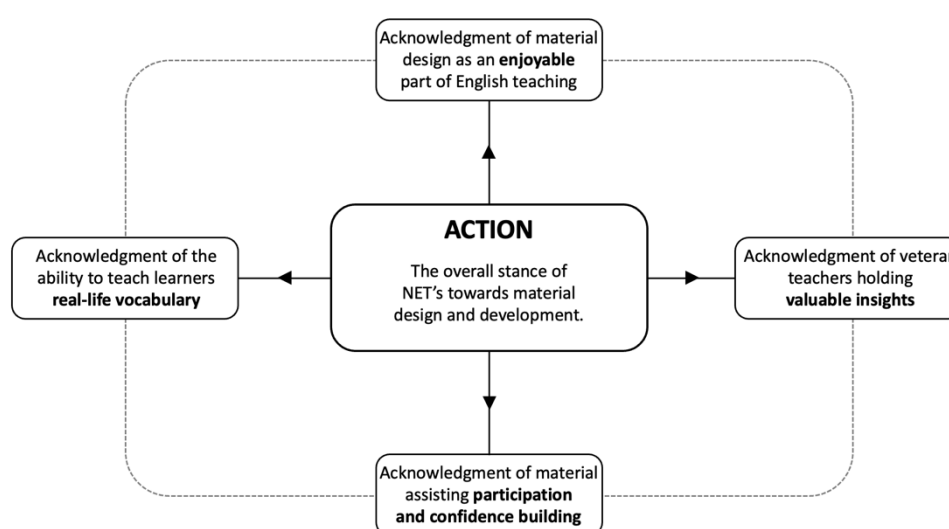

Altercations or disagreements with traditional methods, and the well-respected veteran Korean teachers who apply them may occur but will not assist in the cultural exchange of ideas and knowledge which forms part of a NET's primary teaching objective. Instead, teachers aiming to localise English teaching materials would benefit from understanding the valuable source culture insights into Korean life that can be gathered from these experts and blended with target culture they themselves can bring to classrooms.

Education

NET's enter Korea with a range of teaching experience and teacher education because of the Korean E-2 visa application process, which has variable impacts on English teaching and material development *(Fig. 7)*. Novice NET's with entry level TEFL certificates often find the realities of teaching differ from those portrayed during their education, an issue referenced by Kanno & Stuart (2011:237), resulting in this type of course being considered insignificant and unhelpful. Experienced NET's with more expansive qualifications such as CELTA, DELTA, or MA qualifications, realise the fundamental teaching skills they have studied, can be applied to differing subjects and situations and refer to their training with regularity.

Figure 7 - Varying impact of teacher education on localised materials in Korea.
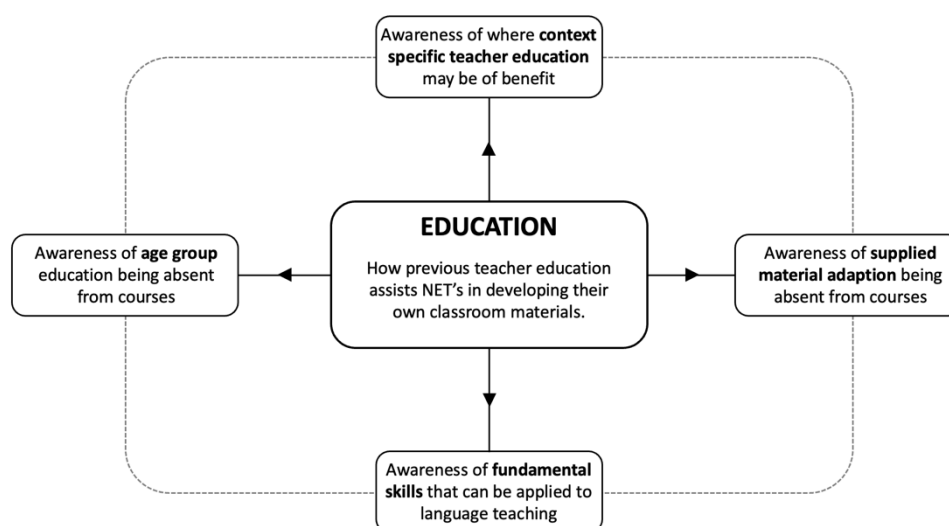
Due to the vast amounts of global ELT contexts available, TEFL and TESOL courses struggle to deliver sufficient information surrounding age groups and teaching practice techniques. This absence of information is leaving novice NET's unsure of the correct approaches, themes and content to include in their localised materials, and raises an argument for context specific teacher education to be available and required prior to or on arrival in Korea.

