

2017

Exploring NNESTs' Beliefs and Identities: A Case Study of Japanese EFL High School Teachers

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Exploring NNESTs' Beliefs and Identities:
A Case Study of Japanese EFL High School Teachers

By
Ryosuke Aoyama

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
English
Teaching English as a Second Language

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

December 2017

November 9, 2017

Exploring NNESTs' Beliefs and Identities: A Case Study of Japanese EFL High School

Teachers

Ryosuke Aoyama

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, Advisor

Dr. Glen Poupore, Committee Member

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, my advisor, for all the years of guidance, encouragement, and advice. She has been an instrumental part of my success and my career in the MA TESL program at MNSU. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Glen Poupore, my second reader, who provided precise, detailed feedback on my manuscripts despite his busy schedule.

I owe special thanks to the teacher participants of this study, who shared with me their valuable stories, experiences, insights, and beliefs. Without them, this research simply would not have been possible. The conversations with them also promoted my critical reflection on my beliefs and my identity as a Japanese English teacher.

There are several others who deserve credit for this thesis. Stefanus Angga Prima volunteered to help me with piloting the interview protocols and questions. Shyam Bahadur Pandey worked with me to check the accuracy of my data analysis. I appreciate their support and continued friendship. I would also like to thank Emily Myers, who read my early drafts and provided suggestions to increase readability.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank my family. I dedicate this thesis to my wife and my daughter for their love, encouragement, understanding, and patience during this long journey. I would not have been able to complete my degree without their support.

Abstract

Studies have suggested that, to understand language teaching and learning, it is critical to examine teachers' beliefs and identities, along with their impacts on actual teaching practices in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to explore teaching beliefs and teacher identities of eight non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) in Japanese public high schools. Three research questions were addressed to examine what teaching beliefs they have, what influences their belief formation and professional identity development, and what identities constitute their teacher identity. To do this, a qualitative case study was undertaken. An in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts revealed the participants' beliefs toward communicative language teaching, student-centered instruction, and the medium of instruction in the classroom. It was also found that the following factors impacted their teaching beliefs and practices and their identity: personal experiences in childhood and adolescence, experiences as an in-service teacher, and English education policy in Japan. As for the question pertaining to their teacher identity, the data analysis found four salient identities that are closely connected to their identity as an English teacher, which include general teacher identity, context-related identity, language teacher identity, and non-native English speaking teacher identity. It is concluded that the teachers' beliefs and identities are formed through continuous negotiations with external factors, such as past experiences, contextual factors surrounding their teaching sites, and students' expectations of and the national policy on English education. Furthermore, it is concluded that how their identities are non-fixed and transformative, complex and multiple, and seemingly stable but susceptible, which

reflect the complex nature of language teacher identity construction as noted in the literature.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Due to the dominant status of the English language in the face of globalization, there are more non-native speakers than native speakers of English across the world (Crystal, 2003). In the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), likewise, native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are currently outnumbered by their non-native counterparts. In fact, non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) comprise approximately 80 percent of teachers of English as a second or foreign language around the world (Canagarajah, 2005). Reflecting the strong presence of NNESTs both inside and outside English-speaking countries, the past two decades have observed a growing number of publications on NNEST studies in the TESOL field (Kamhi-Stein, 2016). Previous research on NNEST covered a wide variety of topics both in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, including teacher identity, learning and teaching beliefs, a tension between teaching beliefs and practices, English proficiency and performance, and language policies surrounding NNESTs (e.g., Duff & Uchida, 1997; Farrell & Kun, 2008; Kamhi-Stein, 2013; Pan & Block, 2011; Richards, 2017b).

At the same time, in the field of language teacher education and development, language teacher identity (LTI) became an emergent area of interest for researchers, and still is a topic of mainstream research. For example, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnson (2005) stressed the importance of focusing on teachers rather than teaching methodologies, and they explored theoretical frameworks to understand teacher identity. Various theoretical frameworks in different disciplines were drawn upon to better unpack

language teachers' identity negotiation and development. In particular, poststructuralist conception that views identity as multi-dimensional, fluid, contradictory, a source of struggle (Norton, 1995) and social theory that juxtaposes identity and practice in particular communities (Wenger, 1998) were highly used in well-known LTI research (e.g., Morgan, 2004; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Tsui, 2007) and provided strong frameworks for detailed identity analysis. An attempt to theorize LTI continues until today. Barkhuizen (2017) made a recent innovative contribution to this field by presenting how teacher identities can be conceptualized using various theoretical frameworks and how they are understood in different research fields.

Paralleled with a growing trend of LTI research, NNEST studies also geared towards examining teacher cognition, such as teacher identity and teaching beliefs of NNESTs, in diverse teaching contexts around the world. In an ESL context, Park (2012) examined the experiences of five East Asian female NNESTs before and during their TESOL programs. Focusing on one participant's identity transformation, the study explored her trajectory to embrace her non-native speaker identity. In an EFL context, Mak (2011) examined a pre-service NNEST's beliefs about communicative language teaching (CLT) and her teaching practices during a post-graduate teacher education program. The study presented how her teaching beliefs about CLT changed and what factors impacted her changes. Lee's (2013) case study also examined NNESTs in an EFL context, exploring identity constructions of four in-service writing teachers in China. The findings showed how their identities were discursively constructed and how socio-cultural and socio-political factors surrounding them influenced their identity development.

Despite the studies mentioned above, however, a closer analysis of particularity in NNESTs' teaching contexts is still missing from the NNEST-related literature. For example, although previous research studied cognition of Japanese NNESTs in Japan, (e.g., Butler, 2007; Nagatomo, 2011; Sakui, 2004; Sakui & Gates, 2006), research investigating Japanese high school NNESTs' beliefs and identities is not abundant. Even more scarce is up-to-date research on the same topic that reflects current situations where Japanese high school teachers of English are experiencing an English education reform under the new governmental policy. Thus, to fill the gap in the literature, this study aimed to provide current, local understandings of secondary EFL education in Japan by exploring Japanese high school NNESTs' beliefs and identities.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to examine teaching beliefs and teacher identities of eight NNESTs in Japanese public high schools. More specifically, this study sought to answer what teaching beliefs they have, what influences their belief formation and professional identity development, and what identities constitute their teacher identity. By answering these questions and sharing the findings, it is hoped that teacher educators, school leaders, and local boards of education could provide more reflective and constructive teacher training programs that promote teachers' professional development. In addition, it is hoped that these teachers would benefit from reflecting on their beliefs, identities, and practices, which might result in positive pedagogical change in their teaching contexts. In order to explore these teachers' beliefs and identities, the following research questions were addressed.

1. What English language teaching beliefs do Japanese high school teachers of English hold?
2. What factors affect their teaching belief formation and professional identity development?
3. What identities constitute Japanese high school teachers of English?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

As stated earlier, more NNESTs research that targets Japanese high school teachers of English should be encouraged, especially because secondary public English education in Japan has been going through continuous reforms. Teachers play a central role as brokers in reform (Bower & Parsons, 2016; Marshall & Grestl-Pepin, 2005); however, due to the particularity of teaching contexts, such as contextual and affective factors, there was found to be a discrepancy between the current reform's goals and Japanese teachers' actual classroom practices (Suzuki & Roger, 2014). To address this gap, policy makers, teacher educators, and municipal boards of education have tried to provide seminars, workshops, and training programs in the hope of smooth implementation of the national policy under the current reform. Such teacher training tends to follow the top-down cascade model, where one teacher representative for a school or area participates in a government-led curricular training and then shares the content with their colleagues and other teachers. However, it is rare that teachers simply internalize what the authority said and perform as expected (Johnson & Golombek, 2016). Varghese et al. (2005) insisted that, without strong understanding on teachers themselves, language teaching cannot be discussed, and they continued, "in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional,

cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them” (p. 22). In line with Varghese et al’s argument, this case study sought to understand the beliefs and identities of eight Japanese high school teachers of English. Using multiple theoretical frameworks including Wenger’s (1998) social theory of identity formation, Kumaravadivelu’s (2012) theory of teaching Self, and Pennington and Richards’ (2016) typology of LTI, this study offered in-depth, nuanced understandings of the participants’ lived experiences that revealed their multiple beliefs and identities. The findings could enable teacher educators to gain critical insights into teachers’ belief and identity construction and design teacher training programs that promote their reflective thinking, positive pedagogical change in the classroom, and internalization of the national policy based on a critical reflection of their beliefs and identities.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. This chapter started by presenting an overview of NNEST research and LTI research in the TESOL field. After providing background information on NNEST research in Japanese EFL contexts, the purpose of the study, its rationale, and its importance were explained.

Chapter Two reviews the previous literature related to this study. It starts with reviewing research on LTI, detailing an overview of LTI research and how identity is conceptualized by various scholars, along with reviewing theoretical frameworks to analyze LTI. Next, definitions and characteristics of language teacher beliefs are presented. The reviews on socio-cultural and socio-educational factors in Japanese EFL contexts conclude Chapter Two.

Chapter Three presents the methodology of this research. The chapter addresses the methodological orientation of this study, followed by descriptions of the participants and sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis procedures. Trustworthiness of the study is then discussed, explaining how this study addressed the issues of validity and reliability.

Chapter Four details findings of the study. It presents emergent themes identified through qualitative data analysis, which includes themes related to: 1) beliefs about teaching, 2) factors that affect teaching beliefs and identities, and 3) teacher identities. The chapter also discusses the findings in terms of the relevant literature.

Finally, Chapter Five concludes the thesis by presenting the summary of the findings, highlighting pedagogical implications, and offering recommendations for the future research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter addresses three areas of research related to the research questions of this study: 1) What English language teaching beliefs do Japanese high school teachers of English hold? 2) What factors affect their teaching belief formation and professional identity development? and 3) What identities constitute Japanese high school teachers of English? In the first section, previous research studies related to language teacher identity (LTI) as well as theoretical frameworks employed in the field are addressed. The second section reviews research on language teacher beliefs, including their characteristics and influential factors. This chapter then explores research on contextual factors specific to the study, that is, socio-cultural and socio-educational factors that potentially affect teachers' belief and identity formation and their teaching practices in secondary English education in Japan.

Language Teacher Identity (LTI)

For the last two decades, especially in recent years, there has been a growing, worldwide trend in the field of applied linguistics, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and teacher education to examine LTI and its pedagogical impacts (e.g., De Costa & Norton, 2017; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Lee, 2013, Tsui, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005; Yuan & Burns, 2016). Many researchers have attempted to construe LTI; however, due to highly elusive, multi-dimensional concepts the term identity inherently has, it is not at all easy to define LTI, let alone to have a single definition that gives comprehensive views of what LTI is. This section presents the overview of how identity, especially how LTI has been defined and interpreted by

various scholars in the different fields for the past two decades and what theoretical frameworks have been proposed that provide more meaningful, richer understandings of LTI.

Multi-dimensional natures of LTI. Simply put, identity can be described as who people think they are. However, it is almost impossible that a person figures out who he or she is by only looking at their inner self in isolation from others. Gee (2001) defined identity as “being recognized as a certain kind of person in a given context” (p. 99) and explained that the “kind of person” changes depending on the circumstances, that is, whom they are with, where they are, and when it is. Thus, people have multiple identities which are reflective of their performance in society (Gee, 2001). Along the similar vein, highly cited in identity research today is the poststructural view that sees the individual as “diverse, contradictory, and dynamic; multiple rather than unitary, decentered rather than centered” (Norton, 1995, p. 15). Drawing on such poststructuralism conceptualization and emphasizing the relation to one’s social world, identity is defined as “the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2013, p. 4). In this way, it is natural that one person’s identity as a teacher becomes multi-dimensional or just a part of his or her multiple identities that constitute who they are. For example, a teacher, as the title shows, forms the identity as a teacher when working with students in the classroom, but once he or she leaves the classroom and enters the teacher’s office, the identity as a colleague emerges, and so does the identity as a parent or partner returning home (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Thus,

LTI can become multiple, transformative, contradictory, and a site of conflict as theorized in the literature on identity research (Norton, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Recognizing identity as multifaceted and dynamic, Matsuda (2017) defined LTI as “the teacher’s evolving sense of professional self that is situated in the material (historical and physical self), psychological (self-image), and social (perception of others) realities” (p. 242). He further explained that the formation of LTI is influenced by the teacher’s beliefs about language teaching and past experiences as both a language learner and teacher. Duff and Uchida’s (1997) research also found that biographical and educational factors as well as contextual ones, such as “the local classroom culture, the institutional culture, and the textbook or curriculum” (p. 469) influenced the identity negotiation and formation of four EFL teachers. Reflecting on her previous research on learner identity and teacher identity (e.g., Duff, 2012; Duff & Uchida, 1997), Duff (2017) again discussed the issues of LTI and defined it as “teachers’ subjectivities and sense of who they are in relation to their educational practices, their histories, and the social dimensions of their lives that are most important to them” (p. 173). She pointed out two major factors that contribute to LTI formation, which well covers and supplements some of the ideas presented in the aforementioned Matsuda’s (2017) book chapter and Duff and Uchida’s (1997) article. The two sets of factors include:

- (1) personal biography, including attributes and alignments connected with such constructs as gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, language proficiency, professional experience and expertise, age, physical stature, personality, and so on; and (2)
- local socio-educational contexts (curriculum, programs, policies, circulating

ideologies about what constitutes good or preferred language teachers, teaching practices, and qualifications). (Duff, 2017, p. 173)

Indeed, these multiple factors above are components of what constitutes “a certain kind of person” or “several different kinds” (Gee, 2001, p. 99) for a language teacher. Just like identity in general, LTI is also non-linear, fluid, and always evolving, but is negotiated and constructed under the influence of socio-educational factors teachers face in their life (Duff, 2017).

LTI construction in relation to competence. As seen in the influential factors toward LTI formation Duff (2017) proposed, the competence of a language teacher inevitably plays a critical role in the development of teacher identity. As Wenger (1998) insisted, identity is “an experience and a display of competence” (p. 152) in a community. Richards (2010) identified ten areas of competence, namely, knowledge and skills required for successful language teachers. They include language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner-focused teaching, pedagogical reasoning skills, theorizing from practice, membership of a community of practice, and professionalism.

