

**Reflective practice as a tool for professional development of in-service  
high school teachers of English in Japan**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Atsuko Suzuki  
December 2013

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## Abstract

Perceived problems in a state-administered teacher training programme for Japanese teachers of English prompted this thesis. Low consideration and little attention were given to what is meant by teaching ability or teacher professional development. Courses designed to support high school teachers failed to meet their needs. In contrast, considerable emphasis was placed on 'brushing up' the teachers' English proficiency. What the programme lacked was exploring and drawing on teachers' rich source of ideas and experiences for professional development.

Reflective practice seemed to offer a way for high school teachers to examine their ideas and experiences of teaching, to enhance self-awareness, and to foster autonomy. Through a multiple case study approach, this empirical study examines how the incorporation of reflective practice enhances the teacher development of Japanese high school teachers of English. Its incorporation was regarded as a form of methodology borrowing, thus the study attempted to be sensitive to specific cultural practices, so as not to influence their *honne* (real intent) and to keep them from *hansei* (self-critical reflection).

The study found that reflective practice was more effective for the novice teachers than the experienced teachers. The novice teachers engaged in shaping their professional identity and professional knowledge. In contrast, the experienced teachers seemed to have reflected within their 'comfort zones,' that is, what is comfortable for them.

In contrast to the approach taken by the state-administered training programme, this study argues that the novice and experienced teachers have different needs in their professional development. The novice teachers needed an opportunity to shape their professional identity. The experienced teachers needed an exploration beyond their 'comfort zones'. The study also argues that reflective practice, which is likely to be individually based, should be facilitated with interactions and interventions from others, such as peers and teacher trainers.

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### **Japanese**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>Hansei</i>   | to reflect on what one did through a critical view  |
| <i>Honne</i>    | real intent of a person which is not expressed  |
| <i>Juku</i>     | a private educational organisation attended in addition to an ordinary educational institution, colloquially known as a cram school                 |
| <i>Kotodama</i> | the original meaning is that words expressed gains mystical power, currently, it means what is expressed may be actualised or has to be carried out |
| <i>Tatemaie</i> | public formal statement expected from others  |

### **Abbreviations**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| EFL   | English as a Foreign Language   |
| ELT   | English Language Teaching   |
| FG    | Focus Group: FG1 refers to the first focus group  |
| INT   | Interview: INT1 refers to the first interview   |
| JE    | JE refers to a journal entry. It is often indicated with numbers, as in JE 1/18 Oct. The number 1/18 refers to the total number of the entries (in this case 18) and the numbering of the entry (in this case the first entry). Abbreviation of the month when the entry was made follows the number. |
| MEXT  | Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology   |
| TOEFL | Test Of English as a Foreign Language   |
| TOEIC | Test Of English for International Communication   |
| STEP  | Society for Testing English Proficiency   |

## **Chapter 1: Teacher training seminars: marginalising the knowledge and the experiences of teachers**

### **1. 1 Prelude**

This study has its origin in my distressing experience as a teacher trainer. In the summer of 2003, my colleague at the university, Hitomi (pseudonym), and I were asked by our university to lead compulsory teacher training sessions for in-service public junior and senior high school teachers of English in Japan. The sessions were administered by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) under the action plan of *Japanese with English Abilities*, launched in 2003 to foster the English abilities of Japanese nationals. We were asked to lead two sessions entitled ‘How to teach writing’ to mixed groups of junior and senior high school teachers of English. The sessions were a total failure. The participant teachers seemed reluctant and unmotivated; they were unresponsive and hesitant to participate in the activities; they did not want to speak in English. The sessions did not achieve even half that which had been planned. The sessions still remain as one of the most difficult and traumatic lessons that I have taught in my career as a teacher of English.

After completing the sessions, Hitomi and I were astounded and exhausted. On our way home, we slowly started to think about the reasons why the sessions did not go well. A string of questions revolved in our minds: Why weren’t the teachers motivated? Why didn’t the teachers care to know what was introduced? Why were the junior and senior high school teachers mixed in one group? Why did the Education Center<sup>1</sup> choose such a general topic, ‘How to teach writing’, for the diverse groups? Why were we, who were language teachers and

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<sup>1</sup> Education Center is placed in each prefecture under the administration of MEXT.

inexperienced in teacher training, leading the sessions?

My initial analysis of the failure of the sessions was that the Education Center, and we, the teacher trainers, were not well informed and prepared for the compulsory seminar conducted as part of the action plan, *Japanese with English Abilities*. The analysis of the MEXT document shows another underlying reason for the fiasco: the overemphasis on the improvement of English proficiency and the marginalisation of expertise of the in-service teachers. The message conveyed from the MEXT might have been that what matters most in English language teaching was the teacher's English proficiency, and that this takes precedence over other professional knowledge and skills. Would English language proficiency be most important for the teachers of English? I was wondering if there would be any ways to tap the expertise of the in-service participant teachers. Eventually, I came to find about reflective practice and embarked on a study to explore professional knowledge of in-service teachers through reflective practice as a tool for teacher development.

## **1.2 The aim of the thesis**

This study attempts to cast light on the incorporation of reflective practice as a development tool for in-service Japanese high school teachers of English in Japan. Through a qualitative multiple case study approach, the study asks the main research question, "How does reflective practice work as a professional development tool for in-service high school teachers of English in Japan?" In the examination of the main research question, the following subsets of questions are also addressed:

- What does it mean for the Japanese high school teachers of English to

reflect?

- How would reflective interventions be effective in helping Japanese high school teachers of English to reflect?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in reflection?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in engaging in the reflective interventions?

From September 2007 to March 2008, six public high school teachers of English engaged in reflective interventions: focus-group discussion, individual interviews, and journal writing. The study entails an in-depth analysis of reflection and the reflective interventions focusing on cultural as well as on individual perspectives. In the cultural perspective, sensitivity to specific cultural practices was taken into consideration so as not to influence *honne* (real intent) of the participants and to keep them from engaging in *hansei* (self-critical reflection).

### **1.3 The background of the action plan: *Japanese with English Abilities***

*Japanese with English Abilities* is an action plan to foster the English abilities of Japanese nationals, which was announced by MEXT in March 2003. The action plan had an unprecedented impact on the nation's extensive English language teaching sectors. The ultimate aim of the action plan was to foster "English language abilities for all Japanese people" (MEXT, 2003, p. 1): that is, abilities to exchange ideas with people from other countries and to express one's opinions clearly (MEXT, 2003). Among all the nationals, the focused target was junior and senior high school students (MEXT, 2003). In order to cultivate their English abilities, wide-ranging areas such as examinations of English and teachers of

English were involved, one of which was improvement of the teaching ability<sup>2</sup> of English teachers of junior and senior high schools. The seminar in which Hitomi and I were involved as teacher trainers was one of these schemes, which involved the mandatory participation of all public in-service junior and senior high school teachers of English in Japan in an intensive teacher training seminar once in the five years from 2003 to 2007 (MEXT, 2003), which involved the participation of approximately 60,000 in-service teachers (Takahashi, 2004). The compulsory seminar was also unprecedented in the speed by which it was enforced: i.e. five months on average after it was announced in March 2003. (“Eigo kyounen kennshu program: sono zenyuu, English teachers’ training programme: its overview”, 2003; Takahashi, 2004.)

The background of the action plan *Japanese with English Abilities* is analysed in this section to examine the significance of its rapid, extensive, and inclusive implementation. Incidents and reports of the time often throw light on understanding of background (Armitage, Bryant, Dunnill, Hammersley, Hayes, Hudson, Lawes, & Renwick, 2007), and analysis shows that the action plan was informed by recommendations from the business community – it was not motivated and initiated by the education community. Also the report of low TOEFL<sup>3</sup> scores and the criticism of high school English education urged the need for change.

One thrust for the implementation of the action plan was an urgent need to foster

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Teaching ability’ is the term used in the English translated version of the MEXT document.

<sup>3</sup> TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) is an English proficiency test required for non-native speaker of English to take when entering colleges in the U.S.

English proficiency of Japanese nationals, which was economically as opposed to educationally driven. It was a scheme to win international competition and to equip Japanese nationals with improvement in proficiency in English was acknowledged to be an urgent need (Goto Butler & Iino, 2005). MEXT proclaimed that there was a need to equip the nation with skills to succeed in international competition in trade, science, and entertainment; one such skill was a mastery of communicative proficiency in English (MEXT, 2003). Honna and Takeshita (2005) point out that the need to gain “a far higher level of English proficiency” (p. 363) became the norm after the announcement. Iiyoshi (2005) analyses that the post 1990s had been a time of long-term recession, of which education was seen as one cause and its improvement was regarded as crucial, leading to numerous recommendations proposed from major economic organisations. Various recommendations from the economic organisations led to MEXT’s policies for fostering English language (Tanaka, 2007).

Another driver was the report of the average TOEFL scores in Asia reported in 1998, where Japan ranked the lowest (Funabashi, 2000). The report had an enormous impact on the whole nation, a country where a large portion of the population is interested in, and embraces the importance of, gaining proficiency in English. For political, economic, and social reasons, a mastery of the language is deemed crucial for one’s success domestically as well as internationally. Thus, the lowest average TOEFL score was acknowledged as a pressing national issue that required substantial and immediate treatment.

A third driver was the recurrent criticism toward English language education in

Japan (Goto Butler & Iino, 2005), which is often associated with the grammar-translation method. With its ever-intense concentration on passing college entrance examinations, the culmination of English language education in the country has long been associated with training students to pass entrance examinations to high schools and universities (Goto Butler & Iino, 2005; Sasajima, 2008; Terauchi, 2001), which mainly focuses on testing the examinees' grammar knowledge and translation skills, and not particularly on listening and speaking proficiency. The urge to study English is escalated by the fact that English score distribution in entrance examinations is often higher than the scores of other subjects<sup>4</sup> (Goto Butler & Iino, 2005). The need for the emphasis on studying English for entrance examinations is strongly felt in high schools, as 50 per cent of high school students take entrance examinations to pursue higher education, for institutions such as universities and vocational schools (Sugimoto, 2003). In this context, English curricula in high school emphasises reading and grammar, rather than aural and oral skills (Goto Butler & Iino, 2005); and it was against this prevailing practice that MEXT's action plan clarified a firm position: to promote communicative abilities and to discourage teaching of grammar and translation in classrooms (MEXT, 2003):

In order to be able to “make use of English”, it is necessary not only to have a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to use English for the purpose of actual communication. Thus, in English classes, instruction mainly based on grammar and translation or teacher-centered classes are not recommended (p. 3).

The review of the time at which the seminar was planned suggests that the need for the mastery of the language felt by the nation, in particular from the business community, had left practising teachers out of the picture. The recommendation

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<sup>4</sup> Entrance examinations comprise various subjects such as English, Japanese language, history.



from the business community, the report of the results of the national average TOEFL scores, and the repeated criticism against English language all gave impetus to the implementation of the action plan. The competency-based seminar, where MEXT placed the overriding importance on the English language proficiency of English teachers, thus stems from political and economic motives rather than from the needs and opinions raised from educational motives.

#### **1.4 The teacher training seminar to “brush up” English**

The *approach* in the teacher training seminar seemed to have been also informed by the business community. It was competency-based, and reduced the pedagogical approach to ‘teaching ability’. Iiyoshi (2005) explains that prior to the recession of 1995, the business community interpreted, ‘ability’ as holistic, abstract, and potential ability, and evaluated it accordingly. After the recession, what appeared and was embraced was a results-oriented approach (Iiyoshi, 2005). In the seminar, what was overemphasised was English proficiency with ‘clearly observable results’, and what was ignored were pedagogical approaches that would most effectively promote effective learning in students. The predominant focus of English language proficiency was evident from the MEXT document, especially in the description of the seminar and the participation criteria.

The MEXT document undervalues pedagogical knowledge of teachers as it emphasised English language proficiency and there was no description of pedagogical approaches. The goals for the English teachers in MEXT document were stated as follows:

Almost all English teachers will acquire English skills (STEP<sup>5</sup> pre-first level, TOEFL<sup>6</sup> 550, TOEIC<sup>7</sup> 730 or over) and the teaching ability to be able to conduct classes to cultivate communication ability through the repetition of activities making use of English (MEXT, 2003, p. 7)<sup>8</sup>

In the document, 'a certain level of English ability' was described with the criteria of English proficiency tests commonly used in Japan. The description of the criteria, however, undermines the English proficiency of teachers to be measurable with the scores. Moreover, there is no description of what is meant by 'the teaching ability', which disregards the importance of expertise of teaching.

One of the few guidelines announced by MEXT in conducting the seminars - that English be used both by the trainers and the participant teachers - also highlights the focus on English proficiency and undermines the pedagogical approach of teachers. MEXT announced that it would assemble university teachers as teacher trainers, who would be able to lead the seminars exclusively

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<sup>5</sup> STEP test is a measurement of one's English proficiency. It is constructed by the Society for Testing English Proficiency Inc, The test comprises seven grades: 1st, pre-1st, 2nd, pre-2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th, the 1st being most challenging. Passing the STEP Pre-1st is said to be about the equivalent of TOEFL score of 550.

<sup>6</sup> TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language): the score range at the time was from 310 to 677. TOEFL score 550 is a score often required for a non-native speaker of English to enter college in the U.S.

<sup>7</sup> TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) is an assessment of communicative English ability. The score ranges from 10 to 990. TOEIC score of 730 is assumed to be approximately equivalent to TOEFL score of 550. The test is considered to measure one's English proficiency in business communication.

<sup>8</sup> In the same document, the goal is further elaborated: "Cultivating 'Japanese with English Abilities' is realized through the practice of teachers who have daily contact with children. The teaching methods of such teachers are extremely important. A certain level of English ability and teaching ability is required of English teachers to conduct classes which aim to develop proficiency in terms of vocabulary and grammar through the repetition of activities where English is used as a means of communication and to foster communication abilities in 'listening,' 'speaking,' 'reading,' and 'writing' through classes principally taught in English. Thus, research to analyze concretely the English and teaching abilities required of English teachers will be implemented" (MEXT 2003: 7).

in English to give participant teachers ample opportunities to be exposed to, and to use, English (Eigo Kyoin Kenshu Program: sono zenyou, English teachers' training programme: its overview, 2003). On the other hand, experience as a teacher trainer was not taken into consideration. This applied to the recruitment of Hitomi and I as teacher trainers: we were experienced in teaching classes in English at one of a few bilingual universities in Japan, but were quite novice as teacher trainers. Teaching on the English programme at the university, we were approved to be qualified as the sessions' teacher trainers, even though we do not teach teacher training courses at the university, and nor have we ever taught at junior or senior high schools.

The participation criteria also indicates the emphasis on the proficiency of English and the disregard for pedagogical approach. Participation in the seminar was required for all public junior and senior high school English teachers, regardless of their years of teaching. Exceptions were, however, made in some prefectures for teachers who had an experience of studying abroad or who scored more than 550 on TOEFL; these teachers were required to attend only half the seminar. This also shows that English proficiency was given precedence over the other pedagogical approaches which take into account of the teachers' expertise which they gained through years of teaching or through formal trainings.

In contrast to the emphasis on English proficiency, the undervaluing of the pedagogical approach and experiences of practising teachers is shown in the use of the translation 'teaching ability', with no explanation provided for this term.

'Ability' refers to a technique or a tip that teachers can learn instantly, as opposed to professional knowledge that teachers gained through their experiences as a student and a teacher. It could be argued that the idea of 'teaching ability' might have been influenced by the results-oriented approach. In this line of thought, the evaluation of 'teaching ability' aligns with the view of a rule-governed inquiry, which offers formulaic answers to a problem, and disregards the intricate phenomena that teachers face and the original solutions that they develop. Offering no account of 'teaching ability' appears to show that MEXT emphasises English proficiency and marginalises pedagogical approaches of teachers.

The overemphasis on the improvement of English language abilities implied that English proficiency was what matters most in the teaching of English, which might have led to the de-motivation of the participating teachers at our seminars. Firstly, participation at the MEXT seminar was mandatory. Secondly the seminar was focused on brushing up the teachers' English language proficiency which disregarded their pedagogical approaches and daily practices, which were more likely to involve grammar-translation to prepare students to pass entrance examinations. Their pedagogical approach and their practice were disregarded and what was focused on was the communication proficiency on English which was endorsed from the business community.

After the failure of the seminar, I sought a better way of leading it. English proficiency is an important quality for being a good teacher of English, but is not a sufficient prerequisite. I wondered how I, a teacher outside of their teaching

sphere, could contribute to making the seminar more effective for the participants: in-service teachers who taught at different schools in the prefecture. Some of them had longer experiences as teachers than I had, and all of them had more years of experience of teaching at junior or senior high schools. I was not fully utilising what Freeman and Johnson (1998) describe as the wisdom of teaching, which the participant teachers had accumulated through years of practice, and I was searching for ways to draw out these experiences. This led me to consider reflective practice as an alternative approach to teacher development.

### **1.5 Reflective practice: An alternative approach**

Reflective practice is generally understood as a way of achieving professional development through looking at one's own practice. It is explored and employed in this study as a development tool for teachers to tap the wisdom of teaching that they have accumulated through years of practice. Reflective practice will critically be discussed in the second chapter. Thus the concept is only briefly touched upon here. Reflective practice has been one of the mainstream underlying principles of good teaching practice and teacher education in the West (Farrell, 2001; Grushka, McLeod & Reynolds, 2005; Lee, 2007; Rarieya, 2005). Its benefits have been associated with enhancement of teachers' self-awareness; fostering autonomous teachers (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Gebhard, 1996; Rodgers, 2002); and promotion of long-term development (Johnson, 1999).

Reflective practice is still a rather novel approach in teacher development for English language teaching in Japan, especially for in-service teachers of English,

and its incorporation is more common in pre-service than in-service teacher training programmes. Among the 86 national universities, a modest number (12) have adopted reflective practice for pre-service teacher training courses (Japan Association of Universities of Education, 2006). For in-service teacher training seminars such as those mandated by MEXT, the number is not clear due to the lack of publications, however; according to a study by Jimbo, Hisamura and Yoffe (2009) on in-service teacher training, a case of reflective practice has not yet been reported. Unlike the 'lesson study' which has a long history and has been practised in some schools, reflective practice is still an underdeveloped endeavour carried out autonomously in various school settings.

That there is no agreed Japanese translation for 'reflective practice' also shows its novelty. The term 'reflective practice', has been translated into several expressions: '*hanseiteki jissen* (反省的実践)', 'action research (アクションリサーチ)', '*furikaeri* (振り返り)', '*shosatsu* (省察)', '*naisei* (内省)', and the direct use of the English term 'reflective practice (リフレクティブプラクティス)' into Japanese. The various translations indicate that the notion of reflective practice has not been firmly established in Japan. Moreover, it could be argued that the variety is an impediment to the understanding of the concept. This study has employed the phrase 'reflective practice' directly into Japanese: the English word 'reflective' is not often used as a loan word in the Japanese language, and the meaning of 'reflective' or 'reflection' is not commonly shared, thus it is free from an influence of strong connotations attached with the words. Also, the English word, 'practice,' is a loan word in Japanese, which is commonly used in the language to refer to 'an exercise', and carries a neutral meaning. By contrast,

*'hansei'* or *'hanseiteki'* denotes a self-critical connotation in Japanese; 'action research' is not equal to reflective practice; *'furikaeri'* is vague in its meaning; and *'shosatsu'* and *'naisei'* were not common terms when the study was embarked upon in 2007. The direct use of the phrase 'reflective practice' is free from the contamination of connotation and, thus, was more favourable than the other alternatives.

In the discussion of in-service teacher development in Japan, it is necessary to touch upon lesson study: a teacher development practice that has a long history, dating back to the early 1900s (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004). Lesson study is a group collaboration in making, demonstrating and observing a lesson (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006). It has received pronounced attention as a form of teacher development globally in recent years. The following process comprises the typical lesson study: 1) a group of teachers plans a lesson; 2) one participant teaches and the others observe the lesson; 3) the teachers meet to discuss and reflect on the observations of the lesson. The process can be completed at the third stage, but can also be continued further: 4) the group revises the lesson; 5) another member of the group teaches while the others observe; 6) the teachers meet to discuss and reflect on the revised lesson (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004). Through this process, "teachers develop pedagogical knowledge and skills and to set meaningful goals for the students' learning as well as teaching" (Lewis *et al.*, 2006, p. 224). Some literature is critical of lesson study: for example, Sato and Sato (2003) point out that even in schools where lesson study is practised, it is meant to hold a *hansei*<sup>9</sup> meeting but has

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<sup>9</sup> *Hansei* means self-critical reflection. The concept of *hansei* will be explicated in the

often relegated this to a formality, and thus it is difficult for lesson study to lead to professional development. It has also been pointed out that lesson study is not often conducive to spontaneous discussion among the teachers: in contrast, the collaboration of the lesson may be influenced by sustaining relationships among teachers (Senke, 2010), especially those with more power (Sato, 2006), where “politically strong teachers dominate the process, and the rest of the teachers are forced to conform to their ideas” (Saito, 2012, p. 5). Teachers interviewed in Senke’s study expressed that they could not criticise other teachers, because they wished to maintain good relationships; and this is shown by what Senke (2010) calls conforming collegiality- a comfortable, convenient area for teachers, where they do not ‘invade’ their teaching and show reluctance to have communication about their practice (Senke, 2010). This is in contrast to collaborative collegiality, where teachers aim to be creative and critical in their teaching practice, and where the mutual interest of collaborative collegiality is development as an autonomous professional.

Lesson study, which has been widely practised in Japan, was not considered as an alternative to the MEXT approach, as the aim of the present study is an attempt to explore wisdom and experiences of individual teachers. Thus, reflective practice was considered more appropriate. A group format of lesson study, as discussed above, may impede the exploration of individual teachers in the Japanese context.

### **1.6 Hansei: Self-critical reflection**

In the study of reflective practice conducted in the Japanese context, it is crucial



to introduce the concept of *hansei*, a concept deeply ingrained and valued in Japanese society (Rohlen, 1976 cited in Lewis, 2000). As discussed earlier, *hansei* is often used as a translation of the word 'reflection'. *Hansei* is defined in dictionaries as follows: 1) to look back at oneself in order to evaluate if one's speech or conduct was right or wrong, and 2) to look back at one's speech and conduct and to admit one's wrong doing (Digital daijisen, 2010; Meikyo kokugo jiten, 1995). Thus, there are two aspects to the meaning of *hansei*; and while it can lead to both positive and negative evaluation, the association with the negative evaluation or self-critical evaluation is more prevalent. Novakowski (2006) translates *hansei* as "self-critical reflection" (p. 2) and Rohlen and LeTendre (1996) "self-reflective criticism" (p. 8). Even after making a positive evaluation, it is pointed out that because of the concept of *hansei*, the Japanese consider that "there is always room for improvement" (Taylor, Lee, Moberly, & Wang, 2010, p. 133). Fukuzawa (1994) describes *hansei* as a social norm, which contains "overtones of self-criticism and confession measured against the yard-stick of socially defined norms of behaviour and emotions" (p. 75).

For a person brought up in Japan, *hansei* is regarded as a fundamental skill for social and personal development (White & LeVine, 1986) and is "emphasized and esteemed" (Lewis, 2000, p. 27). Lewis (2000) describes the uniqueness of the concept:

self-critique may have a decidedly different emotional meaning when it is established and valued as it seems to be in Japan; identifying one's shortcomings and soliciting and gracefully accepting criticism may be ways of showing competence, not failures to be avoided. (pp. 26-27)

*Hansei* is thus witnessed in various social settings throughout one's life (White &

LeVine, 1986). It is “subsequently found in high schools, university clubs, and company training programs” (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996, p. 7), and “a central practice in Japanese schools” (Taylor, Wang, & Ogawa, 2005, p. 79), with *hansei* meetings when an event is completed. Students who have conducted misdeeds are also asked to write *hansei* essays as “both a disciplinary tool to encourage errant students to repent their misdeeds and a means of socializing children to appropriate feelings and emotions” (Lewis, 2000, p. 27). Lewis (2000) further describes the effect of *hansei* essays: “the scripts for apologies, self-criticism, and self-reproach are psychologically salient for many Japanese” (p. 27). White and LeVine (1986) point out that “Children are encouraged to practice *hansei* to discover their weaknesses” (p. 59). Taylor *et al.* (2005) also point out the self-disciplinary nature of *hansei*: “By using this technique, students overcome their shortcomings by first acknowledging them” (p. 80). *Hansei*, thus, is used to raise Japanese children’s standards both at home and at school (Kristof, 1997).

In spite of the negative connotation of the word, the act of *hansei* is esteemed, as a sign of maturity. Sato (1994) explains that *hansei* involves not only contemplating one’s misdeeds, but also making a conscious effort to improve one’s morals. Setting goals for self-improvement after *hansei* is seen as a “quest for character improvement [that] is close to being a national religion” (Rohlen, 1976, p. 128, in Lewis, 2000). As *hansei* is so pervasive in the Japanese context, in this study, the emphasis was placed on the participants not confusing *hansei* with reflection. The concept of *hansei* will be discussed pertinent to reflection in the analysis chapter on reflection (Chapter 5) and in the concluding chapter (Chapter 8).

### **1.7 *Tatemae* and *honne*: Japanese conversational conventions**

In an analysis and discussion of a study which involves communication among Japanese, it is also vital to introduce and explain *tatemae* and *honne*, common communication conventions in Japan. *Tatemae*, a term which derives from the word 'a roof ridge' in Japanese, refers to a communication style that represents an official and public pro forma, which "involves form, the formal principles of polite behaviour accepted by all Japanese to insure harmony and good feelings" (Hall & Hall, 1987, p. 118). *Tatemae* is sometimes associated with dishonesty as it appears to "disguise' the real self under a conventional 'mask'" (Nae, 2003, p. 41): however, it should be understood more appropriately as a result of placing precedence of others' expectations over one's own. Thus, one disguises one's real intent (*honne*). *Honne*, the opposite of *tatemae*, means a conversational style that represents "substance, your real intent, and your personal feelings, which are rarely divulged" (Hall & Hall, 1987, p. 118). Seki (2004) explains *honne* as "the real self", which reveals "dissent or true underlying motives" (Seki, 2004, p. 12). *Honne*, the real intent, is expressed and conveyed in a secure environment among the interlocutors. As Nae (2003) explains, "the private component of the Japanese self is less conspicuous and is allowed to surface only in very intimate moments and places" (p. 41).

During initial phases of encounters among individuals, *tatemae* is expected to precede *honne*. *Tatemae* forms the basis of the communication; it is the foundation on which *honne* can be built or expressed (Doi, 2005). Miyanaga (1991) illustrates an initial encounter between individuals in Japanese society:

Interaction rituals begin with mutual expressions that are culturally prescribed when two parties meet; they develop from occasional (i.e.,

formal) to frequent (i.e., intimate) exposure of honest feelings. Their particularities of the moral basis of interaction rituals is socially established and agreed upon. Honest feelings, however, are by definition, personal. Premature expression of honest expectations can incite a strongly negative response from the other person in the relationship (p. 89).

*Tatemae* functions as “a valuable license that secures them (individuals) membership in a coveted group” (Doi, 2005, p. 82). Once the membership is established through *tatemae*, more open discourse, (*honne*), can be allowed to develop. *Tatemae*, thus may be described as a prerequisite for *honne* in interpersonal discourses in Japan.

The concept of public and formal representation of self, *tatemae*, and private and informal self, *honne*, probably is a universal concept observed in any culture. However, its significance in the communication style of Japanese is characterised by interlocutors’ awareness of, emphasis on, attitude towards, and expectation of *tatemae* and *honne* in various social settings (Naito & Gielen, 1992). The understanding of and the adaptation of *tatemae* and *honne* is seen as “a sign of maturity in Japanese culture when a person fully understands both sides in other people while being able to communicate *tatemae* or *honne* depending on the felt intricacies of a situation” (Naito & Gielen, 1992, p. 163). The understanding of *tatemae* and *honne* is considered “crucial to being a member of Japanese society” (Seki, 2004, p. 12).

The communication style also influences discourse in research. Seki expresses that *tatemae* and *honne* are extremely pervasive in discourse among Japanese, and that this may influence responses in research contexts. In conducting a

study with Japanese university students, Seki incorporated individual interviews as a supplementary method to group discussion with the assumption that participants do not always express their 'genuine' views in group settings. Seki's assertion that, "The form used by Japanese people speaking in public is almost always *tatemae*, which always springs from the perceived attitudes or feelings of the group" (Seki, 2004, p. 45), may be an overstatement, but shows the customary practice of *tatemae* in Japan. With its prevalence in the culture, it is important to take the conversational conventions of *tatemae* and *honne* into consideration in research. That is not to influence but to draw out the *honne* of the participants. The analysis chapter on the reflective interventions (Chapter 5) will discuss the effect of *tatemae* and *honne* on the reflective interventions.

### **1.8 Kotodama: Word spirit**

The concept of *kotodama*, which can be translated as 'word spirit' (*koto* means word and *dama* means spirit), denotes the significance of putting one's inner private thoughts into words. In Japanese society, 'what is expressed' and 'what is not expressed' has a significant difference because what is expressed means what is shared with others, and is thus public.

The original meaning of *kotodama* is that verbalisation of inner thoughts leads to mystical power and is actualised (Hara, 2001). The idea of *kotodama* is often associated with the Shintoism, but this thesis only looks at the concept of *kotodama* in communication conventions among the Japanese. The origin of the concept of *kotodama* dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries; it was mentioned in one of the poems written in *A Collection of a Myriad Leaves* (万葉集), the oldest anthology of poetry in Japan. Miller (1982) explains the concept of *kotodama* as

follows: “once anything is verbalized, it must necessarily be carried out; consequently, words having reference to anything that cannot be carried out are not lightly uttered” (pp.133-134). This belief has been observed in the use and avoidance of certain sounds and words in the Japanese language; on occasion, the verbalisation of some words that may bring about misfortune has been avoided.

The influence of *kotodama* in the communication practice of Japanese is still observed in the present day. Even though it is no longer a common belief that what is uttered will be actualised through mystical power, people still feel as if what is uttered may gain the power to be actualised (Hara, 2001). Hara’s *kotodama* belief model explains the meaning of an expression of one’s inner thoughts:

Person A consciously has his or her thoughts, ideas, and feelings; and immediately, Internalized Message A is created from them. Before encoding Internalized Message A, Person A asks himself or herself whether this message should be encoded or not, at the stage of internal self-feedback. After Person A has decided to encode the Internalized Message A, a verbalized externalized Message A is produced. The words included in this verbalized Message A are believed to have the power to make the verbalized issues happen or be actualized, whether the message is intentional or unintentional. Internal self-feedback therefore plays an important role in choosing which messages will be verbalized, in order to avoid doing ill or undesirable *kotoage*<sup>10</sup>. (p. 285)

What is relevant in this thesis is Person A’s choice in deciding what is to be encoded, or verbalised; in other words, what is decided to be actualised and what could be made public. What is made public adds significance to what is to be actualised. The analysis chapter of the reflective intervention (Chapter 5) will be discussed with the concept of *kotodama*.