It could be argued that no teacher education will sufficiently prepare a teacher the Korean context, as each individual school, student group, faculty, and outside environment will differ to a certain extent. This variability creates difficulties in NET's confirming the

suitability of their created materials through other methods than feedback from colleagues, learners, or previous personal teaching experience.

Suitability

Ensuring that unmediated teaching materials maintain their suitability for a given context or pedagogical purpose remains a challenging endeavour for many NET's *(Fig. 8)*. It is apparent that overreliance on colleague opinions to gauge the level of suitability is a regular event and stands as the main method of confirming alignment with a context. NET's should attempt to ensure that learners feel familiar and interested with material content with source culture imagery and topics, and through extensive piloting wherever possible.

Figure 8 - Ensuring localised teaching materials remain 'fit for purpose' in Korea.
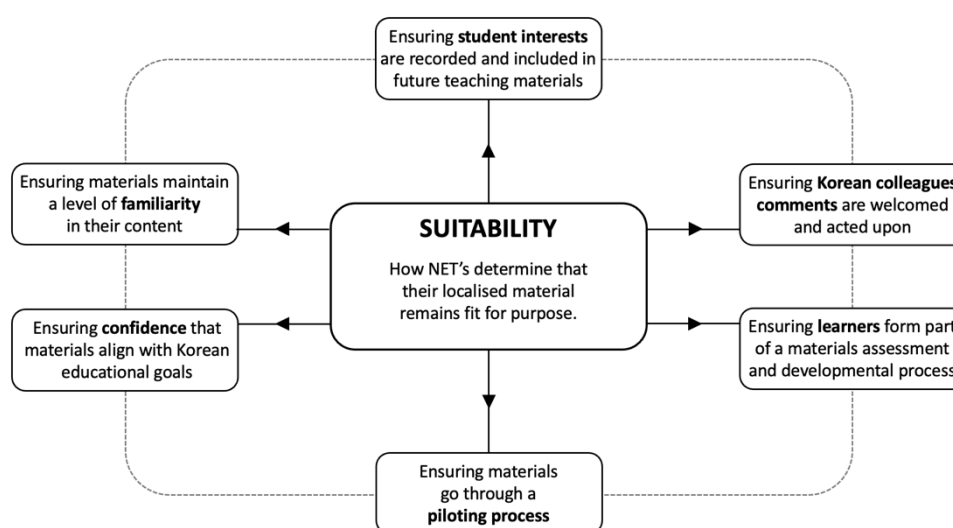
Most notably during the research phase, little attention was given to any form of concrete framework for recording a materials suitability, with NET's either preferring or being required to display their work to colleagues prior to application in class, avoiding potential embarrassing moments or problematic contextual mismatches. This may cause a dilemma if NET's are faced with a faculty of teachers apathetic to their responsibilities, providing no constructive feedback, or even more significantly to their teaching careers in Korea, destructive feedback.

Having discussed these six areas of concern in greater detail, The investigation will turn to the possible implications that may surface should NET's ignore these important factors, as well as the potential impact or complications this may have on teaching materials produced.

Implications

Impacts on NET's and Localised Materials

Before implications can be identified, it must be clarified that due to the unique attributes of educational contexts in Korea, any implications referred to and experienced by NET's during their sojourn are likely to differ to a dramatic extent. The magnitude of variables is outside the scope of this investigation, and as such, the implications discussed serve only to highlight possible impacts on teaching materials and the spiral of concerns which a NET may contend with if the six areas on concern are not fully understood, processed, and acted upon.