Drawing on and conceptualizing the above-mentioned teacher expertise, Pennington and Richards (2016) presented foundational and advanced competences of LTI. The following paragraphs detail the competences presented in their article, which they insisted are linked to LTI construction.

Language-related identity. Acknowledging identity is related to a person’s language background and language proficiency, Pennington and Richards (2016) considered language competence as one of the foundational competences of LTI and

referred to identity pertaining to it as “language-related identity” (p. 11). Language teachers, especially in the context where a language is taught in the medium of the language, need a certain level of the target language competence to effectively give instructions to and communicate with their students. Thus, they insisted that having a good command of the target language as well as knowledge about it, what Shulman (1986) called pedagogical content knowledge, can be central to their professional development. In addition, they pointed out that LTI can be built around and through the identity as a language learner, drawing on a teacher’s reflective narrative on changes she went through in teaching English (Richards, 2015). For example, the teacher’s narrative story revealed that he saw himself as a learner model for his students to make them realize that it was possible for them to reach the same level of proficiency he attained.

Disciplinary identity. The second competence they identified is related to teacher knowledge and named “disciplinary identity” (Pennington & Richards, 2016, p. 13). As Kanno and Stuart (2011) revealed, developing expertise plays a significant role in LTI development. Pennington and Richards claimed that content knowledge about the subject, whether acquired through one’s own teaching experience or through formal education and training, serves as a foundation of LTI. According to Richards and Farrell (2011), it is broadly categorized into two types: disciplinary knowledge (theories and methods, etc.) and pedagogical content knowledge (curriculum design, assessment, reflective teaching, etc.). It goes without saying that both areas are necessary for language teaching professionals. Pennington and Richards (2016) stated that acquiring rich disciplinary knowledge and content knowledge serves as a foundation for language teachers to have secured and stable identity construction.

Context-related identity. As previously reviewed, LTI is deeply influenced by socio-educational contexts to which the teacher belongs. Pennington and Richards (2016) called identity in relation to teaching contexts “context-related identity” (p. 14) and wrote that such contextual factors (class size, resources, administrators, benefits, etc.) have a strong influence on teacher identity development. They also noted that LTI develops within a “particular national or regional and school culture, reflecting the nature of the students, other teachers, and school leadership and administration” (p. 15), which is in line with the aforementioned socio-educational factors contributing to LTI Duff (2017) pointed out.

Self-knowledge and awareness. The next competence reviewed in the article is “self-knowledge and awareness” (Pennington & Richards, 2016, p. 15). Citing Pennington’s (1989) work that noted the importance of self-knowledge and awareness of a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses and how to apply them to his or her teaching practice, they claimed LTI includes a self-image based on “self-awareness in relation to acts of teaching and that incorporates one’s personal qualities, values, and ideals into effective teaching performance” (Pennington & Richards, 2016, p. 16). As Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) wrote, “it is impossible [for teachers] to speak about the self when there is no reflection” (p. 114). Through teaching experience, language teachers build up awareness of what makes ideal teaching, but such awareness is often “unexplained and sometimes even unexplainable” (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 32) without their conscious reflection on themselves. In Pennington and Richards (2016), as one of the ways to reflect teachers’ self-knowledge and awareness and to reveal values and principles they hold as a professional, the use of teacher narratives was discussed. In the

field of reflective teaching, Farrell (2012) also insisted on the importance of teacher narratives as one of the strategies for professional development. He noted that self-reflection through articulating teachers' stories enables them to realize their "persona as a teacher," (p. 184) and thus provides them with deeper and richer understanding of themselves and their teaching practices.

Student-related identity. Students per se are critical factors toward LTI formation since LTI is "continuously performed and transformed through interaction in classrooms" (Miller, 2009, p. 175). Focusing on student-centeredness as a sign of skilled teacher behavior, Pennington and Richards (2016) listed competence related to knowledge and awareness of students as another foundational competence of LTI. Stating that LTI evolves through interaction and relation with students, they called it "student-related identity" (p. 16). They showed, analyzing two language teachers' narrative, how teachers' identity, beliefs, and practice were shaped by and reflected their desires to positively impact their students' learning. In a similar vein, Morgan (2004) pointed out identity work in relation to teacher-student relationship, writing that he, as an English teacher in China, discovered new aspects about himself as he learned new things about his students. Kanno and Stuart's (2011) study also revealed how teachers attitude toward and relationship with students changed as their teacher identity developed over time. In their study, two teaching assistants in an MA TESOL program first showed non-authoritative attitudes to their students to provide a more comfortable learning environment, establishing themselves as equivalent to their students. As the semester progressed, their early enthusiasm toward their students withered and eventually established more business-like, dispassionate stance when teaching. This finding implies that teachers'

willingness to invest in students has a significant impact on what teachers do and how they behave in the classroom and how they see themselves as a teacher.

As reviewed above, Pennington and Richards (2016) listed language proficiency, disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge, self-knowledge and awareness, and student-knowledge and awareness as foundational competences of LTI, and named teacher identities impacted by them “language-related identity,” “disciplinary identity,” “self-knowledge and awareness,” and “student-related identity” respectively. In addition, they listed teaching skills (conducting disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge), theorizing skills (producing knowledge), and social-networking (participating in professional communities) as advanced competences of LTI that are expected to be acquired through teachers’ career development.

Theoretical frameworks. In an effort to better capture the complexity of identity, LTI research has employed several theoretical frameworks. Varghese et al. (2005) explored ways of theorizing LTI and found how different theoretical orientations each revealed and highlighted different perspectives toward it. The theoretical frameworks juxtaposed and discussed in their analysis include: 1) Tajfel’s (1978) social identity theory that individual identity is determined by group membership, and social categorization and discrimination of one’s group in relation to other groups forms his or her identity, 2) Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theory of situated learning that learning entails a full participation in social communities and thus it involves identity formation, and 3) Simon’s (1995) notion of the image-text that a teacher performs an image-text constructed by the views and beliefs of his or her students in certain discourses, which

means LTI is formed not only within a teacher but also by students through interaction between them.

Along with Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory, Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice has been used often, perhaps most recently in LTI research (e.g., Herath & Valencia, 2015; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Nagatomo, 2012; Racelis & Matsuda, 2015; Tsui, 2007; Yuan & Burns, 2016) as it effectively captures the complexity of teacher identity formation that occurs in communities within socio-educational contexts and provides characterizations of identity in relation to teaching practice. Juxtaposing identity and practice, he presented five conceptualizations of how identity can be defined in terms of communities of practice:

1. Identity as negotiated experience (Identity is formed by how people experience their selves through participating in specific communities and how they and others see themselves);
2. Identity as community membership (Identity is dictated by what is familiar and what is unfamiliar);
3. Identity as learning trajectory (Identity is characterized as a constant "interplay of participation and reification" (p. 153) and thus temporal and developing during the course of life);
4. Identity as nexus of multimembership (Identity is formed by how people negotiate various forms of selves in different communities of practice); and
5. Identity as a relation between the local and the global (Identity is negotiated in a local community of practice and also formed in relation to the macro level discourse) (Wenger, 1998).

As reviewed in the above, LTI researchers have preferred to use as their theoretical framework social theories such as Wenger's (1998) communities of practice and Morgan's (2004) and Norton's (1995) poststructural views. However, scholars in the field of second language teacher education, although they are not frequently cited in LTI research, have also presented comprehensive theoretical frameworks in an attempt to better understand language teachers' cognition and to find ways to further their professional development. Borg (2015) characterized language teacher cognition, namely how language teachers do the thinking, knowing, and believing as "an often tacit, personally-held, practical system of mental constructs held by teachers and which are dynamic - that is defined and refined on the basis of educational and professional experiences throughout teachers' lives" (p. 40), which appears congruent with Wenger's (1998) social identity as negotiated experience. Drawing on the sociocultural perspectives of language teachers' professional development, Sasajima (2012) characterized language teacher cognition as a multi-dimensional system of teachers' thinking, believing, knowing, and learning in relation to their communities of practice. He, thus, insisted that exploring language teachers' cognition helps us to understand socio-cultural factors that shape language teachers, and also better promotes teachers' professional development in accordance with the existing language education policy. In the field of language teacher education, Kumaravadivelu (2012) conceptualized LTI as recognizing the "teaching Self", and pointed out that it is intricately constructed through negotiation with social realities and others who belong to the same personal and professional discourses. He also provided a theoretical framework that LTI constructions are shaped by teachers' beliefs and values, which is briefly reviewed in the next section.

Language Teacher Beliefs

As Kumaravadivelu (2012) theorized, teacher beliefs, along with teacher values, are fundamental components of teacher identity since they are a source of one's decision making in the course of one's life, and a belief system they hold governs what they think, say, and do. Kumaravadivelu considered Pajares' (1992) often cited fundamental assumptions about teachers' beliefs as still relevant today, pointing out that the assumptions listed below are the most important:

- Beliefs are formed early and tend to self-perpetuate, persevering even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience;
- The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter. Newly acquired beliefs are most vulnerable to change;
- Individuals tend to hold on to beliefs based on incorrect or incomplete knowledge, even after scientifically correct explanations are presented to them;
- Beliefs about teaching are well established by the time a student teacher enters a teacher education program;
- Teacher beliefs strongly affect teaching behavior, and are instrumental in guiding teachers in defining, selecting, organizing knowledge and information presented to students; and
- By their very nature and origin, some teacher beliefs are more incontrovertible than others. (Pajares, 1992, as cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 61)

In relation to the formation of teachers' early beliefs and the difficulty of changing them, Lortie's (1975) classic study revealed how participant teachers' current teaching practices

were affected by the instruction they received from their teachers. The way their teacher taught them in class had served as a strong, positive role model for their teaching. This observation is in line with and is well conceptualized in Pajares' assumptions of teacher's beliefs.

Teachers' past learning experiences, however, could impact their beliefs in ways other than Lortie's above-mentioned study observed. Mak (2011) studied how Lily, a Chinese non-native English speaking student teacher, formed and transformed her teaching beliefs in a one-year postgraduate teacher education program. The study found that her positive beliefs toward communicative language teaching (CLT) stemmed from her critical attitude toward the traditional language instruction she received as a student. She rejected the teaching model her teacher provided, considering that it would not be suitable or motivating for a new generation of language learners, and preferred a different approach, which was a CLT approach. This finding is in line with Johnson's (1994) study where four pre-service English teachers recognized their former teachers who employed a traditional approach as a negative teacher model. The past language instruction teachers received as students, both positive and negative, has a significant impact on language teachers' belief system.

Mak's (2011) study found that the pre-service teacher's positive belief toward CLT influenced by her past learning experience did not change; in fact, it was strengthened during the course of her practicum. However, not all the beliefs she had had before the practicum remained the same. For example, her belief about the balance between teacher talk and student talk fluctuated according to the teaching realities she faced, such as her students' culturally-formed learning style and their participation

performance in class. The participant teacher was forced to reevaluate her existing belief and formulate a different one when she experienced the new teaching discourse.

As reviewed so far, language teachers' beliefs can be described as intrinsically habitual and steady, but at the same time, unstable and flexible. They are also both model-dependent and anti-model dependent. In other words, beliefs have multifaceted characteristics, and external factors surrounding teachers dictate their teaching beliefs. In addition, it is also possible that two different and competing faces appear at the same time. For example, Sakui and Gates's (2006) self-study explored what teacher beliefs she held and how they were situated in her teaching discourse. The interview data and journal entries revealed several competing, contradictory sets of teacher beliefs. As an example, the teacher hoped to be perceived by her students as a person who maintained control of the classroom. She expressed dissatisfaction when her students did not act as what she had expected them to do in class. But at the same time, she also wanted her students to think of her as a caring teacher. She explained that she respected her students as individuals, and controlling every single detail in class was not desirable. In this way, her belief that a teacher should maintain control of the classroom and another belief that a teacher should care about and understand his or her students were conflicting with each other. This observation revealed how one's beliefs as a teacher can become complex and how they closely pertain to his or her teacher identity.

Although teacher beliefs are critical factors that influence teachers' practices and thus their identities, their beliefs cannot always be consistent with what they actually do. Lee (2009) investigated teachers' beliefs and practices in written feedback on English writing. The study revealed several discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and their

actual written feedback practices. For example, even though the majority of teachers in the study preferred selective marking, assuming comprehensive marking would overwhelm students with the low proficiency, they performed comprehensive marking. They also thought that idea development and organization constitute good writing as well as the accuracy of the language form; however, heavy emphasis on language form, with little attention to other writing areas in their feedback, was observed in the study. The participant teachers explained these mismatches between their beliefs and practices were due to the institutional policy that required them to locate every single error with regard to language form. Phipps and Borg's (2009) study also identified tensions between teachers' beliefs and practice. For example, one of their participant teachers in the interview revealed that he used controlled practice with worksheets even though he actually doubted its effectiveness in terms of language acquisition. He claimed that he did so since the use of worksheets was the institutional norm, and many teachers there used them as classroom management tools to calm their students down in class. This, as well as Lee's (2009) case study, seems to exemplify how contextual factors such as institutional policies and norms and classroom realities can trigger discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and practices; however, as Lee noted, there is a possibility that such contextual factors could have been brought up by the teachers just as excuses for their inconsistencies. Thus, he called for teachers' critical reflection and analysis on the teaching issues and further examination of institutional and sociocultural factors through an ethnographical approach.

Socio-cultural and Educational Factors in Japan

As discussed in the above sections, language teacher identities, beliefs, and practice cannot be discussed without careful examination of contextual factors surrounding language teachers. Especially, social factors in relation to cultures and education lie at the core of LTI. This section reviews contextual issues pertaining to the present study, that is, the key issues surrounding Japanese English teachers who work in public high schools in Japan.