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<sup>10</sup> *Kotonage* means to say something in order to realise it through the power of *kotodama*.

### 1.9 Methodology borrowing

Incorporation of reflective practice, which originates from and was developed in the West, to the Japanese context is presumed to be a form of borrowing: the “conscious adoption in one context of policy observed in another” (Phillips & Ochs, 2004, p. 774). As is the study involves methodology borrowing, it emphasises cultural sensitivity to specific cultural practices, which means taking into account of *tatemae* and *honne*, the Japanese communicative conventions: especially so as not to influence *honne* of the participants and not to involve the participants in *hansei*, but in reflection. With such sensitivity, this study explores professional knowledge of individual teachers through reflective practice. As pointed out by Silverman (1993), cultural sensitivity is one aspect of sensitivity that needs to be taken into consideration in research.

It has been contested that borrowing a methodology across different cultures has an adverse effect on teachers and students. Canagarajah (1999) claims, “Methods are not value-free instruments of solely pragmatic import. They are ideological in embodying partisan assumptions about social relations and cultural values. Methods can reproduce these values and practices wherever they are being used” (1999, p. 104) – and moreover warns that “this dependency on imported products has tended to undermine the alternative styles of thinking, learning, and interacting preferred by local communities” (p. 104). Taking into account the nature of reflective practice in Japan, the concerns described by Canagarajah may not be entirely applicable to the appropriation of reflective practice into the context of Japan. Holliday (1994) elaborates how various methodologies can be appropriated into different (non-Western, non-native

English) context, among which reflective practice is an approach that can be adapted to be culturally sensitive.

Furthermore, reflective practice may be effortlessly introduced in the Japanese context as it is regarded as being an 'Eastern' approach by some scholars. Clift and Houston (1990) claim:

reflection can take an Eastern as well as Western approach, to recognize its long and distinguished history, and to recognize that it is not a method nor a technique but a way of life, then one begins to sense the paucity of thought that has too often gone into the conceptualizations of many teacher-preparation programs (p. 212).

Tremmel (1993) states that in Western society, individuals understand reflective practice from the concepts and epistemology with which they are familiar; meaning that they remain captives of technical rationality. He then contends that reflective practice can be understood more profoundly with a different focus of mind, specifically, Zen. 'Paying attention', claims Tremmel, is a crucial aspect in reflective practice as mindfulness is in Zen;

I am beginning to see that paying attention, not only to what is going on around us but also within us, is not only a necessary step towards mindfulness and Zen, but is also the better part of reflective practice (Tremmel, 1993, p. 447).

Korghagen and Vasalos (2010) and Johns (2005) also point out 'mindfulness' as the common aspect both of reflection and Zen Buddhism. Reflective practice may thus be accepted rather effortlessly into the cultural context from which Zen has originated.

Given the contemplative nature of reflective practice, it may not face the challenges and resistance in Japan of which Canagarajah warns, yet it remains



still crucial to be sensitive to the cultural context. In this study, it means to be sensitive to the communicative conventions of *tatemae* and *honne* or not to influence but to draw out the *honne* of the participants, and to keep them from self-critical reflection (*hansei*).

### **1.10 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is observed in the aspects of teacher development that are under-researched in Japan: the use of reflective practice for teacher development of English language teachers; the employment of qualitative research in teacher development; the participants of the study to be all in-service teachers; and my own position of being outside the teaching spheres of the study's participants. The significance of the study is also given by the original focus of the research and its findings; the analysis of the influence of the Japanese cultural conventions of *tatemae/honne* and *hansei* in reflective practice; and the results of the study which showed that reflective practice gave greater benefit to the novice teachers than their experienced counterparts.

Reflective practice is still a novel notion in Japan where a few case studies in the field of EFL have been reported. The study thus explores the incorporation of reflective practice through considering the influence of *hansei* and endeavouring not to influence *honne* of the participants in the employment of the interventions: interviews, focus group discussions, and journal writing. Secondly, qualitative study in teacher development is not yet a dominant approach to research in Japan (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004); much research conducted in teacher development follows the quantitative tradition which consists of questionnaire surveys. Thirdly, there are few studies in the field of teacher development which

constitute exclusively of in-service teachers as participants as time and scheduling constraints with case studies often impede in-service teachers from participating in such studies. The findings from this study are therefore valuable in learning about the development of in-service teachers. My position of holding an etic perspective, being outside of the participants' teaching context, is also a notable aspect of the study. My experiences as a teacher trainer for the MEXT seminar informed me about the curriculum of the teacher training seminar in various prefectures and of the contexts in which in-service high school teachers of English worked. My position as an EFL teacher at a university, who does not have an experience of teaching at high school, also provides an etic view. Recognition of the researcher as an outsider may create a less intimidating or vulnerable environment for the participants to express their views (Merriam, 1998). Moreover, this study was conducted not as a part of a course or seminar, but was based solely upon interaction between the participants and me, which signifies that the relationships and interests in the study were purely personal. This aspect allowed for frank and candid expression on the parts of the participants.

The study's aim to take into consideration Japanese cultural conventions in reflective practice is unique. There has not been a study which refers to those cultural conventions in reflective practice. Through the analysis of reflective practice with the Japanese conventions, the thesis finds that the concept of *hansei* influences that of reflection and of development. The thesis also suggests the promise of reflective interventions that it can be a forum not only to express, but also to exchange, *honne*.

The findings of the study are of another significance. In contrast to the arguments presented in the literature, the study found that reflective practice was more beneficial to novices than to experienced teachers. They shaped their professional identity and knowledge based on students' perspectives.

The novel and unique aspects of the study position this as significant research that will contribute to a body of knowledge of reflective practice for in-service teacher development in the context of Japan.

### **1.11 Overview of the thesis**

This introduction chapter has presented the essential background in understanding the context of the study. First it presents a critical analysis of the background of the teacher training seminar administered by MEXT under the action plan, *Japanese with English Abilities*. It argues that the aim of the teacher training seminar was informed by the business community for Japanese nationals to become more competitive internationally and the focus was mainly on improving the English language proficiency of English teachers, which marginalised the knowledge, expertise and experiences of the in-service teachers. The chapter also touches upon concepts relevant to the discussion of reflective practice in the Japanese context, such as *hansei*, lesson study, *tatema*e and *honne*, and *kotodama*.

The second chapter presents a critical review of the literature of the central themes of this thesis: teacher knowledge, reflection and reflective practice. The chapter discusses what is meant by teacher knowledge, as part of the study's intention to explore the participants' teacher knowledge through reflective

practice. It then introduces the influence of Schön, one of the originators of reflective practice, on the current body of literature: that is, that ‘tacit’ knowledge has become professional knowledge, teachers are seen as professionals, and reflection is regarded as a form of development. The chapter then develops a discussion of reflective practice by presenting some critical views, for example that reflection is a vague concept with various frameworks and processes, and that reflection has a vague focus and subjective nature. It also introduces an argument that reflective practice may not be as effective for novice teachers as for experienced teachers.

Chapter three presents a discussion of methodology: the approach the study has taken, the reflective interventions employed in the study, the process of inviting the participants, and the development of the reflective interventions. The chapter explains the rationale for employing the interventions in the study: the focus group discussion, journal writing, and individual interviews. These interventions were employed as a forum for reflection as well as data collection. The chapter goes on to describe the development of the interventions in the processes of the study and the accommodation of sensitivity to specific cultural practices, giving particular focus to the interviews. The chapter argues the importance of taking into consideration of *tatemae/honne* in the reflective interventions, and illustrates the in-depth data analysis procedure.

Chapter four presents an extensive analysis of reflection: what it means to reflect through the psychological perspectives, that is, through layers of awareness. It first presents my definition of reflection, which is ‘looking back at one’s practice

and ideas in order to gain new perspectives, such as *reinterpretation* and *awareness*' (which I identify as two types of reflection). In addition to reflection, the study identified 'precursors to reflection': *description*, *reconfirmation*, *hansei*. The difference between the reflection and 'precursors to reflection' is that reflection is accompanied with changes whereas 'precursors to reflection' are not. The chapter illustrates each 'precursor to reflection' and reflection with examples from the data. The chapter argues that reflection is not an abrupt, independent entity which is prompted by one particular intervention, but a continuum that comprises different types of 'precursors to reflection' and of reflection. The types of 'precursors to reflection' and reflection identified in this chapter will be used in the discussion of reflection in the analysis chapters, 5, 6, and 7.

Chapter five presents a critical analysis of the reflective interventions employed in the study. The chapter examines the effectiveness of each intervention as a reflective tool, highlighting both cultural and individual factors. The concepts of *tatema*, *honne*, and *kotodama* are used to explain reflective interventions in the Japanese context. The chapter discusses the importance of revisiting reflective intervention for the development of reflection. It was found that one single reflective intervention does not often lead to reflection, but one's engagement in more than one reflective intervention was conducive to developing reflection.

Chapter six focuses on the analysis of the data gained from the three novice teachers, Ken, Kyoko, and Sara in terms of what they gained in their engagement in reflective practice. The chapter argues that reflective practice, as opposed to some arguments in the existing literature, was more beneficial for the

novice teachers than the experienced teachers. The benefits of reflective practice were observed, in that reflective practice helped them to examine and shape their teacher knowledge and professional identity, which was based on their perspectives as students. These cases also suggest a need for the novice to have a mentor for further development.

Chapter seven discusses the analysis of the data gained from the three experienced teachers, Yoko, Naomi, and Miki, in terms of what they gained through the engagement in reflective practice. Their cases were more variable than those of the novices, but the chapter argues that reflective practice engaged the experienced teachers to confirm teacher knowledge rather than to question it. The chapter suggests that the exploration of the experienced teachers was more likely to stay within their 'comfort zones', that is, what is comfortable for them. Their cases suggest the need for more interaction and intervention from others for further professional development.

Chapter eight presents the conclusions that I have drawn from the study's findings. It discusses the effectiveness of reflective practice, and examines reflective practice in terms of what reflection, development, and reflective interventions mean in the Japanese context through the prism of what is culturally specific and what is universal, in that is, common to all cultures or transcends culture. The universal aspects can be seen as some types of reflection and reflective process: on the other hand, it was found that the concept of *hansei* underlies the concept of reflection and development. The roles of the reflective interventions in the Japanese context were found to be bringing the

participants out of *honne* as well as enhancing reflection. The chapter also argues that for further development, reflective practice, which tends to be individually focused, needs to be facilitated with interaction and intervention from others.

### **1.12 Conclusion**

This introductory chapter has laid the foundations of the background knowledge necessary for the study. The unsuccessful sessions at the MEXT teacher training seminar prompted me to adopt reflective practice as an alternative tool for teacher development. This chapter has argued that, in contrast to the action plan, *Japanese with English Abilities*, the high proficiency of English language is not the only quality of being a good English teacher. The analysis of the background of the action plan revealed that it was informed mainly by criticism from the business community about English language teaching in junior and senior high schools, and that the focus was placed on the improvement of English proficiency of the English teachers. The thesis argues that the competency-based agenda of the teacher training seminars, however, marginalised the wisdom and the years of experiences of the participant teachers. In this study, reflective practice was adopted as a way to tap wisdom and experiences of in-service teachers.

The incorporation of reflective practice into the Japanese context is a form of methodology borrowing. Even though reflective practice is an approach considered to be sensitive to various cultures, it is still important to pay attention to the context of the Japanese culture, by taking into account of the communicative conventions of *tatemae* and *honne* and the concept of *hansei*.

The next chapter elaborates on the discussion of reflective practice as an alternative approach to teacher development.



## Chapter 2 Development of reflective practice

### 2.1 Introduction

As introduced in Chapter 1, this study applied the principle of reflective practice to an exploration of teacher knowledge for the professional development of teachers as an alternative to the MEXT focus on language competency as 'teacher training'. Reflective practice in teacher development is generally understood as professional development through an examination of one's own ideas and experiences in teaching. This chapter aims to discuss the theoretical background of reflective practice. It first introduces an origin of reflective practice, through Schön's (1983, 1987) concept, and goes on to discuss the influence of Schön's elaboration of reflective practice on teacher development. On impact of Schön's ideas was the emergence of a body of research which values 'teacher knowledge', that is, teachers' expertise and experience; it regards 'tacit' knowledge as professional knowledge, teachers as professionals, and considers the concept of reflection as a legitimate vehicle for professional development. The chapter then reviews common criticisms of reflective practice raised in the literature, which question the validity of reflection as a development tool. Some argue that reflection is a vague concept; that its models, frameworks, and process are too diverse; and that its focus is sometimes unclear. There are, for example, differing views on how reflection might be developed. The chapter also touches upon the claim that reflective practice tends to be too subjective and introduces the view that reflective practice may not be as effective for novice teachers as their experienced colleagues. The chapter also discusses the relationship between reflective practice and *tatemaie/honne*<sup>11</sup>, and reflection and

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<sup>11</sup> *Tatemaie* refers to an official and public face. *Honne* means the real intent of a person.

*hansei*<sup>12</sup>; issues that are essential to the study.

The main research question posed by the study is, “How does reflective practice work as a professional development tool for in-service high school teachers of English in Japan?” The following subsets of questions are also investigated:

- What does it mean for the Japanese high school teachers of English to reflect?
- How would reflective interventions be effective in helping Japanese high school teachers of English to reflect?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in reflection?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in engaging in the reflective interventions?

The thesis is based on an empirical study which analyses reflection by the Japanese high school teachers of English. The thesis attempts to provide a new insight into how reflective practice might be integrated into professional teacher development in Japan. The study attempts to establish a definition of reflection and identify types of reflection. The study is also concerned with how teachers in Japan might successfully draw on aspects of reflective practice for their own professional development.

## **2.2 An origin of reflective practice: Schön’s view**

Although reflective practice has its origins in Dewey’s notions of “reflective thought” (1933, p. 5), it is Schön’s elaboration of the ‘reflective practitioner’ (1983; 1987) that has had an important impact on teacher development in the

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<sup>12</sup> *Hansei* is often translated as self-critical reflection.

West. As we have seen in Chapter 1, reflective practice is a less familiar concept in Japan. This thesis focuses upon the concept of reflective practice developed in the last 30 years, and thus discusses Schön's, rather than Dewey's, views. In the 1980s, Schön's seminal works, *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) and *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987), offered the possibility of teachers being more involved in their own development through exploring their practice, which has now become a major underlying philosophy of professional development in the West (Farrell, 2001; Grushka *et al.*, 2005; Lee, 2007).

Schön argued the importance of incorporating reflection as the key element in professional development. He claimed that higher education did not prepare students to solve problems in the real world of practice, which were not straight forward but unique, and comprise value conflict which defies solutions by technical rationality - that is, the application of rule-governed inquiry. In the real world, it is often difficult even to frame what the problem is. Schön (1987) called this situation "the indeterminate zones of practice" (p.6), referring to a new, unknown situation where existing solutions do not apply. Schön (1983, 1987) contended that what was necessary in the indeterminate zones of practice was not solutions developed through technical rationality but those developed through the artistry of professionals - that is, reflection.

Schön's (1983, 1987) concept presented two types of reflection, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Schön emphasised reflection-in-action as professional artistry; however, it was reflection-on-action that took root in teacher development, and the term 'reflection' in the present day

mostly refers to reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action is an on-the-spot experiment to improve the situation, with which experienced practitioners engage in the middle of a performance. It is initiated when the practitioners meet indeterminate zones of practice, which cannot be solved either through an application of theory or their “repertoire of expectations, images, and techniques” (Schön, 1983, p.60), what Schön calls knowing-in-action.

Knowing-in-action is an important concept in Schön’s reflection. It is commonly understood as one’s wisdom, or the know-how of one’s practice, which is formed, shaped, and developed through numerous encounters with various incidents. Thus, knowing-in-action is internalised and tacit, and one cannot always articulate what it is. Experienced practitioners perform their knowing-in-action without conscious deliberation and thinking. When they meet an unexpected situation, which is not fully accountable with their knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action is prompted. That is, experienced practitioners frame the situation in a different way, or reframe the situation, and try out an on-the-spot experiment in order to improve the situation. Schön (1987) described this process thus: “we think up and try out new actions intended to explore the newly observed phenomena, test out tentative understandings of them, or affirm the moves we have invented to change things for the better” (p. 27). Thus, through reflection-in-action, the practitioners make sense of and cope with the indeterminate zones of practice while in action.

The other type of reflection, reflection-on-action, means that practitioners think back to a past event and explore how their knowing-in-action was applied in the

event. Unlike reflection-in-action, which takes place when one can still make a difference to the event, reflection-on-action does not allow one to change the event. Thus, reflection-on-action, the examination and understanding of one's knowing-in-action after the event, helps one to improve future actions.

Critics have argued that reflection-in-action is improbable during teaching (Eraut, 1994; Johansson & Kroksmark, 2004; Johns, 2005; Wieringa, 2011). It is pointed out that Schön's examples of reflection-in-action are based on the practice of music and architecture, situations that allow one to pause and think about one's practice; but reflection-in-action in teaching is not realistic during a lesson when teachers are in front of students (Johansson & Kroksmark, 2004; Johns, 2005; Newman, 1996; Roberts, 1998; Wieringa, 2011). Coming from the background of language teaching, Farrell (2007) points out that if one engages in reflection-in-action during teaching, it may paralyse teaching and lead to a dysfunctional classroom. Eraut (1994), whose background is in research on professional development, and Roberts (1998), whose background is in language teacher education, claim that questioning one's knowing-in-action requires that teachers have some time away from teaching. In contrast, reflection-on-action is regarded as more probable and realistic. Farrell (2007) argues that reflection-on-action is seen as a beneficial meta-cognitive activity where reflection does not take place in a limited time period, such as during teaching. In this study, when I use the word 'reflection', it refers to reflection-on-action unless otherwise stated. This study will critically analyse how reflection-on-action works as a development tool for Japanese high school teachers of English.

### **2.3 The influence of reflective practice**

Reflective practice has been one of the mainstream underlying influences of good teaching practice and teacher education in the United Kingdom and the United States (Farrell, 2001; Grushka *et al.*, 2005; Lee, 2007; Rarieya, 2005). Schön's concept of reflection and knowing-in-action exerted tremendous influence on teacher development, generating a whole body of commentary, research, and certain key ideas in terms of what is professional knowledge. It led to tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1957) - an ineffable, implicit and unarticulated knowledge, what Schön (1983) called "knowing more than we can say" (p. 51) - to be recognised as an important element of teachers' professional knowledge. It also led to reflection becoming a legitimate form of professional development, and practising teachers being regarded as professionals.

#### **2.3.1 Tacit knowledge as professional knowledge**

The concept of knowing-in-action influenced the understanding of teachers' tacit knowledge as professional knowledge. Shulman (1988), whose background is in professional education, points out that Schön reminded researchers of the importance of tacit knowledge. A substantial body of literature presents extensive discussion of teachers' tacit knowledge which is expressed in various terms: practical knowledge (Calderhead, 1988; Elbaz, 1983), craft knowledge (Zeichner, Tabachinick & Densmore, 1987), practical theory (Handal & Lauvas, 1987), personal knowledge (Eraut, 1994), personal theory (Sendan & Roberts, 1998), personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995), teachers' professional knowledge (Banks, Leach & Moon, 1999) and teacher cognition (Borg, 2003).

The various terms denote differences in the constitution of teachers' knowledge, especially if it entails just experiential knowledge, or also propositional knowledge. This thesis uses the term "teacher knowledge", the most commonly used term in the professional development discourse (Borg, 2006), as a super ordinate term to encompass both propositional and experiential knowledge (See Figure 1). I regard teacher knowledge as encompassing propositional knowledge and experiential knowledge, such as contextual knowledge, and beliefs and values. This is because it is difficult to identify the source of teachers' knowledge; whether it derives from propositional knowledge they read in the literature or from experiences they had in a classroom. This interpretation is widespread and held by scholars such as Banks *et al.* (1999), Borg (2006), Connelly and Clandinin, (1995), Elbaz (1983), Heilbronn, (2008), Johnson and Golombek, (2003), Mann, (2005), Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer, (2001). The other interpretation deems teachers' knowledge to comprise mostly experiential knowledge, and does not include propositional knowledge. Knowing-in-action, as Schön originally meant, falls under this interpretation.

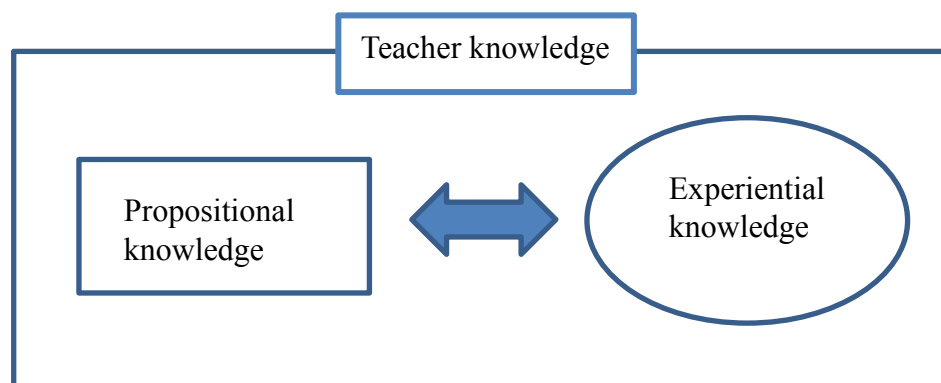


Figure 1: Teacher knowledge

Schön's concept of knowing-in-action led tacit teacher knowledge to receive pronounced attention. Just as with knowing-in-action, teacher knowledge was

considered to inform one's practice and form the basis of one's interpretation of events in the classroom (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Woods, 1996). It is also argued that tacit teacher knowledge exerts substantial influence throughout one's career as a teacher (Borg, 2003). However influential, it is regarded that one is not often aware of one's teacher knowledge, as it is dynamic (Banks *et al.*, 1999; Borg, 2006), complex (Banks *et al.*, 1999), and tacit (Borg, 2006). It is claimed that becoming aware of such tacit teacher knowledge is a prerequisite for change (Cox, 2005; Farrell, 2001; William & Burden, 1997). Reflective practice is regarded as a vehicle for becoming conscious of tacit teacher knowledge.

Teacher knowledge is said to be dynamic as it is modified and reshaped through interactions with various types of situations to improve its adaptability, and also through the application of propositional knowledge to one's experience: Wallace (1991) terms this 'experiential knowledge'. Johnson (2006) describes this dynamic characteristic of teacher knowledge using Kennedy's (1999) 'expert knowledge', and shows that teacher knowledge is transformed as teachers link 'expert knowledge' to their own 'experiential knowledge'. Mann (2005), who has a background in teacher education, adds one's teaching context to his explanation, and illustrates that a dynamic reshaping of teacher knowledge is constantly taking place between expert knowledge, experiential knowledge and also one's teaching context. Johnson and Golombek (2003), whose background is in teacher development, state that the benefit of reshaping teacher knowledge is that this itself is a learning experience for teachers, as one gains new understanding from the process of reshaping. Coming from a background in ESL



teaching, Borg (2003) points out that the shaping of teacher knowledge is initiated when one is a learner: “prior learning experiences shape teachers’ cognitions and instructional decisions” (p. 88). Borg (2003) also argues that this reshaping continues throughout one’s career: through numerous encounters with various events, teacher knowledge is always under examination and revision. It is pointed out that teacher knowledge is said to be dynamic and exerts substantial influence on one’s career. However, a question needs to be raised as to whether teacher knowledge is dynamic for all teachers and whether any aspect of teacher knowledge is more likely to be dynamic or static than others. Moreover, one might question the influence of individual disposition and the context in which teachers are working.

The second distinct characteristic of teacher knowledge is that it is complex, as it is a combination of various types of knowledge, such as propositional knowledge, experiential knowledge, local situated knowledge, and one’s beliefs and assumptions (Banks et al., 1999; Borg, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin 1995; Elbaz, 1983; Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Mann 2005). The various types of knowledge that teachers gain are integrated and intertwined. Banks *et al.* (1999) illustrate the combination of various types of teacher’s professional knowledge, “a complex amalgam of past knowledge, experiences of learning, a personal view of what constitutes ‘good’ teaching and belief in the purposes of the subject” (p. 95). With the use of the term ‘amalgam’, they emphasise the importance of the interaction of various types of teacher knowledge.

The body of literature describes the complex and intricate nature of teacher

knowledge, which is a combination of various types of knowledge. Borg (2006) explains the amalgam of the knowledge with the term “teacher cognition,” and describes its complexity as a “complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work” (p. 272). He explains that teacher cognition is shaped through teachers’ prior experiences of language learning, and forms the basis of one’s conceptualisation of teaching and learning, (Borg, 2003). Verloop *et al.* (2001) point out that the combination of teacher knowledge as “components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions, and intuitions are inextricably intertwined” (p. 446). Tsui (2003), coming from the background of English language teaching, describes teacher knowledge as a melding of knowledge from various domains, which are “at the heart of teaching” (p. 58). Kennedy’s (1999) concept of ‘expertise’ is similar to the concept of teacher knowledge: she describes ‘expertise’ to be a blend of expert knowledge and experiential knowledge.

Numerous contributions to the literature of teacher knowledge analyse the complex combination of the various types of knowledge (see Figure 2, below). The different components can be encapsulated as follows: subject knowledge, context knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and one’s beliefs and value (Banks *et al.*, 1999; Borg, 2003; Elbaz, 1983; Mann, 2005; Shulman, 1987). Subject knowledge refers to the knowledge of the content of the subject one is teaching in a lesson (Banks *et al.*, 1999; Elbaz, 1983; Shulman, 1987), for example, knowledge of the English language, which entails the knowledge of grammar, syntax, lexicon, and usage of the English language as well as the knowledge of

history and culture of the Anglosphere countries. Proficiency in the English language, which applies to proficiency of the four skills of the language - listening, reading, speaking, and writing - also falls under subject knowledge. Context knowledge (Banks *et al.*, 1999; Elbaz, 1983; Shulman, 1987), or situated knowledge, refers to knowledge pertinent to where one teaches: it encompasses knowledge of curriculum, teaching materials, testing materials, institutions with its peculiar culture, overt and covert rules and roles, and learners and their characteristics. It also includes knowledge of the policy, the governance, and the finance of the district and the state. Pedagogical knowledge or formal educational scholarship (Banks *et al.*, 1999; Elbaz, 1983; Shulman, 1987) refers to established theories and approaches to teaching. In English language teaching, the task-based approach and communicative language teaching would be such examples. Pedagogical knowledge comprises part of the teaching course at universities and is also often touched upon in teacher development seminars.

One's beliefs, values, and assumptions comprise another important component of teacher knowledge. Although it is not possible to explore this area in depth, a number of issues are related to this study. Kagan (1992) defines teacher beliefs as "unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught" (p. 65). It is claimed that teacher beliefs and values exert tremendous influences on teachers' decision and actions. They are claimed to influence teachers' planning procedure (Woods, 1996) and their actions in the classroom (Korthagen, 2004; Pajares 1992; Tsui, 2003; Woods, 1996). However, it is said that teachers' beliefs and what they actually do in the

classrooms are often different. Becoming aware of such discrepancy is said to be a prerequisite for change (Farrell, 2007). Johnson and Golebeck (2002) argue the importance of looking into one's beliefs in teacher development by stating, "professional development emerges from a process of reshaping teachers' existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods, or materials on teachers" (p.2). Borg (2003) is critical of professional development that ignores the need to review one's beliefs; as discussed in Chapter 1, the failure to engage the participant teachers. Tann (1993) argues that in order to prepare students to teach, it is necessary for them to clarify their assumptions. Ashdown (2002) refers to the value systems that he claims to impinge on teaching, and contends that it is important for teacher development seminars to encourage teachers to recognise the complexity of their value systems:

the design of professional development needs to specifically (rather than implicitly) attend to teachers' value systems through discussion, role play, observations of teaching, and analysis of case examples, to ensure that teachers' growth and development is not only about specific skill and knowledge acquisition, but also about the process of recognizing and addressing the complexity of their value systems and the impact such systems have on their teaching. (p. 127)

As described above, belief, assumptions, and value systems form one area of teacher knowledge that has recently received pronounced attention in teacher development.

Teacher knowledge is, thus, described in the literature as an amalgam of various types of knowledge (see Figure 2, below). However, this thesis explores the notion that some areas of knowledge may be in conflict with each other such as context knowledge or belief, or if any types of knowledge may be dominant or

take priority in some cases. These are some aspects that I explore in the empirical study.

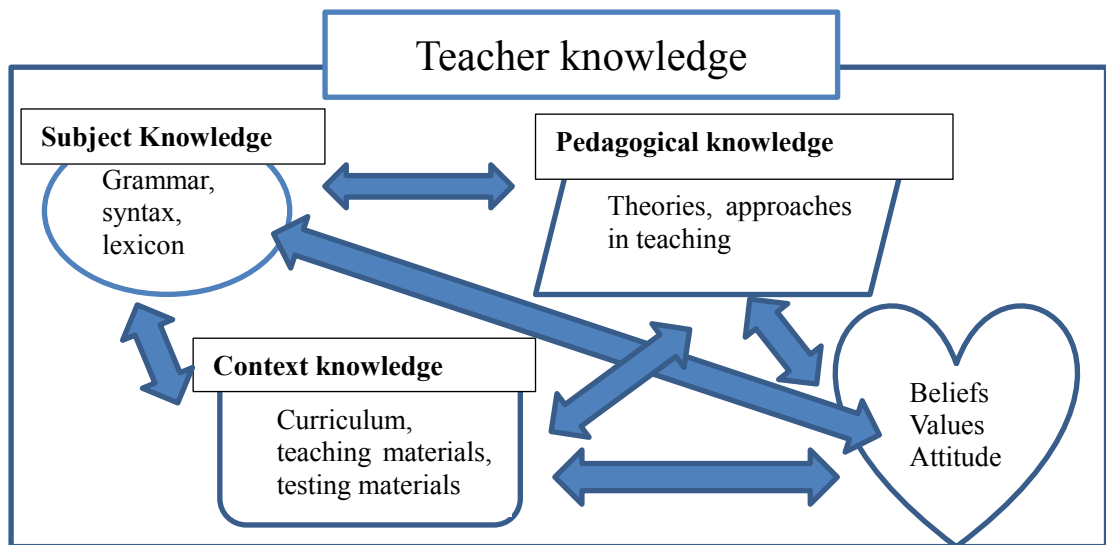


Figure 2: Amalgam of teacher knowledge

The third characteristic of teacher knowledge is that it is tacit. Even though it is argued that it is important to examine and understand one's teacher knowledge as it impinges on one's practice, teacher knowledge, a dynamic amalgam of various types of knowledge, is said to be tacit or ineffable (Borg, 2006; Polanyi, 1957). It is said that teachers are often unaware of their teacher knowledge (Crandall, 2000; Tann, 1993; Tsui, 2003) as it is taken for granted and has been internalised through long years of experiences as teachers and students (Lortie, 1975). Since teachers are unaware, it is suggested that teacher knowledge is difficult to be identified, articulated (Tann, 1993) and changed (Crandall, 2000). It is argued that becoming aware of tacit, teacher knowledge is thus a prerequisite for change, and reflective practice offers a key to exploration of teacher knowledge (Cox, 2005; Farrell, 2001; Williams & Burden, 1997). This study employs reflective practice as a tool to explore teacher knowledge, and whether

there are possible differences among the participants, such as between novice teachers and experienced teachers, in their exploration of teacher knowledge through reflective practice.