Context

Should an NET fail to fully understand the context in which they teach *(Fig. 9)* and the 'permeability of classroom walls' (Pennycook, 2016:33. In: Hall 2018:201), it is possible to portray an unprofessional image *(C-2)*, misunderstand their position or role *(C-3)*, or be overwhelmed with unexpected cultural differences *(C-6)*. Although Korean colleagues are familiar with novice teachers arriving without a full understanding of their country, it is important for a NET to acclimatise as efficiently as possible to avoid any unnecessary bureaucracy *(C-4)* or potential cultural offence *(C-7)*. If effort is not made to do this, learners may develop a negative view of the NET, the subject, and their materials *(C-1)* or even develop stress, apprehension and become overburdened *(C-5)*.

It is critical for a NET to understand Korean society, as Stern (1983:283. In: Hall, 2018:205) explains, 'society and culture are more than background and even more than context' and for an NET, represents the foundation on which all localised classroom materials should be constructed.

Figure 9 - Possible implications of a failure to understand and process given context.
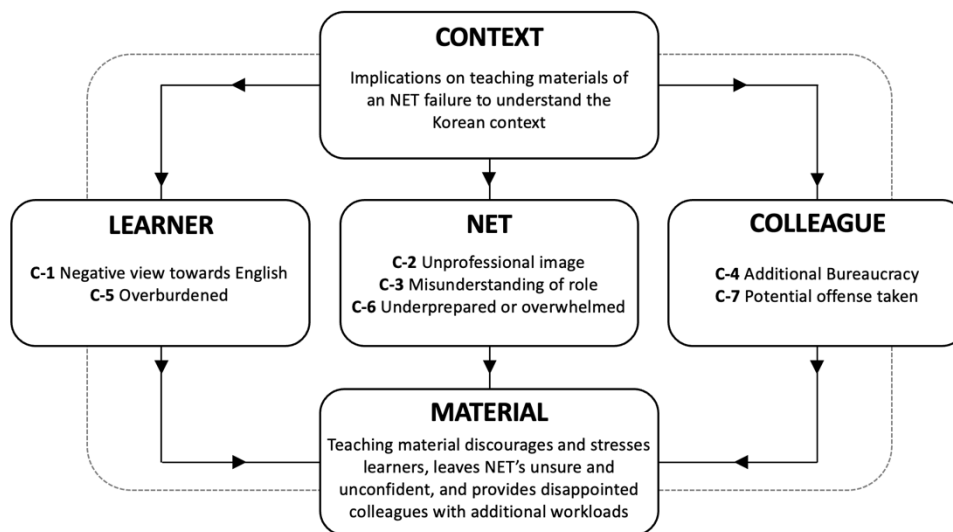
Need

Should an NET fail to recognise the needs and characteristics (McDonough, 2012:7) of their Korean learners *(Fig. 10)*, they may introduce a one-sided cultural experience *(N-4)*, not include sufficient enjoyable, fun, or playful tasks *(N-7)*, and could begin to frustrate both their learners and co-workers *(N-9).* Language learners require motivation *(N-1)* and