National policy and communicative language teaching. In Japanese public schools, school curriculums are required to be based on The Course of Study (CS), the national standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). As of the year 2017, the current, effective CS for upper secondary English education is the one revised in 2009, which aims to “develop students’ communication abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information, ideas, etc., deepening their understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages” (MEXT, 2009, p. 1). Focusing on the communicative competences, it notes that the language knowledge such as vocabulary, sentence structures, and grammar, should not be the center of instruction in the classroom. Although the previous CS (MEXT, 1999) also had the focus on communicative competences in English, the 2009 revision caught attention since it, for the first time, stipulated that English should be the medium of instruction in English classes (MEXT, 2009). Under the current CS, the titles of English subjects were changed, reflecting its communicative orientation; for example, from “English I” to “Communication English I,” and the subjects that focused only on one skill, such as

“Reading” and “Writing” were replaced with integrated-skills courses. Correspondingly, it was expected that small-scale language assessments used in school should become more performance-based, rather than knowledge-based, to better evaluate students’ communicative competences. Pursuing effective implementation of the CS, MEXT encouraged each high school to set a “Can-do list,” a goal-oriented, performance-based assessment tool for reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (MEXT, 2011). Most recently, MEXT released the outline of the goals of English education stipulated in the next CS, which will be implemented in 2020 nationwide. Under the implementation of the new CS, English will become a mandatory, formal subject for fifth and sixth graders in elementary school as opposed to the current “foreign language activities” whose focus is on only oral communication. As for the upper secondary English education, the next CS places even more emphasis on speaking and writing skills needed for communicative purposes such as presentation, debate, discussion, and negotiation (MEXT, 2016).

Constraints to policy implementation. As seen in the previous, current, and future CSs, the focus on communicative competences in Japanese English education, at any level, has been gaining momentum under the trend of globalization. However, considering what has been happening in the actual classroom for the past few decades, it is difficult to say that the most essential stakeholders in the reform, namely Japanese English teachers, have been ready for such top-down movements. Even today, whether English or not, language teaching has been observed to be more concern with traditional grammar and text-based approaches such as memorization, language analysis, translation or in-direct, discreet point assessment (Duff, 2014). The literature on Japanese English education in the past decade has also revealed similar cases, where English teachers’

practice failed to conform to the abovementioned governmental English education policy (e.g., Kikuchi & Browne, 2009; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008; Nunan, 2003; O'Donnell, 2005).

Reviewing the past studies on the implementation of CLT in the EFL context in Asian countries, Butler (2011) pointed out that there are three constraining factors that hinder successful CLT implementation. They include: 1) conceptual constraints, 2) classroom-level constraints, and 3) societal-institutional level constraints. The following paragraphs discuss each constraining factor while drawing from literature on English education in Japan.

Constraints pertaining to conceptual gaps. The first factor that Butler (2011) pointed out that impedes CLT implementation at the classroom level is conceptual constraints, which is concerned with how traditional concepts of learning and teaching in Asian EFL contexts are not compatible with those of CLT. Butler explained that traditionally in Asia, due to the focus on a literary education rather than an acquisition of practical knowledge, teachers were recognized as providers of authoritative knowledge, and students as their recipients. Nagatomo's (2011) yearlong LTI case study of a Japanese English teacher in university would exemplify this conceptual factor well. The study showed that past learning experiences and a fondness for English literary works formed the beliefs the teacher held toward English teaching and learning. The interview revealed that English learning, for her, was more than acquiring practical skills; it was in-depth analysis and understanding of language through teacher-centered lectures and self-study. This is how she was taught English, which she found very important, and she identified herself as a "literature nerd" (p. 30). Developing a strong sense of self as a literature

specialist, she taught English with a traditional teacher-centered, top-down knowledge-transmission style. Nagatomo assumed the participant teacher's educational background is not unique; rather, it is common among other Japanese teachers in university settings.

Considering Lortie's (1975) study, the transmission model of teaching described above could be rationalized by teachers' past experience of language learning as a student. However, Japanese English learners do not always relish such teacher-centered instruction. In fact, Nagatomo's (2011) above-mentioned study indicated that there was a divide between what the teacher considered as good language instruction, namely, bottom-up language analysis, and what her students did. Not surprisingly, it has been revealed that teacher-centered, non-communicative classrooms are actually major demotivating factors for Japanese English learners. Kikuchi and Sakai (2009) explored factors that demotivated Japanese high school English learners and found that non-communicative methods their teachers employed — that is, a heavy focus on grammar explanation and entrance exam preparation without providing students with chances to use the language — are some of the major factors that negatively impacted their motivation for learning English. Matikainen's (2015) study showed that both student and teacher participants thought of motivation as a critical factor of successful language instruction. Most of the student participants mentioned being able to motivate students when asked what would make good language teachers, and teacher participants also felt that being able to motivate students is the most important skill for language teachers. The study also showed the student participants preferred communicative activities and would appreciate many opportunities to use English in class. Considering these studies that indicate students' awareness of motivation in class, dissatisfaction of traditional bottom-

up teacher-centered approaches, and instead preference for more communicative approaches, it would be difficult to say that traditional concepts of learning and teaching in Asian EFL contexts that Butler (2011) pointed out are major factors that hinder CLT implementation in today's Japanese secondary and university English education.

Constraints pertaining to Japanese English teachers, materials, and institutional factors. The second set of constraints Butler (2011) reviewed is concerned with various contextual factors related to non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), materials, and classroom-level institutional constraints. First, teachers' English communication proficiency level is a key factor for CLT implementation. Richards (2017a) wrote that 80 percent of the world's English teachers may fall into intermediate or lower intermediate in terms of English proficiency level, and according to Butler (2011), teachers in EFL contexts often feel less confident to employ communicative approaches in class and to assess students' communication skills. Nishino and Watanabe (2008) pointed out that Japanese English teachers' English proficiency levels are not high, and they received few opportunities for learning how to implement CLT in both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. Consequently, teachers may not understand the principles of CLT and classroom activities to introduce it. For example, Sakui's (2004) case study revealed that the understanding of CLT Japanese English teachers had was different from what is normally considered. The teachers' recognition of CLT and actual teaching practice were more aligned with audiolingualism, which focuses on correct sentence production, grammar manipulation, and fluency building. Second, Butler pointed out that it has been found difficult for English teachers in EFL contexts to find meaningful materials that are appropriate for students' level and

authentic evaluation tools to assess their skills. There are still textbooks that have an emphasis on developing grammatical competence rather than other elements of communicative competence (Glasgow & Paller, 2016). McGroarty and Taguchi's (2005) study on EFL textbooks also revealed that sampled texts showed a lack of focus on sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. The situations for communication in the texts were limited mainly to school setting or other casual settings, and thus provided learners with few situations that required formality in speech acts. Also, they noted that language forms presented in the textbooks were not introduced with careful attention to their functions in communication. The third factors are concerned with institutional restrictions. In Japan, the standard class size of public high schools is set to 40 students per class. Butler (2011) mentioned large class sizes as a major constraining factor for CLT implementation, explaining that it is challenging to introduce communicative activities that promote students' participation and performance-based assessments in such large classrooms.

Constraints pertaining to social and contextual factors. The third set of constraining factors is social and macro-contextual factors surrounding teachers. These constraints are at the societal-institutional level, as opposed to the classroom level, such as grammar-translation-oriented entrance examination and the limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom (Butler, 2011).

Like other EFL contexts today (e.g, Hatipoğlu, 2016; Ramezaney, 2014), the impacts of the university entrance exam on Japanese high school English teachers' practice have been significant. Traditionally in Japan, English was considered as an academic subject learned mainly for developing literacy skills rather than for

communication, and it was used as a screening tool for elite education (Butler & Iino, 2005). Despite recent MEXT's communication-oriented English education policy, both public and private academic high schools, regardless of the academic level of the high school, geared toward "juken eigo," that is, English for the purpose of entrance examinations (Glasgow & Paller, 2016; O'Donnell, 2005). Also, the content of entrance examinations tended to have a heavy focus on reading and the grammatical aspects, which, as a result, lacked components of oral and aural skills (Butler & Iino, 2005). Thus, Japanese English teachers were put in a dilemma between students' needs for entrance exam preparation and MEXT's reforms that encourage them to focus on communication skills. One of the participant teachers in Sakui's (2004) study described this dilemma as being "forced to wear two pairs of shoes," and indicated that the demand to prepare students for the entrance exams is the major factor that impedes CLT implementation in class, even though the teachers support CLT. Recently, in an effort to close the gap between the policy and actual teaching practices, MEXT has been working on reforming the national entrance examination system. By 2024, in order to evaluate students' four skills and promote better implementation of the new CS, which will be introduced in 2020, the current paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice national entrance exam for the English language will be gradually discontinued. As its replacement, testing offered by private testing companies that has been utilized nationwide and has reliability and validity in terms of English entrance examinations will be introduced (MEXT, 2017). As of writing, it has not yet been decided which testing will be used for the entrance examination reform. However, considering the condition MEXT presented for appropriate testing that serves the purpose of university admission assessments,

especially in terms of popularity, credibility and practicality, there might be a possibility that Jitsuyo Eigo Gino Kentei (Test in Practical English Proficiency) by EIKEN foundation of Japan, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) by Education Testing Services, and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) by British Council would qualify as one of the testing programs used for university English entrance examinations.

In addition to issues of entrance examinations discussed above, working conditions and school cultures surrounding Japanese English teachers are another social, contextual constraining factor that impedes successful policy implementation at the classroom level. Simply put, English teachers' duties in Japanese high schools consist of more than teaching English. The supervision of students' extra-curricular club activities after school, student guidance and counseling, and school management and general administrative tasks are as important as, and sometimes more important than, teaching English. O'Donnell (2005) found that the amount of time his Japanese English teacher participants spent on such non-teaching duties every day were greater than the time spent on teaching English, and one teacher even reported his teaching responsibilities made up only 30 percent of his entire workload. The quote below by a Japanese English teacher from Sakui's (2004) case study describes this situation well.

At least 3 or 4 times a week, we have meetings after school... I coach badminton club with another teacher so I attend student practice sometimes. I leave school 7:00 but occasionally I stay until 10:00. (Mr. Kawamoto, as cited in Sakui, 2004, p. 160)

These working practices surrounding Japanese teachers are not only seen in qualitative case studies but also statistically confirmed in nationwide research. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2013 reported that lower secondary school teachers in Japan worked an average of 53.9 hours per week, which is significantly higher than the average of the OECD's member countries at 38.3 hours. The amount of time Japanese teachers spent on extracurricular activities such as sports and cultural activities after school during the complete calendar week was 7.7 hours, which is again more than all other participating countries. This indicates its unique school cultures and working environments as contrasted with 2.2 hours, the average of OECD's countries. Also, the study showed that Japanese teachers had the lowest level of self-efficacy in their teaching skills, and correspondingly, their need for professional development opportunities was the greatest of all the OECD countries (OECD, 2014).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the literature related to this study. First, the chapter reviewed LTI research and discussed theoretical frameworks that are frequently used to understand LTI. It then reviewed research on language teacher beliefs, including their characteristics and influential factors. The examination of social-cultural and socio-educational factors in Japanese EFL contexts concluded Chapter Two. The next chapter presents the methodology of this research, detailing the methodological orientation, participants, sampling strategy, data collection, analysis procedures, and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter Three

Methodology

To present a detailed description of the methodology employed in this study, this chapter is divided into five main sections: description of methodological orientation, participants and sampling methods, data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability of the study. The first section describes the three research questions that the current study aims to answer and what research design was used to achieve the purpose. In the second section, the research context, including the teachers who participated in the study, is discussed. The third section then describes how the data were collected and the procedures employed during the data collection process. The fourth section explains the methods and frameworks used to analyze the data and explore the factors that emerged from the analysis. And lastly, the fifth section provides an explanation of the study's validity and reliability.

Methodological Orientation

The current study intends to reveal how Japanese high school teachers of English develop and establish their teaching Self (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). To explore multi-dimensional factors that contribute to the participants' belief and identity formation, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What English language teaching beliefs do Japanese high school teachers of English hold?
2. What factors affect their teaching belief formation and professional identity development?
3. What identities constitute Japanese high school teachers of English?

Since answering these questions that guided this study requires “interpretative analysis” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38) through interaction between the researcher and the participants, the design of this study is framed by a qualitative approach, which, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), seeks to understand “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 6). In the field of language teacher cognition, which is the broad domain this study falls under, an interpretative research stance has often been employed, and researchers in the field stress the importance of studying teacher cognition qualitatively since it yields “in-depth, contextualized understandings of cognition which have strong local relevance” (Borg, 2012, p.18). Likewise, this study seeks to provide local understandings that are specific to Japanese nonnative English speaker teachers working in public high schools in Japan. This research, therefore, is characterized as a case study within a qualitative, interpretive approach whose essence and value is in “holistic and in-depth characterization of individual entities in context” (Duff & Anderson, 2015, p. 112). As Kumaravadivelu (2001) argues, all pedagogy is local, and ignoring local exigencies equals ignoring lived experiences. And it is of prime importance for this study to reveal and interpret such lived experiences and contextual factors surrounding the participants. With this in mind, the orientation of this research is framed within Kumaravadivelu’s postmethod pedagogy, especially a pedagogy of particularity, and seeks meaningful pedagogical findings that are “sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 538).

Participants and Sampling Methods

Participants. Eight Japanese high school teachers of English (two males and six females) who used to be members of a government-sponsored teacher training program agreed to participate in this study (see Appendix A & B for the recruitment email and the participant consent form). This particular training program was a six-month exchange in the U.S., which consisted of three phases: 1) one-month English proficiency classes at an American university, 2) four-month concentrated coursework in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the same university, and 3) one-month teaching practicum at an American high school. The objectives of this program were threefold: 1) to improve participants' English proficiency, 2) to promote their understanding of current theories and practices in TESOL, and 3) to raise their intercultural awareness through living in the U.S. The participants of this study were purposefully selected from this program. Additionally, the participants were working in different prefectures all over Japan; seven participants were teaching in high schools, and one was working for the prefectural board of education as a consultant/supervisor of English teachers but had taught in high school before. All of them were considered as experienced teachers, ranging in years of teaching experience from 7 to 15 years, and were playing a central role in their workplace. As for the academic level of their high schools, three were working at intermediate level schools and four at advanced level schools. Students at advanced level high schools tend to go to more prestigious universities than students at intermediate level high schools. Table 1 below provides an overview of the participants' background information. All names of the participants are pseudonyms.