### **2.3.2 Teachers as professionals**

Another significant contribution of Schön's concept in the field of professional development can be seen in the elevation of the position of teachers as those who possess and create knowledge. As stated earlier, Schön (1987) contended that the problems in the real world of practice are not simple and straightforward, and cannot be solved by a package of set solutions; thus it is necessary for practitioners to generate their own. Schön (1987) argued, "The case is not 'in the book.' If she is to deal with it competently, she must do so by a kind of improvisation, inventing and testing in the situation strategies of her own devising" (p. 5). Schön (1983) claimed that through reflection-in-action one became a researcher and created a new theory: "when someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case" (p. 68).

Schön's idea of practitioners as researchers who create a new theory was instrumental in elevating the position of teachers. It is claimed that teachers have long been considered those who practice, but do not possess knowledge. Researchers, in contrast, have been assumed to bestow knowledge and theories to teachers through teacher education seminars. Johnson and Golombeck (2002) present a critical view of this contention:

For more than a hundred years, teacher education has been based on the

notion that knowledge about teaching and learning can be “transmitted” to teachers by others. In the knowledge transmission model, educational researchers, positioned as outsiders to classroom life, seek to quantify generalizable knowledge about what good teaching is and what good teachers do. Teachers have been viewed as objects of study rather than as knowing professionals or agents of change. Researchers have been privileged in that they create the knowledge, hold it, and bestow it upon teachers. Teachers have been marginalized in that they are told what they should know and how they should use that knowledge. (p. 1)

Their description of teachers as a marginalised object of study, rather than knowing professionals and agents of change, shows a stark contrast. Furthermore, Johnson and Golebeck (2002) refer to teachers as “legitimate knowers,” and contend that teachers are “producers of legitimate knowledge” (p. 3), which means that they have agency in the creation of knowledge. Widdowson (1978) describes the marginalisation of teachers as ‘humble practitioners’:

Language teachers are often represented by themselves and others as humble practitioners, essentially practical people concerned with basic classroom tactics and impatient of theory. Such a representation is unnecessarily demeaning. Of course the teacher is concerned with practical results, but this practice is based on theoretical notions, no matter how inexplicit they may be. (p. 163)

In professional development, Johnson and Golebeck (2002) emphasise the importance of reshaping and utilising their teacher knowledge rather than imposing knowledge to them: “Professional development emerges from a process of reshaping teachers’ existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods, or materials on teachers” (p. 2). Crandall (2000), who has a background of teacher education, also contends the need to recognise the roles of teachers in their professional development: “What is often missing from traditional language teacher education is recognition of the role that the teacher play in generating knowledge through teaching experience

and reflection” (p. 39). These claims may explain the disengagement of the participants in the MEXT teacher training seminars. What was presented at the seminar might have been perceived by the participating teachers as having been bestowed with inappropriate knowledge or practice. As noted in Chapter 1, what was valued at the MEXT seminar was their English proficiency, the subject knowledge alone, and not their other types of professional knowledge. Reflective practice can be a way to recognise teachers’ professional knowledge and lead them to develop as better professionals – a point discussed in the next section.

### **2.3.3 Reflection as a form of development**

The other way in which Schön’s concept has been influential is in that reflection has been considered a legitimate form of development, as it enhances teachers’ awareness and autonomy. Schön’s (1987) view of professional development was for a practitioner to adapt to various indeterminate zones of practice through reflection-in-action, thus expanding the repertoire of knowing-in-action. Schön explained that reflection-in-action shaped and developed one’s knowing-in-action; that is, reflection-in-action increases one’s repertoire of practice. Schön (1987) described the process of one’s reframing of a problem in facing indeterminate zones of practice: “we think critically about the thinking that got us into this fix or this opportunity; and we may, in the process, restructure strategies of action, understandings of phenomena or ways of framing problems” (p. 28). Through reflection-in-action, knowing-in-action is reshaped and made adaptable to more diverse situations. Thus, Schön (1983) claimed continual necessity to reflect-in-action for professional development. He showed that when practitioners do not meet unexpected situations, their knowing-in-action became



“increasingly tacit, spontaneous, and automatic” (1983, p. 60) and they do not need to reflect-in-action, which resulted in an expertise, but also suggested a danger of one’s knowing-in-action to be “a parochial narrowness of vision” (1983, p. 60). Thus, it is presumed that he suggested the importance of examination of one’s knowing-in-action through reflection-in-action for professional development.

Schön’s view of development was to expand a repertoire of practice through reflection-in-action. In arguing the importance of reflection for professional development, literature including the work of Moon and López Boullón (1997) and Tsui (2003) focused on reflection-on-action and not reflection-in-action. As stated earlier, it was reflection-on-action and not reflection-in-action that took root in teacher professional development. Among various beneficial outcomes associated with reflective practice, it is claimed that reflective practice allows tacit teacher knowledge to be explicit and helps teachers to be aware and autonomous in their professional development.

Reflection is claimed to enhance awareness about one’s practice and views about teaching, which is considered important in professional development. Moon and López Boullón (1997) argue that reflection facilitates awareness raising. Burns (2005), whose background is in English language teaching, points out reflective practice has been established as a “precursor to substantive change” (p. 68). Change is significant in professional development. As Farrell (2007) points out, in order for change to take place, one needs to be aware of one’s current practice, and reflective practice leads to “changing their levels of

awareness of their current practices so that they can articulate their current practice” (p. 7). It is argued that reflection leads to recognise incoherency and inconsistency between one’s beliefs and actions (Tann, 1993; Zeichner *et al.*, 1987), to new perspectives in knowing and teaching (Crandall, 2000), and to gaining better understanding about one’s current practice (Farrell, 2007). Roberts (1998) claims that being aware of one’s apprenticeship of observation, a concept derived from Lortie (1975) that means what one has learned as a student, is important. Roberts (1998) argues that one’s apprenticeship of observation is often limited in scope, thus it is essential to expand it in the images of teaching. Griffin (2003) claims the need to clarify what LaBoskey (1993) called the ‘latent philosophy of education’. Griffin (2003) points out that novice teachers are more likely to follow the ‘latent philosophy of education’, thus it is necessary to be make it explicit and become aware of it in order to examine one’s practice. Crandall (2000) argues the need for teachers to be aware of their prior learning experiences and preconceptions, as they are resistant to change unless it is made aware through teacher education programmes or reflective opportunities. As stated above, reflective practice allows one to become aware of one’s practice and views.

Reflective practice is also described as a self-directional development tool to enhance autonomy of teachers. Bailey (1990), who is involved in teacher education, claims that self is the main source of development in reflective practice. She states that teachers are in control of generating one’s own answers and solutions based on each teacher’s background, experiences, and ideas about teaching. Gebhard (1996) echoes Bailey, and contends that in

reflective practice, through the review of their own practice and knowledge, teachers are not given a model answer but they are in control of generating their own solutions. For professional development, Johnston (2003) argues the importance of situating teachers in charge of their own development.

In the discussion of teacher autonomy, control and responsibility are relevant in this study. Little (1995), who first brought the concept into language education (Benson, 2011), highlights both control and responsibility, for teachers which he defines as “having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest possible degree of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process, and exploring the freedom that this confers” (p.179). Smith (2000) also highlights control in his definition of teacher autonomy as “teachers’ control over their learning” (p. 89). Tort-Moloney (1997, cited in Smith 2000) indicates that teacher autonomy entails control over one’s teaching practices. McGrath (2000) claims that teacher autonomy is control over one’s professional development and having self-direction. Benson (2011) conceptualises teacher autonomy as “a professional capacity connected, on one hand, to the ability to control the processes involved in teaching and, on the other, to the ability to control one’s own development as a teacher” (p. 189). Control in teacher autonomy seems to be on their teaching and also on their development.

Responsibility, associated with teacher autonomy, is also discussed by a variety of scholars. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) refer to responsibility in their explanation of teacher development as having “characteristics of an individual

that predispose one toward taking primary responsibility for personal learning endeavours” (p. 29). Hoyle and John (1995) explain responsibility as “voluntaristic commitment to a set of principles governing good practice and the realisation of these through day-to-day professional activities” (p. 104). Referring to the ideas of Langford (1985), they further explain responsibility not only as agent-for-another but also as principal, that is one needs to set “the ends of his actions” (Langford, 1985, p.55 cited in Holye and John, 1995). Responsibility in teacher autonomy seems to be related to being an agent for change. This is in line with Day (1999), who argues that teachers should be “initiators of change” (p. 15) or “change agency” (p. 15) in students. Just as with control, responsibility in autonomy also involves not only responsibility for one’s development, but also for students’ learning.

Reflective practice is also said to provide for further long-term development. Johnson (1999) asserts that: “Exploring and expanding teachers’ reasoning through reflection and inquiry into why teachers teach as they do is central to the long-term developmental process of learning to teach and understanding the complex nature of teaching” (p. 7). Johnson and Golembeck (2002) show how autonomous role of teachers in professional development in the long term, as teachers become “capable of constructing and sustaining their own professional development over time” (p. 3). This study examines how the Japanese participant teachers’ engagement in reflection led to teacher autonomy, which Sinclair (2009) describes to be a Western concept.

Schön’s concept of reflection was freely interpreted and developed from its

original argument. His view of knowing-in-action and reflection-on-action influenced the view of teacher knowledge as professional knowledge, teachers as professionals, and reflection as a form of development. In this study I examine how reflective practice explores teacher knowledge and develops teachers to be autonomous and aware. In the next section, I would like to introduce some common criticisms of reflective practice.

## **2.4. Critical views of reflective practice**

Even after being established as a major concept in teacher education, reflective practice is not without its critics. In this chapter, I would like to touch upon the following arguments: that reflective practice is a vague concept; that its frameworks and processes are also vague; whether the focus of reflection should be on positive or negative aspects; whether it is too personalised for professional development; and whether it is too challenging for the novice.

### **2.4.1. Reflection: A vague concept**

An ongoing criticism is that the concept of reflective practice is vague. Schön's definition and explanation of reflection are rather vague. Schön's definition and explanation of reflection are rather vague for example, Roberts (1998) points out that Schön's differentiation between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action is not particularly clear. Roberts (1998) also contends that Schön's explanation of reflection can refer to the following cognitive activities: "rational deliberative thought" (p. 53), "the ability to draw critically on diverse knowledge bases when addressing pedagogic issues, as in decision-maker models of teaching" (p.53), "reframing, where the teacher recasts problems in order to arrive at original and apt solutions, (p.53), or "self-awareness" (p.53). It could be assumed that such

vague explanation is prone to lead to various interpretations.

In spite of being a predominant approach in teacher education in ELT, it is pointed out that what is meant by reflection remains to be diversified (Day, 1993; Farrell, 2001; Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Grimmett, 1998; Heilbronn, 2008; Jay & Johnson, 2002; LaBoskey, 1993; McLaughlin, 2007; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1991). There is no agreed-upon definition of reflection or reflective practice. The popularity of the concept of reflection has not led to its conceptual clarity (Furlong & Maynard, 1995), but rather has stimulated and amplified its vagueness. The notions of reflection and reflective practice, thus, have been interpreted in various ways, and informed by different theoretical frameworks (Calderhead & Gates, 1993; Ghaye & Lylliman cited in Ghaye 2011; Moon & López Boullón, 1997), and interpreted through different beliefs and ideas about teaching and teacher education (Furlong & Maynard, 1995), which results in even greater diversity of interpretation. Because its meaning is unclear, McLaughlin (2007) contends: “the reflective practitioner’ is often used as a vague slogan rather than as a concept whose meaning and implications are well thought through and worked out” (p. 357).

The vagueness of the concept of reflection allows various interpretations with various theories of learning. Some seem to derive from the theory of experiential learning, which argues that, “significant learning will only take place when the subject matter is perceived to be of personal relevance to the learner and when it involves active participation by the learner” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 35). This view focuses on the importance of individuals’ capacity to learn from their

own experiences. Shulman's (1987) interpretation of reflection, which is, "what a teacher does when he or she looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurred, and reconstructs, re-enacts, and/or recaptures the events, the emotions, and the accomplishments" (p. 19), highlights the importance of inquiry and re-inquiry into one's own experience. Coming from the background of continuing professional development, Boud, Keogh and Walker's (1985) definition also emphasises learning from individual experiences: "Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning" (p. 19). The interpretation by Richards and Farrell's (2005), whose background is in language teaching, also highlights an examination of one's own experiences: "reflection is viewed as the process of critical examination of experiences, a process that can lead to a better understanding of one's teaching practices and routines" (p. 7). McIntyre (1993), who has a background in teacher education, employs Lucas's (1991) definition of reflection, which is "systematic enquiry into one's own practice to improve that practice and to deepen one's understanding of it" (p. 42-43). This definition also refers to an examination of one's own practice. Loughran's (1996) understanding of reflection emphasises one's intent in an action, and the differentiation of reflection from being merely a thought: "I consider reflection as the purposeful, deliberate act of inquiry into one's thoughts and actions through which a perceived problem is examined in order that a thoughtful, reasoned response might be tested out" (p. 21). Bailey *et al.* (2001) highlight solitude in their definition of reflection: "solitary process of introspection and retrospection, focusing specifically on a teacher's actions and thoughts before, during or after lessons" (p. 36). All of the above definitions

seem to be informed by experiential learning, and place value on learning from one's experience in the reflective process. Even though their definitions differ, they all imply that reflection is a personal experience.

These definitions have been criticised for their lack of interaction with others - in particular from the social constructivist perspective, which places importance in subjective meaning of experience which is negotiated socially and historically (Creswell, 2009). It is not possible to discuss social constructivism fully in this thesis, which is only able to touch upon it in relation to this study. The interpretation of reflection offered by teacher educators' Jay and Johnson (2002) incorporates collaboration and dialogue with others as an important aspect of reflection:

Reflection is a process, both individual and collaborative, involving experience and uncertainty. It is comprised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one's thoughts into dialogue with oneself and with others. (p. 7)

The definition by Mann (2005) also takes into account of dialogue with others. He regards reflection as "a process of inner dialogue" (p. 108) through which language teachers develop awareness of their practice: "awareness is an outcome of a reflexive dialogue between knowledge and experience and can happen individually or collaboratively" (p. 108). The two definitions of reflection emphasise interaction and dialogue with others, and historical and cultural norms in making meaning.

The definitions reviewed above, informed by experiential learning and social constructivism, are criticised for lacking a socio-political view that would stress



the importance of questioning and becoming an active agent for teachers to change their contexts - not only in their classroom but in a sociocultural sense. A socio-political view values challenging the status quo that prevents teachers from being active agents for change; its aim is “asking questions that can challenge the status quo, challenge oppressive and disempowering workplace contexts, and focus on reducing or removing barriers to improvement (Ghaye, 2011, p.14). The view of reflection offered by Smyth (1989), a teacher educator, illustrates this critique:

Teaching, and reflection upon it, has a lot more to do with intentionality and the way in which teachers are able to be active agents (Ross and Hannay, 1986) in making the linkages between economic structures, social and cultural conditions, and the way schooling works (p.4).

The view of teacher educators Zeichner and Liston (1996) also highlights the questioning of social conditions:

reflective teaching entails a recognition, examination, and rumination over the implications of one’s beliefs, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and values as well as the opportunities and constraints provided by the social conditions in which the teacher works (p.33).

The different definitions offered above indicate the diversity of interpretation of reflection, informed by different theoretical underpinnings. Ironically, to many teacher educators and teachers, this vagueness and flexibility may be one appeal of reflective practice (Furlong & Maynard, 1995), allowing one to take up the idea without committing oneself with any particular view (McLaughlin, 2007). Zeichner and Tabachinick (1991) point out these “generic conceptions of reflection” (p. 2) enable teachers of any ideological belief to employ the practice and embrace any way to be practised under the name of reflection. Wilkin (1999) states that reflective practice may be “comforting” (p. 11) to teachers due to the

notion of reflective practice being “so flexible, so loose, it can be recruited in so many guises” (p. 11). Moreover, Lawes (2004) points out because it is ambiguous and flexible, reflective practice does not require one to defend its theory.

The flexibility associated with the definition gives the impression that if teachers ‘think’ about something in some way, it is considered ‘reflection’, and that any solution drawn from ‘reflection’ is acceptable. The ease and comfort associated with reflective practice attracts educators and researchers to incorporate it as an essential aspect of teacher development. As a result, it is argued that reflective practice has almost promoted its position from practice to theory (Furlong & Maynard, 1995; Lawes, 2004), and without scrutiny, reflective practice seemed to have become the emblem of teacher development.

The ambiguous and flexible nature of the definitions of reflective practice, however, poses several problems. Ambiguous definitions are not conducive for discussion to take place (Farrell, 2001; Heilbronn, 2008; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). The lack of agreed-upon definitions renders it difficult to grasp what reflective practice is (Day, 1993; Roberts, 1998). It is difficult to differentiate what is reflective and what is not reflective (Rodgers, 2002) or to discern what ‘good’ or ‘bad’ reflection might be (Heilbronn, 2008). In addition, the ambiguity devalues reflective practice and prevents it from being recognised as a defensible model (Heilbronn, 2008; Rodgers, 2002). It is also pointed out that the ambiguous definition makes it difficult to conduct research on the effect of reflective practice on teachers’ practice and students’ learning (Rodgers, 2002). This thesis, which

is based on an empirical study, introduces a definition of reflection and explores reflection through the analysis of the data in order to see what happens when teachers look back at their teaching and what is meant when reflection takes place.

#### **2.4.2 Reflective practice: Various frameworks**

Another variation of the concept of reflective practice is the interpretation of the levels of reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995). There are various models and frameworks that suggest different types or levels of reflection but they can be grouped into two main categories: the sociological perspective, which analyses reflection through its topic areas, and the psychological perspective, which analyses reflection through its layers of awareness (Valli & Taylor, 1989, cited in Valli, 1993). This study aims to analyse the types of reflection through the psychological perspective. Sociological perspectives seem to be more dominant in the field of teacher development, and many are based on the seminal work of teacher educator Van Manen (1977), who classifies reflexivity into three hierarchical levels informed by different theories of learning. The first level, of 'reflection' is technical reflection, which takes the empirical-analytic approach, aligned with the behaviourist approach, and values "economy, efficiency, and effectiveness" (p. 226). The second level, of 'reflectivity', embraces the interpretive framework within a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach, where reflection concerns such aspects as the reasons and assumptions of teaching. The third, or higher, level of 'reflexivity' takes the political-ethical orientation of a critical approach, which involves a constant questioning of domination, of institution, and of authority. Following the model of Van Manen, various models of reflection have been presented (Furlong & Maynard, 1995), such as by Boud

*et al.* (1985), McIntyre (1993), and Zeichner and Liston (1996); many of which consist of the three levels and accord with the three theories of learning suggested by Van Manen's model.

Following Van Manen's model, McIntyre's (1993) model consists of three different levels of reflection. The first is a technical level, where the concern of a teacher is to attain a given goal. The second is a practical level, where the concern is what types of actions are linked with such aspects as assumptions, predispositions, values, and consequences. The third is a critical or emancipatory level, concerned with "wider ethical, social, and political issues" (p.44) that may have constrained or limited the freedom or effectiveness of action of individuals.

Zeichner and Liston's (1996) practice triangle, which they adapt from Handal and Lauvas (1987), also resembles Van Manen's model. The first level, P1, refers to levels of action, such as giving assignments, asking questions, and monitoring students' work. The second level, P2, is planning and reflection, which involves teachers to think of the reasons for their actions in the classroom. In the third level, P3, teachers reflect on the ethical and moral considerations of their actions to see how it would be possible to achieve the enhancement of a more caring classroom or equity and justice in the classroom.

It seems that the third level in these models, critical reflection, has become a dominant area of reflection in the literature. It has often been argued to be the highest level of reflection, and the ultimate goal of teacher development. Smyth's

(1989) view, for instance, explains:

being able to locate oneself both personally and professionally in history in order to be clear about the forces that have come to determine one's existence, is the hallmark of a teacher who has been able to harness the reflective process and begin to act on the world in a way that amounts to changing it (p.7).

McIntyre (1993) describes critical reflection as encompassing "wider ethical, social and political issues, including crucially the institutional and societal forces which may constrain the individual's freedom of actions or limit the efficacy of his or her actions" (p. 44). He emphasises political issues such as being free from institution or societal forces. Smyth (1989), Van Manen (1977), and Zeichner and Liston (1996) claim the importance of reflection as empowerment of teachers, which is described by Smyth (1989) as "teachers taking charge of aspects of their lives over which they have been prevented from gaining access in the past" (p. 5). Smyth (1989) describes the purpose of reflection as "to critique and uncover the tensions that exist between particular teaching practices and the larger cultural and social contexts in which they are embedded" (p. 5). In critical reflection, teachers are encouraged to initiate changes in their teaching context, such as changes in terms of textbooks, curriculum, assessments, teaching schedules, salaries; professional development in several stratum. Smyth (1989) argues:

When teachers are able to begin to link consciousness about the processes that inform the day-to-day aspects of their teaching with the wider political and social realities within which it occurs, then they are able to transcend self-blame for things that don't work out and to see that perhaps their causation may more properly line in the social injustices and palpable injustices of society, which is to say that deficiencies in teaching can be caused by the manner in which dominant groups in society pursue their narrow sectional interest. (p.7)

However, the question is raised here as to whether it is plausible for an individual

to move in a linear fashion through the levels of reflexivity informed by different theories of learning, as posed by Van Manen *et al.*, such as from an empirical-analytic approach to a political-ethical orientation. The question might also be raised as to whether the socio-political aspect described in some models of reflection is in fact the hallmark of reflection. Their views consider that it is possible to “transcend self-blame for things that don’t work out and to see that perhaps their causation may more properly lie in the social injustices and palpable injustices of society” (Smyth, 1989, p.7). This idea is particularly interesting to examine in a Japanese context where the concept of *hansei*<sup>13</sup> prevails. The idea of transcending self-blame seems to be in conflict with *hansei*, which essentially acknowledges one’s wrong doing.

There are sociological frameworks that do not follow Van Manen’s model. One is that of Korthagen (2004) which he refers to as an ‘onion model’. He classifies reflection in six different topical areas: the environment, behaviour, competencies, beliefs, professional identity and mission. Each perspective is concerned with answers to what it means to be a good teacher. Korthagen focuses, in particular, on the latter two areas - professional identity and mission - as the key to teachers’ transformational changes. My study also found professional identity to be a significant area, so I would like to develop a discussion about it.

Professional identity is an area of interest in teacher education. As Korthagen (2004) argues, a range of literature addresses the shaping of professional

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<sup>13</sup> *Hansei*, which is often translated as self-critical reflection, means to look back to evaluate one’s speech or conduct and to admit one’s wrong doing.

identity as one significant aspect of teacher development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop 2004; Flores & Day, 2006). Bullough (1997) states its importance, especially for novice teachers:

Teacher identity - what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning and self-as-a teacher - is of vital concern to teacher education; it is the basis for meaning making and decision making. Teacher education must begin, then, by exploring the teaching self. (p. 21)

As suggested by Bullough (1997), the exploration of professional identity is deemed important, especially for the novice (Flores & Day, 2006). Novice teachers are still in the process of shaping their professional identity as Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) describe: “negotiating within shifting conceptions of what teaching is or should be, relating to the identities of others, becoming agents of their own identity development” (p.185). The novice may rely on their views as students for what teachers may be. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) refer to these as ‘tentative identities’, which entails that their identities need eventually to be shaped. This is in line with what Flores and Day (2006) suggest when they observe that “prior experiences as pupils seemed to play a strong mediating role in the identities which new teachers brought into their first school teaching experience” (p. 223). However, professional identity shifting is not a smooth endeavour. Beijaard *et al.* (2004) state that, “professional identity formation is often presented as a struggle because (student) teachers have to make sense of varying and sometimes competing perspectives, expectations, and roles that they have to confront and adapt to” (p. 115). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) describe such a difficulty thus: “the paths that teacher identity development can take are not necessarily smooth but often fraught with periods of self-doubt and questioning” (p. 767). Professional identity

formation for the novice is difficult also because it means distinguishing oneself from being a student. Cook (2012) refers to this as “the negotiation of teacher-student boundaries” (p. 284), which he claims it to be vital in developing professional identities. Lasky (2005) states that an ambiguous teacher-student boundary is a characteristic of the novice teacher: “the willingness to blur the boundaries between the personal and professional with their students was a core component of their teacher identity” (p.908). Zembylas (2005) points out that clarifying such a boundary is a prerequisite for the shaping of professional identity, stating that “the need to find personal and professional boundaries emerged as a central part of teacher identity” (p.9).

In Korthagen’s framework (2004), mission, the deepest core of the onion model, is explained as the reason for one to become a teacher, or one’s calling in the world. He describes mission as what moves teachers, and one’s meaning of existence and role in relation to others. Becoming aware of one’s mission is explained as “giving meaning to one’s own existence with a larger whole, and the role we see for ourselves in the relation to our fellow man” (p. 85). Even though Korthagen places it at the core, mission is an area which has not fully been discussed in the body of literature.

In contrast to the sociological perspective, there are fewer examples in the existing literature of levels of reflectivity that use the psychological perspective; I would like to introduce the views of Moore (2004) and Jay and Johnson (2002). Moore’s view comprises four reflective activities: ‘ritualistic reflection’, ‘pseudo-reflection’, ‘productive reflection’, and ‘reflexivity’. ‘Ritualistic reflection’



is described as a perfunctory reflection, where one engages in a reflective task such as writing things down in a reflective journal almost as an assignment.

'Pseudo-reflection' is a type of reflection that does not lead into development or change - one example of which is:

an avoidance of potentially troubling issues whose confrontation might entail a fairly radical reappraisal of practice, involving either downscaling or recasting such issues into more acceptable representations, or focusing on other issues altogether on the basis that there are (as one student teacher on the *Autobiographies Project* had put it) 'some things you can't do anything about' (2004, p.109).

Moore (2004) does not consider these two types of reflection to be authentic reflection. What he considers authentic reflection are 'productive reflection' and 'reflexivity'. 'Productive reflection' involves one problematising situations and questioning one's views, and beliefs, which lead to changes in understandings. 'Reflexivity' is reflection that goes beyond the classroom and engages one in reflection in a wider personal, social, and cultural contexts. It enables one to look at an event in a classroom with an historical or social perspective. Even though Moore's reflective activities follow the psychological perspective, the explanation of the highest level of reflection – reflexivity - follows the sociological perspective.

Another example of the psychological perspective of reflection is one provided by Jay and Johnson (2002), who categorise reflective thoughts into descriptive, comparative, and critical. It should be noted that their categories also place critical reflection as the highest aspect of reflection. Descriptive is a description of a matter, such as one's concerns, feelings, or interesting theory, which is stated as "involving describing a matter, such as a classroom concern, a

recognized bias, an interesting theory, or a feeling” (p. 78). Jay and Johnson emphasise the significance of description by stating: “The simplicity of this is misleading, though, for descriptive reflection entails more than just reporting the facts. It involves finding significance in a matter so as to recognize salient features, extract and study causes and consequences, recontextualise them, and envision a change.” (p. 78). In this sense, description can be regarded as a gateway for reflection.

The literature on reflection often discusses the significance of description. Tripp (1993) points out the significance of description is to reshape one’s experiences, which means to express what may be in our subconscious:

The written account not only facilitates and formalises our telling or retelling of them, but simultaneously encourages and records the way we inevitably reshape the experience, highlighting or suppressing features according to how we are feeling about them when writing. This is entirely natural and useful, because in the reshaping we allow our subconscious to write in things which we may recognise as important only after they have appeared on paper. Part of that reshaping is the result of re-analysis which might, as in the first example above, occur a very long time later. (p. 109)

Description is said to be significant also because, as Tripp argues, it identifies problematics, which leads to one to become aware of one’s routines. Tripp (1993) states, “it is only when it is realised that problematics exist that one can set out to expose, understand and acknowledge (or, if necessary, transform) them” (1993, p. 14). In this sense, the problematic resembles Schön’s framing of a problem. Tripp states:

It is our problematic which leads us to develop and uncritically rely upon a set of structured practices which are employed in more or less similar ways upon more or less similar occasions, and which are generally called routines, and in this case, ‘professional routines’. These professional routines are constructed by and enacted through a particular problematic,

and are by definition, seldom if ever challenged or consciously engaged. It is these routines which thus effectively determine what we actually do in the social and material world of our professional practice (1993, p. 14).

What LaBoskey (1993) refers to as 'problem definition' is similar to a problematic and she denotes its importance as a gateway to the exploration of tacit teacher knowledge. Description leads to the identification of a problematic, which is an opening to explore one's teacher knowledge. It is significant because otherwise teacher knowledge remains unexamined.

The second type of reflection in Jay and Johnson's (2002) typology is comparative reflection, which means to look at a matter from a variety of perspectives. It involves looking at and trying to understand a matter through different points of view that may be incongruent with one's own. On this point, they state:

reflective practitioners are sensitive to various perspectives. So a given classroom scenario might be considered from the perspective of another teacher, a student, a counselor, a parent, and so on. When we consider alternative perspectives or varying ways to approach a problem, we discover meaning we might otherwise miss (p. 78).

Comparative reflection is in line with what Schön (1983) called the reframing of the problem, where "the inquirer remains open to the discovery of phenomena, incongruent with the initial problem setting, on the basis of which he reframes the problem" (p. 268). Comparative reflection also aligns with what LaBoskey (1993) calls "means/ends analysis," which is to "gather and evaluate information as to the possible sources of the dilemma under consideration and to generate multiple alternative solutions and their potential implications" (p. 30). The significance of *comparative* reflection is seen in broadening one's perspectives.

