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Difficulties and Social Marginalization of Native English-Speaking Professors in University English Programs

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This study examines the challenges faced by native English-speaking professors who teach general English courses in Korean universities, specifically focusing on the issue of social marginalization. Data were collected through online surveys and interviews. The findings indicate that these professors view themselves as a non-mainstream group within university faculties, often experiencing exclusion from decision-making processes and professional development opportunities, primarily due to language barriers. Moreover, cultural differences and structural discrimination exacerbate these challenges. Although the respondents did not report significant difficulties related to student education and exhibited a strong sense of efficacy in teaching English, some lacked sufficient understanding of the institutional curriculum. To address these issues, this study suggests that, for foreign professors to fully demonstrate their expertise in English education and foster a sense of belonging within the university community, they should be granted the authority and responsibility to participate in curriculum improvement research, along with administrative assistance.

Keywords: native English-speaking professors, social marginalization, cultural alienation, general English

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1. INTRODUCTION

Many universities offer foreign languages, particularly English, as part of their general education requirements. General English courses are often taught by native English-speaking instructors, although they are sometimes taught by Korean instructors. Faculty involved in liberal arts education at universities hold diverse positions—such as full-time, adjunct, part-time, and research professors—with their roles in curriculum development and operation varying significantly depending on their status (Yoon et al., 2019). Foreign professors responsible for general English at universities are typically in charge of teaching classes due to their unstable employment status and their special status as foreigners, but they are also excluded from curriculum development discussions (Min, 2015).

Since the 2000s, the number of foreign professors in Korean universities has increased (Song & Byun, 2022). Factors contributing to this increase include the quantitative expansion of universities following the education reform of May 31, 1995, the opening of the higher education market with the launch of the World Trade Organization (WTO) system and the start of global university evaluations by organizations such as Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and Times Higher Education. This accelerated competition among universities, which led to an increase in the number of foreign teachers. With the transition to a knowledge-based society, strengthening the international competitiveness of universities and improving the quality of higher education have become important social issues. In response, universities at each level have made various efforts, such as expanding English-language lectures and recruiting foreign teachers to align with internationally accepted standards of education.

As a result, the foreign faculty presence has increased nearly fourfold compared to 20 years ago. In 1999, there were only 1,698 foreign faculty members at general universities, but by 2013, this figure had risen to 7,474. Since then, the number of foreign faculty has fluctuated annually due to external factors such as changes in higher education policies, university evaluation metrics, reduced international travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the expansion of non-face-to-face/online classes. As of 2023, there are “6,532 foreign faculty members, representing 4.13% of the total 158,083 faculty members at general universities” (Korea Educational Development Institute, 2023, pp. 102-105). Recently, as domestic universities have become more active in attracting international students, it has become important to achieve high rankings in global university rankings. This has increased the demand for internationalized faculty members to manage and develop curricula for international students. Consequently, there is a trend toward maintaining a substantial number of foreign faculty members, regardless of whether the institution is a research-oriented or education-oriented university (Lee, 2015).

However, in the process of adapting to the educational system and living culture of domestic universities, foreign faculty often find themselves positioned differently from what

was expected at the beginning of their appointment. This can lead to a phenomenon known as 'decoupling,' where foreign faculty members are unable to demonstrate appropriate capabilities in research and education because they are unable to perform their expected roles or are not assigned suitable roles (Min, 2015; Song & Byun, 2022). This issue arises because, despite the quantitative expansion of foreign faculty, there is a lack of systematic linguistic and administrative support to help them focus on their jobs (Han & Shin, 2020). Additionally, foreign faculty may be appointed with lower educational qualifications compared to their domestic counterparts (Ko, Kim, Yuting, Kim, & Moon, 2016), making it challenging for them to perform their roles effectively. As a result, contrary to initial expectations, foreign faculty members often experience the process of 'marginalization' (Wenger, 1999). They are pushed to the periphery of the university community and find it difficult to return to the center of academic and social activities within the institution.

This experience is also common among native English-speaking faculty. As the role of English as a global language is emphasized, universities are hiring native English-speaking professors to teach liberal arts English and enhance students' English communication skills (Kim, 2022; Yeo, 2012). At some universities, Korean and foreign faculty members are in charge of general English classes together. Despite their contributions, native English-speaking professors are often excluded from key discussions, such as curriculum reform, and feel underappreciated and unrecognized within their institutions (Kim & Davis, 2017; Min, 2015). Consequently, their sense of belonging to the school community remains limited (Kim & Davis, 2017). This situation highlights that, although they are responsible for general English education, English-speaking foreign professors are not leading initiatives and are unable to fully demonstrate their expertise in English education.

For liberal arts English education at universities to be effective, native English-speaking professors must be able to participate in educational decision-making with autonomy and initiative. To achieve this, they need to fully understand their university's general English curriculum, actively cooperate with fellow professors, and maintain a strong sense of efficacy and commitment to continuous self-development. Difficulties in these areas can negatively affect the quality of the general English classes they teach. In particular, experiencing marginalization while adapting to the distinct environment of Korean universities can adversely impact their teaching. Accordingly, through online surveys and in-depth interviews with native English-speaking professors responsible for general English courses, this study examines the challenges they face and analyzes whether these difficulties stem from the social marginalization experienced as foreigners in Korean universities. The specific research questions are as follows:

1) What challenges do native English-speaking professors face in performing their duties?