Table 1

Background Information of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Years taught	Workplace	Highest Degree
Yuki	F	15	Board of Education	Bachelor's
Shiho	F	7	Advanced level senior high school	Bachelor's
Mei	F	12	Intermediate level senior high school	Bachelor's
Seiji	M	14	Advanced level senior high school	Bachelor's
Satsuki	F	15	Intermediate level senior high school	Master's
Toshio	M	14	Advanced level senior high school	Bachelor's
Naoko	F	11	Intermediate level senior school	Bachelor's
Hiromi	F	9	Advanced level junior and senior school	Bachelor's

Sampling methods. The participants of this study consisted of a purposeful sample since the current study is a case study where “the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). The above-mentioned government-sponsored teacher training program members were purposefully selected due to four main reasons. They include the fact that each participant was working in a different prefecture all over Japan, which provided contextual diversity, and the fact that the group comprised full-time, mid-career teachers and a teacher consultant with enough teaching years and experience to reflect their teaching beliefs, practice and identities. In addition, I was a former member of the same government-sponsored teacher training program and because of the professional relationship the group members and I had established, I was able to easily reach out to and invite them to participate in the current study. Lastly, I am also a

Japanese teacher with similar years of teaching experiences, similar working conditions and status in a public high school in Japan. Such positionality as a researcher provided me with the insider's perspective when conducting interviews that required responsive questions and analyzing data. Considering the fact that the researcher is the primary tool for collecting and analyzing data in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 1994), my unique researcher's positionality stated above offered some advantages. However, I acknowledged that it could also have shortcomings and could generate biases that would negatively impact the study. Taking into consideration suggestions by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), I paid careful attention to potential influences my researcher's positionality and subjectivity would have on my study by identifying and monitoring biases "in relation to the theoretical framework and in light of [my] own interests, to make clear how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data" (p. 16).

Data Collection

Interviewing strategy. Since this study aimed to understand the participants' lived experiences, beliefs, and thoughts that had impacted and were impacting their teacher identity development, one-on-one in-depth interviewing was employed as a primary data collection tool. All the interviews were carried out via Skype, an online videoconferencing application, and Call Recorder for Skype, a digital audio recording software, was used to audio-record the video interviews. As for an interviewing strategy, semi-structured interviews were used for data collection due to the following advantages:

- Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to become flexible and responsive to situations at hand, and thus to explore emerging themes that lead to new findings on the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016);
- They promote interviewees' active participation in the research and sense-making process when interpreting their own experiences (Borg, 2012; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004); and
- For interviewers, to establish rapport with their interviewees is fundamental to knowledge construction process in interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1994), and semi-structured interviews promote to develop a necessary relationship for them to have rapport (Borg, 2012).

Although the interview guide, which included the list of the questions (see Appendix C) was created before and used during the interviews for this study, the order of questions and direction of the interview varied in each session for the aforementioned reasons.

Interviews. Two individual interviews were conducted for each teacher participant between June and August in 2016. The first interview was semi-structured with the use of the interview guide (see Appendix C) in order to understand the teacher participants' beliefs about teaching and learning English from the following four perspectives. The first part of the interview focused on the process of belief formation, that is, how early teaching beliefs were formed and restructured over time, and how they came to hold current teaching beliefs. The second part explored the relationship between the government policy and the teachers' beliefs and practice. Also, the use of L1, Japanese, in the English classroom was discussed. For the next part, the participants'

lived experiences about teaching; for example, successes and challenges they had encountered at their school, were examined. Lastly, in order to explore their teaching beliefs and the socio-educational factors specific to the participants' teaching context more deeply, they were asked what skills they found crucial for high school English teachers in Japan.

The second interview, which was also done via Skype, was conducted about one month after the first one. The purpose of the second interview was twofold: 1) to ask follow-up questions to better understand what the teacher participants had said during the first interview, and 2) to understand how they identified themselves as a high school English teacher. Therefore, the questions asked during the interview varied for each teacher participant depending on what they shared during the first interview, except for the question regarding their teacher identity. The interview was semi-structured based on the interview guide that is unique to each participant, in the same way as the first one.

It should be noted that all the interviews were conducted mainly in English even though all of the participants and I are native speakers of Japanese. The reason for this was to minimize translation issues when analyzing and presenting data. Another reason was that the participants were professional English teachers and competent enough in communicating their ideas in English. However, in order to elicit nuanced, rich, thick information from the teacher participants, they were invited to code-switch into L1, Japanese, whenever they felt the need to do so. All the participants, in fact, used Japanese to elaborate their explanations to varying degrees during the interviews.

Supplementary data source. The use of multiple data source is one of the strategies for qualitative research to achieve credibility (McKay, 2006). In order to

carefully understand and analyze the participants' teaching beliefs and practices stated during the interviews, digital copies of classroom artifacts they had used for teaching English were collected as a supplementary data source. All the teacher participants provided the handouts and worksheets they had created by themselves for a particular teaching unit. In addition, some attached a lesson plan to explain their teaching materials.

Data Analysis

Transcription. The audio-recorded interview data were transcribed using MAXQDA 12, a qualitative data analysis software. To accurately depict and interpret the data, the transcriptions were used for member checking to "solicit participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations" (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). The data were transcribed immediately after each interview, and the interview transcripts were sent to the participants via email so that they could verify the accuracy of my transcriptions. Also, follow-up email correspondence was used to ask the participants to check if my interpretation of the interview data was correct.

The method of transcription was determined based on "how much and what kinds of response data should be recorded" and "how these data should be noted and coded" (Brown & Rogers, 2002, p. 63) to explore teacher identities. If identities are studied in terms of discourse analysis, for example, with a research question "What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact?" (Gee, 2011, p.18), detailed transcribing would be used to analyze the way participants use language to display certain identities. For this study, however, the focus is solely on the content of stories, lived experiences, and thoughts and beliefs told by the teacher participants during interviews, as opposed to the way that they are told. In such a case, Elliot (2005)

recommended that researchers should use “clean transcripts” (p. 52) as they can provide a better focus of what participants say during interviews. Therefore, non-verbal data such as pauses, speed, and intonation — as well as slip of tongue, grammatical errors, and fillers — were removed from the transcripts since they were not critical to coding and analysis in this study.

Procedures. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain, the goal of qualitative data analysis is to make sense out of the data, and it involves “consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read” (p. 202). To this end, a qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA 12 was used as an assisted tool, following the process for conducting qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I first read each transcript and conducted open coding by annotating whatever I found interesting without a specific focus. After all the interview transcripts were reviewed and given open codes, they were read again, this time, to group the codes together. This process, what Merriam and Tisdell called analytical coding, enabled me to identify salient patterns and emergent themes, which were relevant to my research questions. Those patterns and themes were analyzed according to multiple theoretical frameworks to better capture multi-dimensional factors, as suggested by Varghese et al. (2005). First, I used Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice as a fundamental framework to explore the teacher participants’ identity formation within socio-educational contexts. As a supplementary framework, Kumaravadivelu’s (2012) theory of teaching Self was employed to examine the relationship between teacher identities and teaching beliefs. In addition, foundational and advanced competences of language teacher identity (Pennington & Richards, 2016) was drawn upon to analyze how contextual factors

surrounding teachers and their competence — for example, teaching skills or English proficiency — intersected with their teacher identities.

Validity and Reliability

As Bailey (1991) notes, the potential limitations of qualitative case studies are issues of external validity, which could arise from 1) problems regarding the participants, 2) problems in data collection, and 3) problems in data analysis. Although this study, due to the nature of qualitative case studies, does not seek strong generalizability of the findings, several strategies were employed to address above-mentioned issues and establish the trustworthiness of this study. First, purposeful sampling, which places “the emphasis on in-depth understanding of specific cases” (Patton, 2015, p. 53), was used, and all the selected teacher participants, as explained previously, met the selection criteria reflective of the purpose of this study. Also, including multiple participants and my researcher’s positionality enhanced the external validity of my findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To address potential problems in data collection, multiple sources of data, which were the interview transcriptions and teaching artifacts, were utilized. As suggested by Creswell (2013), those data were analyzed after receiving verification from my participants, (member checking), and the codes and themes I identified were reviewed by one of my teaching assistant colleagues (peer debriefing). Finally, I tried to provide “rich, thick descriptions” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 259) when presenting data to enhance transferability and to demonstrate “relative degrees of typicality within a particular context or group” (Duff & Anderson, 2015, p. 117).

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the methodology of the study. First, the methodological orientation and its rationale were explained. Then the chapter described the participants and sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis procedures. Finally, the trustworthiness of the study, that is, how the study addressed potential limitations, was discussed. The following chapter presents findings of the study, discussing emergent themes identified through qualitative data analysis explained in this chapter.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the findings that are relevant to answering the research questions about 1) what English language teaching beliefs Japanese high school teachers of English hold, 2) what factors affect their teaching belief formation and professional identity development, and 3) what identities constitute Japanese high school teachers of English. The chapter consists of the three main sections organized according to each research question. Each section begins by presenting the emergent themes identified through the step-by-step process of qualitative data analysis suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and conceptualized within relevant theoretical frameworks such as Wenger's (1998) social theory of identity formation, Kumaravadivelu's (2012) theory of teaching Self, and Pennington and Richards' (2016) typology of language teacher identity (LTI). It then discusses the findings drawing on the literature in an attempt to provide "concrete, context-dependent knowledge" (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 301) that could contribute to LTI research in any context, and most importantly, to the professional development of Japanese teachers of English.

Beliefs About Teaching English

The first research question that guided this study aimed to analyze the teachers' beliefs about English teaching. To better understand the nature of beliefs and the relationship between teaching beliefs and teacher identity, I analyzed the interview data regarding the participants' teaching beliefs using Kumaravadivelu's (2012) framework and sorted it into "teacher beliefs" and "teacher values" (p. 56). Teacher beliefs presented below as a sub-category are concerned with the beliefs the teacher participants held and

hold about teaching English, whereas teacher values pertain to the beliefs as a teacher in general, not necessarily as an English teacher. Kumaravadivelu (2012) discussed teacher values citing Dewey's distinction, "the teaching of morality" and "the morality of teaching" (p. 66); however, teacher values presented in this study are only concerned with the latter.

English as a communication tool. I asked the teachers about their early teaching beliefs they held when they started their teaching career and their current teaching beliefs as a high school English teacher in Japan. The key words, teaching English as "a communication tool" were identified as one of the most salient themes, and such a belief was found to be stable, unchanged, and even deepened over time for some teacher participants.

Recalling her teaching beliefs as a first-year English teacher, Satsuki said that she considered English as "a tool to open yourself to the world outside Japan" (Interview 1, June 16, 2016) and still does. Through teaching, she has wanted her students to enjoy communication with people from different backgrounds and to broaden their perspectives through the interaction. To this end, she feels that students should be given appropriate scaffoldings in class. For example, she uses classroom activities such as pair and group work for her students to use target grammar or expressions newly learned in class and become confident in using English. Also, she provides them with opportunities to use English they already know and can use "so that students can talk about themselves using their own words" (Interview 1, June 16, 2016).

Similarly, Mei's early and current teaching belief is to have students speak and use English and enjoy communication with others. She prefers not to put much emphasis on explaining grammar or have her students work on grammar drills:

English is a communication tool. Students cannot learn communicative skills alone. So, in class, students need to communicate with other students. They can do grammatical tasks or independent tasks at home by themselves. In class, I want students to use English as much as possible and enjoy communication with others. I think grammatical tasks are so important for them. But I don't want to spare much time on grammar instruction in class. So, I give my students some homework [for them to work on grammar]. (Interview 1, June 18, 2016)

This emphasis on English as "a communication tool" seems closely tied to the nature of a learning community in the classroom. Mei believed that it is in the classroom that her students can develop their communication skills, and thus, she hesitated to spend limited class time on something her students could do alone by themselves outside of the class.

In the same vein, Yuki, who used to be a high school English teacher and currently works as a teacher consultant, put emphasis on the aspect of a teacher's job as a "facilitator" (Interview 1, June 19, 2016), and thought that developing communication skills in class was of prime importance:

I always advise English teachers to do what students can do only in the classroom, what they can do with their teachers, and classmates, such as activities which students can't do without friends. (Interview 1, June 19, 2016)

Toshio, who supports the idea of developing communication skills in English, expressed his frustration toward the way English was being taught in Japan, which

focused heavily on receptive skills and lacked the perspective of the language function as a communication tool:

Because English education in Japan focused too much on reading, students seldom had time to speak or listen or write. I wanted to change the situation. And I wanted my students to do what they could do not in the house, but in the classroom. So, I wanted to be a facilitator rather than a teacher. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

When the teachers mentioned English as “a communication tool,” it seemed that they used it in contrast with English as a subject to be just understood, analyzed or memorized for the test preparation. Such traditional knowledge-based English instruction has been commonly confirmed in the literature on English Education in Japan (e.g., Kikuchi & Browne, 2009; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008; Nunan, 2003; O'Donnell, 2005). Toshio mentioned that the heavy emphasis on reading skills, as opposed to integrated communication skills, came from traditional paper-and-pencil English university exams. Yuki explained that secondary-level English education in Japan could be typically characterized and categorized into the two contrasting orientations: English education for university entrance exams and as a communication tool. In fact, the categorization she observed was often revealed in the previous qualitative studies on the secondary English education in Japan (e.g., Kurihara & Samimy, 2007; Sakui, 2004). Yuki opposed to such categorization by saying “We can't divide [English education]. We shouldn't divide it” (Interview 1, June 19, 2016). The divide she pointed out seems to be the critical factor when examining the teachers' beliefs and identity development since all the participants, to some extent, were in a dilemma where they were “forced to wear two pairs of shoes”

(Sakui, 2004, p. 158). The impact of entrance exams on the teachers, the source of the divide, is discussed later.