Finally, the third dimension of Jay and Johnson's (2002) typology is critical reflection, which involves gaining a broader perspective in historical, socio-political and moral context of schooling (p. 79).

As stated earlier, one might question whether critical reflection - that is, reflection on socio-political context - is the highest level of reflection. There are a few models that do not place socio-political level as the highest level of reflection. Even psychological models of reflection, such as those provided by Moore, and Jay and Johnson, place socio-political reflection the highest level. However, what seems to be a hierarchical approach of reflection does not seem to take account of the depth of reflection and that the level of reflection is dictated by the area within which one reflects. Lee (2005) is critical of such a view, commenting that, "one can reflect in depth on technical/practical issues and be considered at a lower level; as long as one considers moral and ethical issues even without justification, one can be considered reflecting at a high level" (pp. 712-713). The distinctiveness of this empirical study is that it explores and examines reflection through a psychological perspective, which is a rare endeavour, and attempts to identify levels of reflection with the Japanese participants.

#### **2.4.3 Reflective practice: Various processes**

The literature on reflective practice describes a variety of processes. One such example is Richard and Lockhart's (1996) process of reflection: 1) collecting data about teaching; 2) finding a problem; 3) generating a solution; 4) applying the solution to teaching; and 5) collecting data to evaluate the solution and find other problems. The process is cyclic: as one collects the data and evaluates the solution, they then find other problems, and start collecting data about teaching

again. Smyth's (1989) process is informed by the work of Paul Freire<sup>14</sup> and involves asking questions of teachers to uncover the forces that have suppressed and inhibited them, and to bring about changes. They need to ask the following four questions in a sequential manner:

1. Describe ... what do I do?
  2. Inform .... what does this mean?
  3. Confront ... how did I come to be like this?
  4. Reconstruct ... how might I do things differently?"
- (p. 5-6)

Griffiths and Tann (1992) argue that teachers need to reflect on the following temporal dimensions at one time in their career. They claim that the overemphasis on one area will result in superficial reflection:

1. Rapid reflection (immediate and automatic reflection-in-action)
2. Repair (thoughtful reflection-in-action)
3. Review (less formal reflection-on-action at a particular point in time)
4. Research (more systematic reflection-on-action over a period of time)
5. Rethorizing and research (long-term reflection-on-action informed by public academic theories)

By contrast, there are others who regard reflection more holistically. Hunt (1998) warns that, "CAUTION! RP DOES NOT PROCEED IN AN ORDERLY FASHION!" (Capitals in the original)" (p. 28). Zeichner and Liston (1996) state that reflection:

is a holistic way of meeting and responding to problems, a way of being as a teacher. Reflective action is also a process that involves more than logical and rational problem-solving processes. Reflection involves intuition, emotion, and passion and is not something that can be neatly packaged as a set of techniques for teachers to use (p. 9).

Ward and McCotter (2004) describe reflection to be "cyclic in nature" (p. 245).

Even though Jay and Johnson (2002) identified the typology of reflection

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<sup>14</sup> Paul Freire is known as the author of the seminal book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970).

consisting of three categories as seen above, they explain, “the process is not as linear as the typology might suggest; rather, it involves contemplation, inspiration, and experience. Reflection should not be constrained to a formula, but allowed to evolve in its own loops and leaps over time” (p. 80). This empirical study will examine how reflection develops: whether it happens in a step-by-step manner or in a non-linear fashion.

#### **2.4.4 Reflection: On the positives or the negatives**

Another criticism of reflective practice concerns whether one should focus on positives or negatives for effective professional development. Critics of reflection that focuses on negative aspects argue that such a focus may lead teachers to concentrate on problem solution, and to dwell on negativity about one’s practice, which leads to the undermining of one’s confidence. Regarding the first point, problem solution may appear to be productive, but Korthagen and Vasalos (2010) warn that being accustomed to solution generation as trouble-shooting may prevent teachers from reflecting on underlying phenomena in their teaching, and their development may remain rather superficial. Hatton and Smith (1995) point out that there seems to be some consensus that reflective practice involves finding solutions to problems; however, “questions can be raised about whether solving problems should be considered an inherent characteristic of reflection” (p. 35). Tremmel (1993) argues that the tendency to look for precise solutions may prevent teachers from reflection, and points out “In Schön’s terms, it is exactly this desire for solutions that hinders efforts to establish reflective practice in education” (p. 437). It can be claimed that a predominant focus on problem solution may inhibit a teacher’s exploration of teacher knowledge.

The second argument against the focus on negativity is that dwelling on negativity may not be conducive to development but rather undermines one's confidence. Day (1999) suggests that, "confrontation resulting from engagement in reflective practices is not always 'comfortable'" (p.40), which may lead individuals to undermine themselves. Ghaye (2011) warns that the risk of focus on deficit-based questions of reflection may lead to deficit-based conversation, and also to deficit-based patterns of action, which also undermines one's confidence. Boud *et al.* (1985) contend that negative feelings caused by reflection can prevent teachers from learning:

the reflective process is a complex one in which both feelings and cognition are closely interrelated and interactive. Negative feelings, particularly about oneself, can form major barriers towards learning. They can distort perceptions, lead to false interpretations of events, and can undermine the will to persist. (p. 11)

Reflection on deficiencies and problems is claimed to lead one to have a narrow vision and dwell on problems (Ghaye, 2011). Korthagen and Vasalos (2010) write "to put it in everyday terms: through negative emotions about their experiences, people tend to move into a kind of 'tunnel thinking'" (p. 537). Korthagen and Vasalos (2010) further state that a side-effect of reflecting on negativity is a feeling of inadequacy: "People often have the habit of lingering longer with things that went wrong than with successes. A side-effect is that somehow this fosters a feeling of inadequacy in them" (p.537). As can be seen above, there are views that point out negative consequences of reflection on negativity.

As a reaction against reflection on negative aspects, a recent trend informed through positive psychology, argues that focusing on one's strengths is more

beneficial than focusing on one's weaknesses and deficiencies (Ghaye, 2011; Janssen, de Hullu, & Tigelaar, 2008; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010). As pointed out by Ghaye (2011): "Recently there has been a slow but perceptible shift in our thinking about the role of reflective practice, away from being only about problem finding, problem solving and getting rid of 'unwanted' aspects of current practice" (p. 10). Janssen, *et al.* (2008) argue that reflection on positive experiences gives teachers confidence, which leads to their optimal development:

reflection methods based on positive experiences will help (student) teachers to embark on the route of optimal development because they produce more innovative resolutions which they are highly motivated to apply. This means that reflection on positive experiences might put them on the route to optimal development because they strike a balance between innovation and routines. (Janssen, de Hullu, & Tigelaar, 2008: 126)

However, some argue that reflection on positive aspects may not always be helpful. Even though Korthagen and Vasalos (2010) acknowledge the importance of focusing on one's strengths in reflection, they also point out the drawback of only focusing on positive aspects:

our analysis led to the insight that a focus on strengths alone is not sufficient, but that what is needed is cognitive, emotional and motivational awareness of both one's strengths, and of one's *inner* obstacles to the actualization of one's strengths (p.538).

Roberts (1998) also warns that the focus on strengths may encourage the avoidance of negativity both for the novice and the experienced teachers. The novice, who is likely to be concerned with self-presentation, may resist reflection on difficult areas. The experienced may be unwilling to risk an examination of their routines. Webb (2005) illustrates an avoidance of going beyond one's comfort zone:



The discussion 'comfort zone' for participants centred on reflection for practical concerns immediately applicable in classroom situations. Prompts by the participant researcher to consider the 'why' of situations were subsumed by a general wish to share and discuss strategies. They assumed that 'how to do it' was a solution to their fear and discomfort. (Webb, 2005)

Webb (2005) points out that rather than examining 'why' teachers engage in some practice, they are likely to examine 'how' they engage in practice: thus they were staying within their 'comfort zones'. As a solution to the focus of reflection, Cook (2012) proposes an idea of "productive disequilibrium" in teacher development: "learn to embrace, not to fear, change and discomfort in our lives" (p. 289). This study will critically examine the participants' reflection on positive and negative aspects and how this leads to their development. Reflection on negativity is of particular interest in a culture where the concept of *hansei* prevails.

#### **2.4.5 Subjective nature of reflection**

There is a claim that reflection tends to be too personalised to be effective as a development tool. On this aspect, Lawes (2004), who has a background in teacher education, points out that reflection is prone to be too individualistic: "the exemplification of individuation of thought and an individualistic response to problems that is necessarily subjective and inward-looking" (p. 339). In this case, reflective practice might not seem to be a defensible development tool. Furlong and Maynard (1995) argue that personal reflection alone is not sufficient for professional development:

Personal reflection....may indeed help student teachers bring their teaching under their own control, but one is still forced to ask the question as to whether personal reflection, on its own, is sufficient to ensure professional development....that it is not. (p. 54)

Zeichner and Liston (1996) also point out that reflective practice lacks social interaction and argue that teacher development pursued solely by an individual teacher “greatly limits the potential for teacher growth” (p. 76). Ghaye (2011) suggests the importance of the need to learn from experiences from others, and Roberts (1998) points out:

Inner resources alone may not be enough: there may be gaps in a person’s knowledge and experience, or blind spots about themselves. In such a case, others are needed to make the person aware of these gaps and help them to find the knowledge they need. We need feedback to learn, whether it is formal and from a supervisor, or informal and from peers. (p.21)

Roberts (1998) develops an argument about why teachers especially require social validation when engaged in reflective practice:

teaching is a socially constructed role, and in learning to teach, the expectations of others and relationships with others play a profoundly important part. Individualist theory remains incapable of addressing these dimensions of becoming a language teacher. We therefore recognise that, while each teacher develops his/her thinking by personal construction and reconstruction, social validation plays a critical part in the process. (p.33)

Roberts (1998) also suggests the need for a presence of a trusted and interested listener or team building, and Day (1999) suggests the need for group work and critical friendship. They both claim the presence of others is necessary for defining oneself as a teacher. Roberts contends (1998):

learning to teach is not a private journey, but it involves the adoption of a social role, a process of defining oneself as a teacher informed by our images of others and the traditional views of teaching available to us. (p.36)

There is a need for more than just the presence of the others. Lawes (2004) and McIntyre (1993) claim the need for theoretical knowledge. Lawes (2004) contends that the absence of theory leaves teachers to feel themselves as mere technicians: “If language teachers do not even begin to have some

understanding of educational and applied subject theory, they will be mere technicians and feel themselves to be such” (p. 27). Her view warns of the danger of teachers falling under technical rationality. McIntyre (1993) also notes the necessity of familiarity with literature from the field as well as comments from others.

Due to the strong influence that Japanese receive from others through *tatemae/honne*, this study focuses on individual participants’ personal perspectives and attempts to let the participants explore their own views. This study explores how reflective practice functions in the context where the communicative convention of *tatemae/honne* is ingrained.

#### **2.4.6 Reflective practice: Not for the novice?**

Despite of the view that it is important for the novice to shape professional identity (Flores & Day, 2006), the proponents of reflective practice regard reflective practice as not necessarily effective for the novice. Roberts (1998) considers reflective practice to be unprofitable for novice teachers as they lack adequate knowledge and experiences, and claims that the novice may lack specialised concepts and vocabulary to discuss teaching. He criticises Schön for his failure to mention the necessity of being equipped with some basic idea of the field in order to reflect. McIntyre (1993) states that the novice’s lack of experience means that they do not have adequate incidents to draw on from the classroom, and also that they have not formed systematic beliefs about teaching. He further argues that novices, with a limited experience of teaching, do not need to explore their views of teaching, as they have formed few assumptions and beliefs as teachers. Veenman (1984) also points out that there may be less

need for novice teachers to reflect, as they are often preoccupied with more immediate concerns such as classroom discipline and motivating students.

Lawes (2003) contends that reflective practice is not effective for the novice, as their inadequate understanding of the field leads them to misunderstandings and confusion:

Without systematic study of the foundation disciplines of education, all they may have is a confused, unstructured understanding. These so-called 'theoretical insights' may often be misunderstandings, faulty interpretations and simply false beliefs about theories. (p. 26)

Rather than becoming involved in reflective practice, Lawes (2003) emphasises the importance of the novice's study of the field. McIntyre (1993) does acknowledge that reflective practice benefits the novice's professional development, but argues that it is not their immediate need. He also claims that the novice benefits more from learning from outside sources, such as experienced teachers, tutors, or readings. There is a further view that reflective practice is too challenging for the novice. Cavanagh and Prescott (2010) argue "reflective practice can be a daunting process, particularly for beginning teachers who may lack the wisdom that can come with greater classroom experience" (p. 157).

Those who argue the benefits of reflection for the novice claim the need for an examination of their 'latent philosophy of education' - the beliefs and attitudes they created as a student. 'Latent philosophy of education' is said to be difficult to change, thus reflective practice may facilitate this (Griffin, 2003).

However, reflective practice is generally regarded to be more beneficial for the experienced teachers. McIntyre (1993) claims that their teacher knowledge, their assumptions and beliefs, are more often internalised, and reflection helps them to be conscious of them. The difficulty for the experienced teachers in becoming aware of their practice and changing it is argued by Loizou (2012):

Change, however, may be more difficult for teachers with more experience. This is because behaviour is underpinned with theories-in-use which build up and solidify in the unconscious as time passes. (p. 14)

In this thesis, one of the foci in the analysis chapters is the benefit of reflective practice for the novice and the experienced, which are examined, discussed, and contrasted. The findings of this study, as we see in Chapter 6, suggest that the novice teachers received substantially more benefit than the experienced teachers.

### **2.5 Reflective practice and *tatemae/honne*<sup>15</sup>**

As discussed in Chapter 1, reflective practice in the Japanese context may be a complex phenomenon due to the prevalence of the communication convention of *tatemae/honne*. As the present study attempts to examine individual teachers' exploration of teacher knowledge through reflective practice, this study aims to bring out *honne* of the participants, which is not influenced by views of others - including myself. *Tatemae/honne* is deeply ingrained in communication among Japanese in various social settings, and Seki (2004) points out that it also exerts influence in research settings. In the negotiation and construction of meaning, as Hall and Hall (1987) point out, "to insure harmony and good feelings" (p.118) two

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<sup>15</sup> *Tatemae* refers to an official and public face and expression. *Honne* means the real intent of a person.

different meanings may be generated: public meaning constructed with others (*tatemae*) and one's private meaning, which was not shared or changed (*honne*). Chapter 1 discussed in relation to lesson study that, in an attempt to ensure harmony and comforting collegiality, Japanese teachers often do not confront each other. The communication of *honne* seems more difficult in a group setting. Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) caution that: "It cannot necessarily be assumed or assured that 'collaborations' lead to improved (or positive) teacher development" (p. 800). They argue that types of interaction among the participants and the influences of the interactions need to be taken into account. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) also point out that the group dynamics caused by status differences "may lead to non-participation by some members and dominance by others" (p. 377). These two cultural conventions, *tatemae* and *honne*, inform a unique conceptualisation of reflective practice.

## **2.6 Reflective practice and *hansei***

Even though there is no literature to date that discusses reflection and *hansei*, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, the two concepts are closely related in the Japanese context. Thus, it might be relevant to discuss *hansei* and reflection in the literature review. I would like to discuss the similarities between *hansei* and reflection in its translation and meaning. *Hansei* and reflection both involve looking back at oneself; however, *hansei* often involves negative self-evaluation. *Hansei* is translated as 'self-critical reflection' (Novakowski, 2006) or 'self-critical criticism' (Rohlen and LeTendre, 1996), which suggests that *hansei* can be a negative form of reflection; as pointed out in Chapter 1 (see section 1.6) there is no agreement in the translation of reflection into Japanese, but it is often translated as '*hansei*'. Another similarity between *hansei* and reflection is that

both are associated with development. As argued in Chapter 1, in the literature on teacher development, reflective practice has been regarded as one of the mainstream underlying principles of good teaching practice and education in the West. Similarly, as pointed out by White and Levine (1986) in Chapter 1, *hansei* is considered to be a fundamental skill for social and personal development in the Japanese context, and Japanese people are exposed to opportunities for *hansei* throughout their lives (See section 1.6). This strengthens the point that reflection is often understood as *hansei* in the Japanese context. In conducting research on reflective practice in the Japanese context, it is vital to bear in mind the association between *hansei* and reflection, in particular so as not to engage the participants in self-critical negative reflection.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the theoretical background of reflective practice as a professional development tool to explore teacher knowledge. As has been shown, there are number of competing views and arguments. First, the chapter explained an origin of reflective practice in the work of Schön, and then discussed Schön's influence on current forms of reflective practice. Schön's influence is seen in the treatment of tacit knowledge as professional knowledge, teachers as professionals, and reflection as a form of development. The chapter introduced criticisms of reflective practice which include the vagueness of the concept; its diversified models and frameworks; its various processes; whether the focus of reflection should be on the positives or the negatives; the subjective nature of reflection; and whether reflection may not be effective for novice teachers. The chapter posed a question about the prevalence of placing critical reflection at the highest level of reflection, and clarified that the thesis will

analyse reflection through the psychological perspective, i.e. through layers of awareness, which is unique in the literature of reflective practice. These points will be analysed in the context of Japan, taking into consideration of the Japanese cultural conventions of *tatemae/honne* and *hansai*. In the next chapter, Chapter 3, the reflective interventions employed in the study will be explained.



## **Chapter 3: The research methodology of the study**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter elaborates the methodology of an empirical study that aims to examine the use of reflective practice for teacher development of in-service Japanese high school teachers of English. In the examination of reflective practice, which is still novel in Japan, this chapter discusses the development of the interventions. This chapter also argues for sensitivity to specific cultural practices in the employment of interventions: namely, not to influence *honne* (real intent) of the participants and not to engage the participants in *hansei* (self-critical) reflection.

The study seeks to answer the main research question, “How does reflective practice work as a professional development tool for in-service high school teachers of English in Japan?” In the examination of the main research question, the following subsets of questions are also addressed:

- What does it mean for the Japanese high school teachers of English to reflect?
- How would reflective interventions be effective in helping Japanese high school teachers of English to reflect?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in reflection?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in engaging in the reflective interventions?

A multiple case study was conducted with six Japanese high school teachers of

English as participants. The study comprises rich qualitative data triangulated for in-depth analysis. The participants engaged in the following interventions: focus group discussions, journal writing, and individual interviews during a seven month period from September 2007 to March 2008 extending over two semesters<sup>16</sup>. The purpose of the employment of the interventions was two-fold. They were avenues through which the participants had opportunities to develop reflection, as well as the data source for me and to analyse. The interventions were thus called reflective interventions. The main study was preceded by a pilot study conducted from September 2006 to March 2007 in Suburban prefecture (pseudonym), one of the prefectures where I led the MEXT teacher training sessions. The results of the pilot study informed and formed the basis of the research design of the main study.

This chapter first discusses the methodology employed in the study. It then briefly introduces the pilot study, and elaborates on the process of selecting the participants. The chapter then illustrates the design of the main study, informed by the pilot study. Following a discussion of the rationale for the three reflective interventions, the development of the interventions of the main study is discussed. The chapter then explains the in-depth data analysis procedure.

### **3.2 Case study**

In an attempt to answer the main research question, “How does reflective practice work as a development tool for in-service high school teachers of

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<sup>16</sup> The academic year in Japan starts from April and ends in March. The year is divided into three semesters: the first semester, from April to July; the second semester, from September to December; the third semester, from January to March.

English in Japan?”, this study adopts a qualitative multiple case study with an intervention, which is an incorporation of reflective practice. Merriam (1998) defines a qualitative case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). The case study usually examines a case in a natural setting without an intervention (Stark & Torrance, 2005). The case study was employed because it allowed for the focus on in-depth analysis of individual teachers’ involvement in reflective practice, the novelty of reflective practice in the Japanese context, the importance of developmental process in reflective practice, and an aim to establish theoretical generalisations from the case.

A case study allows an in-depth analysis focusing on individuals (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000) in terms of how they engage in reflective practice. It is suggested that a case study allows the researcher “to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 185). The focus on the examination of individual participants is essential to this study, since it aims to uncover individual differences: in particular, in their orientation to reflection and their involvement in reflective interventions to enhance reflection. As a case study “observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community” (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 185), it was seen as an appropriate methodology for this study.

Another justification for the use of a case study methodology is the novelty that this study signifies in the Japanese context. Qualitative research in teacher development research is still a new approach in Japan (Sato & Kleinsasser,

2004). Moreover, the incorporation of reflective practice for EFL teacher development is also an area novel in Japan (see section 1.10). A case study approach is described to be “especially suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 135).

A further reason for the employment of the case study approach was because of the focus in the developmental process of the participants’ engagement in reflective practice. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) describe one prominent aspect of the case study approach to be “investigating how an individual or program changes over time, perhaps as the result of certain circumstances or interventions” (p. 135). The case study is considered appropriate in observing such changes in their involvement in the reflective interventions in the study.

Even though the study emphasises individual participants’ experiences and perspectives, it also aims at establishing generalisation among the cases, as the main research question seeks to understand the exploration of reflective practice as a development tool for in-service high school teachers of English in Japan. The case study allows diversity and profound insights into each case, but it also aims to contribute to theory and to propose some elements as generalisable (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). However, a limitation of the case study should be noted, in that the findings are not *statistically* generalisable (Stark & Torrance, 2005). In this study, each case is scrutinised and examined in depth to identify analytical generalisations (Silverman, 2000) or theoretical generalisations (Robson, 2002) and move towards conclusions (Mitchell, 2000).

### **3.3 The pilot study**

The pilot study was conducted with one participant, Mr. Sato (pseudonym), in Suburban prefecture (pseudonym) from September 2006 to March 2007. After I gave the MEXT teacher training seminar in the summer of 2006 in the prefecture, voluntary participants were drawn from the participant teachers in the seminar. Mr. Sato, who was the only teacher who volunteered, engaged in reflective interventions; weekly journals and monthly interviews. In addition, his lessons were observed monthly. The data were thus triangulated. In journal keeping, Mr. Sato was advised to write about such things as events in teaching, his feelings towards the events, his belief about teaching, and also the keeping of the journal itself. However, he was constantly reminded that he had the discretion to decide on the topic entry. This aimed to allow spontaneous generation of the topics. Mr. Sato was given a choice of language between English and Japanese in which to keep the journal, and he chose English. He was asked to send the journal electronically every week. My role was to read his entries and to write questions or comments, but not to judge or evaluate the content of the entries. For monthly interviews and monthly class observations, I visited Mr. Sato's high school. The monthly interviews were unstructured, and Mr. Sato chose to have interviews in Japanese. In the interviews, I asked him questions about the content of the journal entries. There were four interviews conducted with Mr. Sato. The aim of the class observation was for me to learn the context where he taught, and I just took an observer role; I sat at the back of the classroom and took field notes.

In writing a journal, having complete control over the topic seemed to have led Mr. Sato to wonder what to enter and consequently led him to think about

negative events. Through journal keeping, Mr. Sato experienced deep introspection, not only about his teaching practices but about the way he lived his life, and he found the experience to be too 'heavy'. He wrote the journal entries at home, which he said broke the barrier he had built between work and home in order to keep balance in his life through separating school-related matters, teaching, students, and colleagues from his private life (INT 3). Journal writing led him not only to contemplate his present practice of teaching, but also conjured up past experiences of his teaching and past students, which he could not change. The discomfort he experienced prevented him from keeping journal entries. He talked about keeping a journal in one interview:

I think this type of self-development is good, but it becomes more difficult as we get older. We have all those years of experiences behind us, and they come out. If we are just writing about teaching in the classroom, maybe that is ok...but we do not want to inquire after ourselves very deeply, we want to leave some aspects fuzzy for ourselves...journal is good as a child, but it is difficult as an adult...you pile up sad memories...with Westerners since they have religions, they can be saved by God, but with Japanese, since most of us do not have religion, we cannot entrust ourselves to God, there is no salvation. (INT 2)

Mr. Sato was expressing the view in a joking tone, but the impact of his statement cannot be ignored. He seemed to have started to look at himself critically. Through weekly journal keeping, Mr. Sato experienced discomfort with its disclosing nature; deep introspection about his own life, and reminiscence of painful experiences. As introduced in Chapter 2, Moore (2004) explains such unhelpful negativity as 'pseudo-reflection', which is counter-productive and can lead "to focus too much on negative experiences and feelings, to feed anxieties and obsessions, and to lead not so much to improved practice as to despair" (p. 110). Mr. Sato used the word '*hansei*' to refer to 'reflection', which might be one

reason which led him to negative reflection. Even without any references by me to the word '*hansei*', Mr. Sato was spontaneously using the word to refer to reflection.

The monthly observation also seemed to have had a rather negative impact on Mr. Sato. The aim of the class observation in the pilot study was for me to learn the context where Mr. Sato taught. Without a clear purpose of what to observe, the observation sessions appeared to leave Mr. Sato feeling nervous and vulnerable. The experiences of Mr. Sato in the pilot study were taken into consideration in the design of the main study.

### **3.4 Participants**

#### **3.4.1 Potential participants**

This study attempts to shed light on the under-researched area of teacher development in Japan, that is, teacher development of in-service high school teachers. The target participants of this study were decided to be in-service teachers, since the study aims to explore the incorporation of reflective practice in authentic teaching context; it requires a substantial amount of time of teaching over several months, which would be difficult for pre-service teachers<sup>17</sup> to engage in. High school teachers, rather than junior high school teachers, were selected as potential participants as there is some evidence that internal in-service teacher development is not practised and is underdeveloped in high schools in Japan. In contrast, such development effort is often autonomously

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<sup>17</sup> The period of the practicum for pre-service teachers is four weeks for junior high school and two weeks for high school. Depending on the circumstances of the host school, however, three weeks is acknowledged to be the minimum period for junior high school.

carried out in the other levels of educational institutions, such as in elementary schools (Shimahara, 1998). Moreover, as pointed out in Chapter 1, high school teachers receive pressure and responsibility to prepare students for entrance examinations. Because of its predominant focus on the preparation for university entrance examinations, as Ikeno (2006) argues, improvement of English education in high schools has been most keenly called for in Japan. However, despite its urgent need, improvement seems to be left untouched (Ikeno, 2006), and high school teachers often cannot afford to modify their lesson plans. With high school teachers as the participants, this study attempts to examine the area of teacher development in Japan that has been hitherto underexplored.

The study did not aim to incorporate a comparative dimension but to focus on the exploration of reflective practice as experienced by the sample drawn from the same population, high school teachers, who were assumed to have similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As stated in Chapter 1, reflective practice as a method for language teacher development remains newly explored in Japan; thus, the study focuses on the engagement and exploration of reflective practice by participants who represent the majority of full-time high school English teachers in Japan.

#### **3.4.2 The process of inviting the participants: Teacher training seminars**

An invitation to join the study was extended to the high school teachers who attended the MEXT teacher training seminars in two locations, Suburban prefecture and Rural prefecture (both pseudonyms), where I gave workshops on reflective practice as a teacher trainer in August 2007. At the end of the seminars,



I shared the information about the study. I distributed my email address to the teachers and asked them to contact me if they were interested in participating; in order to ensure purely voluntary participations, the contact details of the teachers were not collected.

There were two responses from teachers in Rural prefecture and no responses from Suburban prefecture. The two teachers from Rural prefecture received the information sheet (see Appendix 1). After reading the information sheet, one of the teachers, Yoko (pseudonym), volunteered to join; the other potential participant declined. This potential participant, however, sent the information sheet to other teachers in Rural prefecture. Subsequently, Ken and Kyoko (both pseudonyms) contacted me, and after reading the information sheet, agreed to participate in the study. On the due date to contact me, there were only three participants from Rural prefecture and none from Suburban prefecture. With this small number, it was necessary to obtain additional participants.

### **3.4.3 The process of encouraging participation: Mailing lists**

In order to obtain a larger number of participants, a brief description of the study was posted on mailing lists for English language teachers<sup>18</sup> in August 2007. A brief introduction included the aim of the research, details of participation in the research, and my contact details. Interest was expressed by six teachers; four Japanese teachers of English and two non-Japanese teachers of English.

The information sheet for the study was sent to the four Japanese teachers of

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<sup>18</sup> The members of the two mailing lists consisted of graduates of M.A. programmes in TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages).

English. Subsequently, three teachers, Naomi, Miki, and Sara, (all pseudonyms), all of whom taught at a public school in Urban prefecture (pseudonym), agreed to participate. The non-Japanese teachers of English were contacted and informed that the study was targeted at Japanese teachers of English. Thus they were not invited to participate. Beyond being a Japanese high school teacher of English, other criteria - age, gender, career in teaching, and educational and occupational background - were not considered.

### 3.4.4 The participants

The participants selected for the study were six high school teachers of English, three of whom taught at high schools in Rural prefecture and three others in Urban prefecture (see Figure 3, below). Yoko, Kyoko, and Ken from Rural prefecture taught at high schools where the levels of the schools are lower than the average in t-scores<sup>19</sup>. Among the teachers who taught at Urban prefecture, Miki taught at one of the top high schools in the Urban prefecture, Naomi's high school can be described as of average level, and Sara taught at a high school with one of the lowest t-scores in the prefecture.

| <b>Names</b> | <b>Prefectures</b> | <b>Years of teaching</b> | <b>Types of high school</b>  |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Ken          | Rural              | Two years                | Vocational   |
| Kyoko        | Rural              | Two years                | Vocational   |
| Yoko         | Rural              | 13 years                 | Vocational<br><i>Rural Technical High School*</i> (current)<br><i>Athletic High School</i><br>(previous place of employment) |

<sup>19</sup> T-score refers to the number of standard deviations (SD) above or below the mean. T-score is often referred to in showing the levels of schools in Japan.

|       |       |                       |   |
|-------|-------|-----------------------|---|
| Sara  | Urban | Six years             | Remedial<br><i>River High School</i>  |
| Miki  | Urban | More than 20<br>years | Advanced<br><i>Elite High School</i>  |
| Naomi | Urban | More than 20<br>years | Intermediate<br><i>Medial High School</i><br>(current)<br><i>Technical High School</i><br>(previous place of<br>employment) |

Figure 3: The participants in the study

*\*Entries in italics indicate pseudonyms of high schools where the participants taught.*

### 3.5 Research protocol and ethical issues

The information sheet for the study was composed of following the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004). The information sheet, written in Japanese, included an explanation of the aims of the research, the tasks and the duration of the engagement of participants, the schedule of the study, and ethics in educational research. The ethical aspect of educational research was emphasised by describing potential advantages and disadvantages in participation, the confidentiality of the participants and of their institutions, data storage, and withdrawal from the study. My telephone number, home address, and e-mail address were published as the contact points (see Appendix 1). The data sheet of Ethics Approval for Doctoral Student Research Projects written in English was submitted for ethical scrutiny at the Institute of Education, University of London, before the outset of the main study. Ethics in educational research bore particular importance in the study since the study involved a substantial investment of time and commitment from the teachers,

which required them to engage in weekly journal keeping, 45-minute monthly interviews and three 45-minute focus group discussions in the seven months.