2) Are these challenges related to the social marginalization experienced by foreign English professors at Korean universities?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Foreign Faculty in General English Education in South Korea

General English education is provided to students in all departments within the university and has been an important part of the liberal arts education that forms the basis of university education. Currently, almost all universities in Korea designate English as a required or elective liberal arts subject and require students to take a certain number of hours to meet graduation requirements (Yoo, 2010). Entering the 21st century, amid rapidly changing domestic and international trends, Korea's university English education has implemented various systems in the form of curriculum reform. Among the many changes so far, there are two that are closely related to this study. First, as interest in and demand for communication-oriented education increases, domestic universities are opening practical English courses to improve learners' English-speaking skills. Second, native speakers have been actively recruited, and the proportion of general English subjects taught by them has gradually increased.

From the mid-1990s, fluent English conversation skills were emphasized to prepare for globalization. Accordingly, the introduction and necessity of communication-focused teaching methods have been consistently raised, and this has had a significant impact on the conversion of the educational goals and curriculum of general English to practical English (Park, 1997). Entering the 2000s, there was a rapid transition to general English which focuses on practical English usage. As the government emphasized communication skills through policy, a craze for practical English learning emerged in elementary, middle, and high school English subjects. This was also reflected in universities, and many universities reorganized their general English curriculum from a focus on reading to a focus on practical English. As English communication has become more important, the number of schools developing general English programs taught by native English-speaking professors has increased (Nam, 2017).

As the proportion of subjects taught by native English-speaking professors increased, significant changes occurred in teaching methods. Some universities employ native English-speaking professors to solely teach general English courses, while Korean professors lead other classes. Other universities adopt a team-teaching approach, where foreign and Korean professors jointly conduct courses. Additionally, there are instances where English courses are divided, with native English-speaking professors and Korean professors teaching their

respective classes independently (Yoo, 2010). Among these approaches, the most common method is to separate the subjects within a general English curriculum, with native English-speaking professors and Korean professors each independently handling different subjects (Seo, 2018). In current university general English courses, native English-speaking professors typically lead conversation-centered speaking classes to enhance communication skills (Lee, 2012; Lim, 2012; Yoo & Pyo, 2009), while Korean professors commonly teach traditional grammar and vocabulary (Han, 2009).

As the number of general English classes taught by native English-speaking professors has increased, many related studies have been conducted and can be broadly classified into two categories. The first category examines the effectiveness of classes led by native English-speaking professors and the corresponding improvements in learners' communication skills (Song & Park, 2004). The second category focuses on learners' satisfaction with native-speaker-led classes, as well as their perceptions and anxiety related to these classes (Jung & Jeon, 2011; Lee, 2012; Lim, 2012).

However, despite the significant role of native English-speaking professors in current general English education, there is limited research on the challenges these professors face within university teaching organizations and their actual engagement in self-development as educators. Aside from a study by Kim and Lim (2013), which highlighted the need for dedicated staff to recruit and manage native English-speaking professors and manage the curriculum, there is a lack of research in university English education that examines native English-speaking professors' involvement in their own classes, their interactions with fellow faculty members, their perceptions of self-development, the difficulties they encounter, and their support needs. As communication skills become increasingly emphasized in college English education, the educational role of foreign English faculty is gaining prominence, underscoring the need for more focused research in these areas.

2.2. Foreign Faculty's Adaptation Challenges and Social Marginalization in University Settings

Foreign professors often remain on the periphery of universities and are marginalized, unable to influence decision-making and administration (Song & Byun, 2022). They face challenges due to language and cultural differences, distance from administration and colleagues, a resulting lack of communication, and exclusion from decisions and information within the institution (Min, 2015). Even those familiar with Korean culture and proficient in Korean often consider themselves outsiders and struggle to adapt to the Korean university system (Shim, 2014). Many feel that their opinions are not respected and that their work is not recognized (Kim & Davis, 2017). This sense of isolation and helplessness leads some foreign professors to leave their positions, where they are then replaced by new foreign

professors, perpetuating a cycle of marginalization (Kim, 2016).

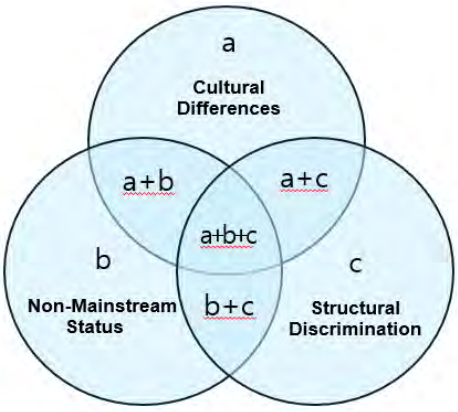
The term ‘marginal’ originally appeared in geographical research and refers to spatial locations such as margins, edges, limits, and boundaries. In economics, it is used to refer to a gap between profit and loss, barely covering production costs, or the limit of profitability. In political science, it refers to constituencies that win elections by small margins. In sociology, it involves contact with two or more cultural groups without full acceptance into any. In psychology, it describes individuals or social groups that are not fully accepted and remain on the periphery of consciousness (Pelc, 2017).

Thus, marginality generally refers to the state of not belonging to the center or mainstream of a society or group, instead, remaining on the periphery or edge. It is often associated with economic poverty, cultural alienation, social inequality, and geographical isolation (Chand, Nel, & Pelc, 2017; von Braun & Gatzweiler, 2014). Billson (2005) defines marginality as occurring in three forms: cultural marginality, which arises during the process of assimilation into a different culture; social role marginality, which involves the tension felt when an individual does not belong to a positively perceived reference group, such as a woman entering a male-dominated occupation; and structural marginality, which is a feeling of helplessness and disadvantage due to political, social, and economic structures.