Seiji, like other teachers in this study, focused on developing students' communication skills through teaching English. When he started teaching, what he wanted to tell his students the most was how enjoyable it was to use English and communicate with others. However, what has been at the core of his early and current teaching beliefs is more than the focus on the importance of communicating with others:

When we use a different language, we can be different ... It's kind of like being an actor or something like that ... Everyone has a chance to be another person by learning English or another foreign language. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

For Seiji, English was not just a communication tool with others but also a tool to acquire a different identity. His positive attitude toward the effects a foreign language has on language learners through communicating with others who speak the language seemed the most critical to his early and current teaching beliefs.

Student-centered instruction. The first emergent theme, “English as a communication tool” clearly leads to and is supported by the instructional approach where teaching is designed for learners to actively use what they have learned rather than to passively listen to their teacher. Trying to encourage her students to actively learn content knowledge and skills using English, Hiromi had them work on science research projects. Her students had a chance to share their research in English with students from foreign countries, which was a successful and rewarding experience for them and a successful teaching moment for Hiromi. She also shared another teaching moment that she felt successful about:

I felt successful when my students successfully did English debates with students from Taiwan. My students were afraid of speaking English at first. But they thought of ideas a lot and practiced a lot before the Taiwanese students came. Although they made some mistakes, they could successfully tell their ideas to the foreign students. After that, they told me that they felt very happy. They said they came to want to learn English more and more. I felt very successful at that moment. (Interview 1, June 21, 2016)

It goes without saying that teachers play a key role in providing such student-centered learning opportunities. Yuki stressed the importance of developing facilitating skills in the classroom touching upon the English-only policy of the current Course of Study (CS):

Teachers need skills as a facilitator. Many teachers just focus on teaching English in English. But it's not the main issue. Our job is to expose students to English as much as possible and to encourage students to use English. Facilitating skill is necessary from now on. (Interview 1, June 19, 2016)

As Yuki pointed out, it is possible that English-only policy the current CS stipulates could not be fully understood by English teachers in Japan. The current CS mentions the purpose of teaching English in English, which is “to enhance the opportunities for students to be exposed to English, transforming classes into real communication scenes” (MEXT, 2009, p. 7); however, the aspect of teaching English in English could be stressed so much that teachers exhibit inappropriate dominance by their using English rather than having their students use English. Seiji, who also supports student-centered instructions,

shared his experiences when he observed a teaching demonstration by a high school English teacher:

Just my personal impression but now teachers are trying to be good speakers of English in classrooms. Sometimes I go to see other high schools to see the lessons. Teachers are trying to speak a lot... Teachers really talk too much.

(Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

Seiji mentioned that the teacher he observed had even talked for about forty out of fifty minutes in the class. Admitting that he sometimes failed to have a right balance between teacher and student talk, he pointed out the importance of student-centered instructions:

Teachers tend to talk too much. I'm not an exception. I have a tendency of doing the same thing [as the teacher he observed]. But I try to avoid it... The classroom is a place where students should use English. So, teachers shouldn't talk too much. Also, how teachers can make an atmosphere where students feel free to speak English or students can enjoy speaking English, that's totally the most important for teachers. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

As Seiji's comments indicate, it is crucial for students to feel comfortable using English in order to promote and increase their engagement in the classroom. And how teachers respond to their students' mistakes plays a key role in creating such a classroom atmosphere. Naoko mentioned the importance of teachers' being lenient toward students' mistakes and creating a comfortable learning atmosphere for them. She even thought students should be encouraged to make mistakes:

To improve English skills, students should make a lot of mistakes and errors. We teachers have to allow our students to make mistakes... When students feel

pressured and worried about their mistakes, they will gain nothing through the classes. So, making good atmosphere is also a very important key to improve their English skills. (Interview 1, June 24, 2016)

Hiromi also prioritized increasing students' output in English over correcting their mistakes so that students could feel comfortable in the classroom. Instead of pointing out her students' errors during speaking activities, she tried to praise their risk-taking attitudes since they tended to hesitate to make mistakes in front of their peers.

As seen in these teachers' excerpts, their emphasis on promoting the students' active engagements in class, seeking the right balance of teacher and student talk, and being lenient toward students' mistakes seems to closely link to their identification as a classroom facilitator. The identity as a facilitator was found to be one of the most salient factors that constitutes these teachers' multiple identities, which will be discussed in detail later.

Strict all English approach vs use of L1 as a scaffolding tool. All of the teacher participants largely supported the idea of using English as the medium of instruction and had a positive attitude toward the all-English policy by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). In the interviews, the majority of teachers reported that they mainly used English as the medium of instruction. Hiromi and Shiho, for example, mentioned that one of the purposes for using English in the classroom was to create an atmosphere where students feel comfortable using English in class. However, some teachers also used their L1 selectively to scaffold English-medium instruction, whereas others expressed a negative attitude toward the use of L1.

When L1 was used by the teachers in the classroom, it was found that it was basically for explaining grammar and vocabulary, scaffolding complex classroom instructions for activities, and promoting deeper learning for students. Acknowledging that teaching grammar is essential for students to develop their communication abilities, Shiho explained that she used Japanese for grammar instructions since she could teach “effectively and instantly” (Interview 1, June 27, 2016). She had previously tried teaching grammar in English without the help of L1, but she had some students who could not fully understand her explanation, which led her to decide to use L1 when teaching grammar. Mei also used L1 mainly when she introduced new vocabulary that was hard to explain in English. She sees the value in using L1 and explained the role of it in the English teaching and students’ learning process:

I think Japanese helps students to understand complicated instructions or complicated concepts of grammar. Sometimes, I need to use Japanese to explain very complicated things. If we use Japanese, we can save a lot of time. We can spare much time for activities where students use and practice English. (Interview 1, June 18, 2016)

Admitting that the use of Japanese in the classroom might have the potential to inhibit students’ development of English skills, Toshio pointed out that there also are times when Japanese facilitates their higher thinking skills. He has the impression that the use of Japanese in the classroom is being negatively seen in the current English education trends in Japan; however, he insisted that Japanese could scaffold students’ higher level thinking process especially when the contents they learn requires such skills.

On the other hand, some teachers are skeptical about the use of Japanese in the classroom. For example, Yuki believed that English is better taught in the English-only classroom but admitted that it was not simple. Asked about the role L1 plays in the English classes, she shared her beliefs and struggles:

Actually, this is a very difficult question for me. I might not be able to answer this question. But L1 often adversely affects the process of learning L2. That is my opinion. Because we tend to think about the structure of L2 based on the knowledge of L1. If possible, we should eliminate L1 in the foreign language classes. In my case, I resorted to Japanese simply because it was easy. I had to finish the class. Sometimes if students didn't understand my English, I resorted to Japanese. I don't think it had a positive impact on students' learning. I could finish the class, but it doesn't mean students learned a lot from me. So L1 is not helpful for students... We should eliminate L1 in the classroom, but unfortunately, I didn't have the skills. I didn't have the alternative way. That is why I resorted to Japanese. (Interview 1, June 19, 2016)

Asked about the same question, Seiji also shared his negative perspective toward the use of Japanese:

I'm not sure whether I can answer your question correctly or not but [L1 has] kind of a negative impact on students in that students can heavily depend on Japanese in English classrooms. For example, all students are from different backgrounds or different countries and if they don't share a common language, they have no choice but to use English in English classrooms, right? But we all share Japanese in the classrooms. So a little... it has a negative impact on English learning

sometimes in that sense that students can depend on their first language.

(Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

He continued and said that he used to allow his students to use Japanese when they had to talk about complex and abstract issues in his class. But he changed his mind and tried to eliminate the use of Japanese. One of the reasons that he decided so was a presentation a university professor made at a conference he attended:

What he told us was very shocking. That was... if you can do something only in your language and you go to a place where you cannot communicate in your language, you're regarded as of zero ability. That was shocking. I used to allow my students to use Japanese when the passage was really difficult to understand...But if I continue that, students will be regarded worthless outside Japan. When they have some difficult problems, probably they will depend on Japanese. But in that context when people around them don't understand Japanese, their ability is zero. You know what I mean. That was a very important finding for me. Then I realized that we shouldn't easily or carelessly allow students to use Japanese. We should encourage them to keep on using English and make them brave enough to keep on talking in English. That's really important for them. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

Seiji, however, admitted that encouraging his students to use only English is a challenge. He found it challenging especially when his students wanted to say something in English but words failed them. To be able to better help students to communicate their ideas in English in class has been his goal of his English teaching.

To sum up, in terms of the medium of instruction, the findings showed that teacher participants had varying perspectives toward the use of L1 in the classroom, although all of them favored communicative approaches. In fact, a previous study reported Japanese English teachers' heavy dependence on the use of L1 in the classroom despite the governmental all-English policy (Suzuki & Roger, 2014). Thus, the findings of this study are significant in that this study revealed perspectives toward the selective use of L1 by the teachers who mainly used English as the medium of instruction. Some of the participants saw L1 as a resource for their instruction and its multiple benefits in the EFL classroom were confirmed by the previous studies (e.g., Bhooth, Azman, & Ismail, 2014; Bouangeune, 2009; Butzkamm, 2003; Sali, 2014). On the other hand, some other participants saw it as a source that could inhibit students' English communication skills, and this discrepancy in beliefs among the participants reflects the controversy of the issue of using L1 in the literature (Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

Understanding and caring for students. When the teacher participants were sharing and elaborating on their teaching beliefs, they did not necessarily talk about beliefs specific to disciplinary knowledge such as theories and teaching methods, or pedagogical content knowledge such as areas of curriculum design or assessment. Rather, they shared their universal values such as respect, empathy, and care they should hold as a teacher. In this study, such beliefs were framed as “teacher values” in Kumaravadivelu's (2012) term and were found to be a critical layer that formed the participants' multiple teaching beliefs.

For Shiho, treating and understanding a student as a valuable individual with different needs has been a core value supporting her teaching beliefs. She explained that

teachers in Japanese public high schools often have to work with nearly forty students in a classroom, which is an educational norm in secondary education in Japan, but she felt she should pay attention to each student instead of treating them as a group of forty. In her classes, she often walked around and gave individual feedback to each student, thinking that students are different in many ways:

Communication skills have been stressed [in the recent educational reform]. I agree with that. But understanding students is the same. In the classroom, teachers communicate with students. In order to communicate, we have to understand students. As a teacher, I need to grasp what my students need, what they lack, and so on. (Interview 2, July 27, 2016)

Naoko also believes that understanding each student is crucial not only for English teachers but teachers of any subject:

Some teachers think students don't understand the classes because they are lazy. But actually, they all have different reasons... Each student has each different reason. We should face students more and we teachers understand why they don't understand. (Interview 2, July 27, 2016)

She admits that identifying and helping struggling students is not an easy task. Reflecting on her everyday teaching practice, she shared her perspectives and beliefs about how she worked with students in class:

As I said, I have a lot of kinds of students. Some students like English but some don't. Teachers are good at their own subject they teach and I'm good at English. But some students don't like English. Maybe teachers don't know how they feel. The other day, a student teacher came to my school for practicum and she said she

couldn't understand how struggling students feel in her class. This got me thinking. I think if I don't know how they feel, it's difficult for me to help them, but in reality, I might be teaching without enough attention to such students to move on sometimes. For example, I might be teaching based on the strong students' level and some students may be feeling left behind. It's hard but I think it's very important to take care of every student in class. (Interview 2, July 27, 2016)

Similar to other teacher participants' cases, Naoko had to work with a large number of students in her class, which clearly made it challenging to understand every student, identify both strong and struggling students, and satisfy their needs. But her desire to do so was found to be salient when she shared her teaching beliefs at the core of her teaching philosophy.

Influential Factors on Belief Formation and Professional Identity Development

The second research question explored factors that affect the teacher participants' belief formation and professional identity development. When the participants shared their early teaching beliefs and current ones, some voluntarily talked about critical incidents, experiences, and stories that influenced their teaching belief and teacher identity development. Others were explicitly asked how they came to hold early teaching beliefs and what caused them to change their teaching beliefs if their current teaching beliefs differed from the early ones. The interview data from the participants revealed three salient factors that contributed to their belief and identity formation: 1) personal experiences in childhood and adolescence including experiences as an English language learner, 2) experiences as an in-service teacher, and 3) the CS, the nationwide English

education policy stipulated by MEXT. The following sections present each factor in detail.

Personal experiences in childhood and adolescence. The teacher participants' early biographical history was found to be one of the most critical factors that impacted their teaching beliefs and their identities as a teacher. Most of them shared their personal experiences and stories in childhood and adolescence when explaining their teaching beliefs. The stories told by them – for example, how they were raised, how the English language impacted them in those days, and how they learned it – not only impacted their early teaching belief and identity formation but also their current belief and identity development.

Biographical, socio-cultural factors. Satsuki, who supports communicative language teaching (CLT), mentioned her childhood and adolescence experiences in her small, closed community as one of the influences on her teaching beliefs:

The reality I faced when I was a child was that everyone knew each other in my small town. Everyone looked the same. They behaved in the same way. They dressed like the same way. I thought there was kind of a rule even though the rule was not written or not spoken, but if you don't follow the rule, you will be seen like a stranger, sometimes even an abnormal person. (Interview 2, August 1, 2016)

Her experiences in her small, conservative, non-diverse community where she was born and raised caused her to “long for freedom and the world that is new” to her (Interview 2, August 1, 2016). Watching TV, she learned how people in some large American cities led their lives, which she found quite fascinating since they seemed to be enjoying their

freedom and diversity there. Her teaching belief, “English is a tool” (Interview 1, June 16, 2016) rather than just a subject to study, stems from her desire to experience a new world, communicate with people from different backgrounds, and enjoy diversity in her life.

Socio-educational factors on language learners (prior learning experiences).