### **3.6 The main study**

#### **3.6.1 Explanation of the research**

Care was taken to explain involvement in the study. The ethical guidelines were explained at the initial meetings held in both Urban and Rural prefectures. The teachers (Ken and Kyoko in Rural prefecture and Naomi, Sara and Miki in Urban prefecture) were given an opportunity to ask questions about the study as well as receiving an explanation of the ethical issues. Following questions and answers about the study, the summary of the information sheet and the consent form of the study written in Japanese (see Appendix 2) were presented to the potential participant teachers. The sheet explained the purpose of the study, participation in the research, thanks, confidentiality, data storage, withdrawal from the study, and contact points. Reflective practice was briefly introduced as ‘an untraditional way of teacher development through looking back at one’s teaching and the teachers can find the answers within themselves’. Also, clarification on the word, ‘reflection’ was provided in order to evade the potential risk of self-criticism. It was explained that ‘reflection’ did not equal *hansei* and reflection did not necessarily require one to ponder on negative events. The potential participants were given time to read and ask questions. If they agreed to the statements, they were asked to sign the consent form. The forms were copied. The originals were kept by me and the copy was returned to each participant. Yoko, who could not attend the meeting in the Rural prefecture, received the same information and explanation with the same procedure before her first interview session.

### **3.6.2 The reflective interventions: Informed from the pilot study**

The main study employed three interventions: journal writing, the focus group discussion, and individual interviews, to triangulate for in-depth analysis. There was one observation session with each participant. As stated earlier, the employment of the interventions was two-fold, as a way to obtain data and as avenues for the participants to reflect.

The findings from the pilot study informed the research design of the main study. The modifications from the pilot study were: the reduction in the number of class observations, a clarification of guidance in journal keeping, a brief discussion of the word 'reflection', and the introduction of a focus group discussion.

One class observation was considered enough to learn about the context where the teachers were teaching. The purpose of the observation in the main study was the same as the pilot study, which was for me to learn the context where the participants taught. As stated earlier, the monthly observation in the pilot study had had a rather negative impact on the participant Mr. Sato. In the main study, class observation was scheduled only once in the early stage of the study. Class observation will be discussed in the latter part of this Chapter (see section 3.6.10).

In the main study, guidance was provided at the outset of the initial entry of the journal to prevent the participants from developing overly self-critical reflection. This was done by asking the participants to write their reactions to the discussion that took place in the first focus group (see section 3.6.4). Giving a clear

guideline at the beginning seemed to be helpful in directing the participants to write the entries. In the pilot study, having complete control over the topic entry seemed to have left Mr. Sato to wonder what to enter and had consequently led him to write negative events and to experience discomfort. After the initial entry, the topic of the journal entry was left to each participant.

During the explanation of the research, the clarification of the word 'reflection' was provided in order to evade the potential risk of self-criticism. It was explained that reflection does not necessarily require one to ponder on negative events (see section 3.6.1). In the pilot study, even without any reference to the word '*hansei*' from me, Mr. Sato often used the word to refer to reflection, which might have led him to negative reflection. Stockhausen and Kawashima (2002) argue that since the word, '*hansei*' conveys the notion of self-criticism, the association of 'reflective' and '*hansei*' may promote one to focus on past negative events. It was deemed crucial in the main study to clarify the meaning of 'reflection' to avoid the misunderstanding of its meaning.

In the main study, the focus group discussion was incorporated as a debriefing arena as well as a reflective intervention. Having multiple participants in the main study allowed the incorporation of the discussion groups. In addition to being a reflective intervention, the purpose of the discussion groups was to create a community which might function as a debriefing arena, where the participants share their views and experiences in the participation of the study (see section 3.6.4). The discussion of their experiences of participation in the study was considered to keep them from developing negative reflection.

In the main study, the focus group discussion, journal writing, and individual interviews were employed to triangulate for in-depth analysis. As the avenues for reflection, it was important to employ interventions which offer multiple modes of communication to meet differences of individuals to enhance reflection and also to express their *honne*. Particular emphasis was given not to influence the participants' *honne*, and not to encourage participants to dwell in *hansei*. I was careful not to share my views in the reflective interventions. In the focus group, I was a facilitator who generated questions but did not share my views. In journal writing, I wrote comments and posed questions but did not evaluate their entries. In the interviews, I adhered to asking questions and attempted not to share my views. To avoid participants' dwelling on *hansei*, questions were constantly asked as to whether the journal writing was producing any negative effects.

### **3.6.3 Focus group discussion**

The focus group was employed in the study as it provides a group forum which is a different mode of communication from the other reflective intervention and also as a debriefing arena. The focus group is defined by Morgan (1996) as a research technique that “collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (p. 130). In the focus group discussions, views and understandings of the group members are shared, which may be debated and challenged, and consequently be changed (Field, 2000), which rarely occurs in an individual interview (Bryman, 2004). The members may be presented with opposite views, challenged for holding certain ideas, or have their inconsistencies pointed out (Bryman, 2004). Such interactions may lead the members to learn new ideas, probe and clarify their views (Morgan, 1996; Nishida, 2006), and consequently gain insights (Nishida, 2006) or change their

views (Bryman, 2004). Engagement in discussions with the other teachers is considered a way to enhance reflection on their teaching practices (Farrell, 2001).

The interactions in the focus group may offer insights different from journal writing and individual interviews. The differences are highlighted with the presence of a plural audience, that is, peer teachers, and the involvement in reciprocal multidirectional communication. A forum, in which the interlocutors are peers or other participants, and not the researcher, may permit participants more easily than in the other interventions to express *honne*, especially about their experience of participation in the study, their views of engagement in the reflective interventions, or about the issues at their workplaces. Reciprocal multidirectional communication of the focus group, as opposed to the other interventions between a participant and I where I did not share my views, is expected to allow the participants to exchange views with others, which is likely to develop into discussion. The group arrangement also exposes the participants to multiple views and perspectives, which again is different from the other interventions.

The second aim of the employment of the focus group was as a debriefing arena to deter the participants from developing self-critical reflection. This was based on an insight gained from Mr. Sato's participation in the pilot study. Due to his self-critical reflection, he found writing journals to be painful since it conjured up all the events and feelings that he had tried to repress. As he was the only participant in the study, he did not have a person other than me with whom to



share his views. The focus group discussion, which enables participants to express their views and experiences of the engagement to others in the study, was expected to function as a debriefing forum.

Some of the drawbacks of focus groups pointed out in the literature relate to the imbalance of power in a group setting, where there may be uneven participation caused by participants with status differences. Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) caution that collaborations in a group should not necessarily be assumed to lead to “improved or positive teacher development” (p. 800), and that types of interaction among the participants and the influences of the interactions need to be taken into account. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) also point out that the group dynamics caused by status differences “may lead to non-participation by some members and dominance by others” (p. 377). Grundy (as cited in Boud *et al.*, 1985) point out that “One of the key features of self-reflection is the need for people to have the freedom to make a genuine choice for themselves, rather than conform to the influence of the teacher or other students” (p. 14). To this end, she argues the need for a structure that allows equal power relationships among group members, including teachers and facilitators. Uneven participation caused by the status differences need to be taken into account in the context of this study, where the communicative conventions of *tatemae/honne* prevail.

#### **3.6.4 Procedure of the focus group discussions**

The participants who taught in the same prefectures met for group discussion three times during the course of the study. The three meetings were scheduled based on the duration in the study: focus group 1 (FG1) in September 2007, focus group 2 (FG2) in December 2007, and focus group 3 (FG3) in March 2008.

The dates and the venues were negotiated with the participants. The participants were given a choice of language, either Japanese or English, in the discussion. Both groups of teachers chose Japanese for the three meetings. With the consent of the participants, the focus group discussions were audio recorded and then transcribed (see Figure 4, below).

My role in the focus group was that of a facilitator. Even though the topic was suggested by me, I provided an unstructured setting for the group members to discuss a topic. Thus, I guided but did not intervene in the discussion (Bryman, 2004). My role, however, required proactivity to ensure the spontaneous yet congenial participation of the members (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). I sometimes posed questions to some reticent members.

The initial focus group (FG1) meetings had distinctive purposes, which were giving the introduction of the study, offering opportunities to ask questions about the study, and providing suggestion of topics for the first journal entry. The introduction of the study comprised a brief explanation of reflective practice (see section 3.6.1). Following the questions and answers, the participants watched a 10-minute segment of DVD<sup>20</sup> of a Japanese high school teacher of English teaching a lesson. Afterwards, the teachers participated in a discussion about the practice of the teacher. The showing of the DVD was incorporated as a prompt for discussion, which was also advised to be the potential topic for their first entry of the journal. The discussion of the practice of another teacher was

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<sup>20</sup> The DVD is a series of “expert teachers” and is freely available on sale in Japan.

considered to set the tone and launch into the discussion of one's practice, rather than retrospection about one's past memories, in journal writing.

In Rural prefecture, there were no dates when all the three participants, Yoko, Ken, and Kyoko, were available for the first focus group meeting. Yoko, who attended the workshop conducted by me, was assumed to have had some knowledge of reflective practice. Thus, the priority for attendance was given to Kyoko and Ken. In Urban prefecture, all the three teachers, Sara, Miki and Naomi, attended the first focus group discussion.

The second focus group session (FG2) was designed to give an opportunity for the participants to express and discuss their views about the reflective interventions, the focus group discussions, journal keeping, and individual interviews, to which I refer as a reflective task (see Figure 4; Chapter 5, Figure 8). The objective of the second focus group (FG2) was established during the course of the study, as a result of topics raised by the participants in the interviews and in the journal writing. The participants often asked questions regarding the interventions of the study and their performances. They wondered if they were answering questions correctly in the interviews (see section 3.6.8) or making adequate entries in the journals. I raised the use of the term 'interview' and asked them their impression of the word. Some participants expressed that they found it was easier to speak during interviews with some questions initiated by me (Miki FG2), and some stated that with the word 'interview' they thought they were expected to respond to the questions posed by me (Yoko FG2). The use of the word and the purpose of the interviews were discussed and clarified in

the second focus group discussion (FG 2). All the participants in the two prefectures attended the second sessions.

The final focus group (FG3) was held as a forum for participants to look back and share their feedback on their engagements in the study, which denotes another reflective task (see Figure 4; Chapter 5, Figure 8). In Rural prefecture, Ken, having come down with a cold, could not attend the meeting. In Urban prefecture, there were no dates when all of the three teachers were available. I asked the three participants about the possibility of conducting the session in April. Taking into consideration of the feedback from the participants, and the description on the information sheet of the study which stated the period of the study to be completed in March 2008, the focus group was conducted in March without Naomi. Even without one participant in both groups, however, rich data was collected.

| <b>Sessions</b> | <b>Dates</b>   | <b>Aims</b>   |
|-----------------|----------------|---|
| First           | September 2007 | Meeting the other participants, inquiry about the study, suggestions for the first journal entry                                |
| Second          | December 2007  | Reflective task: Inquiry and experience sharing in the participation in the study, focus group, journal keeping, and interviews |
| Third           | March 2008     | Reflective task: Looking back on the participation in the study   |

Figure 4: Focus group process and the aims

### **3.6.5 Journal writing**

The journal writing was utilised as a reflective intervention as it facilitates

teachers to reflect through writing (Bailey 1990; Brock, Yu, & Wong, 1992; Ho & Richards, 1993; Lee, 2007; Loughran, 1996; McDonough, 1994), and it is distinct from the other interventions especially in the Japanese context. Journal writing is an intervention that allows an exploration of tacit teacher knowledge through engaging one in critical and objective examinations of one's teaching. Tripp (1993) illustrates that the reflective journal, or what he calls a critical incident file, allows teachers "to identify, articulate and examine their professional awareness and problematic" (p.18). Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) suggest that writing can be an effective tool to articulate and explore one's beliefs and practice. Journal writing is also said to clarify one's thoughts and feelings through gaining an objective view as a writer (Bailey, 1990; Tripp, 1993). Moreover, as Boud, Cohen, and Walker (1993) illustrate, writing is "a way of distancing oneself from the experience, which has the effect of clarifying it and fostering the ability to work with it, so that the learner can draw out potential learning" (p.63).

Journal writing is also considered to be an intervention which allows one's real intent, *honne*, to emerge due to its mode of communication: it is personal at the point of creation<sup>21</sup>. Brown and Dowling (1998) point out that the journal is an intervention that represents an everyday act of a teacher, where the data is less manipulated than other interventions such as interviews. McDonough and McDonough (1997) also describe the characteristic of journal keeping as being to express one's real intent:

a primary vehicle for process research, for getting 'under the

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<sup>21</sup> This attribute of journal writing was discussed by Dr. Shirley Lawes during a tutorial with the author in 2006.

skin' of the psychological, social and affective factors involved in teaching... that cannot readily be reached by staff meetings or tests or population sampling or experiments (p.135).

Writing allows the writers to write about their views and the thoughts deeply ingrained in them. In addition, journal writing does not require immediate responses, even when a question is posed; it allows writers to mull over ideas in writing. Thus, as McDonough (1994) contends, journal writing is a “real insider instrument” which allows writers to become aware of their behaviour and attitudes and also leads one to making decisions. Moreover, Gebhard and Oprandy (1999) suggest that journal writing gives a forum for the expression of frustration: “we can even accept a journal as a place to vent our frustration and to work through our judgements” (p. 24). In this way, journal writing offers a great potential for the participants' expression of *honne*.

### **3.6.6 Journal writing in the Japanese context**

It is vital to introduce the meaning of diary writing in Japan in the discussion of journal writing, as diary keeping is a common practice in Japan, which one encounters throughout one's life. In spite of the predominant cultural convention of *honne* and *tatemae*, with their preference in and familiarity with writing a diary, it could be assumed that the Japanese are accustomed to express their *honne* in a diary even with an audience. Nishikawa (2009) argues that diary keeping has been used as a device for educating Japanese nationals about with its ideological policy throughout the history; during WWII, soldiers were encouraged to keep diaries, and after WWII, housewives were encouraged to keep diaries of family finances. Nishikawa's explanation suggests the underlying reason for the prevalence of the practice of diary writing in the country. At elementary schools,

students are assigned with keeping a summer vacation diary. At high schools, students study the classic diary literature written around 1000 AD. The perpetual exposure to diary explains the general preference of diary keeping among Japanese, which is also reflected in the number of blogs on the internet. In 2008, a report by Technorati indicated that the largest number of blogs in the world were written in Japanese (37%) followed by English (36 %) (Harden, 2007). The number of blogs in Japanese, the official language only of Japan, exceeding the number of those in English, can be seen as a significant illustration of the Japanese preference for keeping a diary.

### **3.6.7 Journal writing process**

The participants were asked to send a journal entry electronically approximately once a week, but the number of the actual entries was left to each participant (see Figure 5). The participants were offered a choice of language in the entry, either in Japanese or in English. One teacher, Sara, kept her journals in English; the five other teachers kept their journals in Japanese. My role was to read the entries, pose clarifying questions, and comment on their entries, but not to evaluate or judge the content of the journals so as to allow the participants' *honne* to be expressed spontaneously.

After their participation in the first focus group (FG1), the teachers were asked to make the first journal entry about their reactions to the discussions that took place and the ideas that were generated in the meeting. From the second entry, the teachers were advised to write about their experiences of engagement in the study or their lessons; however, the topics were left to each participant. The topics sometimes developed like a thread between participants' responses and

my questions. A reflective task was incorporated in the final journal entry, prior to the submission of the final entry in the final month of the study. All of the journal entries and the exchanges with me were compiled and sent via email to each participant. The teachers were asked to read their past entries and to select reflective themes, that is their recurring interests or concerns in their teaching practices. Rereading the journal entries, as Lee (2007) points out, is suggested to lead the participants to become more aware of the changes in their own values and beliefs, and also of self-development. Bailey (1990) argues the importance of rereading the journals as “simply writing diary entries does not yield the maximum potential benefit of the process. In order to really learn from the record, the diarist should reread the journal entries and try to find the patterns therein” (p. 224). Tripp (1993) also notes the importance of rereading journals, as: “we allow our subconscious to write in things which we may recognise as important only after they have appeared on paper” (p. 109). Tripp’s view seems to suggest that one has different perspectives as a writer and a reader.

|                    | <b>Topics</b>  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>First entry</b> | Reactions on their first focus group discussion                                  |
|                    | Open-ended reactions<br>Responses to questions posed by me                       |
| <b>Final entry</b> | Reflective task: Selection of the themes of their teaching from the past entries |

Figure 5: Journal writing process and the topics

### **3.6.8 Individual interviews**

Interviews were employed in the study, as they allow the participants’ *honne* to emerge and also because they provide direct interaction with the participants.

The interviews were designed to be unstructured: as Creswell (2009) states,



open-ended questions allow researchers to attend to what people say and do, not influence the participants' expression. Thus, an unstructured interview is a way to bring out the view or *honne* of the participants. Silverman (1993) states that interviews are the most effective way to "gather an 'authentic' understanding of peoples' experiences" (p. 10). It is also pointed out that interviews allow the views and feelings of the participants to emerge (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956 cited in Robson, 2002). Kvale (2006) argues that interviews give an opportunity for the participants to "freely present their life situations in their own words" (p. 481). Brown and Dowling (1998) suggest that interviews lead "to explore the world from the perspective of the interviewee and to construct an understanding of how the interviewee makes sense of their experiences" (1998, p. 72).

The direct interaction in an interviewee may allow researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the participants compared to other methods. The face-to-face communication design may lead respondents to be more engaged and motivated to share their views than in other interventions (Tuckman, 1972 cited in Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). In the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, the interviews give an interviewer an opportunity for clarification, probing, and prompting (Brown & Dowling, 1998). The spontaneity of the interviews may also offer "the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives" (Robson, 2002, p. 272). In addition, the nonverbal cues in interviews may give additional information to interviewers to help understand the verbal message (Robson, 2002). Thus, direct interaction with the participants is seen to be conducive to understanding the participants.

### **3.6.9 Development of the interviews**

During the course of the study, each teacher was interviewed six times, approximately once a month (see Figure 6). The interviews were 45 minute long unstructured interviews. The participants were given a choice of language, either Japanese or English; all six participants chose to speak in Japanese. With the agreement of the participants, the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis. My role in the interviews was to ask questions and not to judge the interviewees' statements or share my views. The questions in the interviews focused on the content of the journal entries and the participants' experience of the engagement in the study. The questions were utilised as prompts to develop the interviews, but not to install a set structure. Most of the interviews were conducted on the participants' school premises, and the schedule and the venue were negotiated with each participant. Since the teachers do not own a private office, the participant teachers reserved a room for interviews: the presence of other teachers would have hindered me from asking questions, especially those about the school and the students.

Among the interventions utilised in the study, the interview was the reflective intervention that required discussion with the participants. This resulted from development of the interviews which derived from the word 'interview' and my use of a notepad. Farrell (2001) claims the necessity of negotiating reflective interventions before embarking on a study; this study found that it was necessary to discuss the interventions during the study as well.

The purpose of the first interviews (INT1), which were conducted in October 2007, was a warm-up session for both the participants and me to get to know

each other, and for the participants to get accustomed to being interviewed. The questions focused mostly on factual information, such as the years of teaching experience, the years of teaching at the particular school, the courses that they were teaching, and the curriculum of the school. Questions pertinent to their beliefs and ideas towards teaching were not asked in the first interviews.

During the second interviews (INT2), conducted in November 2007, I encountered some challenges. The interviews were designed to be unstructured; however, conducting such interviews proved to be quite difficult. The interviews were initiated by me asking clarifying questions on the journal content. There were individual differences in the ways participants responded in the interviews. Most participants responded to the questions and did not engage in an extensive dialogue. I noticed an overall tendency among such participants; they waited for questions to be asked by me, responded to the questions, and then waited for the next question to be asked. This seemed to have prevented the participants from exploring and developing their utterances. After the voice recorder was turned off, however, they would speak more spontaneously; their *honne* would emerge.

Naomi's interviews were different from those of the other participants, both in terms of Naomi's and my own involvement. Naomi would return questions and put long strings of questions to me. I was concerned with my participation in these interviews. If I responded, I thought I might be influencing Naomi's *honne*; yet if I did not respond, I thought I might offend her.

The tendency among the participants to wait for questions might have resulted from the following two aspects: the use of a notepad in the interviews, and the use of the word 'interview'. During interviews, I had a notepad with a list of questions written on the pages so that I would not run out of questions. Since the participants and I were sitting facing each other in close proximity, they were able to look at the list on the notepad. After the interviews, some participants would apologise that I could not finish asking all the questions listed on the notepad. The list might have given an impression that there were a set of questions to be asked and answered in the interviews. Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2002) state that notepads can be identified as "a symbol of the power of the researcher" (p. 209). The use of the notepad could have led the participants to assume interviewee roles, thinking that there were questions to be answered. Afterwards, I tried to minimise reading the questions from the question list on the notepad.

The second aspect that explains the common pattern of the interview might have derived from the use of the word 'interview' in Japanese. 'Interview' is a loan word from English which is commonly used in the Japanese language. The meaning of the word in Japanese is restricted to Q & A type of discourse, where an interviewer asks a set of questions to an interviewee. With the use of the word, the participants might have interpreted their role to be answering questions; thus playing the role of an interviewee. The use of the word 'interview' was raised in the second focus group discussion as a topic for clarification i.e. that the interview sessions do not have to follow the Q & A style (see section 3.6.4).

In addition to the clarification of the word 'interview', I used *tatemae* as rapport building for facilitating participants' spontaneous discourse as a solution to the challenges in the interviews. *Tatemae* as rapport building may seem paradoxical because *tatemae* is a public front, and rapport building may seem to be associated with *honne*, real intent. What I would like to suggest is an accommodation with *tatemae*, that is, going along with the expected conversational ritual of the participants. As pointed out in Chapter 1, *tatemae* is the prerequisite for *honne*, and *tatemae* is preceded with *honne*. It was discussed that once the membership is established through *tatemae*, more open discourse, *honne*, can be allowed to develop (see section 1.7). With the participants whose interviews resembled Q & A sessions, it was possible to go along with a Q & A session as a warm up before *honne* is built. With the interviews with Naomi where my participation was requested, I also used *tatemae*, in that I went along with her request and expectations by responding to her questions. Accommodating to Naomi's request and expectation seemed more appropriate, as averting replies to the questions might have offended her or discouraged her participation in the study. During the interviews with Naomi, I felt that it would be more important to let her talk so as to respect her expectation and give her a forum for expression, rather than striving to adhere to the standard procedure of the interviews to gain uncontaminated data. The request from the participants for me to participate in the study was unexpected. This suggests a need of a peer or a mentor for the participants, which will be discussed in the Conclusion, Chapter 8.

In the third interviews (INT3), which were carried out in December 2007, each participant was taking a more active role in the interviews by engaging in a more

extensive discourse. This might be a result of the second focus group, where discussion took place about the word 'interview'.

The fourth interviews (INT4), conducted in January 2008, entailed a reflective task, that is, reading the transcripts of the first three interviews and sharing any findings, such as what they often discussed, what seemed important for them, if they had discovered anything about their teaching or themselves as a teacher, and also what they often discussed and what seemed important to them in teaching. The reason for asking the participants to read the transcripts were two-fold: to check the transcripts for accuracy<sup>22</sup> and also to look back on their past interviews. I handed the interview transcripts to the participants and asked them to share anything they found. There were differences in the participants' reactions in reading the interview scripts; some were amazed to find some patterns in what they had said, while others, experienced teachers as Yoko and Miki, did not particularly state any new findings.

In the fifth interviews, conducted in February 2008, another reflective task was incorporated. This was for the participants to select their reflective themes, that is, their recurring interests or concerns in their teaching practices and the ideas they found through their participation in the study. The reading of their past interview transcripts in the fourth interview was presumed to be helpful for the participants to select their reflective themes. The first two interviews of the fifth interviews were with Miki and Yoko. Since they did not share any findings in the

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<sup>22</sup> Checking the interview transcripts for accuracy means to check if the proper nouns and the Chinese characters are correct and not to check the content of what the participants said.

fourth interviews, the sessions started with my questions regarding the recurring themes which I found from their interviews and journals. The presentation of my observation, prior to the participants' selection of their reflective themes, might have influenced the participants' selection and discussion of the reflective themes; the interviews with the other four participants were initiated by asking the participants to share their reflective themes.

The final interviews (INT6) focused on reflection of the teachers' overall participation in the study, which denoted another reflective task. Prior to the final interviews, each participant received the compiled collection of all of their past journal exchanges with me. The participants were asked to read the past entries, find and write about their reflective themes in the final journal, and send it to me (see section 3.6.7). The interviews focused on the reflective themes written in the final reflective journal.

|                                    | <b>Focus of the interviews</b>   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>First interview</b>             | Learning the background of teachers and school contexts                |
| <b>Second and Third interviews</b> | Asking specific questions to each participant on their journal entries |
| <b>Fourth interview</b>            | Reflective task: Sharing interview transcriptions with each teacher    |
| <b>Fifth interview</b>             | Reflective task: Identifying their own reflective themes               |
| <b>Sixth interview</b>             | Reflective task: discussion on the last journal entry                  |

Figure 6: Interview process and the focus

### **3.6.10 Class observation**

The purpose of the class observation was for me to learn the context where each teacher taught. The textbook, the students, the physical layout of the classroom,

and the objectives of high school English lessons, was considered important in creating rapport as well as understanding data generated from the participants. Class observation of each participant was conducted once, at an early stage in the study. Since there was no particular focus of what was being observed or how the data was recorded, observation in the study was informal observation (Robson, 2002). I took a non-participant observer role (Brown & Dowling, 1998) and sat at the back of the classroom for the whole class period, taking field notes on the events that occurred in the lesson and on my reactions. With each participant, the date of the observation session was negotiated via email. The observations of Kyoko, Ken, Yoko, and Naomi were conducted in October 2007, and of Miki and Sara in November 2007. After the observation, if the time allowed for the teachers, brief interviews of about 10 minutes were conducted. The purpose of the interview was to ask clarifying questions and explanations regarding the lesson, but not to evaluate teaching. The discussion was recorded with the consent of the participant and transcribed.

### **3.6.11 Overall schedule of the process**

The study was conducted for seven months during which time the participants engaged in the reflective interventions. The first task the teachers engaged in was participation in the focus group. Following the initial focus group, each participant was asked to keep a weekly journal. Class observation was conducted with each participant within two months from the outset of the study. Individual interviews were conducted every month. The reflective tasks, tasks incorporated in the study in an attempt to facilitate reflection, were: 1) for the participants to ask questions and share experiences about their participation in



the second focus group; 2) reading the first three interview transcripts during the fourth interview; 3) identifying reflective themes in the fifth interviews; 4) writing reflection in the last journal entry; 5) discussion on the last journal entry in the last interview; and 6) sharing feedback in the participation in the study in the third focus group (See Figure 7 below). The scheduling of the interviews, observation, and the focus group sessions was discussed and negotiated with each participant via email.

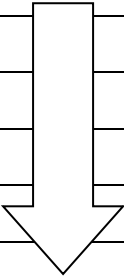
| Reflective intervention engaged |   |  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Sep. 2007                       | 1 <sup>st</sup> Focus group discussion.           | First entry of the journal   |
| Oct.                            | Interview, Class observation                      |  |
| Nov.                            | Interview, Class observation                      |  |
| Dec.                            | Interview, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus group discussion |  |
| Jan. 2008                       | Interview   |  |
| Feb.                            | Interview   |  |
| Mar.                            | Interview, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus group discussion | The last entry   |

Figure 7: The schedule of the reflective interventions

### 3.7 The follow-up to the study

After the completion of the study in March 2008, a follow-up email was sent to each participant in August 2008. I asked each participant approximately 10 questions pertinent to the reflective themes they described in the final journal entries and discussed in the final interviews. The questions focused on their view towards the reflective themes and about any changes that were brought about after the completion of the study. Miki, Sara, Naomi, and Yoko returned emails with the responses to the questions. Ken responded and said that he would return an email, but he did not. Kyoko did not respond to the email.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

#### **3.8.1 Data source**

The main source of the data was drawn from the three reflective interventions: the focus group discussions, the interviews, and the journal entries. There were three discussion groups conducted in two prefectures: a total of six group discussions. The interviews were conducted six times with the six participants: 36 interviews in total. The number of journal entries sent to me and the lengths of the entries written by the participants varied among the participants. However, there was ample material for in-depth analysis. In addition to the main sources of the data, there were supplementary sources of data such as the brief interviews after the class observation, and field notes taken during the class observation and after the interviews.

The audio data, those of the interviews and the focus group, were manually transcribed by me. Transcribing Japanese language is time-consuming, as it involves not only typing but selecting the correct Chinese characters. The use of computer software, such as Dragon Speech, which transcribes recognised voices, was considered. However, a manual transcription was conducted since listening to the data repeatedly was an effective way to internalise the data. After the transcription was completed, all of the data, from the focus group, the interviews, and the journal, was chronologically ordered and compiled in one document for each participant. This document was made to analyse each participant's development through the study. The direct quotation of the data used in the thesis, which was originally in Japanese, was initially translated into English by me. To ensure the objective presentation of the data, however, the data was translated by a bilingual colleague.

### **3.8.2 Analysis process**

The study aims to generate a theory rather than starting with a theory (Creswell, 2009). This requires intensive and extensive analysis of the data, and marks the strength of the study. From the research questions, there were three main foci of the analysis of the data; the participants' engagement in reflection, their engagement in reflective interventions, and the meaning of their participation in reflective practice. The first two foci were analysed within and across the participants. The last focus involved in-depth analysis of the data of each participant.

For the analysis of the participants' reflection, first, I read through the data without any coding. In the second reading, I coded and took notes in the margins on the parts of data where the participants appeared to have looked back at their teaching practices or ideas, or changed their views. The coded sections of all of the participants were combined and made into a document. The compiled list of codes was then analysed for differences and similarities. The similar codes were put into categories (see Appendix 3), which formed the preliminary basis of the types of reflection discussed in Chapter 4. The different categories, or types of reflection, were applied back to the data to see if they explained the data. If the categories were not adequate, they were modified and revised.