Figure 10 - Possible implications of a failure to recognise and address various needs.
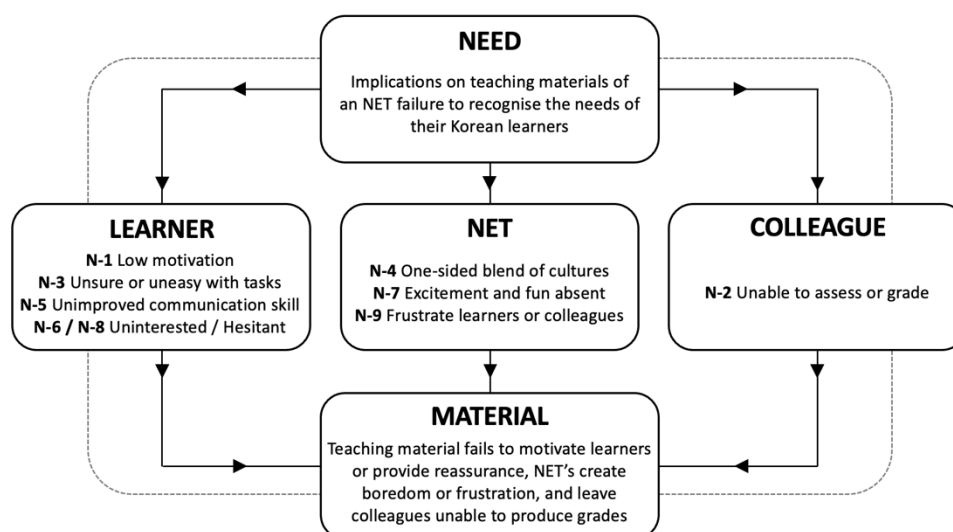
confidence that the tasks they complete are designed with their needs in mind *(N-3)*, and without seeing an improvement in their communication skills *(N-5),* or grades *(N-2)*, may begin to grow uninterested *(N-6)* or hesitant to participate *(N-8)* in a NET's language class.

A constant analysis and reflection of learner needs is essential for localised materials to feature the correct content, theming, activities, and tasks, and as Graves (1999. In: Dat, 2013:413) declares, should be an ongoing process for any teacher in any subject.

Difficulty

Should an NET fail to overcome the 'internal' (Cunningsworth, 1995. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015:68) restrictions or 'external' (McDonough & Shaw, 2003:85. In: Harwood, 2014:221; Stern, 1983:283. In: Hall, 2018:205) limitations placed on them by institutions or cultural aspects of life in Korea *(Fig. 11)*, insecurities *(D-1)* or issues relating to self-confidence *(D-6)* may begin to emerge and be reflected in material production. Frustrations with supplied materials *(D-2)* and the content within them *(D-3)*, along with time pressure *(D-5)* and an overall lack of contextual experience *(D-13),* can be emotionally draining and result in reduced quality of teaching materials. Learners may be able to sense these difficulties, adding unpredictable reactions *(D-7)*, ambivalence towards classes unrelated to exams

Figure 11 - Possible implications of a failure to overcome limitations and difficulties.
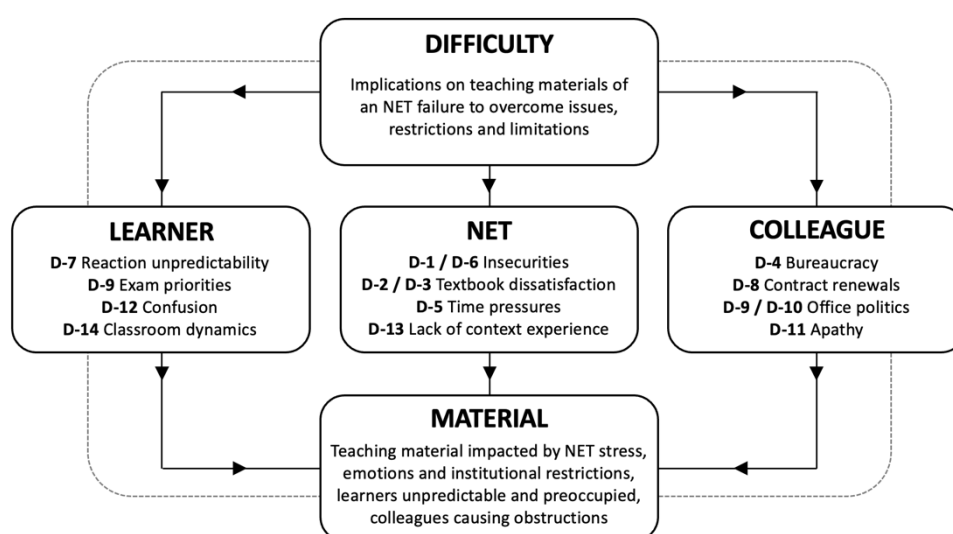
(D-9), and confusion *(D-12)*, creating problematic classroom dynamics *(D-14).* These dynamics may also be complicated by hierarchy-based office politics *(D-10)*, concerns over contract renewals *(D-8)*, administrative bureaucracy *(D-4)*, or a general apathy *(D-11)* towards NET's and their work.