Marginalization is the process by which an individual is pushed to the periphery in terms of social structure, making it difficult for the individual to re-enter mainstream society on their own (Wenger, 1999). To analyze such marginalization of native English-speaking professors, we adapted Billson’s (2005) framework of cultural marginality, social role marginality, and structural marginality. The exclusion and inequality faced by native-speaking professors can reflect one or more of these characteristics, depending on the specific circumstances of the individual and the university community. This adapted framework, as shown in Figure 1, provides a comprehensive approach to examining the causes of their marginalization in this study.

FIGURE 1

Analysis Framework of Marginalization Causes



First, there is marginalization due to cultural differences. Native-speaking professors often experience cultural confusion and alienation while assimilating into Korean university culture. They frequently consider themselves 'strangers.' For example, even after 30 years of working at a Korean university, an individual who could speak Korean, was an overseas Korean, and had a Korean spouse still felt like an outsider due to the exclusive culture among Korean professors. Despite claims of globalization, a teaching culture that values homogeneity and group conformity, and is uncomfortable with differences, remains prevalent (Shim, 2014). These cultural differences affect not only their daily lives in Korea but also their understanding of students' attitudes and behaviors in class (Min, 2015). Marital status or proficiency in Korean language did not significantly change perceptions of these cultural challenges in occupational activities (Kim & Davis, 2017).

Second, there is the marginalization of social roles that occurs when individuals are not part of the mainstream group. At Korean universities, the role expectations for foreign professors are relatively low. Consequently, there are cases where sufficient administrative and linguistic support is not provided to these professors. Due to language barriers, foreign professors frequently find themselves excluded from essential administrative, research, and teaching and learning support. Administrative documents are typically only available in Korean, and even seeking assistance with teaching strategies is challenging because workshops, manuals, and videos are primarily in Korean (Han & Shin, 2020). Additionally, professional development programs for teaching and learning are often insufficient (Youn & Kim, 2014). As a result, there is a preference for hiring overseas Koreans or foreign professors proficient in Korean language and culture, who can navigate the system more easily (Song & Byun, 2022). This preference highlights the tension and unfair treatment that

arise from being part of a non-mainstream group at a Korean university, making it difficult for foreign professors to improve their classes or develop their competencies fully.

Third, there is marginalization in terms of social structure. Foreign professors often experience structural discrimination in political, social, and economic aspects. While their symbolic role in university internationalization is emphasized, they are often hired as contract workers to meet full-time faculty quotas (Song & Byun, 2022). A survey of 2,767 foreign professors revealed that 21.8% held bachelor's degrees, and only 34.1% had doctoral degrees (Ko et al., 2016). This is significantly lower than "the 88.6% of full-time professors at Korean universities with doctoral degrees in 2023" (Korea Educational Development Institute, 2023, p.134). Ko et al. (2016) attribute this disparity to the lower working conditions, such as short-term contracts, offered to foreign professors. Even full-time foreign professors often find themselves excluded from important communications and decision-making processes. They are frequently left out of department or faculty meetings, regardless of their ability to speak Korean (Kim & Davis, 2017; Shim, 2014). This exclusion can occur due to their status as contract workers or their perceived lower academic qualifications, further marginalizing them within the university.

Most foreign professors may experience all three forms of marginalization. While individual experiences may vary, with some feeling fewer cultural differences or less structural discrimination if they have higher education levels or full-time positions, the majority encounter cultural, social role, and structural marginalization simultaneously. Depending on their circumstances, they may primarily experience all of marginalization types or any combination of these marginalization types, as depicted in Figure 1.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research Participants

The research participants were native English-speaking professors with at least one year of experience teaching general English courses at four-year universities in Korea. A total of 50 native English-speaking professors from 8 universities were contacted via email, with addresses verified through university websites, to invite them to participate in the study. Participants who expressed interest in the study received a link to an online survey. At the end of the survey, they were asked if they would be willing to participate in a personal interview. Those who agreed were contacted personally, and interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via Zoom. In total, 13 native English-speaking professors participated in the survey, and 5 of them took part in in-depth interviews.

The basic information about the participants is summarized in Table 1. The participants

included more male than female, with four individuals each in their 40s and 50s, making up 61.6% of the group. Most participants were from the United States and Canada, with four individuals from each country. Eleven participants (84.7%) had lived in Korea for more than 16 years. All participants were non-tenured full-time professors at their respective universities. They all had over 11 years of experience teaching English, including in private education, with 11 participants (84.7%) having over 11 years of experience teaching at Korean universities. The majority (10 participants, 76.9%) held master's degrees, and more than half (8 participants, 61.6%) majored in English studies or English education. In terms of research experience, 10 participants (77%) had conducted English-related research, including major studies on English, English curriculum development, and English textbook development. The five professors who participated in the interviews were identified as Respondent #01, 02, 04, 06, and 10.