The analysis of the reflective interventions examined if and how the interventions were beneficial for the participants to develop reflection. First, I read through the data of all the participants without any coding. Then, in the rereading of the data, I marked the parts on the data where the participants referred to the reflective

interventions and where the types of reflection which I identified in Chapter 4 emerged. I divided the parts of the data where reflection was identified under different interventions and made a file for each intervention. For each file of intervention, I compared the data across the participants to look for generality of the participants' reflection under each intervention.

The analysis of the individual participants' participation in the study, in principal, followed the process described above. First I read through the data without coding to examine the data objectively. Then, I coded and entered comments in the data where I found recurring topics, words with impact, repeated patterns of argument, and elaboration. I also coded reflective themes, which were not selected by the participants and/or me during the main study. I went back to the data, this time to code the reflective themes that were selected by the participants and/or by me during the study. Thus, there were three different types of reflective themes: those selected by the participants, those selected by me during data collection, and those selected by me during data analysis. I cut and pasted sections of data which referred to the reflective themes into a document for each theme. Each compiled reflective theme was then read and analysed to see what they meant, signified, and represented. The reflective themes were then analysed with the use of diagrams (see Appendix 4). Tables were used to compare and contrast salient points, and charts were drawn to connect the relationships among the themes if they were consistent, opposite, or similar (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). The charts were then examined to gain a holistic understanding of the meaning of each participant's participation in the study. This was compared and contrasted across the participants. The extensive and

thorough analysis of the data marks the strength of this thesis.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

Chapter 3 discussed the reflective interventions employed in the study, the focus group, journal writing, and the interviews, with the focus that the study was conducted in the Japanese context. As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the distinctive features of the study is the novelty both of the areas examined and of the interventions employed: an exploration of reflective practice through a case study approach conducted in Japan. The chapter has discussed the rationale for the employment of the interventions, and the development of the interventions. In the discussion of the development of the interviews, the chapter has addressed that the challenge with the interviews can be facilitated by observing the communicative convention of *tatemae/honne*. The chapter has then described the in-depth data analysis through the focus on reflection, the reflective interventions and each participant. Chapter 4 discusses the type of reflection identified in the study.

## Chapter 4: Analysis of reflection

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes a definition and types of reflection, and also explicates the process of reflection through examples drawn from each participant; Ken, Kyoko, Sara, Yoko, Naomi, and Miki. As explained in Chapter 2, this thesis elaborates on the types of reflection through a psychological perspective, i.e. the layers of awareness of reflection. From the analysis of the data, I would like to define reflection as an act of 'looking back at one's practice and ideas in order to gain new perspectives, such as *reinterpretation* and *awareness*'. I identified two broad categories of reflection: 'precursors to reflection', i.e. changes have not taken place in the data, and reflection, i.e., a change has taken place in the data. The types of 'precursors to reflection' are *description*, *reconfirmation*, and *hansei*; the types of reflection are *reinterpretation* and *awareness*. The five types of reflection, *description*, *reconfirmation*, *hansei*, *reinterpretation*, and *awareness*, are specific names that I use to describe reflection of the participants. This chapter explores each type of 'precursor to reflection' and reflection with examples from the data. The chapter concludes with presenting my argument that reflective process is non-linear and recursive, and is developed through what I call a *reflective continuum*; and that reflection cannot be staged into a hierarchy, as has been suggested by some of the professional literature of reflective practice reviewed in Chapter 2. The types of reflection identified in the current chapter will be employed in the following analysis chapters, 5 6 and 7. In this chapter, the following abbreviations are used:

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| FG  | Focus Group, FG1 refers to the first focus group  |
| INT | Interview, INT1 refers to the first interview   |
| JE  | Journal entry. For example, in "JE1/18 Oct," "1/18," refers to the number of the entry (in this case the first entry) and the total |

number of the entries (in this case 18). “Oct.,” October, is the abbreviation of the month when the entry was made.

Single quotation marks are used to indicate the reflective themes that the participants selected.

Types of reflection are indicated in italics.

## **4.2 The types of reflection**

### **4.2.1 *Description***

*Description* refers to a spontaneous written or spoken depiction of experiences or feelings without gaining new perspectives or changes, so it is a ‘precursor to reflection’. *Description* refers to most of the data generated from the participants. It is, however, significant, because what is written or spoken entails not only what is recalled, but also what is chosen to be verbalised and made public. As explained in Chapter 1, what is verbalised and what is not verbalised has a significant difference in the Japanese context, which can be explained with the concept of *kotodama*<sup>23</sup>. What is verbalised means a private thought which is made public and acknowledged by the individual to be actualised (Hara, 2001). Thus, it can be said that *description* involves participants’ declaration of an idea to be examined. What is not verbalised is a private thought that will not be made public and examined. What were *described* in the early phases of the study were often developed to be reflection or reflective themes in the later phases of the study. The topics described often went through ‘precursors to reflection’ (reconfirmation, *hansei*) and reflection (reinterpretation) before the participants developed *awareness*. This suggests the recurrent nature of reflection, which I call the *reflective continuum*. It is argued that reflection is developed after one goes through different types of ‘precursors to reflection’ and reflection.

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<sup>23</sup> Its literal translation is ‘word spirit’. It signifies what is verbalised needs to be actualised.

*Description* bears importance as a 'precursor to reflection', or a gateway to the *reflective continuum*.

Chapter 2 discussed the significance of *description* in the *reflective continuum*. It introduced *description* as one category of reflection used by Jay and Johnson (2002), for whom the significance of *description* is that a writer notices what was described to have 'salient features'. It was also noted that Tripp (1993) points out the significance of *description*. He states that *description* reveals writers' thoughts, about which they may not be necessarily conscious, but what is entered allows them to objectify their views. *Description* is also explained as a way to identify a problematic (Tripp, 1993) or problem definition (LaBoskey, 1993), and denotes its importance as a gateway to the exploration of tacit teacher knowledge and routines. Tripp's (1993) statement of the importance of acknowledging the problematic shows: "it is only when it is realised that problematics exist that one can set out to expose, understand and acknowledge (or, if necessary, transform) them" (p. 14). It was also pointed out that Tripp (1993) regards the importance of identification of the problematic in that it leads to an exploration of one's routine, which otherwise is not often challenged (see section 2.4.2). *Description*, which is a verbalisation of a problematic, is a way to examine a part of teacher knowledge that otherwise remains unexamined.

The followings are examples of *description* which later developed into reflection or were selected as reflective themes by the participants. Ken *described* a strong influence of 'atmosphere' on students' learning and on his teaching (JE 4/11 Nov.). 'Atmosphere' was what he later *reconfirmed* to be his reflective theme (JE



1/11 Oct.), showed *hansei* towards it (JE 9/11 Jan), *reinterpreted* his view of it (JE 9/11 Jan) and gained *awareness* about it (INT6) (see section 6.2.3). As Tripp (1993) points out, the significance of *description* is that it reveals writers' thoughts without their being conscious and that what is entered allows one to objectify their views. Reading his own interview transcripts and journal entries, Ken expressed that he was amazed with the extent he was concerned with 'the atmosphere' (INT6). The first focus group and in an early journal entry, Kyoko *described* the change that took place in her first year of teaching from teaching English to 'developing students through English study' (FG1; JE 1/12 Oct.), which was later discussed and *reconfirmed* as one of her reflective themes in the course of the study (INT5) (see section 6.3.2). In the first journal, Sara *described* her teaching maxim, 'bring the world into the classroom' (JE 1/26 Oct.), which became her reflective theme, which was *reconfirmed* (JE 24/25 Mar.), *reinterpreted* (JE 24/25 Mar.), and which she gained *awareness* about (JE 24/25 Mar.) in the latter part of the study (see section 6.4.5). The second journal entry, Yoko *described* 'effectiveness of writing a journal,' which became her arena for expression and one of her reflective themes. From the first focus group discussion, Naomi *described* her colleague Ms. Ono (pseudonym), whose view Naomi *reinterpreted* (INT5) (see section 7.3.3). In the second journal, Miki *described* 'the use of worksheet,' through which she became *aware* of her weakness in teaching (INT6) in the latter phase of the study (see section 7.4.4). The reflective themes mentioned above were explored, reviewed, elaborated, and the participants developed awareness with it, which denotes the significance of *description* in the participants' journey through the *reflective continuum* for development.

#### **4.2.2 Reconfirmation**

*Reconfirmation* is an affirmation of one's view or interpretation. Since there is no change involved, it is also a 'precursor to reflection'. *Reconfirmation* has not often been discussed as a type of reflection in the literature of reflective practice. However, it was common among the participants in this study. This may be because one of the reflective tasks of the study gave opportunities to the participants to look back at their past interview transcripts and journal entries. It is also argued that *reconfirmation* is characteristic among Japanese participants. *Reconfirmation* entails a unique aspect of the findings of the study, and this thesis argues that *reconfirmation* is one important point in the *reflective continuum*, as it allows one to review and confirm one's ideas and often leads to develop reflection such as *reinterpretation* and *awareness*.

*Reconfirmation* is similar to *description* since it involves an individual choosing and stating their view. The difference is that whereas *description* is a more spontaneous selection from an open-ended pool of ideas and experiences, *reconfirmation* entails reviewing, choosing and declaring what is important, from reading one's past journal entries or the interview transcripts. *Reconfirmation* thus entails a process of narrowing down what is important for oneself among that which was already *described*. Even though *reconfirmation* does not involve perceptual changes, it constitutes a crucial point in the reflective continuum as it consolidates one's view, reminds oneself of what is important, and brings one back to the right track, which functions as self-monitoring as well as an impetus for reflection. Through *reconfirmation*, the participants solidified their views of teaching and their professional identity. What the participants *reconfirmed* often

led to reflection, i.e., *reinterpretation* and *awareness*.

*Reconfirmation* functions as an important aspect of self-monitoring, especially for novice teachers, because they were still uncertain about what they wanted to aim at in teaching. Kyoko *reconfirmed* that her aim of teaching was ‘developing students through English study’, which she established at the beginning of the academic year through writing the self-evaluation sheet for the high school. Even though she expressed the aim of teaching at the beginning of the study, she remained uncertain and forgot about the aim. The rereading of the aim and writing the self-evaluation sheet in the latter part of the academic year (JE 9/12 Jan) reminded Kyoko what was important for her and also led her to evaluate her practice against the aim (see 6.3.2). In Sara’s case, in terms of what she gained in the study, she pointed out that it was beneficial for her to *reconfirm* the direction she wanted to pursue through the exchange of the journal with me (JE 26/26 Aug.).

*Reconfirmation* is an important point in the reflective continuum; what was *reconfirmed* often developed into reflection. Ken *reconfirmed* that ‘atmosphere’ was an influential factor on students’ learning and on his teaching and chose it as one of his reflective themes (INT4, JE 11/11 Mar., INT6). He later *reinterpreted* what ‘atmosphere’ meant for him; it was something that he had to create rather than being vulnerable (JE 9/11 Jan). He also gained *awareness* that he was dodging his responsibility of teaching and creating a good class ‘atmosphere’ for learning on the students and on the bad class ‘atmosphere’ (INT6) (see 6.2.3). This led to his shaping the professional identity that he was

the one who had to create a good class 'atmosphere'. Sara, in one of the last journals, *reconfirmed* that to 'bring the world into the classroom' was still her big theme in teaching English (JE 25/26 Mar.). The *reconfirmation* led Sara to *reinterpret* what was meant by 'the world' for her students and she became aware of the differences between her 'world' and that of her students. She became aware that in teaching, she had to understand and approach through the students' world rather than teaching through her world (INT6) (see section 6.4.5). What Yoko *reconfirmed* was that she was 'a person who wants to express her views to others but is not saying them', which led her to express critical views about her colleagues, and eventually reshaped her professional identity as a teacher (JE 25/25 Aug) (see section 7.2.3). Naomi *reconfirmed* 'belief' to be her interest in teaching, which led her to investigate teacher belief through interviewing her colleagues (JE 12/19 Feb., INT6) (see 7.3.4), and later *reinterpreted* her view towards her difficult colleague, 'Ms. Ono', to perceive her as a teacher with a different background and beliefs (INT5) (see 7.3.3). Miki *reconfirmed* 'the use of worksheet' to be her ultimate method of teaching (INT6) (see section 7.4.4). She later scrutinised the use of the 'worksheet' and gained *awareness* that the use of the 'worksheet' might have been a compensation for her weakness in teaching (INT6). Even though it is not often mentioned in the literature of reflection, the study found *reconfirmation* to be a significant 'precursor to reflection' as it helps one to review, remind oneself, and consolidate what was important for one's teaching, which prepares one to develop reflection.

#### **4.2.3 Hansei**

*Hansei* is another type of 'pre-cursor to reflection' that is characteristics of the Japanese participants. As a 'precursor to reflection', I would like to define *hansei*

as 'looking back at one's view, one's present or past practice, and recognising that it was not appropriate or satisfactory, and acknowledging one's responsibility in its cause and in its improvement'. I would like to clarify that *hansei* and reflection are different; however, they are often interpreted as the same concept in Japan, as discussed in Chapter 1 (see section 1.6). The focus of *hansei* is assuming responsibility for an unsatisfactory cause or phenomenon, and improvement of an event, which is not the case in reflection. Also, unlike reflection, *hansei* is not accompanied with a new perspective. The study found that *hansei* often comprises a self-critical evaluation of one's views or practice followed by a statement of conscious effort for self-improvement.

*Hansei* is salient as a 'precursor to reflection' in the reflective continuum, as it leads to reflection, and also other cognitive activities such as generating a solution, and gaining various perspectives. For instance, Kyoko considers *hansei* to be an important factor for improvement. She expressed that she could not understand her colleagues who think they are able to "engage in satisfactory educational activities without having an opportunity to *hansei*" (JE 9/12 Jan.). Naomi regarded *hansei* as an essential part of learning: "I have gained a lot from the participation in the study. I started to look back at my teaching. I look back, *hansei*, and I learn from it" (JE 19/19 Aug.).

The following instance shows that Miki's *hansei* leads to the generation of a solution. Miki showed *hansei* about her teaching practice; she said that she was just focused on finishing up the assigned part in the textbook. She entered in one journal (JE 4/18 Oct.), "I assume *hansei* on my excessive focus on covering the

content for the test and doing grammar translation in September and the first half of October, but now I am starting to make worksheets again” (JE 4/18 Oct.). This indicates that she acknowledges and takes the responsibility for teaching mostly through grammar translation and not trying other attempts. Miki’s *hansei* is followed by a solution, the use of the worksheet, which Miki thought would improve the situation.

One instance of Kyoko’s *hansei* led her to change her practice. Kyoko showed *hansei* in that she had not provided written feedback to each student on their writing: “I assume *hansei* that I had not given individual feedback to students in English. When I was in high school, I used to receive individual feedback from teachers” (JE 8/12 Jan.). She acknowledged that what she did not practise, not writing individual feedback, was not desirable. After showing *hansei*, she started to write comments on each student’s work, which she said enabled her to have one-to-one communication with each student (JE 8/12 Jan.).

The following extract shows Naomi’s *hansei* which precedes *reconfirmation*. Naomi pronounced *hansei* about having been unable to prepare a worksheet and resorted to the workbook, which she knew was too difficult for the students. *Hansei* is followed by *reconfirmation* of what is important for her in teaching a lesson:

I did not have time to make the worksheet this week, so I had to use the workbook. The students were not motivated to study with the workbook and the lesson ended in failure. I assume *hansei*. I feel the importance of teaching a lesson that students can follow. (JE 3/19 Nov.)

After showing *hansei*, she reconfirms the importance of teaching a lesson that students can follow.

One instance of Kyoko's *hansei* led to reflection, *reinterpretation*. Kyoko *described* an episode which she said she engaged in *hansei*, which led her to look at the situation through various perspectives, and to *reinterpretation*. Kyoko described the episode: one student became upset because Kyoko changed the scheduled date of the students' presentation. Kyoko thought the quality of the Powerpoint documents that the students prepared was not satisfactory for making the presentation. However, the students felt they were ready and wanted to present; they thought they had put enough effort into making the documents (JE 1/12 Oct.). Towards this event, Kyoko generates various *reinterpretations* for the reasons that the student became upset:

Maybe, it may be that I said something that hurt the student. When she said, "Why can't we present?" I said, "Did you practise the presentation?" To her response, "No," I said, "See!" and I might have acted offensive. That's not all, my response might have given her an impression that what she had tried hard was denied. I might have acted that way. (JE 1/12 Oct.)

Kyoko generates various *reinterpretations* of the situation: she might have said something to hurt the student's feelings, she might have acted too offensively, or she might have appeared to have denied the student's work. The extract above is an example of *hansei* followed by *reinterpretation*.

Miki's one journal entry of *hansei* shows concurrence of *hansei*, a generation of various perspectives, and *awareness*. In this episode, *hansei* generates different perspectives:

Today, in Class D (my homeroom<sup>24</sup> class), a student asked me again about whether or not I would give out the Japanese translation of the

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<sup>24</sup> Homeroom is a unit of a class where students take the same required courses together. They have a homeroom teacher who is like their "guidance teacher". A homeroom teacher is in charge of giving career and behavioural guidance.

reading passage in the textbook. I told the student that I am not going to give it and don't need to because I am explaining everything during the class. However, the student's reply was "But you gave it to us last year." Last year, when we were using an official government approved textbook, we had many types of tasks such as oral introductions and I also created worksheets for each class. I explained to the student that the way I am teaching this year is different from last year. Then, another student said, "Last year's way was better. This year, it feels like we are reading the English text with only a strong focus on translating into Japanese, so it doesn't feel like we are reading English." That was pretty harsh to hear...I explained to the student the reasons for the difference and he seemed to understand. However, honestly speaking, preparing an English-to-Japanese grammar translation type class is easier for me. I may be making excuses (such as how the students wanted more explanation based on translation or wanted grammar to be explained more, or I don't have time to prepare because I am busy and don't have time to make worksheets). I assumed *hansei* as I felt that I may have been swept toward the easier way of doing things. Last year, I worked really hard to use many different ways of teaching because I was against the idea that the students of this school are on a college exam course and should just be taught with grammar translation to prepare for the exams. However, I've realised that I'm doing a completely different style of teaching this year. I promised the student that we will go back to last year's style after we finish with the exam. I resolved to try to teach classes that I will not be ashamed of. (JE 1/18 Oct.)

Miki's entry first shows a description of a problematic event. A student pointed out that the lessons from the last year were better. Then, she mulled over the reasons for differences between this year and the last year. She gave reasons to the students for the differences in the lessons. Then she explored the underlying reasons and generated other perspectives. "I don't have time to prepare because I am busy and don't have time to make worksheets". She then became *aware* that she was leaning towards teaching lessons that require less preparation, then she writes that she assumes *hansei*. She closed the journal with a *reconfirmation*: "I resolved to try to teach classes that I will not be ashamed of".

As Kyoko and Miki's journal entries show, *hansei* often co-occurs with looking at



an event through various perspectives. As introduced in Chapter 2, Jay and Johnson (2002) explain the generation of various perspectives in reflective practice:

reflective practitioners are sensitive to various perspectives. So a given classroom scenario might be considered from the perspective of another teacher, a student, a counselor, a parent, and so on. When we consider alternative perspectives or varying ways to approach a problem, we discover meaning we might otherwise miss. (p. 78)

*Hansei* seems to encourage one to look at the situation through various perspectives: this aligns with what Schön (1987) called reframing, that a problem is seen or framed in a different way. This study showed that *hansei* seemed to be an essential part in the reflective continuum of Japanese participants. As the concept of *hansei* is an integral part of Japanese culture, *hansei* is salient not only in reflection but also in professional development. This will be discussed in the concluding chapter (see section 8.4).

#### **4.2.4 Reinterpretation**

*Reinterpretation* means changing one's view or opinions toward objects, events, persons or self. The difference between *reinterpretation* and *reconfirmation* is that *reconfirmation* is an affirmation of one's view after a review of one's interview scripts or journal entries, thus the view does not change, whereas *reinterpretation* involves changing one's view. *Reinterpretation* often involves a change in one's view from a subjective, personal judgement to an objective, detached point of view. It does not mean, however, that once one *reinterprets* a phenomenon, one's view is completely and invariably changed. Even after one has *reinterpreted* a phenomenon, the view needs to be revisited and reviewed. Thus, this study addresses the importance of revisiting and reviewing one's view

even after one has *reinterpreted* one's view. *Reinterpretation* is a gradual process which involves ample *descriptions*, i.e. entries in the journals, discussion on the interviews, and focus group discussions. In *reinterpretation*, the change is often brought about after one's objective examination of one's views, which may involve looking at a phenomenon through the views of others or through the application of a theory. The *reinterpreted* perspective can often be the opposite of the view one held. This is similar to Schön's (1983) concept of reframing, where he explains, "the inquirer remains open to the discovery of phenomena, incongruent with the initial problem setting, on the basis of which he reframes the problem" (p. 268). *Reinterpretation* is similar also to Jay and Johnson's (2002) comparative reflection as both highlight the importance of gaining of an opposite view. Jay and Johnson (2002) explain, "Comparative reflection involves seeking to understand others' points of view, which may be incongruent with one's own" (p. 78). This section first provides some brief examples of *reinterpretation* followed by a Naomi's case which is an illustration of the *reflective continuum* of how *reinterpretation* was brought about.

Kyoko *reinterpreted* her view of classroom teaching from focusing primarily on individualised instruction to focusing both on teaching individual students and a group of students. She *reinterpreted* that teaching at high school does not or cannot always entail individual instruction like one at *juku*<sup>25</sup> from which Kyoko received substantial influence. Acknowledging the differences between high school and *juku*, Kyoko stated that she had to try to incorporate teaching both a group and individuals into her lessons (INT5). Kyoko's *reinterpretation* denotes a

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<sup>25</sup> *Juku* is a private educational organisation attended in addition to an ordinary educational institution.

change in her view of teaching, from one based on a student point of view to one based on that of a teacher (see section 6.3.5).

Ken *reinterpreted* his reflective theme, 'atmosphere', from an external source of influence to which he was vulnerable to an ambience he has to create as a teacher (JE 9/11 Jan.). Ken repeatedly *described* 'atmosphere' as influential on students' learning and on his teaching. Ken *reinterpreted* 'atmosphere' from what he was vulnerable to what he should take responsibility for changing. He expressed in an interview: "I should not be making excuses about my students not being responsive. I should do everything I can to create an atmosphere that allows them to respond energetically" (INT6). Ken's *reinterpretation* of 'atmosphere' is significant as it indicates his assuming responsibility in creating a positive 'atmosphere' conducive for learning (see 6.2.3).

Naomi *reinterpreted* 'Ms. Ono' from an impossible colleague to work with to a teacher with a different belief from her own (INT5). Naomi's *reinterpretation* was developed as a result of ample discussion in the reflective interventions and an application of a theory of teacher belief to 'Ms. Ono'. Naomi was preoccupied with the difficulties of coping with 'Ms. Ono' whom she described to be "a type of a colleague who ignores others' ideas, whom I never met in my 20 years of teaching career" (FG1) (see section 7.3.3).

In the early phase of the study, Naomi's description of 'Ms. Ono' was a colleague with whom it was impossible to collaborate. 'Ms. Ono' was described as a teacher who ignored students' proficiency levels in test making, material

selection, teaching a lesson, and assignments. In addition, 'Ms. Ono' was depicted to be a colleague who would not listen to other teachers. After the second interview, while remaining critical, Naomi's view of 'Ms. Ono' changed as she began to think of reasons behind 'Ms. Ono's' practice; 'Ms. Ono' gave impossible assignments to students because those might represent how she studied when she was a student (INT2, FG2). Thinking of 'Ms. Ono's' learner experience led Naomi to apply the theory of teacher belief to understand 'Ms. Ono's' practice. Naomi wrote in the journal, "Once belief of language learning is formed, it is difficult to change. I think that she must be such an example" (JE 9/19 Jan.). The application of the theory to 'Ms. Ono' allowed Naomi to objectify 'Ms. Ono' and her practice. Naomi, then, was no longer critical of 'Ms. Ono'; instead through the observation of 'Ms. Ono', she regarded teacher belief to be difficult to be changed. She *reinterpreted* 'Ms. Ono' from an impossible colleague to work with to a teacher with a different view and practice which derived from different learner belief and professional background (INT5).

The three examples of *reinterpretation* all show that *reinterpretation* is brought about as a result of ample *description* or discussion which engaged the participants in thorough examination of their views. These processes allowed the teachers to explore various perspectives which led to the change in their views. The examples of *reinterpretation* also indicate reflection as a result of one's engagement in the reflective continuum.

#### **4.2.5 Awareness**

*Awareness* means that one gains a new finding about one's practice or views. *Awareness* can be manifested in various ways, such as identifying underlying

reasons for one's teacher knowledge, identifying contradictions in one's teacher knowledge, drawing out one's tendency or pattern, noticing changes in oneself, and identifying avoidance in one's practice. Unlike *reinterpretation*, *awareness* is not changing one's view from one to another but it is finding a new discovery and getting an additional insight. Just as with *reinterpretation*, *awareness* is often generated as a result of an engagement in the 'precursors to reflection' and reflection. *Awareness* involves one being objective and critical about one's practice and views: Morin (2005) writes that one characteristic of being aware is "the capacity to become the object of one's own attention" (p. 359). This section first illustrates brief examples of *awareness* with Kyoko, Yoko, and Miki; and then explicates with longer examples of Sara and Ken how *awareness* was brought about in the reflective process, or *reflective continuum*.

Kyoko *became aware* of the connection between her practice and what she held as important in teaching. Rereading of the self-evaluation sheet<sup>26</sup> prompted her to *reconfirm* that 'developing students through English study' was one of the aims she established at the beginning of the academic year (see section 4.2.2). She also found that what she learned at the MEXT seminar in summer was related to her teaching, 'developing students through English study'. Then she *became aware* that her teaching practice was in line with the aim, 'developing students through English study'. *Becoming aware* of the connection seems to have given Kyoko confidence that her practice was underlined by what she

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<sup>26</sup> The self-evaluation sheet is what was required to write and submit at the public high school. The sheet comprises two parts: the first part is the aim of the school and aims of individual teachers which they entered at the beginning of the academic year; the other part is a review of how the aims were achieved which they enter at the last semester of the academic year.

considered to be important. *Awareness* then led to Kyoko's conscious incorporation of activities that accord with 'developing students through English study' (JE 10/12 Feb.) (see section 6.3.3).

Yoko *became aware* of contradictions among the underlying justification of her reflective themes (FG3, INT6, JE 25/26 Mar.). She thought she clearly understood her views and practices of teaching, but found that the underlying justifications were sometimes contradictory. She explained that the justifications she stated at different occasions were contradicting conveniently, as she said:

as I am expressing, my logic or reasoning are actually different. Well, not exactly different, but depending on the situation, I think I have tended to match them up in a convenient way and rationalise them. Case by case, I've been doing that. (INT6)

The statement manifests *hansei* in that she acknowledges that her justifications were different. Then, Yoko looks at the justifications critically that they were contradicting in a 'convenient way' for her. *Becoming aware* of contradictions among the underlying justification entails the following process: Yoko first *became aware* of her reflective themes, then the underlying reasons of the themes, and the contradiction among the underlying reasons. However, after *becoming aware* of the contradictions, Yoko consciously decided to withhold from further exploration of contradictions. She expressed it like this: "if I pursue those, I feel like I will immobilize myself, so I will accept that they are contradictions and work on them in a humble, modest way" (JE 25/26 Mar.). She *became aware* of the contradictions but she decided not to explore them further (see section 7.2.2).

Yoko also became *aware* that she had avoided writing in the journal what she did not want to discuss. She entered in the journal that both intentionally and unintentionally she avoided writing topics about what she did not want to be involved in, such as supervising extra-curricular club activities. Becoming *aware* of 'avoidance' went through a *reflective continuum*; first Yoko became *aware* of what was not expressed in the journal, then she found similarities among the things that were not expressed in the journal. She explained in the final interview that she 'avoided' writing about aspects of teachers' professional roles she did not really want to be involved in (INT6). Yoko also said that she avoided writing what did not go well (FG3): "I would not want to write that I cannot help it or that I could not do it or that this might be acceptable." Yoko expressed that writing such entries in the journal is a compromise and self-deception (FG3) (see 7.2.2). Yoko seemed to select, consciously or unconsciously, what to enter or not to enter in the journal because, once written, the entry becomes limited public knowledge. This will be elaborated in Chapter 5 (See section 5.4.2).

Miki *became aware* that the use of 'worksheet,' what she considered to be like a panacea of teaching, might be a potential compensation for her weakness in teaching. Her *awareness* points out that she found an underlying reason for her practice, which had become almost like a routine. Miki described and discussed the use of 'worksheet' extensively as her way of problem solution (JE 15/18 Feb.), and expressed it was what she was accustomed to and that it was difficult to change it (INT5). Consequently, the effectiveness of the 'worksheet' was re-examined in terms of engaging students in learning. In the final interview, Miki pointed out that the 'worksheet' might be a compensation for her weakness in

teaching, which is speaking in a lesson. Her awareness entails a feeling of *hansei*. Miki did not consider herself to be good at giving explanations and thus resorted to engaging students in some tasks. She explained 'worksheet' to have given her some comfort because the students were engaged and she did not have to speak to the class (INT5) (see section 7.4.4).

Sara gained *awareness* about one of her maxims, 'bring the world into the classroom'. Sara became *aware* that the world is different for each person and thus her students' world was different from her own (JE 25/26 Mar.). Sara entered in the final journal, "'the world' is different for each person and my students' world is more limited to their own town or neighbours" (JE 25/26 Mar.). For Sara the world means "foreign countries and people outside of Japan on this globe" (JE 25/26 Mar.). The world of the students at River High School was much narrower consisting of areas just around the high school (INT6). Sara became aware of the differences as she pondered on the reasons for the differences between her and the students. She stated that the reason for their narrow world was due to their limited experiences in visiting many places (INT6), "their transportation usually consists of walking and riding a bicycle" (INT6). The *awareness* of the different worlds led Sara to *reinterpret* "the world to be brought into the classroom"; it should not be based on Sara's world, such as news from the world, but on what the students are interested in. Sara said: "I felt that my view of the 'world' may have been too broad for them" (INT6) and "I need to take it step by step before I jump to talking about things in foreign countries" (INT6). She described what can be introduced in the classroom, "maybe using the



Internet in class, *The Student Times*<sup>27</sup>, songs or DVDs, would bring the world much closer to the classroom” (J 25/26 Mar.). Her *awareness* and *reinterpretation* led her to state the desire: “If I could stretch their boundaries a bit further by teaching English and make them interested in what’s going on in the world around us, it would be my great pleasure” (JE 25/26 Mar.). Her *awareness* of the different worlds denotes an expansion of her repertoire of teaching and *reinterpretation* of her maxim. Through the *awareness* of the different worlds, she became better equipped to teach students with lower proficiency of English with the use of different types of materials (see section 6.4.5).