The extent of these difficulties cannot be understated, and the examples provided are a small example of the complications facing NET's aiming to provide engaging localised (Tomlinson, 2003:152) unmediated materials.

Action

Should an NET fail to acknowledge appropriate methods of material design, or not keep the objectives of confidence building and encouraging participation as key in their development plans *(Fig. 12)*, they may experience reduced enjoyment in the developmental process *(A-1)*, provide poor examples of language in use *(A-2)*, and stray too far from the needs of their learners *(A-4)*. A reluctance or stubbornness to listen to feedback from students and co-workers and to make the required modifications, can also harm the effectiveness of sets of materials. NET's must take the correct actions when developing their localised materials which includes this openness to critique and ensure the context and learners needs are kept at the front of their minds, with complications or difficulties kept to a minimum.

Figure 12 - Possible implications of a failure to take appropriate action.
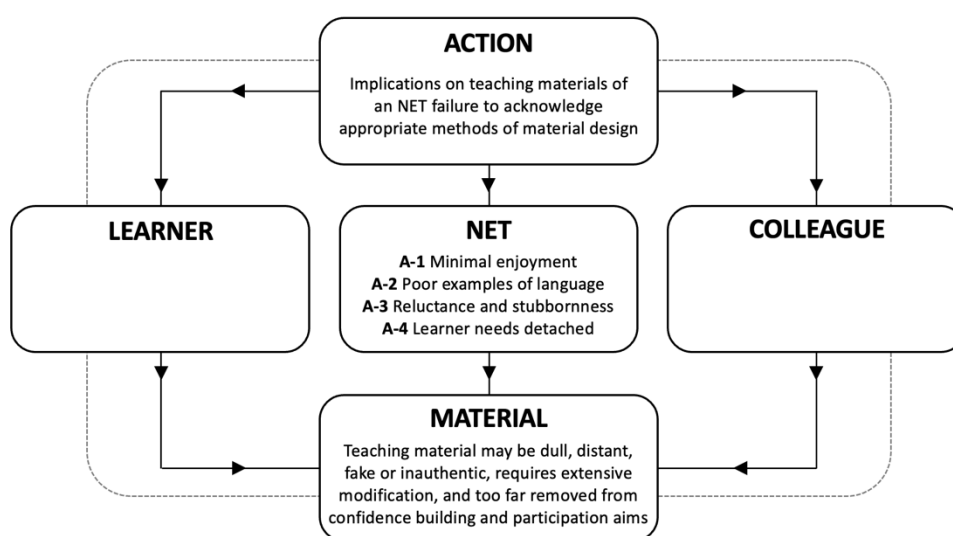
Education

Should an NET fail to remain aware of their previous teacher education *(Fig. 13)*, they may experience a mismatch of contextual expectations *(E-1)* and teaching realities referenced by Kanno & Stuart (2011:237). NET's may also forget to include enough 'source culture' (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999:204) content as a method of familiarising learners with English *(E-3)*,