TABLE 1

General Information of Research Participants

Category			Survey Participants		Interview Participant	
			n	%	*n*	%
Personal Information	Gender	Male	9	69.2	4	80.0
		Female	4	30.8	1	20.0
	Age	30-39 years old	3	23.1	1	20.0
		40-49 years old	4	30.8	2	40.0
		50-59 years old	4	30.8	1	20.0
		Over 60 years old	2	15.4	1	20.0
	Country of Origin	USA	4	30.8	2	40.0
		UK	2	15.4	1	20.0
		Canada	4	30.8	-	-
		New Zealand	1	7.7	1	20.0
		Republic of South Africa	2	15.4	1	20.0
	Length of Residence in Korea	10 years or less	1	7.7	-	-
		11-15 years	1	7.7	-	-
		16-20 years	4	30.8	3	60.0
		21-25 years	4	30.8	1	20.0
		26-30 years	3	23.1	1	20.0
Current Position	Region	Seoul	3	23.1	-	-
		Gyeonggi-do	5	38.5	3	60.0
		Chungcheong-do	3	23.1	1	20.0
		Gyeongsang-do	2	15.4	1	20.0
	Status	Non-tenure track, full-time	13	100.0	5	100.0
	Korean University	6-10 years	2	15.4	-	-
		11-15 years	2	15.4	2	40.0

English Teaching Experience		16-20 years	4	30.8	2	40.0
		21+ years	5	38.5	1	20.0
Academic Degree and Research Experience	Final Degree	Bachelor	2	15.4	-	-
		Master	10	76.9	5	100.0
		Doctor	1	7.7	-	-
	Major	English-Related/Education	8	61.5	4	80.0
		Humanities	2	15.4	-	-
		Science	1	7.7	-	-
		Business/Management	1	7.7	1	20.0
		Other majors	1	7.7	-	-
	Research Experience (multiple selection)	Major-Related English Major	6	46.2	3	60.0
		Non-English Major	4	30.8	-	-
		English Curriculum Development	4	30.8	1	20.0
		Development of English Textbooks	2	15.4	1	20.0
		Others	3	23.1	2	40.0

3.2. Research Procedure

The research procedure was conducted in five steps. First, we analyzed previous research on native English-speaking professors and developed a draft of the survey questions. Additionally, literature on social marginalization theory was examined to inform our understanding of the context. Second, the survey and interview questions were developed through several discussions between researchers. The survey questions included 17 items about basic personal information and background, 9 items related to the work environment, 12 items regarding work-related difficulties, 6 items on teaching efficacy, 18 items about faculty development and support, and 8 open-ended questions, totaling 70 questions. The interview questions were composed of six topic-centered questions. The developed items were reviewed by a native English-speaking professor who did not participate in this study. Third, we applied for review and received approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB) for the overall research procedures, including the survey and interview questions.

Fourth, 50 native English-speaking professors at 8 universities were informed about the survey via email. The survey was conducted using Google Forms, and 13 individuals responded. The final question of the survey asked respondents if they would be willing to participate in an interview, resulting in five participants. These participants were sent interview questions in advance, and interviews were conducted either in person or via Zoom, each lasting approximately an hour. All interview data were recorded for further analysis.

Fifth, to analyze the survey data, descriptive analysis and frequency analysis were performed using SPSS 23. Sixth, the interview data was broadly coded by topic by the researcher who led the interview and transcribed it, and a researcher who did not participate in the interview examined the transcript data and coded by detailed topics. The results were compared, and any differing opinions between the researchers regarding the coding were resolved through discussion. The resulting number of coding related to social marginalization was 16 for cultural differences, 23 for marginalization of social roles due to non-mainstream status, and 16 for structural discrimination within the organization.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Difficulties Experienced by Foreign English Faculty While Performing Their Duties

The respondents reported that they did not experience significant difficulties in performing their duties, that is, running their classes. However, there were notable differences among respondents in their understanding of the English curriculum for general education. When asked to evaluate themselves on six questions related to teaching efficacy ("How would you rate your teaching efficacy in…?) on a 5-point scale, ranging from very low (1 point) to very high (5 points), the scores were relatively high, spanning from 3.62 to 4.31. In particular, the sense of efficacy regarding teaching strategy was notably positive, with all respondents rating it as either 'high' or 'very high.' On the other hand, teaching efficacy in using technology was the lowest, with an average score of 3.62 (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

Foreign English Faculty's Teaching Efficacy

Category	Frequency Analysis					Descriptive Analysis	
	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	*M*	*SD*
Curriculum Design	-	-	3	8	2	3.92	0.64
Course Design	-	-	3	8	2	3.92	0.64
Instructional Strategy	-	-	-	9	4	4.31	0.48
Interpersonal Relation	-	-	3	8	2	3.92	0.64
Technology Usage	-	-	7	4	2	3.62	0.77
Learning Assessment	-	-	4	7	2	3.85	0.69

In an open-ended question on how to promote student class participation, respondents

indicated that they employed a variety of strategies. These included attendance and participation points, praise, memorizing student names, pair or group activities, role play, use of video, use of technology, and task-based feedback. They aimed to create an interactive classroom environment, and specific methods mentioned were task-based learning, flipped learning, and communicative approaches that connect course topics to students' lives, along with role-playing activities (Respondent #13). Additionally, technologies such as AhaSlides, Kahoot, or the college LMS were utilized (Respondent #04). The respondents also "regularly read and check end-of-semester reviews and make adjustments to better help students next semester" (Respondent #06). They actively sought and reflected on student feedback before making changes to their teaching methods (Respondent #05).

Despite these efforts to teach effectively and improve their courses, there were discrepancies among respondents in understanding the overall position of their class within the general English curriculum, its structure, and its purpose. Regarding the statement 'lack of understanding of the curriculum' (M = 2.38, SD = 1.04), nine respondents (69.2%) responded 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree.' However, there were still three respondents (23.1%) who acknowledged this lack of understanding.