Ken developed *awareness* through his reflective theme, ‘atmosphere’, in that he was blaming unsuccessful lessons on the class atmosphere or the students. He explored and examined underlying reasons for his reliance on atmosphere and explained, “when I have a class that does not enjoy reading very much, I just say ‘They are just like that’ and, I know it is not good, but I don’t try to take the initiative to change the situation” (INT6). Ken’s reflective theme of ‘atmosphere’ is a pertinent example with the development of reflection which constitutes both ‘precursors to reflection’ and reflection in a recursive manner. Earlier in the study, Ken *described* ‘atmosphere’ numerous times, he *reconfirmed* it was an influential factor in his teaching, and he *reinterpreted* that the ‘atmosphere’ was what he had to change and create rather than being influenced by it. In the final phase of the study, he explored the theme further and *became aware* that he realised he had not felt responsible for unsuccessful lessons because he thought the

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<sup>27</sup> *The Student Times* is a newspaper published in Japan targeted for learners of English.

success of a lesson was up to the 'atmosphere' of the class and the students. Thus, he expressed that he had not felt he could have changed the 'atmosphere' and he had not taken the initiative to change it.

After Ken became *aware* of his view toward 'atmosphere', that he was influenced by it and thought he could not change it, he again *reconfirmed* what he *reinterpreted* earlier in the study - "I must create by myself the atmosphere that is necessary for good lessons" - which denotes resolution, promise or a reminder to himself. Then he showed *hansei* that he did not take the responsibility to improve the 'atmosphere': "That's what I assume *hansei*, a lot." He acknowledged and expressed what he did not try. Ken's reflective theme of 'atmosphere' indicates that even if one reinterprets a phenomenon, what was reinterpreted needs to be revisited, reviewed, and reminded of (see section 6.2.3).

One commonality in *awareness* was that it was often followed by *reconfirmation*. After Miki gained *awareness* that her teaching was drifting towards an easier way, she also closed one journal with a *reconfirmation*: "I resolved to try to teach classes that I will not be ashamed of" (JE 2/18 Oct.). After Sara became *aware* of the different world between her and the students, she *reconfirmed* in the final journal: "If I could stretch their boundaries a bit further by teaching English and make them interested in what's going on in the world around us, it would be my great pleasure" (JE 25/26 Mar.). After Ken developed *awareness* in terms of 'atmosphere', he stated *reconfirmation*: "I must create by myself the atmosphere that is necessary" (INT6). It could be argued that *reconfirmation* functions as

resolution, announcement, or promise with oneself as well as with others.

### 4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a definition of reflection developed through the study and the categories and the types of reflection identified. It has also developed a particular understanding of the reflective process which I call the *reflective continuum*. I would like to define reflection as ‘to look back at one’s practice and ideas in order to gain new perspectives, such as *reinterpretation* and *awareness*.’ In addition to reflection, I identified ‘precursors to reflection’. The types of the ‘precursors to reflection’ are *description*, *reconfirmation*, and *hansei*; they are termed precursors as they do not denote changes. However, they are important as they prepare and lead the participants to reflection. On the other hand, reflection is accompanied by changes, and I identified *reinterpretation* and gaining *awareness* as types of reflection.

‘Precursors to reflection’ may be particular to Japanese participants. Even though *description* is discussed in the literature as a type of reflection, it has a unique meaning in the Japanese context, which is influenced by the concept of *kotodama*. What is important with the concept of *kotodama* is whether the participants choose to make their views public or not. *Reconfirmation* may also be culture-specific, with the significance of re-verbalising the importance of one’s particular teaching practice or ideas. *Hansei* also is culture-specific as it is a concept deeply ingrained in the Japanese context. On the other hand, reflection, which are *reinterpretation* and *awareness*, are not culture-specific, as it is often discussed in the literature of reflection (e.g. Shulman, 1987; Morin, 2005).

Pertaining to the process of reflection, I would like to call the process of reflection a *reflective continuum*. The analysis of the data showed that reflection is developed through an ample description and discussion in a non-linear loop, of returning to and reviewing that which was described and discussed earlier. Reflective process echoes the views of Jay and Johnson (2002), who state that “different dimensions of reflection are not mutually exclusive” (p. 80); and also those of Ward and McCotter (2004) who describe reflection as “cyclic in nature” (p. 245), and Zeichner and Liston’s (1996) conceptualisation of the process as “holistic” (see section 2.4.3). Reflection is not often an abrupt revelation with a clear beginning and ending. Also, the development of reflection does not signify the end of the continuum; it is just one point of a developmental continuum. A rigid process of reflection, such as ‘finding a problem, generating a solution, and applying the solution to teaching’, as discussed in Chapter 2, was not observed across or even in individuals, but the process was more flexible and arbitrary (see section 2.4.3).

This study argues against ranking reflection into hierarchical levels as the sociological perspectives tend to do. In particular, it argues against the view that places paramount importance on critical reflection in teacher development, as introduced in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.2). The hierarchical model suggests that the levels of reflection, such as the technical level, the cognitive level, and the critical level, are followed sequentially. As I argued earlier, the data showed that reflection of the participants did not develop through some sequence as one level preceding the other. In contrast, the study’s participants often returned to what they discussed earlier, and sometimes *reconfirmed* their views. They often

needed revisiting their earlier entries or utterances as a loop of reflection.

This chapter identified the types of reflection through the analysis of the data. There were individual differences in the participants' reflection and in their engagements in reflective interventions, which will be elaborated in Chapters 6 and 7. The next chapter discusses the effectiveness of reflective interventions employed in the study. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the reflective interventions, the types of reflection identified in this chapter will be used.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis of the reflective interventions**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter analyses the effectiveness of the reflective interventions employed in the study: the focus group discussion, journal writing, and interviews. Chapter 3 introduced and explained the three interventions as tools to explore teacher knowledge and enhance reflection. Chapter 4 identified the categories and the types of reflection: ‘precursors to reflection’, *description*, *reconfirmation*, and *hansei*; and reflection, *reinterpretation*, and *awareness*. This chapter analyses the effectiveness of the reflective interventions in terms of enhancing reflection, using the types of reflection identified in Chapter 4. This chapter also touches upon the individual differences of the participant teachers in their engagement in the reflective interventions. Specific examples of reflection are personal to individuals. It begins with a summary of the reflective tasks, which were incorporated to enhance reflection, and the reflective interventions conducted in the study. It then, elaborates on the effectiveness of each of the three interventions. The discussion is developed referring to the Japanese conventions of *tatemaehonne*<sup>28</sup> and *kotodama*<sup>29</sup>. One of the interesting aspects of the chapter is insight it gives on culturally specific aspect of reflective practice in the Japanese context.

### **5.2 Summary of the reflective interventions and tasks**

The reflective interventions and tasks were introduced in different phases in the study to facilitate participants’ reflection. The reflective interventions comprised

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<sup>28</sup> As introduced in Chapter 1, *tatemaehonne* are common Japanese conversational conventions. *Tatemaehonne* refers to one’s official and public front. *Honne* refers to one’s real intent.

<sup>29</sup> As introduced in Chapter 1, *kotodama*, word spirit, means the idea that is expressed verbally is actualised.

three focus groups, six monthly interviews, and weekly journals. The following reflective tasks, which were aimed at facilitating the participants' reflection, were incorporated in the study (see Figure 8). In the second focus group (FG2), the participants discussed their feedback and experience in the participation in the three interventions. In the fourth interviews (INT4), the participants engaged in reading their past interview scripts and discussed any new findings they gained through the reading. In the fifth interviews (INT5), the participants discussed their reflective themes, that is, recurring interests or concerns in their teaching practices. Before the final interviews (INT6), the participants received via email the entire past journal entries. After reading them, they made the final entries in terms of what they found or felt through rereading. In the final interviews (INT6), they discussed their final journal entries and their feedback from their participation in the study. In the final focus groups (FG3), the participants discussed their feedback from the experience in the participation in the three reflective interventions and the study. The focus and the tasks in the reflective interventions were not meant to be irrevocable, but were open to modifications and adjustments to facilitate reflection of the participants.

|                   | <b>Topics of focus group</b>   | <b>Topics of Interviews</b>  | <b>Topics of journal entries</b>   |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| 2007<br>September | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Focus group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting the other participants</li> <li>• Inquiry about the study</li> <li>• Suggestions for the first journal entry</li> </ul> |  |  |
| October           |  | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Interview</b><br>Learning the background of teachers and school contexts | <b>1<sup>st</sup> entry</b><br>Reactions on their first focus group discussion |

|                 |  |  |   |
|-----------------|--|--|---|
| November        |  | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> interview</b><br>Asking specific questions to each participant on their journal entries        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open-ended reactions</li> <li>• Responses to questions posed by the researcher</li> <li>• Learning the background of teachers and school contexts</li> </ul> |
| December        |  | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Interview</b><br>Asking specific questions to each participant on their journal entries        |   |
|                 | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Focus group</b><br><u>Reflective task:</u> Asking questions and sharing experiences about the participation in the study |  |   |
| 2008<br>January |  | <b>4<sup>th</sup> Interview</b><br><u>Reflective task:</u><br>Sharing interview transcriptions with each teacher |   |
| February        |  | <b>5<sup>th</sup> Interview</b><br><u>Reflective task:</u><br>Identifying their reflective themes                |   |
| March           |  | <b>6<sup>th</sup> Interview</b><br><u>Reflective task:</u><br>Discussion based on the last entry                 | <b>Last entry</b><br>Selection of reflective themes reading the past journals   |
|                 | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Focus group</b><br><u>Reflective task:</u> Sharing feedback in the participation in the study                            |  |   |

Figure 8: The reflective tasks and the interventions

### 5.3 The focus group as a reflective intervention

The focus group was employed in the study as the triangulation of the data collection with the journal writing and the interviews. It offers a multidirectional mode of communication for the participants to reflect which is different from the other interventions. It was also incorporated as a debriefing arena for the participants to share their experiences as well as to reflect (see section 3.6.3).

There was an unexpected outcome of the benefit of the focus group; it



functioned as a forum for expressing one's *honne* to their peers rather than as a forum for enhancing reflection, or as debriefing from the study. It can be said that the focus group functioned as a debriefing arena from their workplaces.

The focus group was an intervention conducive to 'precursors to reflection' rather than to reflection. The teachers engaged in *description* and *reconfirmation* of their views and experiences, some of which later developed into their reflective themes or reflection. There were a few instances where the teachers developed reflection during the focus group. One such instance was with Naomi, when she became aware of a drawback of the journal writing. Naomi was talking about being upset after receiving unreasonable evaluation from a student. She pointed out that the journal writing lacked empathy, thus it did not help her to let go of tension like talking to colleagues:

N: Then, I got upset and I talked about it to my colleagues and then I was able to let go of my tension. But if I wrote it in the journal, the tension would not go down, or with me, it does not go down. How about you?

M: For what is upsetting, I may talk to my colleagues as well. I may talk to my colleagues about what bothers me or what went well in teaching.

N: What went well, too?

M: If they asked me, I may tell them what went well. But when it comes to what bothers me, I would definitely tell them.

N: Then we can feel calm.

M: You can let go of the tension, probably.

N: The colleagues most often empathise with you. Like, yes, that particular student acts that way to everyone.

A: I see. The colleagues empathise with you.

N: I see. Empathy, that is what's missing from the journal writing! (FG 2).  
(N:Naomi, M:Miki, A:Atsuko)

The excerpt indicates that the discussion with others led Naomi to become aware that empathy is what is missing in journal writing. Miki's comment that talking to colleagues enables one to "let go of tension", and my comment which repeated what Naomi said "the colleagues empathised with you", seemed to

have prompted Naomi to develop *awareness*, “Empathy, that is what’s missing from the journal writing!” This instance shows that for Naomi, dialogical communication mode, which allowed her to exchange comments with the other interlocutors, was more helpful and beneficial for reflection and also for letting go of tension than the interventions with a more unidirectional mode of communication, such as journal writing.

The focus group seemed to offer a non-threatening external venue both for the novice and for the experienced teachers to express their views, especially *honne*. An opportunity to discuss with others who understand their contexts of teaching, i.e., the teachers of English in other prefectural high schools in the same prefecture, was in a sense a debriefing arena from their workplace. The group forum comprising such members was beneficial for the participants who sought a safe, external arena to express *honne* outside of their workplace. This indicates that many teachers, regardless of their years of experiences in teaching, find expressing their views, in particular *honne*, at their workplace to be often difficult. It also signifies a role of the focus group to be a forum for the teachers to express their *honne* as well as one for developing reflection.

Kyoko, one of the novice teachers in the rural prefecture, showed a strong appreciation towards participation in the focus group:

About the discussion group, this system is really...you remember how I mentioned that I don’t have anything like this and that new teachers don’t really have any chances to talk about things...I know I was complaining about that, and I really feel thankful for having this type of opportunity. (INT3)

Kyoko, a novice teacher in her 20s, often commented that she felt she could not

express her views at the workplace, among her colleagues in their 50s. After the completion of the initial teacher training seminar<sup>30</sup>, the focus group became a safe avenue for Kyoko to express her *honne* and ideas about teaching to her peers.

Voicing one's *honne* was beneficial also for the experienced teachers. Yoko was working with another colleague as a team, and she had felt it difficult to have an open discussion, that is, to express *honne*, with the colleague since Yoko thought any critical comments could be received as personal criticism. This led Yoko to inhibit expressing *honne* to the colleague. Yoko commented on the benefit of the focus group:

We (the participants in the study) have the same difficulties, but we are not involved with each other. We cannot say too much to those with whom we are working too closely. We suppress what we want to say because if we didn't, it would annoy our colleagues. What we (the members of the focus group) have to do at school is similar so I know what types of difficulties they have, but we are not working in the same context, which allows me to say what I think. Having this kind of environment is healthy (FG3).

Yoko's comment points out the potential difficulty of sharing views with colleagues, other teachers in their immediate teaching contexts. Yoko described the focus group to be "healthy", as the participant teachers were teaching at different public high schools in the same prefecture, thus they understood the contexts. However, they did not know their colleagues, thus the comments towards their colleagues remained anonymous. This allowed the expression of *honne*, which sometimes involved constructive critical comments.

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<sup>30</sup> Initial teacher training seminars are offered once a month by the prefectures.

The focus group was beneficial also as a way to receive an approval of their views and practices from other teachers. Kyoko, a novice teacher, was grateful that in the focus group her views were shared with an experienced teacher, Yoko. Kyoko said, “I was also glad that the other teacher who has a lot more experience than myself mentioned similar things” (INT3). Kyoko found discussion with Yoko comforting as she found her ideas were being confirmed through agreement and affirmation from Yoko. This is what was introduced in Chapter 2 in Roberts’ (1988) discussion of social validation. Roberts (1998) stated that social validation plays a critical part in forming teacher knowledge (see section 2.4.5). With novice teachers, who are in the initial process of forming and shaping teacher knowledge, in particular, agreement and affirmation from more experienced teachers may be comforting, assuring, and helps to confirm their views and gain confidence. The focus group functioned as a venue of affirmation for Kyoko.

### **5.3.1 Drawbacks of the focus group**

There were some drawbacks of the focus group as a reflective intervention, which derives from its group setting. One is the proclivity for communication to remain superficial (*tatema*) rather than fully developing into an exploration of *honne* and teacher knowledge. Even though Naomi showed a strong preference for a dialogical mode of communication, she made a critical comment about the focus group: “All of us teach in different contexts, so the focus group is more like an exchange of information. We do not really exchange opinions and ideas. It is more like a pile of different information shared by each of us” (FG2). The comment indicates a drawback of the focus group in that it does not necessarily lead to an exchange of ideas and opinions, but leaves the communication

merely as an exchange of information about the different teaching contexts. This was often the case in the focus groups. One member's sharing of a view was often interrupted by other members, so the view did not fully develop into discussion.

Another potential drawback of the focus group is that a group setting may make the participants uncomfortable about expressing their *honne*. In this case, the focus group may be seen as a replica of their workplace. Ken found the focus group to be intimidating; he felt overwhelmed by Yoko and remained reticent:

She [Yoko] has experience in business, experience in private schools...when I heard those kinds of things, I thought I do not think about things so deeply. I don't have so much experience. But as teachers, as English teachers, how can I express it...that leads to a loss of confidence. (INT6)

Ken's comment suggests that interactions and collaborations may not always facilitate reflection; at times they could have a reverse effect for some teachers. Ken was intimidated by Yoko in the focus group discussion, then felt slightly discouraged and lost confidence as a teacher. As noted in Chapter 2, Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) caution that collaboration may not always lead to better teacher development. They argue that types of interaction among the participants and the influences of the interactions need to be taken into account. Cohen *et al.* (2007) also argue that the group dynamics caused by status differences "may lead to non-participation by some members and dominance by others" (p. 377) (see section 2.5). This is also pointed out by Sato (2012) in his discussion about lesson study, where he cautions about the influence of politically strong teachers in a group setting (see section 1.5). The benefit of the focus group depends on various factors of individual participants, such as their

disposition and their relationships with the others, as well as the orientations of the groups. The study found that Kyoko and Ken, both novice teachers, showed individual differences in their evaluation and participation in the focus group. For the focus group to be beneficial in the Japanese context, as discussed in Chapter 3, the researcher needed to play a proactive role to ensure spontaneous, yet congenial participation of the members (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) (see section 3.6.4). It is crucial for the researcher to be sensitive to group dynamics, which are often constructed through differences in the ages and experiences of teaching, especially in the Japanese context.

#### **5.4 The journal writing as a reflective intervention**

Journal writing was found to be effective not only as a reflective intervention but also for expressing *honne*. Journal writing, which is produced in solitude, was incorporated in the study as an effective intervention to allow teachers to express their *honne* (see section 3.6.6). This section attempts to clarify the unexplored areas of journal writing. First, it will discuss stages of journal writing that may be conducive to reflection. Then, it will explain the meaning of journal writing in the Japanese context, followed by the limitations of journal writing. The thesis argues that, influenced by the concept of *kotodama*<sup>31</sup>, what is *described* is significant in the Japanese context. What is described becomes an independent entity that enables a writer to be an objective reader, and the presence of the reader obliges one to actualise what is entered.

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<sup>31</sup> *Kotodama*, word spirit, means the idea that is expressed verbally will be actualised.

#### **5.4. 1 The three stages of writing**

This study identified three stages of journal writing - pre-writing, during-writing, and post-writing - in developing reflection. 'Pre-writing' refers to the stage where participants decide what is to be entered or encoded in the journal after recalling the past events or reviewing one's ideas. 'During-writing' is a stage of putting ideas into words. It comprises two parts: the act of writing entries, that is, *description*, and responding to the questions that I raised on their entries. 'Post-writing' refers to the rereading of the journals. There were individual differences found in the three stages of writing, in terms of how the participants responded to the stages.

The pre-writing stage, thinking about what to enter in the journal, engaged the participants in paying closer attention to their teaching practice. It functioned as monitoring one's teaching. Also it engaged the participants in the decision of what to encode. Paying attention (Tremmel, 1993) and being mindful (Johns, 2005) have been highlighted as important aspects of reflective practice (see section 1.9). The journal keeping encouraged the participants to pay attention to the topics and ideas to be entered (Miki FG2, Kyoko FG2). Miki expressed: "I pay attention to what I do in order to find the topics that I can enter in the journal" (FG2). Paying attention also helped the participants to think of and remember events which they said they would otherwise have forgotten (Miki FG2). Pre-writing also led the participants to monitor their lessons, or to observe and make connections between different lessons, and to plan for future lessons.

Yoko said of pre-writing:

When I am to write an entry for the past few weeks, I think about what I did. Then, I think, "Well, I have to do the follow up of what I did." If I did not

follow through, I know the reason for not continuing. Writing helps me to pay attention to both discontinuing and continuing what I do. (FG3)

Yoko said recalling her lessons before writing a journal entry brought her to think about what she did not do in previous lessons and what she should do in future lessons: “I think about what I did not follow up in the following week. Then, I think about what I should do in the next week” (FG3). The pre-writing stage helped Yoko to see connections among her lessons. It also engaged the participants in deciding what to encode in a journal. This decision making process makes the participants review and examine their views and practices. The pre-writing stage offered an arena for the participants to pay attention, to monitor, and to examine their teaching practice, which formed the basis for reflection to take place.

Making an entry, one of the during-writing stages, enabled the participants to gain an objective perspective toward their practice, which allowed them to *reconfirm* and to gain *awareness*. As noted in Chapter 3, the objectivity of writing is illustrated by Boud, *et al.* (1993), in that writing is “a way of distancing oneself from the experience, which has the effect of clarifying it and fostering the ability to work with it, so that the learner can draw out potential learning” (p. 63) (see section 3.6.5). Distancing oneself, or having objectivity, allowed the participants to reorganise their ideas and feelings and often led them to *reconfirm* their views. As introduced in Chapter 1, the concept of *kotodama* can explain the phenomenon that what is written becomes an independent entity which allows one to be a reader (see section 1.8). Through making an entry, Kyoko *reconfirmed* her concerns and rationales for certain practice in her lesson (FG3). Miki *reconfirmed* her practice: “recalling the event and through writing it in my



own words, I was able to explore what I almost forgot” (FG2). In addition, for some participants, writing was a way of letting out of the stress. Yoko wrote in the journal, “I can see that I am releasing my stress through expressing what I cannot do at the workplace.” (Yoko FG3, Yoko JE 25/26 Mar.). It also helps participants to *become aware*. Sara expressed that writing enabled her to look at problems more objectively and to *become aware* of her teaching style (Sara JE. 25/26 Mar.). Kyoko also developed *awareness* during writing (JE 5/12 Nov.) – a point that will be elaborated in the next section.

Some entries by the participants who developed reflection through during-writing stage indicate a trajectory leading to reflection, and shows that reflection is developed through a *reflective continuum*, a continuum consisting of ‘precursors to reflection’ and analysis of problems. Kyoko’s one journal entry is a case which clearly shows such a trajectory, a continuum of reflection leading to *awareness*. She first recalled and *described* an event, then explored and analysed the difficulties, which led her to develop *awareness*. Kyoko expressed the process “through writing in words what I was concerned, I was able to organise what is actually bothering me” (JE 5/12 Nov.). In one journal entry (JE 4/12 Oct.), Kyoko wrote about a distance that she felt with a third year class:

When I think about what might be causing this, I have to say that it is just the reality that I have not been able to build a relationship of trust with my students. These are students that I am suddenly teaching for the first time in their third year and I have never worked with any of them, other than the few students who are on the girls’ basketball team<sup>32</sup>. That could be the main thing, but I also feel *hansei* that I have not tried hard enough to develop a good relationship with the students since April.

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<sup>32</sup> Kyoko was an advisory teacher for the basketball team. One of the non-teaching duties that high school teachers have is being an advisor of clubs. They do not have to be skilled in the area of the activity, and do not need to instruct students. Their duty is to supervise their activities or practices, which often involves after class and weekends.

As Kyoko was writing, she was pointing out potential causes behind the problem; Kyoko was a novice teacher, thus the students and Kyoko had not known each other well. Also, she had not tried hard enough to develop a good relationship with the students. Kyoko shows *hansei* that she acknowledges she was responsible for the problem. She continues to explore another reason behind the problem, which is their previous teacher:

Also, in their second year, these students were taught by a unique older teacher. This teacher was not very serious about teaching English<sup>33</sup>, and mainly just had his students copy down the Japanese translation of the text as he read it to them. He hardly ever asked the students to do tasks that required them to translate or think. On the other hand, however, that teacher had a very warm personality, and the students who did not want to study very much really liked him. That is why I feel that some students are probably thinking, “He was a better teacher for us.”

Kyoko was critical of the teacher’s teaching style, but at the same time acknowledged that there were positive aspects to him. She tried to look at the teacher from the point of view of the students who do not like to study English. Then, she described the potential reasons behind the problem by further taking an attitude of *hansei*, looking at herself critically for not trying to approach the students:

The students have received very little discipline with regard to studying, so it is not like I am going to be able to help them develop academically in a big way in just one year no matter what I do...Since April, I continue to have this preconceived notion in my mind. In addition, last year I had a similar experience of starting to teach a group of students I had never taught before suddenly in the third year. In their third year, students can be very difficult to work with, and they are resistant to new methods because they have become accustomed to the style of teaching that

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<sup>33</sup> Teaching prior to tertiary education involves education in the social development of the students as well as in subjects. Substantial number of teachers choose the profession because they are interested in the social development of the students. A good teacher is often considered to be one who is passionate about the social development of students as well as who are good at teaching subjects.

they received over the past two years. This year, the same thing is happening. If I ask them to do a vocabulary test, they complain and do not prepare. If I ask them to answer a question, they just evade it by saying, "I don't know." Due to the attitude that the students have, I began to think, "Perhaps it is meaningless to teach these people English." Perhaps due to such an unenthusiastic attitude on my part, I did not make a conscious effort to chat with the students about things unrelated to the lesson very much. My feeling about all of this is that I continue to just be a teacher who "just teaches English," and my teaching is very one-way. Looking back, I really feel that I was childish.

The extract above shows that Kyoko had analysed the reasons for the problem further. She admitted her lack of effort but at the same time referenced the lack of effort on the students' part. Then, in the next extract, she developed *awareness* that she was not grasping the reality of her students:

That being said, one idea that just popped into my head as I was writing this is that I was probably teaching my classes without really grasping the reality of my students. The students in my class who say "I don't know" probably have a lot of things they really don't understand, and feel like they cannot keep up with the class. I really need to re-examine my own teaching. Also, another thing I have realised as I was writing this is that I was trying to impose the "discipline" that I use for my first year students onto my third year students, who have already undergone that process of being disciplined. When I look back at myself as a senior in high school, I was basically an adult. Perhaps I was treating the students too much like children (JE 4/12 Oct.).

Kyoko developed *awareness* that she was teaching her lessons without grasping the reality of her students; that is, she was not looking at the problem from their perspectives. She then tried to interpret the students' responses from a different perspective: that the students did not really understand what was going on in her lesson. She assumed responsibility in that it was necessary for her to re-examine her teaching. She critically examined her behaviour towards the third year students. Contrasting her own experience as a third year student in high school shows that Kyoko was trying to analyse the difficulty from the students' perspective.

Kyoko's entry illustrates that the development of reflection is like a continuum with the various views and thoughts leading to *awareness*. First, Kyoko posed and *described* a problem, followed by *hansei*; then she explored the potential causes of the problems through looking at the problem from different perspectives, including those of students. She gained *awareness* that she was not grasping the reality of her students, then stated the need to re-examine her own teaching. The writing allowed her to engage in the loop of the *reflective continuum*, which was essential for her to develop reflection.

The second aspect of during-writing that the participants developed reflection through was in responding to my questions. After I received the journals from the participants, I asked clarifying and prompt questions and returned the journals; in the subsequent entries, the participants responded to the questions. Writing responses was effective for participants who approached the questions as an opening to an exploration into their teaching practice.

Through responding to the questions in the journal, Yoko became *aware* of her teaching practice, such as contradictions in what she wrote at different times. She mulled over the questions and wrote her views in the subsequent entry. Yoko stated in the last journal:

I have learned from Ms. Watanabe<sup>34</sup>'s simple comment, "Why?" Rather than statements such as "Do this" and "Don't do this." "Why?" questions are effective advice and guidance that lead teachers to generate answers for themselves. (JE 24/26 Mar.)

Yoko's description suggests that she did not only take 'Why?' questions as

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<sup>34</sup> I use my maiden name, Watanabe, as the professional name.

questions asking for information, but ascribed the meaning and the role of 'Why?' as rhetorical questions which prompted her to ponder the question. It could be said that 'Why?' questions were interpreted as a trigger for reflection.

Answering 'why' questions was also what made Yoko hesitant toward a further exploration of her reflective themes and teacher knowledge. Asking 'why' questions to herself, Yoko ceased further exploration:

When writing, the process of constantly thinking Why? Why? and considering my reasons led to discovering something different from what I wrote before. When I thought about the reasons in depth, I thought it would become difficult, and so I had better stop at a certain point for a number of issues. Right. But if you ask me about which parts those are, even if I read over my journal, I can't really identify where they are (JE 24/26 Mar.).

The extract indicates that the questions "Why?" halted Yoko from further inquiry before it became overwhelming. Yoko's avoidance of the exploration of contradiction suggests that she was making a decision in terms of what to and what not to explore. It could be said that she was trying to stay within her 'comfort zone', what is comfortable for her in her exploration and in discussion. This point will be elaborated in Chapter 7 where Yoko's individual case is examined in more detail (see section 7.2.2).

Rereading the past entries in the post-writing stage seems to have offered a reflective forum for most of the participants. The review of their own entries led them to *reconfirm*, gain *awareness*, or *reinterpret* events or their ideas about teaching. New perspectives were brought through rereading the written record of the journal. Applying the explanation of the concept of *kotodama*, the journal became a separate entity which allowed the participants to become readers and

to look at their teaching objectively.

Through rereading the journal entries, Sara *reconfirmed* what she had tried in practice and those ideas that were important to her: “rereading of the entries helped me to *reconfirm* what I was trying and what I was concerned with” (Sara INT6). Miki approached journal writing as a monitoring system and expressed that journal writing helped to remind her of her aim, and to compare the aim with her practice to make modifications (Miki INT6). Through rereading the journal entries, Ken developed reflection; he became *aware* that he was putting blame on “the class atmosphere of the students” when the lessons did not go well. He said, “When I was reading my own journal, I became *aware* that I had written that kind of thing at the very end, that I must create by myself the atmosphere that is necessary” (Ken INT6). Sara gained *awareness* about her teaching style, including her weaknesses, through rereading of her own journal:

I notice that if I have a good environment, I am more relaxed in class and concerned on improving my lessons, but when I have hard times controlling students, I am less concerned about my ways of teaching. I think keeping weekly journals for six months made me conscious and aware of my teaching, I wonder how I would be different or the same if I stop writing them now. (JE 25/26 Mar.)

As the entry shows, Sara became *aware* that a good environment was a key factor for her effective teaching. The last sentence, “I wonder how I would be different or the same if I stop (*sic.*) writing them now” indicates the significance of journal writing for Sara and her professional development. It suggests that the journal was her tool, an impetus for her to reflect, and without the journal, it may be difficult for her to reflect.