Figure 13 - Possible implications of a failure to reference previous teacher education.
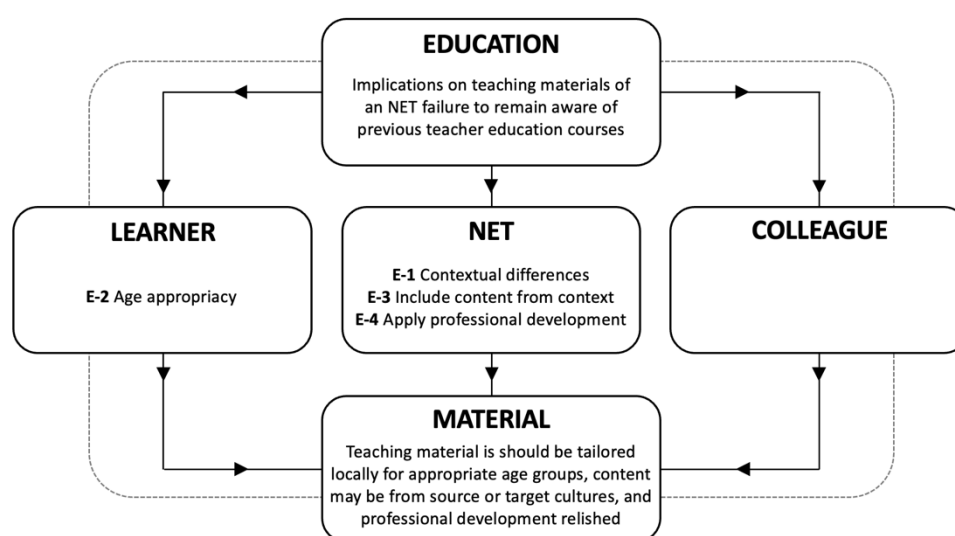

or view material design as an opportunity for professional development *(E-4)* as mentioned in multiple examples of literature (Masuhara, Et Al. 2008:310; Jolly & Bolitho, 2011:129). Ensuring that learners experience material which recognises their needs and is suitably designed and developed for the correct age group should also be a primary concern for all NET's.

Suitability

To ensure the suitability of their material for their specific group of learners *(Fig. 14)*, NET's should complete extensive research of the social and cultural aspects of their context *(S-4)*, remain open to feedback from local professionals *(S-5)*, and complete appropriate levels of piloting *(S-6)*. Learners may locate their interests *(S-1)* or be provided the opportunity to apply their interests during English lessons, and familiarity *(S-2)* will be maintained with Korean source culture. NET's should expect to receive constructive feedback from their co-

workers (S-3) or be comfortable in requesting suggestions from trained Korean staff should they require it.

Figure 14 - Possible implications of a failure to maintain suitability of materials.
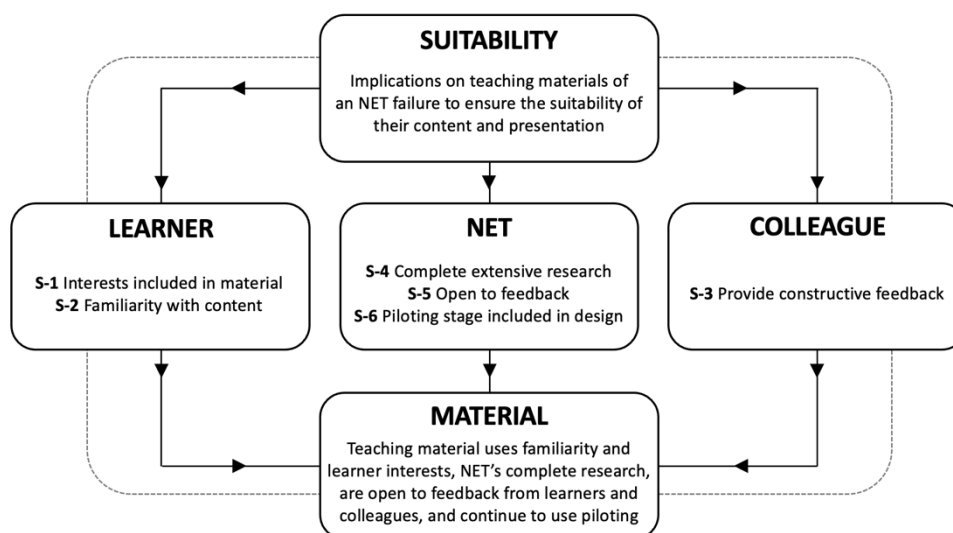
Although the implications mentioned in this research are not comprehensive and should only be viewed as an example, they stand to highlight potential situations which may impact the ability of NET's to localise their own teaching materials, along with recommendations for teaching materials themselves. With the six key areas in the localisation process identified, this paper will now move to the concluding chapter and discuss the contribution this research may have on the field, and NET's teaching in Korea.