In a related open-ended question, 10 respondents (76.9%) responded that they had a sufficient understanding of general English because they had participated in developing the general English curriculum or had been teaching general English at the university for several years. On the other hand, three respondents (23.1%) indicated that they were unaware of the existence of the curriculum, noted that curriculum-related work was managed by another team, or suggested that explanations or charts related to the curriculum would be more useful. Most respondents identified the goals of the general English curriculum as developing English communication skills, enabling autonomous work in an English-speaking environment, and enhancing academic English skills such as writing papers, making presentations, and taking English lectures. However, two respondents admitted that they had not considered these goals or had never encountered such information, viewing the course merely as a graduation requirement. Additionally, although all five teachers who participated in the interviews expressed high satisfaction with their autonomy within the classroom, there was insufficient understanding of the curriculum.

The respondents generally did not perceive major difficulties related to student education or university duties. Table 3 presents the responses to survey questions regarding difficulties in teaching and integration into the university system ("I experienced difficulties due to…"). While some respondents experienced challenges due to students' lack of English skills, introverted attitudes during class, and the excessive number of students per class, these issues were generally rated below 3 on a difficulty scale. In their university positions, respondents reported no significant difficulties with co-worker relationships or adapting to the university system. However, there were notable exceptions. Several respondents reported difficulties

scoring 3 or higher on specific issues such as 'experiencing a language barrier within the university' ($M = 3.00$) and 'exclusion from departmental decisions or important information' ($M = 3.77$). Particularly, eight respondents (61.5%) highlighted 'exclusion from departmental decisions or important information' as a significant problem.

TABLE 3

Causes of Difficulties in Teaching and University System Integration

Category	Frequency Analysis					Descriptive Analysis	
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree	*M*	*SD*
Students' lack of English skills	4	7	1	1	0	1.92	0.86
Differences in the education system from my home country	3	8	2	0	0	1.92	0.64
Students' introverted attitude	2	5	5	0	1	2.46	1.05
Excessive class load per week	6	6	1	0	0	1.62	0.65
Excessive number of students per class	1	5	3	3	1	2.85	1.14
Difficulties in adapting to the university system	2	9	1	1	0	2.08	0.76
Lack of support for teaching and faculty development	1	5	2	5	0	2.85	1.07
Difficulties in relationships with colleagues	5	5	3	0	0	1.85	0.80
Discrimination as a foreigner	1	8	3	1	0	2.31	0.75
Exclusion from departmental decisions or important information	0	1	4	5	3	3.77	0.93
Language barriers within the university	0	3	7	3	0	3.00	0.71
Lack of understanding of the curriculum	2	7	1	3	0	2.38	1.04

The Korean language skills of native English-speaking professors varied significantly, with most respondents not being proficient, as shown in Table 4. On average, they self-reported that their skills were below average across all language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Only one respondent reported very high proficiency, while another indicated very low proficiency. The remaining 11 respondents self-reported scores ranging from low to average. The overall average rating for Korean language skills was 2.75 ($SD = 0.89$), indicating a generally below-average proficiency.

TABLE 4

Korean Language Skills

Category	Frequency Analysis					Descriptive Analysis	
	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High	*M*	*SD*
Listening	1	4	7	0	1	2.69	0.95
Speaking	2	2	8	0	1	2.69	1.03
Reading	1	2	8	1	1	2.92	0.95
Writing	2	2	8	0	1	2.69	1.03

Regardless of their Korean language proficiency, the respondents generally maintained amicable relationships with university members, and their satisfaction with these relationships was accordingly high, as illustrated in Table 5. The average score for ‘relationships with students’ was quite high at 4.31, while ‘relationships with foreign colleagues’ averaged 3.69, and ‘relationships with Korean colleagues’ averaged 3.15. Notably, two respondents rated their relationships with Korean colleagues as below average, and eight rated them as average. The satisfaction levels varied similarly: satisfaction with relationships with students was 4.62, satisfaction with relationships with foreign colleagues was 4.15, and satisfaction with relationships with Korean colleagues was 3.31. This pattern mirrored the reported relationship levels, as observed in Table 6. The correlation between relationship levels and satisfaction levels was positive, ranging from 0.663 to 0.778.

TABLE 5

Relationships and Satisfaction with University Members

Category	Frequency Analysis					Descriptive Analysis	
	Very poor	Below average	Average	Above average	Excellent	*M*	*SD*
Relationship with students	0	0	1	7	5	4.31	0.63
Relationship with foreign colleagues	0	0	6	5	2	3.69	0.75
Relationship with Korean colleagues	0	2	8	2	1	3.15	0.80
Satisfaction with relationships with students	0	0	0	5	8	4.62	0.506
Satisfaction with relationships with foreign colleagues	0	0	3	4	5	4.15	0.801
Satisfaction with relationships with Korean colleagues	0	3	4	5	1	3.31	0.947

TABLE 6

Correlation Analysis between Relationship Levels and Satisfaction Levels

Category	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)
1) Relationship with students	1					
2) Relationship with foreign colleagues	.041	1				
3) Relationship with Korean colleagues	.064	.224	1			
4) Satisfaction with relationships with students	.663*	-0.118	.364	1		
5) Satisfaction with relationships with foreign colleagues	-0.102	.778**	.480	.158	1	
6) Satisfaction with relationships with Korean colleagues	-0.032	-0.207	.701**	.094	.042	1

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$

As presented in Table 7, the respondents displayed varying levels of satisfaction with the university system. Satisfaction with the university's working environment and facilities was relatively high, scoring 4.00. However, satisfaction with the university's current compensation system and faculty development system was notably lower, scoring 2.77 and 2.54 respectively.