The teacher participants’ experiences as an English learner in their adolescence had a critical impact on both early and current teaching beliefs toward teaching English. Seiji mentioned that his homestay experience in England, when he was a high school student was a critical reason why he chose to be an English teacher. The experience there enabled him to realize how enjoyable it was to communicate with people using English; more importantly, the experience made him become confident as an English user. This led him to hold his early teaching belief that favored communicative approaches.

As Seiji’s story shows, it is apparent that being given an authentic opportunity to use English outside the classroom plays an important role in one’s language teaching belief formation; however, their English learning experiences in the classroom also play an important role. The way the teachers were taught in class when they were students seems to have had an immediate impact on their early teaching beliefs, and it still contributes to their current belief and identity development, to some extent. For example, Mei mentioned that her belief of teaching English in English was heavily influenced by the way her junior high school English teacher taught. Her teacher used English all the time in class, did a variety of communicative activities, such as role plays, skits, and pair work, and Mei “really enjoyed using English” and “could understand what he said” in English (Interview 1, June 18, 2016); that is how she came to believe in teaching English

in English. Also, Yuki pointed out the influence by her teacher on her early teaching beliefs. Her teacher, unlike Mei's, focused on "teaching a textbook" and "transmission of knowledge" in class (Interview 1, June 19, 2016). Without enough professional development opportunities to learn how to teach English during her undergraduate program, she simply "mimicked" the ways her teacher taught her (Interview 1, June 19, 2016). Yuki explained how she taught English at the very early stage of her teaching career:

When I started teaching, I thought teachers' job was to teach a textbook. Just to teach a textbook. So the amount of knowledge I provided to my students in the classroom was really important. What I cared about was to explain every single word, phrase, sentence and so on. I never thought about my teaching belief. I just concentrated on how to teach a textbook. But I reflect on myself, and I should have focused more on what students could do only in the classroom with classmates and the teacher. (Interview 1, June 19, 2016)

Yuki's early teaching practices, as well as Mei's early teaching beliefs, could be attributed to the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), and both showed a strong impact on their early teaching Self (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) by their teachers.

Toshio, who favors CLT in class, also shared his experiences as a student when explaining how he developed his teaching beliefs. What is different from Mei's case and Yuki's is that Toshio did not see his English teacher as a role model. He showed his dissatisfaction toward how he was taught English in class:

Basically, the classes aimed at fostering reading and writing skills. So, grammar instruction was at the center of the English instruction. After we had explicit

grammar instruction, we had the pattern practices. That was a typical teaching style. I didn't like the way because it was not so productive, not so communicative, not so realistic. (Interview 2, July 24, 2016)

His negative learning experiences in less communicative classes enabled him to decide to teach differently than his teachers and believe in what he found effective, which is communicative language instruction. This finding is in line with Mak (2011) and Johnson (1994) who reported that teacher participants' decision to employ CLT resulted from their critical examination and negative perspectives of traditional language teaching they received as students.

These findings of the impact of prior learning experiences on the teachers' beliefs support previous research in the field of the language teacher cognition. The participants' learning experiences as language learners not only established their early teaching beliefs but also "continue to exert an influence on [them] throughout their career," (Borg, 2003, p. 88) and thus have an important role in shaping a language teacher identity (Matsuda, 2017).

Experiences as an in-service teacher. The second emergent factor that affected the teacher participants' belief and identity development pertains to everyday practices and experiences as a full-time high school English teacher. All the teacher participants started their teaching career and entered the classroom with teaching beliefs. Such early beliefs, as discussed in the previous section, were formed and influenced by their biographical, socio-cultural backgrounds, personal experiences as an English user, and English learning experience in class or their teachers' teaching practices. But the reality they faced working as a full-time high school teacher was found to have had an

immediate impact on their teaching practices, teaching beliefs, and teacher identity development. Some of their experiences at school promoted and strengthened their early teaching beliefs, while others challenged their beliefs and put them in a dilemma. The data analysis of the interviews identified three major teacher experiences that have influences on their teaching beliefs and teacher identities: experiences in the classroom (students' expectations), experiences of local school culture and system, and experiences of teacher development opportunities.

Experiences in the classroom (students' expectations). The first factor pertains to the teaching experiences the teacher participants gained through everyday interactions with their students, both inside and outside the classroom. Toshio described what he experienced in the classroom when he was a first-year teacher as “a reality of teaching” (Interview 1, June 30, 2016). When he started his teaching career, he worked at an industrial high school. He found that the students he worked with were not good at English, were less motivated to learn, and had negative attitudes toward the subject. This situation made him decide to focus on English conversation in class rather than explaining grammar or Japanese translation by using the textbook. He found it effective to focus on communicative activities and to teach simple conversation using short phrases to his demotivated, beginner level students.

This experience with his students strengthened his early teaching belief of “teaching the joy of communicating with each other in English” (Interview 1, June 30, 2016), and enabled him to focus on the communicative approach, particularly on speaking and listening. However, the situation changed when he was transferred to an academic high school after the first high school. The students he met there were highly

motivated learners, and they did care about getting high scores on the paper-and-pencil exams that focused on reading and grammar knowledge. Toshio needed to modify his teaching styles in order to meet his students' expectations:

The most influential are students themselves. Students always influenced my teaching, my way of teaching. Now I belong to *shingakukou* [advanced level high school] and my students have the need to study English, so my teaching styles changed a little bit and sometimes focus on reading...Of course, I often teach the skills of listening or speaking using communicative activities. But I take some time to teach reading skills and writing skills as well. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

Seiji also encountered a similar situation to Toshio's when he started to work at an advanced level high school. Seiji explained what his students wanted and expected from him was the lecture to prepare them for the entrance examinations:

When I started to work in the current high school, my goal was to teach them how to pass the entrance examination. So we heavily depended on reading and kind of like grammar-translation method. That was, to some extent, comfortable for me. Because I had to do the same thing when I was a high school student. So what I did was ... I taught English as I was taught. That was not uncomfortable. That was comfortable. What my students wanted was what I taught. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

Seiji's early teaching beliefs that favored communicative approaches apparently contradicted his teaching practice at the advanced level school. Like Toshio, Seiji also faced "the reality of teaching" and prioritized his students' expectations and focused on the test preparation. These findings exemplify how traditional paper-and-pencil entrance

exams could be a constraining factor on CLT implementation in high school English education in Japan (Glasgow & Paller, 2016; O'Donnell, 2005). Seiji continued teaching English for the purpose of entrance exams for two to three years, but recently, he again started to focus on communicative aspects in class. He explained that the main reason for this change was the trend of English education in Japan that had communicative orientation:

I'm now really happy about the fact that the Course of Study in Japan has been changing [toward more communication-oriented methods]. Many universities require high school students to take four skill tests including speaking. So students gradually are focusing on speaking and listening and that kind of communication. So according to that, my class also has been changing. Of course, we focus on reading, but to the same extent, we focus on speaking. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

He touched upon the CS, the guideline for English education by MEXT and indicated its tremendous impact on the university entrance examination system. But what should be noted here would be how his teaching beliefs and actual teaching practices have been affected by his students' expectations. Admittedly, the new CS and communicative trends seen in the university exams seem to be the source of his change; however, they would be rather the indirect cause. The interactions with his students in class and the attempts to meet their needs were found to have a more critical, direct impact on his change. This finding would complement Borg (2003) who revealed a teacher's perception of his students' expectations and desire to live up to them overrode his beliefs about a particular teaching method.

Experiences pertaining to the contextual factors in teaching sites. The contextual factors such as the working condition, the school culture, and education system teacher participants were faced with also impacted their teaching belief and teacher identity development. Toshio mentioned that his responsibility as a teacher extends to the various areas on top of teaching English:

I think high school teachers have a lot of things to do, in my case, as an English teacher, as a homeroom teacher, as a club coach, or other tasks of career guidance, students' discipline. Now I don't have enough time to prepare for English lessons.

(Interview 2, July 24, 2016)

Especially, supervising his students' extracurricular activity caused him to work long hours after he finished teaching his classes; this inevitably led to the lack of preparation for class and the lack of professional opportunities to enhance English teaching skills, which made him feel unsatisfied with his teaching skills and his English proficiency level:

I don't want to make an excuse but...teachers are in charge of club activities. It takes a lot of time. You know, when I return from a club activity, it is always 7 or 8 p.m. It's a big problem for every teacher. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

Shiho also shared her struggles as an English teacher working in a public high school in Japan. She thinks it is "very stressful" to have to work long hours to supervise her students' club activities, finish her paperwork, and attend many meetings (Interview 2, July 27, 2016). Their stories suggested that those socio-educational factors related to their local school culture and education system caused them to have multiple roles. But performing all the assigned roles as they wished is almost impossible. These contextual

factors surrounding Japanese English teachers, which were also confirmed in the previous studies (e.g., O'Donnell, 2005; Sakui, 2004), cannot be ignored when examining their teacher identity formation.

Intensive teacher development opportunities. Since the teacher participants worked in public high schools, they were required, by law, to participate in a teacher training program offered by each prefectural board of education, depending on the year of teaching experiences. Such mandatory training program usually involves only several days spread over a year and includes seminars and workshops on teaching methodologies, on top of teacher ethics and human rights education training. When they shared what caused them to form and develop their teaching beliefs, none of the teacher participants mentioned those required teacher training programs. However, some teachers shared their positive changes brought by a teacher exchange program. It was a government-sponsored teacher training program for in-service high school English teachers in Japan, which is almost identical to the program Kurihara and Samimy (2007) studied the effect of on their participants. The exchange program aimed to improve their English skills, help them learn theories and practices on recent trends of English education, and develop intercultural awareness while living in the United States. The teacher participants of this study were all participants of this program and received 6-months of intensive teacher training at an American university and local high schools.

Reflecting on the experiences during the exchange program, Naoko said that the program provided her with the opportunities to learn teaching methods intensively. What she learned about language assessments, especially — creating test specifications and rubrics linked to the learning objectives — brought positive changes to her students and

enhanced their motivation in the classroom. She explained that she had never received such intensive training on teaching theories and methods when she was in the pre-service teacher training program in her university, and the exchange program provided her with what she really wanted to learn, based on the experiences as a full-time English teacher. Shiho also talked about a positive impact the program had on her teaching beliefs. Participating in the program and experiencing “being a student again for the first time in a long time” (Interview 1, June 27, 2016), she realized how her learning experiences during the program differed from ones she had when she was a student in Japan. She was impressed with how closely her teachers of the exchange program worked with each participant individually. The experiences of being a student again and getting the individual attention from the teachers of the program played a role in developing her teaching beliefs.

English education policy in Japan. Since the teacher participants were employed by their municipal government and worked for public high schools, they were required to follow the CS, the nationwide English education policy stipulated by MEXT. As reviewed in the previous chapter, the current CS has an orientation towards CLT, stipulating that the medium of instruction should be English so that students are provided with opportunities to use the language in the classroom (MEXT, 2009). The interview data found that the existence of the CS could be one of the most powerful sources that led the teacher participants to have beliefs that favored CLT and the use of English in class.

Hiromi was one of the teachers who pointed out the current CS as one of the factors that influenced her teaching beliefs. She was inspired by the methodologies the

CS and its model curriculums suggested. The focus on communication activities using English debates and presentations especially appealed to her:

When I read the new Course of Study, I liked the idea of developing students' English communication skills. I think what is the most important is not to study English [for the tests] but to do something using English. Debating and doing presentations in English can develop their critical thinking skills too... I hope my students will play an active role in the global community in the future, and communicating their own ideas using English will be necessary. Yes, the Course of Study, the new curriculum made me want to try such communication activities in the classroom...I think what the CS says is what will be needed for today's high school students. (Interview 1, June 21, 2016)

Yuki, a former English teacher, who currently works as a teacher consultant, shared how the CS impacted her teaching beliefs and practices. Her current teaching beliefs are in line with the CS, and she explained that the CS made her more aware of the importance of developing four skills for English communication. The governmental policy "makes sense" to her and she "totally agree[s] with it" (Interview 1, June 19, 2016). In the interview, however, she also referred to the powerful impact the governmental policy had on her beliefs and practices both as an in-service teacher and a teacher consultant:

[When working in a high school] I was given a lot of opportunities to show my classes to other teachers in my prefecture. And I felt responsible for conducting lessons based on the governmental policy on English education. I tried to use English [as a medium of instruction], and I tried to introduce a lot of English

communication activities. I reduced the amount of explanation in class...(Interview 1, June 19, 2016)

She “felt pressured” to follow the policy as a public high school teacher, and the pressure became even stronger when she started to work as a teacher consultant (Interview 1, June 19, 2016). Her role as a teacher consultant working for the municipal government made her feel “kind of obsessed with [the new governmental policy]” (Interview 1, June 19, 2016).

In fact, all the teacher participants had positive attitudes toward the content of the current CS and supported the governmental policy, although to a varying degree. A few teachers denied that the CS brought changes to their teaching beliefs; however, the majority acknowledged its impact on their beliefs and practices and reported that it enabled them to reflect on what and how they should teach in class. These findings are valuable in that there has been little attention paid to the impacts the current governmental English teaching policies have on high school English teachers’ beliefs and practices and their professional development.

Teacher Identities

The third question that guided this study was: What identities constitute Japanese high school teachers of English? The data analysis identified the following identities: 1) general teacher identity, 2) context-related teacher identity, 3) language teacher identity, and 4) non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST) identity. These multiple identities emerged and were observed during the one-on-one interviews when they talked about their teaching beliefs and practices and when they were asked how they saw themselves as English teachers.

General teacher identity. Although the participants were asked about their beliefs on teaching English and their day-to-day experiences as an English teacher, they shared, to some extent, their beliefs and values that were not specific to or went beyond teaching English. For example, Shiho's strong desire and belief to understand and care for each student show the characteristics of a general teacher identity, rather than specifically an English teacher's. When working with her students, she walked around in the classroom and tried to give individual feedback to each of them. Asked how she came to hold such beliefs, she shared her experiences as a student and mentioned that her teachers taught what the teaching manual said, paying little attention to their students' individual differences. She added, "As a student, I felt I wanted my teacher to teach each of us. That feeling led to my first belief as a teacher" (Interview 2, July 27, 2016).