Summary of Research

Aims and Findings

This narrative investigation into NET's development and use of localised English teaching materials has revealed the process to be extensively more complicated and intricate, requiring considerably higher levels of sensitivity, than initially predicted. What began as an investigation into the content NET's produce and include in their classroom materials, developed into a perspective driven journey through the intertwined educational and sociocultural elements of Korea, culminating in an examination of the impact these contextual concerns may have on the materials a native teachers can create.

The investigation was driven by a review of established literature surrounding English teaching material development, with a primary focus on situated language learning and the inclusion of familiar 'cultural reference points' (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012. In: Mishan & Timmis, 2015). The localisation of teaching material aims to increase the familiarity levels a learner experiences during language learning, triggering an internal desire 'to understand and make themselves understood' (Howatt, 2004:210. In: McGrath 2013:4) and provides interesting topics and relatable situations learners want to talk about.

Tomlinson & Masuhara's (2018:27) statement that NET's and perhaps most teachers do indeed desire to develop material 'if only they had the time, resources and confidence to do so' highlights the unavoidable clash between the native teacher and the Korean context. The requirement to temper enthusiasm and positive theoretical knowledge with contextual realities has been established by the NET participants of this project. These contextual realities, although not experienced by every NET in Korea, can be concisely summarised by Harwood (2010:4. In: Harwood, 2014:212), 'time is short, teaching schedules are heavy, and practitioners are not permitted to deviate from a rigid syllabus.' The interconnected implications of traditional social structures, variable learner needs, institutional restrictions and limitations, self-confidence issues, feelings of isolation, and vague teacher education

courses, significantly impact on the ability for NET's to implement localisation, on the content of their teaching materials, and on their materials suitability for the constantly updating, yet invariably traditional Korean context.

Significance

The NET participants of this e-research project, through recollection and explanation of their own experiences, provided the necessary insights to understand how the process of developing English language teaching materials can rapidly spiral into stressful and draining incidents if contextual environments and needs are not clearly understood, processed, and navigated.

A suggested route through the localisation process was revealed which could be of potential benefit to both current and prospective NET's aiming for an educational career in Korea. Although restricted in its reach and scope, the project's five interviewed participants covered a diverse range of ages, positions, outlooks, and beliefs, and as a result the findings may hold relevance to teachers who will occupy similar educational positions. Literature regarding localised material development and teacher education courses containing modules related to this field are encouraged to be prefaced with similar suggestions, along with emphasis on thorough contextual evaluative procedures.

This contextual evaluation procedure stands as the critical foundation which must remain central to teachers, and the ground on which all localised English teaching materials must be built.

Recommendations for Future Research

Many fascinating areas of interest emerged from this enquiry which I would recommend for further investigation. Most notably, the point or timeframe in which a novice teacher becomes sufficiently confident in their ability to ensure the suitability of their localised materials. With additional resources, the six identified areas of concern could also be investigated further and broken down into smaller sub-categories. The findings are insightful and have facilitated a discussion around the suggested approach to localisation for NET's in Korea. However, the extreme variation in contexts and educational positions

restricts this framework from becoming a guide. It remains an individual teacher's responsibility to assess their own environment while simultaneously considering theoretical literature, former NET experience, and advice from their professionally trained Korean colleagues.

Final Comments

The quite substantial, shocking, and overwhelming extent to which two contexts in Korea can vary, can result in extremely variable, dramatic, and emotionally charged teaching environments for NET's. My full respect is paid to the teachers willing to position themselves in such unpredictable contexts and commit to living, breathing, and studying, such a fascinating yet complicated context for the benefits of their hard working and dedicated learners. The engaging, relatable, and accessible localised material NET's create may well facilitate inspirational and memorable experiences for their students, instigate a continued and autonomous study of English, and equip learners with a new level of confidence for their lifelong language journeys.

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