TABLE 7

Satisfaction with the University System

Category	Frequency Analysis					Descriptive Analysis	
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly agree	*M*	*SD*
Work environment and facilities	0	1	1	8	3	4.00	0.82
Compensation system	2	3	4	4	0	2.77	1.04
Faculty development system	1	7	2	3	0	2.54	0.97

The respondents demonstrated relatively low awareness of the faculty development support system (Table 8). Across all questions related to faculty development support, they reported receiving below-average support in all areas except for technology use. Research support was particularly perceived at a very low level, with ratings of 2.00 and 1.85. Language support for foreign faculty also rated very low, with ratings of 1.62 and 1.85, and administrative support was similarly rated low, ranging from 2.31 to 2.54.

TABLE 8

Support for Foreign English Faculty from the University

Category		Frequency Analysis					Descriptive Analysis	
		Very weak	Weak	Mod-erate	Strong	Very strong	*M*	*SD*
Faculty develop-ment support	Adaptation programs for new international faculty	2	6	5	0	0	2.23	0.73
	Efforts to improve teaching efficacy (self-evaluation, peer evaluation, CTL)	2	5	4	2	0	2.46	0.97
	Active learning (e.g., flipped learning, PBL)	1	5	5	2	0	2.62	0.87
	Sharing teaching methods	2	4	4	2	1	2.69	1.18
	Consulting and micro-teaching	2	5	6	0	0	2.31	0.75
	Utilize technology (e.g., Zoom, MS Teams, Webex, LMS)	1	3	4	4	1	3.08	1.12
	Korean language education for foreign faculty	8	2	3	0	0	1.62	0.87
	Korean cultural education for foreign faculty	5	5	3	0	0	1.85	0.80
	Mentoring program (foreigner-foreigner, foreigner-Korean)	6	3	3	1	0	1.92	1.04
	Availability of handbooks/guidebooks/manuals for the above matters	5	3	3	2	0	2.15	1.14
Research support	Providing research information tailored to the major field of study	5	4	3	1	0	2.00	1.00
	Providing information to improve research proposals	6	4	2	1	0	1.85	0.99
	Utilization of system for administration	0	5	4	4	0	2.92	0.86
Admini-strative support	Understanding administrative structure	0	5	5	3	0	2.85	0.80
	Multilingual website	0	1	4	8	0	2.54	0.66
	Important notices (e.g., email)	3	6	1	3	0	2.31	1.11

To summarize this section, while the respondents exhibited a strong sense of efficacy in teaching English, some lacked sufficient understanding of the English curriculum. Their proficiency in Korean language was below average, leading to instances of language barriers within the university and strained relationships with Korean faculty members. Moreover, most respondents reported feeling excluded from departmental decisions or important information. Upon their appointment, these foreign faculty did not receive adequate support such as orientation programs, consultation for improving teaching methods, various forms

of pedagogical support including microteaching, education on Korean language or culture, relevant materials, or mentoring. Additionally, while administrative support from staff was available, it appeared not to be provided in a systematic manner.

4.2. Impact of Social Marginalization on Job Performance

4.2.1. Marginalization due to cultural alienation

Despite positive responses from quantitative data reported in the previous section, foreign professors encounter cultural differences while fulfilling their duties. They experience cultural differences and confusion as they assimilate into Korean university culture. This confusion stems not only from conflict in relationships with other professors, but also from the process of teaching students. Foreign professors sometimes face challenges in freely exchanging opinions or expressing ideas with Korean professors due to the hierarchical and homogeneous group-oriented culture prevalent in Korean academia. This cultural dynamic reflects the tendency of Korea's academic environment to be insular, uneasy with interpersonal interaction, and uncomfortable with diversity (Shim, 2014). The representative interview excepts are provided below:

> "I think the biggest issue there would be the fact that we seem somewhat segregated within our own foreign faculty but also between the Korean faculty teaching in this as well" (Respondent #01).

> "Because it just makes people uncomfortable and stressed and doesn't give us freedom to talk, give our opinions, share ideas in an open way. … but something that would just help you feel like you are growing as a teacher, rather than stuck in a rut" (Respondent #10).

Due to this cultural atmosphere, foreign professors refrain from saying, "Hey, I have a hard time understanding this" (Respondent #10). Even if there are foreign professors fluent in Korean, meetings are held in English, reinforcing the perception that they are not part of the same group as Korean colleagues.

> "When we have our meetings with the Korean faculty, they all know how to speak English and they cater to our English. And so, we don't speak Korean with them because I feel like there is this idea that we just don't speak Korean. And so, we're sort of just like, oh, you guys just speak English. So, you're left alone to just speak English with each other" (Respondent #06).

The cultural differences most often encountered by native English-speaking professors arise while running classes or guiding students. Despite variations between universities, most professors in this study reported having great freedom in managing their classes. For instance, while some universities mandated the use of specific tests and textbooks (Respondent #10), professors still felt they had full control over other aspects of their classes. In other words, they perceived the guidelines and regulations for class operation and evaluation to be minimal. Although this level of autonomy was initially unfamiliar to some, it was met with high satisfaction.

> "Yeah, it's great because we have a lot of freedom. You know, we design our courses. And at the end of the year, we have to give a very general reflection on what we've done. But I've never received any feedback about what I've done in the classroom or what my goals were. So, I think that's just a formality. And so, the amount of control that we have is I think great" (Respondent #06).