The characteristics of a general teacher identity emerged especially when the participants showed the discrepancies between their teaching beliefs and actual teaching practices. For example, when Mei worked with 10th and 11th grade students of hers, she focused on communicative activities in class by teaching in English. Focusing on developing communication skills by teaching English in English is one of her most salient teaching beliefs. She, however, modified her teaching style when her students became 12th graders, the majority of whom needed to prepare for the high-stakes entrance exam for university. Her use of English in class decreased and she instead devoted some class time for test preparation:

I shouldn't give up what I believe I need to teach easily, but what my students' needs [to pass high-stakes entrance exam] are also important. I just can't ignore

what they say they need. It's very hard to strike a right balance. (Interview 1, June 18, 2016)

As Mei's excerpt shows, the characteristics of the general teacher identity reflect the value of understanding and caring for students. And such value can be held by any teachers, regardless of what subject they teach, and seems to play a core role in shaping their professional identities. Teacher identities are not necessarily directly linked to the subject they teach but can be aligned to their roles that reflect values at the local socio-educational system (Hayes, 2017).

Context-related teacher identity. As the teacher participants were teachers in public high schools and were public officers, their professionalism seemed to involve not only having expertise on teaching English, good teaching skills, or high teacher ethics, but also complying with educational policies and programs by their national and municipal government. Their self-identification as an English high school teacher in Japan is closely linked to their local socio-educational norms such as “curriculum, programs, policies, circulating ideologies about what constitutes good or preferred language teachers” (Duff, 2017, p. 173). As seen in the previous section, the influence of the CS, the governmental policy for an English education reform, was found to be strong enough to form their “context-related identity” (Pennington & Richards, 2016, p. 14), develop their teaching beliefs, and influence their actual teaching practices.

Yuki, for example, often invited other teachers into her classroom and shared her teaching practices. But when she had observers, she “felt responsible for conducting lessons based on the governmental policy on English education” (Interview 1, June 19, 2016) and tried to include many communicative activities using English. Of course, she

did not employ communicative approaches in class just because of the governmental policy that favored CLT. Her teaching beliefs were in line with the policy, and her focus was on developing students' language skills through student-centered instruction. However, she also acknowledged the strong influence of the governmental policy: "I have to follow the government Course of Study, the governmental policy...just because it is a rule. I have to" (Interview 1, June 19, 2016).

Seiji also showed the characteristics of a context-related teacher identity, although not as strongly as Yuki, when he talked about a governmental English education program at his high school. His school worked on the government-sponsored globalization program and was "expected to try out new things," which made him feel "pressured from the board of education" (Interview 1, June 30, 2016). When one of the government officials, the policy maker from MEXT visited Seiji's school to assess the above-mentioned school program, English teachers there, including Seiji, invited and got the policy maker to observe their classes. At that time, classroom activities used in the classroom were "heavily focused on reproduction," in terms of reproducing texts in order to learn English, such as "story-telling and summary writing." (Interview 1, June 30, 2016). And the government official's feedback was critical of such reproduction activities:

What he told us then was that we should look at students' faces. When they speak what they want, they look really happy. But when they are asked to reproduce the text, they look unhappy. So what we were doing was stone-aged English education...Stone age. At first, we were depressed. We couldn't stand up from the chair. We were completely shattered. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

Reflecting on how he taught, Seiji admitted that he did not provide students with enough time for “self-expressions,” and he realized, “What [the government official] told us is really important” (Interview 1, June 30, 2016). Seiji openly acknowledged that the influence on his beliefs and practice was brought by the governmental policy, more specifically, what the government official advised to him. He mentioned, “Now what he requested us to do is the goal of my classroom. And I’d like to find the next goal after I achieve it” (Interview 1, June 30, 2016). The identity emerged in these excerpts overlaps with a language teacher identity since they pertained to methods of teaching English. However, the distinction between the context-related teacher identity and the language teacher identity became salient by examining the influences of the governmental policies that all teachers working for public schools were expected to follow.

Language teacher identity. All the teacher participants exhibited a strong language teacher identity throughout the interviews. What is important to note here is that nobody showed the characteristics of teacher identity of a specific domain, such as a writing teacher identity. Instead, all teacher participants communicated their roles as an English teacher to develop students’ communicative competences, which include all domains of English proficiency. This emphasis on general language skills is what characterizes their language teacher identity. Seiji, for example, explained his recent classroom activities that aimed for the integration of skills. He tried to integrate reading and speaking in class by “making [reading] comprehension activities discussion-like” (Interview 1, June 30, 2016), hoping to develop students’ speaking skills for self-expression as well as reading skills. Toshio also communicated his beliefs of developing

students' general language skills when he talked about skills needed for English high school teachers:

I think English teachers should be able to create activities or tasks which help students to foster four skills. I am not satisfied with teaching English through English textbooks. The important thing is how to deal with textbooks. How to make the textbook more useful. So, that's why we teachers have to create activities. And when I make activities, I often think of how to integrate or isolate four skills... This activity is for reading or writing... This activity is for fostering listening or speaking skills... (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

As seen in the excerpt, Toshio's focus on four language skills is another example that characterized the language teacher identity. His beliefs and teaching practices mentioned during the interview indicated that he identified himself as a general English language teacher, as opposed to English teacher that specialized in one domain. One of the possible reasons behind this identification could be that the teacher participants, including Toshio, were not just English teachers but English teachers working for public schools. They were expected to teach according to the new national curriculum, which focused on communication and integration of four skills: listening, speaking reading and writing. With this regard, this aspect of language teacher identity overlaps their context-related teacher identity.

In addition to the focus on general language skills, another set of the characteristics that formed their language teacher identity was the teachers' beliefs and practices as a classroom facilitator. When sharing his teaching beliefs, Toshio emphasized the importance of increasing students' output in the classroom, and said, "I wanted to be a

facilitator rather than a teacher” (Interview 1, June 30, 2016). What he meant by “a teacher” in the excerpt connoted the person who teaches with a lecture, and he held a negative attitude toward such a role. When asked to share a successful teaching moment in his classes, he talked about some of the collaborative activities he previously tried:

I think the success I had was that students were able to express themselves in English when they did activities using four skills, and I achieved the goal I set up before the lesson. Success... okay... I encourage my students to study in pairs. I often ask them to check their answers or talk with each other and ask questions. I encourage peer learning. When I see my students cooperate with each other in pairs, I often feel my teaching is very good, very successful. (Interview 1, June 30, 2016)

Yuki also communicated a strong sense of a facilitator when expressing her teaching beliefs:

When I was teaching at high schools, I always thought that, from now on, English teachers would need more knowledge and skills about how to facilitate conversations, discussions, debates, and so on... Teachers are expected to introduce a lot of communication activities. And as I said, facilitating debates, discussions, and presentation is all difficult. We have to learn how to do it. (Interview 1, June 19, 2016)

Both Toshio’s satisfaction with his collaborative classroom activities and Yuki’s emphasis on students’ use of English in the classroom exemplified and embodied their language teacher identity as a facilitator. As the interaction with students in the classroom is a source of continuous development of language teacher identity (Miller, 2009), their

identification as a facilitator, “student-related identity” in Pennington and Richards’ (2016) terminology, seems to have a positive impact on their professional development and plays a critical role in forming their teacher identities.

Non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST) identity. Another factor that constitutes the participants’ multiple teacher identities is their identification as NNESTs. Their native language is Japanese and they all received education in Japan. English is not the language they acquired through everyday use of and exposure to it, but the one they did through conscious learning. Just like their students they worked with in the classroom, they were all once — some mentioned that they still are — English language learners, who shared similar socio-educational backgrounds. Thus, their identification as NNESTs reflects their “language-related identity” relating to their linguistic backgrounds and proficiency (Pennington & Richards, 2016, p.11). Their NNEST identity strongly emerged when they talked about their role as an English teacher in Japan and they shared how they saw themselves as English teachers. Mei, for example, communicated her NNEST identity while sharing her backgrounds and contrasting assistant language teachers (ALTs), native speakers of English whom she worked with and her role:

I grew up in Japan, and until I became a university student, I had never been abroad. I learned English only in Japan. I acquired English skills by myself. And Japan is in the EFL context. English as a foreign language, not a second language. So, people can live without speaking English...(Interview 2, July 21, 2016)

ALTs cannot be role models for students. They are native speakers. They speak English very fluently. It’s natural. We cannot be a native speaker, but we try and practice, for example, pronunciation, speaking English and try to be like native

speakers. It's kind of a goal for us. Only Japanese teachers can be role models for Japanese students because we achieve our goals by making efforts. (Interview 1, June 18, 2016)

Mei also communicated that her status as a Japanese teacher and a non-native English speaker enabled her to understand “what [her] students [could] do and [could not] do and what difficulty students [had]” (Interview 2, July 21, 2016). She clearly saw her identity as a non-native speaker of English as one of her strengths, thinking that she could be a role model for her students, who spoke the same L1, had a similar cultural, socio-educational backgrounds, and thus had a similar aspect of identity as non-native speakers. As Duff (2017) argues, it is knowing students' socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds, abilities, and needs that is one of the critical competences language teachers need. Mei's self-positioning as a NNEST is “a display of competence” in her classroom, a community of practice, and can be characterized as “an identity as community membership” (Wenger, 1998, p. 152).

Similar to Mei's identification, the emphasis on role models for English learners as a NNEST was also observed in Satsuki's excerpt:

How do I see myself as an English teacher? I think there are two big roles for me as a nonnative English teacher in a small city in Japan. The first is to be a role model for my students, because they don't have a lot of opportunities to meet people from foreign countries or to use authentic English. So, I want to be a role model for students. The second is to have students interested in the differences and develop their attitude to positively communicate in English. I think that relates to my teaching beliefs I guess. But these days a lot of students don't want

to go abroad. That is very shocking to me. They don't even want to go outside of ... prefecture. Very shocking. They want to stay in the home city with their family and that's it. I want to broaden their world through teaching them English or showing them some different cultures. (Interview 2, August 1, 2016)

Satsuki's identification as a NNEST directly leads to her role as a teacher in socio-cultural contexts she and her students shared. The lack of opportunities for her students to interact with English users and the characteristics of her students, who tended to hesitate to go out of their small city, seemed to make stronger her identity as a role model for her students.

In these teachers' narratives, the characteristics of the NNEST identity reflect their positive self-positioning as a role model for their students and exemplify their identities in community membership (Wenger, 1998). However, the study found that the non-native identity also entails dissatisfaction of ones' own language competences, a desire to acquire native-like English, and a compromise with or realization of their non-nativeness. When asked about personal goals as an English teacher, Yuki showed a strong sense of responsibility to have native-like competence:

It might be wrong, but I'd like to be like a native speaker of English. I always think so. [If I get native-like competence,] I'll be more confident. Many people say that it's wrong, but I'm an English teacher. It's very strange that I cannot have a perfect command of English. But that kind of conception makes teachers very worried, very anxious and insecure. I understand that. I always have a dilemma. (Interview 2, July 22, 2016)

Asked about the same question, Naoko also mentioned the development of her English competence:

First, I want to improve my English skills, especially, speaking and writing. I'm not good at expressing my ideas. So, if I want students to improve these kinds of skills, I should improve them first. I need to improve my English skills. (Interview 2, July 27, 2016)

Mei shared how she felt about her non-native like pronunciation in English and said, "I felt my English was Japanese English" (Interview 2, July 21, 2016). Her "Japanese English" was what made her uncomfortable and feel inferior. But as she worked with other Japanese teachers of English, she found that good teachers did not necessarily have native-like pronunciation. She mentioned, "I realized pronunciation wasn't as important as I had thought. If I am great at teaching, maybe I am fine as an English teacher...whether my pronunciation is good or bad" (Interview 2, July 21, 2016). Unlike Yuki, Mei embraced her non-nativeness and does not persist in acquiring native-like English. The changes in identities in her narrative resonate with the case study by Park (2012), which detailed lived experiences of a NNEST, her challenges and struggles, and the trajectory to embrace her identity as a non-native speaker. Indeed, as the teachers' excerpts in this study showed, it is obvious that they inevitably positioned themselves in relation to native speakers. The stories told by them supported that Expanding Circle speakers tend to be norm-dependent (Kachru, 1985) and that NNESTs' identity is always challenged by native-speaker norms and authority and they feel insecure showing their non-nativeness (Canagarajah, 2017).

These teachers' identification as "role models," the desires to acquire better English competence, and the pursuit of nativeness or the acceptance of their non-nativeness characterizes their NNEST identity. Their identity as NNESTs is "diverse, contradictory, and dynamic" (Norton, 1995, p. 15) in that it reflects positive identification in relation to their students, while juxtaposing themselves with native speakers challenges their identity as an English teacher. In addition, their NNEST identity is strongly linked to their teaching beliefs, as it emerged when the participants shared their roles as an English teacher and how they feel they should be.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed findings of the study by detailing emergent themes related to: 1) beliefs about teaching, 2) factors that affect teaching beliefs and identities, and 3) teacher identities. The next, final chapter begins by presenting the summary of the findings, which is followed by highlighting pedagogical implications and offering recommendations for the future research.

Chapter Five

Implications and Conclusion

This final chapter outlines the summary of findings on the Japanese English teachers' salient beliefs, multiple teacher identities, and potential factors that influenced their beliefs and identity development. This chapter also shares the implications for language teachers, language teacher educators, and policy makers in Japan and the relevant contexts to this study, as well as recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching beliefs and teacher identities of eight Japanese high school teachers of English in Japan. Thus, the research questions that guided this study are threefold: 1) What English language teaching beliefs do Japanese high school teachers of English hold? 2) What factors affect their teaching belief formation and professional identity development? and 3) What identities constitute Japanese high school teachers of English? To elicit “holistic and in-depth characterization of individual entities in context” (Duff & Anderson, 2015, p. 112) and provide “in-depth, contextualized understandings of cognition which have strong local relevance” (Borg, 2012, p.18), the design of this study was a case study, framed within a qualitative approach. The qualitative content analysis of the interview data from the participants identified salient themes related to each guiding question to this study.