> "I think every job I've had in a Korean university has been the same. I felt like I had a lot of control over my class and what I can do" (Respondent #10).

They also noticed cultural differences in student attitudes during class management. In the general English classes, native English-speaking professors often sensed "a disconnect between what students might want and what I feel like they may need" (Respondent #06), and they also found it perplexing that students did not prioritize the class or make rational choices to improve their English skills.

> "I think there are cultural differences that I think I've come to recognize that need to be addressed if we can really make the most of what we're trying to do. Because I know that many students regard their non-mandatory classes as classes that they can sleep through, like it shouldn't be really anything serious" (Respondent #06).

> "A majority of them are capable of speaking reasonably well in English, but you always get that odd few who want to sort of trick the system and stay in lower English courses, not go up to advanced and you always get a few of those" (Respondent #01).

The difference in perceptions between professors and students regarding general education classes led to the softening of class or caused difficulties in guiding the students

in class.

> "They all had to do presentations and they didn't really like look up and speak naturally. They all just read off notes, just look at the notes. I've stopped putting them in like groups. I mean, sometimes it works well, but sometimes they'll just freeze if they are with some stranger. Sometimes they really don't like it and they just won't talk" (Respondent #10).

As foreign faculty adapted to Korean university culture, they became adept at discerning when they could assert their rights as foreigners and when they could not. Accordingly, they attended meetings held in English regardless of their Korean language proficiency, did not actively engage with Korean colleagues or administrators, and often adopted a bystander attitude rather than actively addressing student demands or attitudes. However, they are satisfied with the clear authority they have within the classroom and take an active role in teaching students using various strategies.

4.2.2. Marginalization due to social non-mainstream status

Foreign faculty members are a minority and non-mainstream group within university faculties. Consequently, the expectations placed on foreign faculty are relatively low, and they are sometimes excluded from decision-making processes and professional development opportunities. The primary factor contributing to their non-mainstream status is the language barrier. If a faculty member is proficient in Korean, "they often act as messengers, conveying important information between foreign and Korean professors" (Respondent #06). However, much of the communication burden falls on the individual, as "people don't tell you, or you hear it at the very last minute..., Sometimes the flow of communication is not perfect" (Respondent #10). The dissemination of information to foreign faculty is often determined by managerial discretion rather than by a systematic approach. Every time an administrative manager changes, their communication style changes, which makes them more isolated from critical information.

> "I think part of the issue is the fact that here admin change every two years … our last group of admin people were really great trying to get us emails in English, but these days we don't get any emails in English. It's expected that we translate those through other forms" (Respondent #01).

> "Now I've got used to understanding like and yeah, they change the staff very regularly. So I get used to one staff, okay, yeah, I understand this stuff

> deals with this, like the English courses, the staff deals with the OOO department. So I get used to that, then they change" (Respondent #04).

Language barriers sometimes cause difficulties during practices of personnel management or teaching. Responding appropriately to administrative requests, such as document deadlines, midterm exam schedules, classroom assignments, and test formats, is not easy (Respondent #04). These issues can also affect class scheduling and personnel management (Respondent #10).

> "I think the biggest challenge would be communicating with the administration staff and because there's certain deadlines that we need to submit, like documents to the admin staff. All the emails that they send out are in Korean, sometimes the translator isn't accurate enough and then the email is like this long, it's huge. Line by line. Yeah, so I'm kind of 90% guessing, okay, I think this is what they mean. So that's the biggest one" (Respondent #04).

> "There's still the issue of emails. for a while we were getting translated versions but pretty much run through Google translate so it wasn't clear still and that has kind of ended. We can translate ourselves through Google so that's what I've been doing. But it seems like sometimes we're not getting some fairly important information in English" (Respondent #02).

> "I worked in two other Korean universities, and in my previous university, there was always English-speaking HR, and foreign faculty involved in that. So it was a lot easier language wise than just feeling comfortable culturally and whatnot, like just, if I had a problem with HR or a question or something, I could just very easily and comfortably do it, whereas now it's like, oh, I have to prepare, how am I going to say this, or it's a bit stressful" (Respondent #10).

These communication problems prevent foreign faculty from actively participating in educational changes and innovations, forcing them to respond passively and defensively. For instance, although one faculty member believed that the previously implemented English proficiency test should be reinstated, they could not officially voice this opinion (Respondent #01). Another faculty member mentioned that "without knowing the official goal" of the curriculum, they "simply received instructions and were assigned a textbook" (Respondent #10).

Even among English teachers who do not face language barriers, interaction between foreign and Korean faculty is limited. Many cases involved only exchanging greetings in passing, with no formal meetings to discuss curriculum development (Respondent #04). This lack of interaction negatively impacts the ability of foreign English professors to collaborate, demonstrate their expertise, and lead or engage in self-development as educators.

> "We get no training at all. Or no professional development stuff at all. And if anything is ever offered, it's in Korean. So I feel like that is lacking, formally having meetings to share ideas or get some sort of professional development, whether it's related to the technology we're using, like we have a new LMS and no one explained it, we just got given it" (Respondent #10).

> "I'd really like to know what other professors are doing. I want to be better at my job. I try and do the best that I can… To know their best methods of teaching and to be able to share those would be really good. I'd be able to sort of take ideas from other professors who are doing things that seem to work well in their classes" (Respondent #01).

To summarize, although foreign English professors have expertise in English education at universities, language barriers prevent them from participating in mainstream communication or communities centered around Korean faculty. This leads to hardship and unfair treatment. Additionally, due to their perceived low role expectations at the university, they are less likely to actively engage in improving their classes or developing their capabilities as professors.

4.2.3. Marginalization due to structural discrimination

In addition to cultural and social marginalization due to language barriers, foreign English professors also face challenges caused by their diverse statuses at Korean universities. As noted in the interviews, all were 'non-tenure track full-time' faculty members, and among the 13 survey respondents, only one had a doctoral degree while two had only bachelor's degrees. In a university society where decision-making authority is concentrated among tenure-track full-time faculty members and where colleagues with research capabilities are preferred, it is challenging for foreign English professors to be included in the mainstream in terms of status and competency.

At most universities, communication with foreign English faculty is managed by tenure-track Korean professors, who also hold the decision-making authority.

> "I guess a tenure track full time professor… sometimes he asks our opinion and if you give an opinion that's not his opinion. Yeah, he won't be very happy. So most people just say what he wants most of the time because there's no point in trying really" (Respondent #10).

> "We don't have a supervisor per se, but there is a tenure-track English professor who helps. She's like the liaison between the foreign English professors and the General Education team" (Respondent # 06).

This issue is sometimes based on the assumption that foreign English professors "will not be well integrated into the institution" (Respondent #06). One foreign professor noted, "I think that problem could be solved if I took a few more Korean language classes or got help understanding emails written in Korean" (Respondent #06). However, they did not consider providing such support the institution's responsibility. In other words, while foreign English professors recognized the need for Korean language education and support, they did not actively request it.

Additionally, although they considered their expertise in English education sufficient, there was a lack of uniformity in their understanding of the curriculum. Some did not fully grasp the exact meaning of curriculum and had majors unrelated to English or English education. Ultimately, foreign English faculty members were in a structurally inferior position in terms of rank, academic major and related background compared to Korean faculty members at universities. This sometimes led to failure in course development in the process of performing their duties.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Foreign faculty members appointed at domestic universities are categorized into native English-speaking professors dedicated to teaching English courses, research professors supported by various research foundations, and academic professors overseeing education and research. Given the significance of this group, this study identified the challenges encountered by foreign English professors in fulfilling their responsibilities and analyzed how these difficulties relate to social marginalization.

The survey results showed that while participants had a high sense of teaching efficacy in English, they also experienced difficulties due to cultural differences, such as students' introverted attitudes. They sometimes lacked a sufficient understanding of the English curriculum. Respondents reported experiencing various forms of marginalization due to cultural differences, non-mainstream status, and structural discrimination. These professors

see themselves as an out-group within university faculties, frequently excluded from decision-making processes and professional development opportunities. Despite their expertise in English education, language barriers stemming from low Korean language proficiency hinder their participation in mainstream communication or communities dominated by Korean faculty. Additionally, foreign English faculty members often hold a structurally inferior position in terms of rank, academic specialization, and background compared to their Korean counterparts. This disparity sometimes resulted in failures in course development during their professional duties. As a result, they often adopt a passive role in course development and administrative matters.

Social marginalization is structural and systemic, making it difficult for an individual to overcome through personal efforts alone (Billson, 2005). Native English-speaking faculty members interviewed for this study made various personal efforts to overcome social marginalization, but these efforts did not lead to changes in the group's structure. However, these efforts never led to changes in the university system, and as time passed or when administrators changed, they often faced issues of marginalization again. To effectively implement general English education at universities, it is crucial for foreign English professors to integrate seamlessly into the university environment and demonstrate their full potential as educators. However, the findings of this study indicate that these professors face significant challenges that hinder their contribution to internationalization and educational quality. Importantly, the social marginalization they experience while adapting to the unique environment of Korean universities negatively impacts their teaching and is a major root cause of their challenges.

This study also discovered, in agreement with previous research (Han & Shin, 2020; Min, 2015; Song & Byun, 2022), that one of the reasons for the challenges faced by foreign English professors is the lack of a clear and well-defined role when they are first appointed. This inadequate role definition upon their initial hiring contributes to the difficulties they encounter. Thus, as Ko et al. (2016) suggest, it is essential to recruit foreign professors with academic backgrounds and qualifications equivalent to their domestic counterparts. To enable them to fully demonstrate their expertise as specialists in English education, they should be granted the authority and responsibility to participate in the research and improvement of the general English curriculum, along with administrative support. Additionally, it is worth considering the establishment of an organizational structure that facilitates collaboration with Korean professors teaching general English courses. This approach would assist native English-speaking professors in gaining a better understanding of Korean university culture, enabling them to easily seek information about organizational or informational changes. Moreover, it would contribute to more effective general English education by complementing the research capabilities of native English-speaking professors who may have less research experience.

Some of the professors who took part in the interview were surprised by the autonomy and control they had in their classrooms. This indicates the need for a quality improvement system that would involve regularly reviewing the general English curriculum, sharing course objectives, and confirming learning outcomes, as well as discussion and sharing of how actual English classes are conducted.

This study calls for actionable steps to enhance the quality of university education by enabling native English-speaking professors to fully demonstrate their capabilities and fostering a sense of belonging within the university community. Promoting their integration will create a more inclusive academic environment and leverage their expertise to enrich the educational experience for students. This requires a concerted effort to provide appropriate support systems and redefine the roles and expectations of foreign faculty members to ensure their successful integration and contribution to the university's goals.

Applicable levels: Tertiary

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