As for the first question, the findings showed the teachers' strong preference for language teaching for communicative purposes. The phrase “English as a communication tool” was frequently used during the interviews, and indicated the emphasis on the power of communication in English in the global world. This communicative orientation in

teaching beliefs clearly leads to the participants' student-centered teaching practices. Instead of giving a lecture, the teachers tried to facilitate their students' learning by providing activities that required communication with peers in class. In such communicative activities, they used English as the medium of instruction and wished to increase students' output in the target language. What should be noted here is the study revealed contrasting perspectives among the participants on the effectiveness of the L1 use in the classroom. Some saw the use of Japanese in class as a potential hindrance to students' L2 development, while others saw it as a resource. The data analysis also shed light on "teacher values" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 56), which are not specific to the language teaching beliefs. The most salient teacher value confirmed in the study was the desire to understand and care for each student, which seemed to be at the core of teachers' belief system.

The next question explored the potential factors that influenced the participants' teaching belief formation and professional identity development. Here, the findings showed that the participants' early biographical history and their past experiences as language learners played critical roles in forming their teaching beliefs and their teacher identities. In particular, the influences from their teachers were found to be critical, which supplements the studies by Lortie (1975) and Mak (2011). Also, the teachers' everyday experiences in their working places — such as negotiation with students' expectations reflecting socio-educational norms in academic high school in Japan, local contextual factors that are specific to the participants' school, as well as participation in the government-sponsored exchange program — are sources of teacher change. Lastly, the obvious impacts of the Course of Study (CS), a governmental policy on English

education were observed in the teachers' narrative. It was found that the CS triggered the teachers' reflections on language teaching and promoted their teaching beliefs and practices that favored communicative language teaching (CLT) and the use of English in class.

The last guiding question of this study tried to capture what multiple identities emerged in the teachers' narratives and how they identified themselves as high school English teachers. The data analysis observed four major identities: 1) general teacher identity, 2) context-related identity, 3) language teacher identity, and 4) non-native English speaking teacher (NNEST) identity. General teacher identity reflected "teacher values" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 56) the participants held and contrasted with their identity as English teachers. Another identity that is critical to analyze the participants' multiple identities was framed within "context-related identity" (Pennington & Richards, 2016, p. 14) and named context-related teacher identity. As the name suggests, their status as public school teachers in Japan and surrounding socio-educational factors constructed their context-related teacher identity. The third identity, language teacher identity, was related to how they saw themselves as English teachers as opposed to other roles and closely linked to their language teaching beliefs that favored communicative approaches. Lastly, NNEST identity was confirmed. This distinction was observed in relation to both their students and native speakers of English. Identity as a NNEST mirrored a positive identification as role models for non-native English speaking students, while it became a source of conflict and insecurity as the teachers reflected on their English competence compared to native speakers'. Overall, these findings on the teachers' multiple identities showed how their identities are non-fixed and transformative,

complex and multiple, and seemingly stable but susceptible to outer factors; many elements that characterized and differentiated these identities inevitably overlapped with each other, which revealed the multi-dimensional, complex nature of language teacher identity construction.

Implications

As stated in the methodology section, this study does not pursue strong generalizability of the findings due to the nature of the qualitative case study. The findings do not represent beliefs and identities Japanese public high school teachers of English hold in general. However, framed within Kumaravadivelu's (2001) postmethod pedagogy, this case study sought and revealed context-sensitive findings that were specific to the teacher participants, their students, and their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) that reflected socio-cultural and socio-educational norms in Japan. Therefore, the findings of the study have transferability (McKay, 2006) to similar contexts that share the relevant communities of practice described in the teachers' narrative in this study. Two important implications, based on the findings and their transferability, can be drawn for language teachers, language teacher educators and school leaders, and policy makers in Japan and similar contexts.

First, the findings of this study suggest that exploring teacher identities plays a critical role in promoting teacher reflection. Through reflecting on how teachers position themselves and why, as the study showed, they will be able to reexamine "everyday concepts" (Vygotsky, cited in Johnson & Golombek, 2016) or "personal theories" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) that include their beliefs and values in language teaching/learning or teaching in general, their actual teaching practices, and their lived

experiences, that is, successes and challenges they have encountered in their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Teachers' everyday concepts and personal theories reflect their reality of teaching and thus meaningful, context-sensitive pedagogical knowledge. On the other hand, policies and methodologies established by experts and scholars, whose promotion and dissemination tends to be the main goal of in-service teacher education, are "academic concepts" (Vygotsky, as cited in Johnson & Golombek, 2016) or "professional theories" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). Such academic and professional pedagogical knowledge, however, cannot be meaningful if teachers' identities, beliefs and values, and local lived experiences in their teaching contexts are overlooked. Thus, I would suggest that teacher educators and school leaders in Japan and similar teaching contexts incorporate issues on teacher identity into teacher education in order to promote teachers' conscious reflection on themselves. Reflection on NNEST identity, as the study indicated, will play an especially important role in empowering teachers as NNEST professionals. Examining NNESTs' strengths and struggles, seeking optimal pedagogy to them and their students in particular contexts, and embracing their NNEST identity should be encouraged to promote their sound professional development. Such reflection will also enable NNESTs to be critical of methodologies, ideologies, and beliefs on language teaching based on native speaker norms, which will help them to pursue contextualized pedagogy that maximizes NNESTs' performance and empower their identity. Topics on world Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), or English as an international language (EIL) could potentially be a good introduction to discussing NNEST identity. These topics would promote teachers' reflections on the varieties of English and the situations where English communication happens in the world, which

would lead to a realization of appropriate, realistic goals of English education, and practical teaching practices and assessments that are situated in the local teaching contexts.

Another implication stemming from this study is concerned with the use of L1 in CLT. As the findings showed, the teacher participants' beliefs and practices about the use of L1 in class varied greatly, while they all supported the governmental policy that focuses on communicative competence development. This could possibly be due to a lack of elaboration on how L1 should be treated in the curriculum under the current CS, which only states, "classes, *in principle* [emphasis added], should be conducted in English in order to enhance the opportunities for students to be exposed to English, transforming classes into real communication scenes" (MEXT, 2009, p. 7). Also, as the statement indicates, the primary focus is not on the teachers' English output but on students' engagement in communication in English. How and when the selective use of L1 or code-switching facilitate students' development of communicative competence, along with its potential negative effects on their learning, should be discussed in teacher education and should be stipulated in the new CS. Discussions about the use of L1 and deeper understandings on the governmental policy based on teachers' "everyday concepts" (Vygotsky, cited in Johnson & Golombek, 2016) and "personal theories" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001) constructed in their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) will lead to practical, meaningful contextualization of CLT that is congruent with teacher identities. In top-down cascade models of teacher training that do not involve such critical discussions, teacher educators will not be able to promote genuine teacher development and empower their roles in implementing the governmental policy.

Recommendations for Future Research

Framed within a qualitative research design, this study explored eight Japanese high school English teachers' lived experiences, beliefs and identities, and socio-cultural and socio-educational factors surrounding their lives. As stated in the previous section, the current study does not treat issues of validity in the way quantitative approaches do and thus does not seek strong generalizability of the findings. Rather, what the study pursued is the transferability of the findings to similar contexts. However, I acknowledge that there were ways to enhance transferability and trustworthiness of this study that I could not employ due to the methodological limitations.

First, solid triangulation, or crystallization in Richardson's (2000) term, could have been achieved if the study had had another set of data collected through different methods. Future research would benefit from collecting multiple data sources; especially, a combination of in-depth interviews and classroom observations would yield a more precise analysis of teachers' beliefs, practices, and their identities, which would thus enhance transferability of findings. The second recommendation is concerned with the duration of the study. The current study only analyzed interview data collected twice per participant within two months. However, considering the nature of the studies on language teacher identity, beliefs, and practices, it is recommended that future research aim for a longitudinal investigation to explore teachers' cognitive and behavioral changes. Studies framed within a longitudinal research design would capture on-going development of teacher identities and beliefs, critical incidents they encounter in everyday teaching, and vivid, lived narratives that capture their lives.

In addition to these recommendations based on the limitations of the study, there are three suggestions regarding the research contexts and topics that need to be further explored. First, similar studies should be encouraged in other teaching contexts in Japanese public high schools. As Kumaravadivelu (2001) argues, language pedagogy needs to be context-sensitive; it must be sensitive to particular teachers teaching particular students in particular socio-cultural situations. Identities and beliefs of teachers who work in high schools with a different academic level, students' needs or institutional goals, and teachers who are from different generations with different socio-cultural and socio-educational backgrounds than those of this study should be examined. A strong understanding of local particularity enables teacher educators to design more meaningful teacher training programs where participants can develop their skills to theorize from practice (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Second, as the study suggested, teachers' selective use of L1 as well as its effects on students' learning needs to be examined. Such studies would enable teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers to understand and seek contextualized CLT that is congruent with the goals of English education that the national policy stipulates. Finally, Japanese NNESTs' perceptions toward the English language would be a good topic to explore in order to better understand their language teacher or learner identity. For example, teachers should explore topics such as what Standard English (SE) is for Japanese NNESTs, how they see world Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), and English as an international language (EIL), and which variation of English they think they should teach. These topics should merit attention and should be investigated through in-depth qualitative research. Through narrative inquiries, studies

will reveal how NNEST identity evolves in relation to their perception of the English language and how they acquire a sense of ownership of English as NNESTs.

These three suggestions about future research are prominent and relevant to the current situations of secondary English education in Japan, where teachers are experiencing rapid transitions to CLT due to national educational reforms. Research in the aforementioned areas would promote teachers' reflection on their multiple identities, beliefs, and actual teaching practices, enrich their professional development, and enable them to contextualize their teaching practices based on strong, critical understandings of the current and new governmental policies on English education in Japan.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Dear _____,

You are invited to participate in a research study titled *Exploring NNESTs' beliefs and identities: A case study of Japanese EFL high school teachers*. This research seeks to inform Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) teacher education programs by investigating Japanese high school English teachers' second language (L2) teaching/learning belief and teaching identity construction.

If you choose to participate in this study, my graduate advisee, Ryosuke Aoyama, will interview you twice using Skype during your first semester in 2016. Online individual interviews will be audio recorded and will not exceed one hour. If Ryosuke has any follow-up questions from your interviews, email correspondence will be used.

The potential risks you may encounter do not exceed those experienced in everyday life. Data collection will be done only with your informed consent, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or penalty.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please respond to this email. I will then schedule an online face-to-face meeting using Skype with you during the last two weeks of May in 2016 to review the consent form and answer any questions you may have.

Best,

Sarah Henderson Lee, PhD
Assistant Professor of English
Armstrong Hall 230
Minnesota State University
Mankato, MN 56001
507-389-1359
sarah.henderson-lee@mnsu.edu

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

Dear _____,

My name is Ryosuke Aoyama. I am a graduate student in the English Department's Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Under the supervision of my graduate advisor, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, I would like to conduct research on teacher identity. As a current high school English teacher, you are invited to participate in a research study titled *Exploring NNESTs' beliefs and identities: A case study of Japanese EFL high school teachers*. This research seeks to inform TEFL teacher education programs by investigating Japanese high school English teachers' second language (L2) teaching/learning belief and identity construction.

If you choose to participate in this study, I will interview you twice in person using Skype during your first semester in 2016. Online individual interviews will be audio recorded and will not exceed one hour. If I have any follow-up questions from your interviews, email correspondence will be used. The time commitment to participate in this study does not exceed four total hours.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship to Minnesota State University, Mankato, nor will a refusal to participate involve a penalty or loss of benefits. You can withdraw from the study at any time by contacting the faculty PI, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, at sarah.henderson-lee@mnsu.edu or (507) 389-1359.

The potential risks you may encounter as a participant do not exceed those experienced in everyday life. Those include conversing with peers about professional practice. Additionally, minimum anxiety can occur with digitally recorded interviews. Participants benefit from reflecting on their practice, which may result in positive pedagogical change within their classroom context.

Confidentiality of data will be maintained by the use of pseudonyms for all names in any dissemination of the research. Participants will be given the opportunity to review and respond to collected data and written inquiry that pertains directly to them (member checking). All materials related to the study will be kept on a flash drive and stored in a locked file cabinet in the faculty PI's office (Armstrong Hall 207I). All consent forms and collected data will be retained for a minimum of three years before being destroyed, as per federal regulations.

Initials: _____

If you have any questions please feel free to contact my graduate advisor, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee, at sarah.henderson-lee@mnsu.edu or (507) 389-1359. If you have any questions about rights of research participants, please contact Dr. Barry Ries, Administrator of the Institutional Review Board, at barry.ries@mnsu.edu or (507) 389-1242. If you have any questions regarding the security of electronic information, please contact, the Minnesota State University, Mankato Information and Technology Services Help Desk at (507) 389-6654 and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

A copy of this letter will be provided for you to keep. If you are willing to participate in this study, please initial the bottom of the first page and sign the second page before scanning both pages and emailing them to the faculty PI, Dr. Sarah Henderson Lee (sarah.henderson-lee@mnsu.edu). Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information above and willingly agree to participate. Thank you for your consideration.

Your name (printed): _____

Your signature: _____

Date: _____

MSU IRBNet LOG #: 897521

Date of MSU IRB approval: 04-16-2016

Appendix C

Interview Guide

1. What were your teaching beliefs when you were a first year English teacher? How did you come to have these early teaching beliefs?
2. What are your current teaching beliefs on teaching English to Japanese high school students?
3. How have your teaching beliefs changed over time? What has caused you to change your teaching beliefs? Why?
4. How does the governmental policy on English education affect your teaching beliefs?
5. What role should students' L1 play in their L2 instruction? Why?
6. What successes/challenges have you encountered when you put your teaching beliefs into action at your high school?
7. What skills do you think are crucial for high school English teachers in Japan? Why? How do these skills support students' success with language learning?