Rereading journal entries led the participants to engage both in 'precursors to reflection' and in reflection. As noted in Chapter 3, the importance of rereading one's entries is pointed out by Bailey (1990): "simply writing diary entries does not yield the maximum potential benefit of the process. In order to really learn from the record, the diarist should reread the journal entries and try to find the patterns therein" (p. 224). In this study, the participants found reflective themes after the rereading. As the concept of *kotodama* also illustrates, rereading of journals is an effective reflective task which allowed the participants to be readers of their own entries. This can also be explained by Tripp's (1993) argument: "we allow our subconscious to write in things which we may recognise as important only after they have appeared on paper" (p. 109). Rereading allowed the participants to become objective readers and led them to understand their teaching practice. It also gave opportunities for the participants to trace or monitor one's development and contrast their past and the present views.

#### **5.4.2 Cultural expressions of reflective practice: The journal writing**

This study involved the participants keeping reflective journals and not diaries. The two, on the surface, may appear to be the same; the difference, however, is pronounced with the presence of a reader other than the writer themselves. Having a reader is significant, as it assures that a writer's view will be heard. Some participants expressed that being listened to was an incentive in journal writing: "even only being listened to" (FG2 Kyoko), or "being listened to, even when a comment is not returned" (FG2 Yoko). I, as a reader, also seemed to have facilitated the participants' expression of their views; Yoko said that the

reader being outside of her teaching sphere provided ease and comfort in expressing her views frankly or expressing *honne* (FG2 Yoko). The importance for the participants of being listened to or expressing their views suggests that journal writing, just as the focus group, offers a forum for an expression which they do not have in their teaching context.

Writing in the Japanese context has a unique meaning influenced by the concept of *kotodama*. As discussed in Chapter 1, those things that are verbalised or encoded, “have the power to make the verbalized issues happen or to be actualized” (Hara, 2001) (see section 1.8). In journal writing, what is entered becomes an independent entity and also generates responsibility not for the mystical power but for an individual to accomplish or actualise what was written.

Yoko expressed that what was entered in the journal had to be carried out, thus she avoided making entries that she did not think she could follow up or achieve (FG2):

Y: In a journal, I do not want to write entries such as “well, that can’t be helped,” “I couldn’t do it,” “well, this should be good enough.” I feel frustrated to write such entries. When I feel that it is not good enough, I do not want to compromise that it was ok and I do not want to write that.

K: I think I made such entries.

Y: Doesn’t it bother you? In making such entries, it makes me feel that I was compromising again. If I want to write something better the next time, I feel a little shaken up. (FG3)

(Y: Yoko, K: Kyoko)

The entry shows that Yoko regarded the entries as denoting what one accepted or acknowledged. Writing “it was good enough” means that one had made a decision to encode the idea, which means one decided to share the idea with others, to make the idea public, to acknowledge and accept the view that “it was



good enough.” Yoko did not enter “it was good enough” because she did not want to compromise or she did not want to actualise the idea that “it was good enough.” She did not write it as she wished to continue to improve her practice so that she could “write something better the next time” (FG3).

The presence of a reader makes the written account public. The entry is no longer private but is placed in a limited public domain. Also, as discussed in Chapter 1, the influence of *kotodama* assumes that what is verbalised needs to be actualised (see section 1.8). Writing one’s view and having a reader give double responsibility to the writer to actualise what was written. The responsibility to accomplish or actualise the content of the entry makes the entry an announcement, a promise, and an expectation.

### **5.4.3 Limitations of journal writing as a reflective intervention**

In spite of the insight gained from the study, journal writing was not free from limitations and was not an intervention that was conducive to reflection for all of the participants. Firstly, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4) and indicated in the experience of Mr. Sato in the pilot study (see section 3.3), there is a propensity to enter negative aspects in the journal. Naomi, who preferred dialogical interactions over monologue writings, said that unlike talking with colleagues, writing did not lead her to let go of tension but intensified negative feelings, through which one may re-experience stress (FG2). This relates to Korthagen and Vasalos’s (2010) warning that proclivity of reflection might lead to “a kind of tunnel thinking” (p. 537). This tendency seems to be intensified in journal writing, which entails solitary engagement in the task. The other drawback is the lack of empathy and communication. As discussed in Chapter 4,

and earlier in this chapter, Naomi's comment sums up the limitation of journal writing: "Empathy that is what's lacking in a journal!" (FG2). Without empathy, she commented that the journal affected private reflection and other interventions offered public reflection. Naomi and Sara said that journal-keeping should be shared among the participants, and that this would potentially be more beneficial and conducive to discussion than what was shared between each participant and me. The idea of sharing journals will be discussed in the conclusion (see section 8.10).

### **5.5 Interviews as a reflective intervention**

Individual interviews were employed in the study to triangulate with journal writing and the focus group discussion. They also incorporated a different communication mode from the other reflective interventions, that is, involving discourse between two individuals. The interviews were a forum to clarify the content of the journal entries: for the participants to elaborate on their journal entries and for me to ask clarification questions about them. As a reflective task, the participants read their own interview scripts in the fourth interviews to state any new findings they had gained through the reading. Differences among the individuals were shown in the interviews more than in the other interventions, in their styles of the engagement and their evaluations of the interventions. It seems that interviews were an effective reflective intervention for the participants who felt the need of a mentor. This section first discusses the effectiveness of the interview as a reflective intervention, dividing it into during an interview, or the interview itself, and reading the past interview transcripts. It then discusses the individual differences in the participants' evaluation of and engagement in the interviews.

### 5.5.1 The effectiveness of interviews as a reflective intervention: during an interview

During an interview, the participants did not really develop reflection, i.e., *reinterpretation* or *awareness*. On the other hand, 'precursors to reflection', i.e., *description*, *reconfirmation*, and *hansei*, seemed to be more common. Miki's case shows a unique instance of development of *awareness* during an interview. Prompted by my question, in the final interview she became *aware* of the contradictions in her disciplinary approach between students' cleaning the classroom<sup>35</sup> and preparation for lessons.

A: You talked about your conviction that all students should engage in cleaning of the classroom. How would that be different from students' preparation for a class?

M: I have never thought about that. Well, I do really have to make my students study for classes. I have to create an atmosphere in class where students feel they have to come prepared. I am not good at doing that at the current school.

A: Is that so?

M: Well. Some students do not like it. Some students do not like studying with those who did not prepare for class. Some say it is nuisance to have the lessons interrupted by those who are underprepared. That is a harsh statement but those students are serious. They want to get as much as they can from lessons. Many students seem to feel that they do not want the students who are not prepared to slow down a lesson.

A: But there may be differences between cleaning and preparing for a lesson.

M: They may be different, but I see similarities. I have never connected them, but I now see the connection (INT6).

(A: Atsuko, M: Miki)

Miki's awareness was triggered by my direct question, "How would that be different from students' preparation for a class?", which suggests that the active intervention of an interviewer can be helpful in developing *awareness*. In the interviews, I mostly asked indirect and neutral questions on their spoken or written accounts in order not to influence their *honno*. Thus, my questions were,

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<sup>35</sup> After classes are over, students engage in cleaning their own classrooms in Japanese pre-tertiary educational systems.

for the most part, expected from the participants. However, my direct question, an intervention, led to Miki's *awareness*. Miki seemed to have been taken aback by my direct question and became *aware* of the contradiction that she had not been *aware* of with the two topics she often discussed. Miki's *awareness* indicates that a direct question or an intervention from me was beneficial as an impetus for reflection.

Even though the interview was not an intervention where the participants commonly developed reflection, it was an integral part of the study for the participants to discuss and express their views. Kyoko said that the interviews helped her to gain insights about her teaching through a discussion of her journal entry: "Making an explanation in the interview leads to reconfirming what I said. So, I think there were discoveries or rediscoveries during the interviews....It is like exploring what one wrote in journals a little deeper" (Kyoko FG3). In addition to the benefit of the interviews, this extract suggests that multiple opportunities to discuss one's view in different reflective interventions are crucial in understanding one's view. This might be the case especially for the novice, like Kyoko, who have not firmly established their views about teaching.

### **5.5.2 The effectiveness of interviews as a reflective intervention: Reading interview transcripts**

Reading one's own interview transcripts, a reflective task in which the participants engaged in the fourth interview, was conducive to generating *reconfirmation* and *awareness*. As discussed in the section on journal writing, the reading of the interview scripts involved the participants becoming the readers of their own interviews, which allowed them to gain objective

perspectives. It was found that the reading of the interview transcripts was more beneficial for the participants who were still exploring their teacher knowledge, Ken, Kyoko, Sara, and also with Naomi, than for participants who seemed to have firmly established teacher knowledge - Yoko and Miki.

The reading of the interview transcripts led Ken to *reconfirm* that 'atmosphere' was an important aspect in his teaching. He stated, "it is not because I took part in the study I started thinking about atmosphere, but it was amazing to find that I was so interested in having a good atmosphere" (INT4). Reading one's own statements seemed not only to *reconfirm* but also to remind Ken of the important impact of atmosphere (see 6.2.3). Kyoko also *reconfirmed* her aims and task as a teacher through reading the interview transcripts:

In the interview with you the other day, I felt slightly embarrassed looking at the interview script from October but my main issues or goals I have set have become clearer. My aims are that students have many different channels for learning English and letting students realise that English is a pipe that connects them and the world. My task is not to force students to learn English but to increase their motivation to study English through communication with others, and also to make an effort to help them grow (JE 9/12 Jan.).

The two examples cited above, of the novice teachers, show that an opportunity to review, to remind oneself, and to *reconfirm* is an important precursor to reflection, which help them to solidify their views about teaching.

Becoming *aware* of the reflective themes or changes in one's perception or behaviour was also commonly found in the participants after the reading of the interview transcripts. Through the reading, Kyoko became *aware* that what she had stated in the earlier interviews did not always hold true: "thoughts are

different, like, sort of depending on my feelings at various times” (INT4). Also, Sara became *aware* of the changes in her concerns about teaching, after reading the interview transcripts. She stated in the fourth interview: “In October, the students were loud and unsettled; I had a difficult time with disciplining the students. After January, the discipline has become more manageable, so I have been able to focus on teaching the lessons” (INT4). These two examples show that being a reader of their own transcripts led the participants to gain objective and detached perspectives toward their past comments and became *aware* of the changes. As noted in Chapter 3, Lee (2007) stated that one can become aware of changes in values and beliefs and one’s development in reading one’s journals (see section 3.6.7). This was also found to apply in reading interview scripts.

Through reading the interview transcripts, Naomi became *aware* of her reflective themes, ‘giving whole person education,’ a pattern in the interview, and also the changes in her interest in teaching. Naomi’s subsequent journal entry after reading the interview scripts indicates her *awareness* of her interest, and her pattern of talking about teaching:

I felt some dismay with myself because I was saying the same thing over and over. The question I asked you yesterday was the same question I asked previously. One thing I noticed was that I say many times that I am not much help to you because I am talking about how to provide good guidance or whole person education to students rather than English education. Even if you say that you are interested in that area as well, I may be influenced by the fact that you obtained MA in TESOL and connect things to English education. To some degree I guess I never believed your words that you are interested in the study of education. So I keep asking the same questions and keep apologising. In spite of that, it seems like I was repeatedly talking again and again about how most of my duties are not related to English language education, but that I feel a strong sense of meaning in those other duties (JE 12/19 Feb.).

Naomi goes on to describe her changes in her interest in teaching that discipline is important:

When I think about it, I used to dislike having to do student guidance (enforcement of rules) and could not see any personal meaning in it. I was always discontent, for over ten years, with having to be a gate keeper (literally because we stand in front of the school gate as students come to school and check the students' compliance with rules). As I told you the other day, in order to develop the dignity of Japanese persons, basic education and discipline must come first, and English education comes after that. (JE. 12/19 Feb.)

Naomi's examples above show that rereading of the interview scripts, which allowed her to be a reader, was conducive to reflection as it generated *awareness* about various aspects, such as her reflective theme, her interview discourse pattern, and the change in her interest in teaching. Reading interview transcripts seems to have the same benefit with reading journal writing. Lee's (2007) point in becoming aware of the changes in values and beliefs through rereading one's journal applies in Naomi's example (See also Chapter 3 above). Bailey's (1990) point - "in order to really learn from the record, the diarist should reread the journal entries and try to find the patterns therein" (p. 224) – also applies regarding how Naomi became *aware* of her pattern in the discussion of teaching.

The reading of the interview transcripts was an effective task especially for enhancing *reconfirmation* and *awareness*. Through allowing the participants to become readers, the interviews led them to gain objective perspectives. As was discussed in the journal entry section, the transcripts became an independent entity which allowed the participants to be readers. Just like the rereading of

journal writing, reading interview transcripts has the potential to be extremely effective in the development of reflection.

### **5.5.3 Individual differences in the interviews**

Individual differences were manifested in participants' evaluation of and engagement in the interviews more than with the other interventions. The differences seem to be based on the participants' need of an interaction with others in enhancing reflection or exploring their views. The interaction with others derived from the participants' need for a mentor, especially among the novice participants, or a participant with a strong preference for a bi-directional, reciprocal style of communication (Naomi). On the other hand, Yoko and Miki, who seemed to have firmly established views about their teaching, did not necessarily see the need for the interviews to enhance reflection.

Kyoko showed appreciation for being given the interview opportunity, which allowed her to express her views directly to another person, especially one whom she regarded as a mentor. Kyoko acknowledged a benefit of the interviews, which was different from journal keeping:

The interviews resulted to be supplementary to journals in that the interviews clarify ambiguous parts of journal entries. However, expressing my views through writing and talking face to face like this seem different. Even though what is stated is the same, how the message is conveyed is different, like I can really express what I really think (through the interviews). This may be important (Kyoko FG3).

Her appreciation of the direct expression of views shows the interviews to be a beneficial reflective intervention, especially for those who feel the greater need of expressing their views. Kyoko stated:

I was able to talk about everything and anything I wanted to talk about



and really felt relieved (laugh). It was like, thanks for listening, thanks for listening to my complaining. When you showed me my transcript, I could see that I was talking about all kinds of things, and it was good for me to see that I talked about this and that and was probably thinking about this or that. From my point of view, I really appreciated being able to speak about so many things. (FG3)

Kyoko's interview extract shows that it was important for her to engage in talking and being listened to.

Sara, who was facing a challenge at the workplace, also appreciated the interview with me, whom she also regarded as a mentor. For Sara, having an opportunity for oral expression was crucial, especially in the earlier phase of the study, due to her struggle with teaching challenging students. Her earlier interviews were characterised by her critical comments of the students and her abandonment in teaching them. Her detached views of the students changed in the course of the study, but the honest, *honne*, expression of her views towards the students in the early interviews might have been necessary almost as her debriefing. The interviews also were vital for Sara to get to know and regard me as a mentor:

[I]f this study only involved journal writing, I would have written differently. Meeting and talking to you in person helped me to feel closer to you. If I participated in the study without knowing you in person, my entries might have been more distanced. (Sara FG3)

Moreover, Sara expected me to play a more critical role. Her relentless desire for me to be more critical of her views and teaching practices also explain her expectation of me as a mentor.

Naomi was in need of a peer to whom she could talk due to her strong

preference for bidirectional reciprocal communication and a challenge she was facing at the workplace. Relevance of the reflective interventions for Naomi seemed to be in its plausibility to generate discourse and empathy. Thus, her interviews developed to become dialogical through returning and asking questions to me. However, Naomi did realise that the purpose of the interviews was not for me to express my views:

I am just so interested in finding out what you think of the questions you ask me. I do realise that I am the one who is being interviewed. That is clear to me. I do realise that I should not ask you questions, but my interest exceeds it and then I ask you questions. I understand that the other teachers don't ask questions like I do. (INT6)

Receiving the expected responses from me, such as agreement, as a result of her questions, Naomi seemed to have felt her views were recognised. This may be an example of social validation argued by Roberts (1998) and explored in Chapter 2, and Naomi gained trust in me as a peer. The accordance with her request for expected responses, as well as my reply to her questions, might have been necessary for rapport building. Naomi commented that if I had not responded to her questions, she might have felt hurt (INT6).

Some participants, who seemed to have been confident and comfortable with their teaching and teacher knowledge, did not seem to feel the need for a mentor or peer in the interviews. Yoko and Miki did not seem to regard the interviews as crucial. Even though Yoko said that she enjoyed the interviews, she said that she did not see the need; and she said that the purpose of, and her expected role in, the interviews, and the differences between the interviews and journal-keeping, were not clear. Miki also seemed not to rely on the interview for her professional development.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the effect of the reflective interventions employed in the study. In addition to enhancing reflection, the function of the reflective interventions in the Japanese context seems to be to bring out one's *honne* in public. In the study, the participants expressed their *honne* in the discourse through their engagement in reflective interventions. Consequently, the reflective interventions developed into a forum for the participants to express their *honne*, especially that which they could not express at their workplace. This contrasts with the drawback of lesson study mentioned in Chapter 1, where the politically strong teachers dominate the process and the others are obliged to conform to their views (see section 1.5).

The focus group was conducive for 'precursors to reflection' to take place, such as *description* and *reconfirmation*, rather than reflection. An unexpected outcome of the focus group was that it functioned almost as a debriefing arena from the participants' workplaces. Initially, the focus group was incorporated as a debriefing forum from the engagement in the study; it developed to be a safe place for the participants to express their *honne* to others who understand their contexts. Thus, the focus group promises great potential for professional discussion group where constructive and critical discourse can take place, i.e. making private *honne* public.

The journal writing process can be divided into pre-writing (thinking about what to write), during-writing (making an entry and answering questions), and post-writing (reading the past journal entries). Some processes were conducive

to reflection, especially for some participants. Having a reader seemed to be beneficial not only to reflect but also to express their views, as the reader ensures that the writers' views be heard. Writing has a unique meaning in the Japanese context, with the influence of the concept of *kotodama*, that what is written becomes a public promise, an announcement one makes to others and to oneself. Thus, one may write only what one's promise can be achieved, and one does not write what it may not be possible to achieve.

The interviews showed more individual differences than the other reflective interventions. The participants who regarded me as a mentor or a peer seemed to see the benefit of the interviews. On the other hand, those who seemed to have established their teaching and did not really need a mentor or a peer did not necessarily see the need for the interviews. Just as with the focus group, interviews gave an opportunity for the participants to express what they could not express to their colleagues. The interviews as an intervention were not necessarily conducive to reflection, but the reading of interview scripts was conducive to reflection, through which the participants often generated *reconfirmation* and *awareness*.

Recurrence of discussion via various reflective interventions seems to be the key for enhancing reflection. In this chapter, the discussion of the effectiveness of reflective interventions focused on the three different interventions, but the effectiveness of reflective interventions does not necessarily mean that one single particular intervention led to reflection. As seen in the data, engagement in the three interventions might be necessary for reflection to take place; the

effectiveness of the reflective interventions lies not only in the participants to developing reflection such as *awareness* and *reinterpretation*, but also in preparing the participants to reflect, in giving opportunities to *describe*, *reconfirm*, and *hansei*. A reflective intervention, where the participants developed reflection, was a breakthrough of reflection but it does not necessarily mean the intervention itself (and on its own) is effective in promoting reflection. As discussed in Chapter 4, reflection is developed through a loop of *reflective continuum*, talking about one's views and practice through *description*, reviewing them through *reconfirmation*, and thinking about them. The multiple opportunities provided by different reflective interventions are crucial in the development of reflection.

Individual differences in the engagement in the reflective interventions address the importance of multiple reflective interventions for the participants. The differences among the individuals were pertinent to the participants' disposition, and a need and desire to express their views, which often derive from the difficulty of expressing their views at the workplace or being in the process of the exploration of professional knowledge. In this sense, triangulation is crucial not only for the rigorous collection of data but for the provision of interventions pertaining to one's preference and comfort with the mode of communication.

This chapter has explored and examined the effectiveness of reflective interventions for Japanese teachers of English. The next two chapters will focus on each participant and discuss the reflection and the effectiveness of reflective interventions for the professional development of each teacher. Chapter 6

focuses on the meaning of reflective practice for the novice teachers, and Chapter 7 on the meaning for experienced teachers.

## **Chapter 6: The novice participants in the study**

### **6. 1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the cases of the three novice participants, Ken, Kyoko, and Sara, in their professional development through their engagement in reflective practice. Ken and Kyoko were in the second year of their teaching career. Sara, who was in her sixth year of teaching, was grouped as a novice due to her teaching new types of students under a new curriculum in addition to her inexperience compared to those who had more than ten years of teaching experiences. This chapter is divided into three subsections to elaborate the discussion of each case. Each subsection introduces the profile of the participant, followed by a discussion of their professional development focus on the analysis of the reflective themes. These themes were what the participants or I identified about their recurring interests or concerns in their teaching practices and ideas, through reading their past interview transcripts and journal entries. The participants' reflection was analysed by using the types of reflection that I have identified in Chapter 4. Each case is significant, as it addresses implications of the adaptation of reflective practice as a development tool for in-service high school teachers of English in Japan. The chapter concludes by highlighting the commonalities of the novice teachers. In contrast to McIntyre's (1993) argument that reflective practice is more beneficial for experienced teachers than novices teachers (see section 2.4.6), this chapter found that there was a greater benefit of reflective practice for the novice teachers: in particular, as an opportunity to facilitate their professional identity formation from that of a student to that of a teacher, which is argued to be a crucial phase of professional development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Bullough, 1997). Also, in response to a question I raised in Chapter 2, the exploration of teacher knowledge through reflective

practice seemed to be more beneficial for the novice, whose teacher knowledge was often based on that which they had formed as students. In contrast to the focus in the MEXT teacher training programme discussed in Chapter 1 (see section 1.4), the challenge the novice teachers faced in teaching was not with the use of English in the classroom but with their professional identity formation and the limited repertoire of teaching, i.e. how to teach particular types of students in a given context.

## **6.2 Ken**

Participation in the study led Ken, a novice teacher in his second year of teaching, to initiate a professional identity shift from that of a student to that of a pre-service teacher, then to that of a teacher. He explored and gained new perspectives about his identity as a teacher and about teaching. The shaping of his professional identity is characterised by a change in his perspective, to becoming responsible for the improvement of teaching. This section discusses Ken's engagement in the exploration and development of professional identity formation through the reflective theme that he selected, 'atmosphere' (INT5 & JE 11/11 Mar.), along with the themes that emerged from the data, i.e., the themes that I selected: 'speaking in front of a class', and 'being stricter with students'.

### **6.2.1 Ken's profile**

Ken was in his second year of a teaching career at a vocational high school in the rural prefecture. The school consisted of a small number of students and only two teachers of English. Ken had a positive working relationship with his colleague, who had many more years of experience. Ken said that the colleague acknowledged and accepted any ideas he had about teaching; however, he also



said that he hoped that she would give him more critical comments about teaching, which seemed to indicate that Ken wanted the senior colleague to guide him. Ken had been informed about this study by a teacher who attended my teacher training seminar in the rural prefecture (see section 3.4.2).

Teachers Ken had in junior high school and university were a critical factor that influenced his motivation in learning and his views of teaching (JE 1/11 Oct.). In his first year in junior high school<sup>36</sup>, he said he was unmotivated to study English because the teacher of English seemed to have given up on teaching. The junior high school had many problematic and disruptive students who prevented the teachers from teaching lessons. The unsettling atmosphere in the classroom, and the difficulties the teachers were facing, led Ken to feel that he would neither be suited to being a teacher nor that he would want to become one. In his second year in junior high school, Ken met a teacher at *juku* who gave him positive remarks and told him to be confident. Consequently, English became one of Ken's favourite subjects. Since the *juku* teacher had studied in the United States, Ken held a dream of studying in the United States during college (INT1). He actualised his dream; he studied in the United States in his third year at university, where he met his favourite teachers. He showed respect to one of his favourite teachers, who had displayed a wealth of knowledge of the subject; and liked another because he treated him like a friend (INT3). Returning to the university in Japan, with the advice from his parents, Ken enrolled in the teachers' training course to obtain the teaching certificate<sup>37</sup> (INT1). The strong

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<sup>36</sup> At the time Ken was in junior high school, under the administration of the MEXT, English was taught as the foreign language from the first year in junior high school.

<sup>37</sup> Teaching English at a public high school requires a specific certificate for English

rapport he established with the students during the teaching practicum<sup>38</sup> was the decisive factor for him to take up the profession. He established a rapport with the students in extra-curricular hours through playing baseball and talking with them. The students gave Ken advice such as “you should practise speaking in the classroom”, and supported him through demonstrating active participation during the observation lesson attended by his supervisors<sup>39</sup>. Ken reminisced that those students who did not like studying made a great effort in the observation lesson (INT1). He became a teacher in 2005 at the high school in the rural prefecture.

### **6.2.2 Professional identity formation**

Through participation in the study, Ken experienced a gradual identity shift from a student-teacher to a teacher, which is manifested through his reflective theme of ‘atmosphere’, and the reflective themes that I picked up from his data, ‘speaking in front of a class’, and ‘being stricter with students’. As his first journal entry shows, he had not felt comfortable being a teacher: “And before I knew it, I had become a teacher. Why was that? Even now, I am not completely sure” (JE 1/11 Oct.). In the initial phase of the study, Ken’s views of teaching and his behaviour both in class and in extra-curricular activities were described to be more comparable to those of a student-teacher than a teacher. He seemed ambivalent about teaching, especially speaking in front of a class. He seemed to have felt more affinity with the students than with his colleagues. One manifestation of Ken’s student-teacher identity can be observed in his dual roles

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instruction at high schools. The certificate requires a completion of teacher training courses authorised by the MEXT as well as a bachelor’s degree.

<sup>38</sup> The practicum period for college pre-service teachers are two weeks for high school.

<sup>39</sup> At the end of a practicum, pre-service teachers’ lessons are observed by the supervisors at the practicum school and also at their universities.

in the badminton club, both as the advisory<sup>40</sup> teacher and as one of the club members. Ken decided to participate in the club as a member, learned, and practised badminton along with the other students. Ken's 'peers' in the club were extremely cooperative with him in the lessons (FG1). Thus, it was easy for him to teach classes where there were club members. This may be a replication of his positive experience of playing baseball with the students during the practicum, and may indicate his comfort in an informal setting as a student-teacher. What Ken expressed in the interviews and in the journals was often inconsistent or contradictory, which indicates Ken's uncertainty about being a teacher and his shifting perspectives, between that of student, student-teacher, and teacher. In the course of the study, development was manifested in Ken's *reinterpretation* of his reflective theme, 'atmosphere', and also with recurrent themes that emerged from the data, such as 'speaking in front of a class', and his view towards 'being stricter with the students'.

### **6.2.3 'Atmosphere'**

Ken's reflective theme, 'atmosphere', suggests that he developed reflection; that is, he *reinterpreted* 'atmosphere' from an external source of influence under which he was vulnerable (JE 2/11 Oct, JE 4/11 Nov) to an ambience he has to create as a teacher (INT6). During the course of the study, he *reinterpreted* what is meant by 'atmosphere'. Initially, class 'atmosphere' was an external influence which Ken and the students were controlled by, but he *reinterpreted* it to be what he, as a teacher, had to be in control of and create. This means he realised that,

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<sup>40</sup> One of the non-teaching duties that high school teachers have is being an advisor of clubs. They do not have to be skilled in the area of the activity, and do not need to instruct students. Their duty is to supervise their activities or practices, which often involves after class and weekends.

as a teacher, he had agency. The change is significant as it manifests his change of perspective begins from a student to being a teacher. At the end of the study, he became *aware* that he placed the responsibility of conducting an effective lesson on the students and on the 'atmosphere'. He came to feel that he had to be in control of creating atmosphere conducive for learning, which shows that he gained a stronger sense of autonomy.

In the early phase of the study, Ken expressed that the 'atmosphere' of the classrooms and the whole school exerted strong influences on students' learning and on his teaching. A positive class 'atmosphere' was described to be "enjoyable" (JE 1/11 Oct.), "relaxing" (JE 4/11 Nov.), and "students are motivated" (JE 5/11 Feb.). A lesson with a negative 'atmosphere' was illustrated to be those where there was "no motivation from the students" (JE 10/11 Feb.), "no reactions from the students" (JE 8/11 Jan.), and "the students falling asleep in class" (INT1, INT6). Ken's own experience as a first year junior high school student (see section 6.2.1) shows ways in which Ken was affected by the 'atmosphere' in the classroom. His classmates were not motivated and the teacher was not enthusiastic, which led him to lose interest and motivation in studying. Ken also noted the unpleasant 'atmosphere' of his current high school, with some tension between teachers and students, which caused the students to be reluctant to study and hostile to teachers (INT2). These examples reveal Ken's view that a positive 'atmosphere' is instrumental for enhancing students' learning.

A positive 'atmosphere' was also depicted to be conducive for Ken's effective teaching. The positive effect of 'atmosphere' on Ken's teaching can be

summarised in the following pattern: if the class has a motivating 'atmosphere', it influences all the students, then the students feel comfortable to speak up, ask questions or respond to Ken's questions. Ken stated that he preferred such a lesson because he would not be the sole speaker in the classroom (INT5): Ken speaks, the students respond to him, and he responds to the students. The recurrent references to positive and negative 'atmospheres' in the classroom were always followed by a description of an ease or difficulty of teaching, which shows that his perception of the effectiveness of his teaching was subject to the 'atmosphere' of the class (INT5, JE 11/11 Mar.).

The change of his view about 'atmosphere' and teaching, however, began to emerge in the course of the study which is manifested in strikingly contrastive journal entries written in one day (JE 8/11, 9/11 Jan.). The first entry written in a purely negative tone was overturned by a latter entry where Ken *reinterpreted* his role as a teacher. In the first entry he wrote:

Recently, I've been losing my passion for teaching... after the year-end break, we had to cancel some classes or students were not so attentive after the vacation, so it was hard to make progress in the curriculum... Another problem is that the content of my lessons are becoming very routine-like and repetitive. This is boring both for my students and for me... I think I want to change something, and I've tried various things. Some new attempts actually went well. But recently I have gotten tired, and I don't feel like doing anything new...It is really a problem...I know I need to do something, but I am doing nothing, so I feel worse. It is indeed a vicious circle! (JE 8/11 Jan.).

The negative tone of the entry reveals a predicament that Ken called "a vicious circle"; he knew that he had to change his practice but he did not have the motivation to try. However, the other entry, which was sent four hours afterwards, after teaching a lesson, was written in a completely different tone. This

demonstrated that he was developing his ability to reflect on his experiences, as it can be seen in the following extract:

I sent you an email a short while ago saying that I'm losing my passion. However, just now, I had a class for my first year students and my feeling has changed. The students were first year students and they had not been so responsive in previous classes, but today they were very cooperative and energetic and I almost finished the whole class just chatting with them! It really is easier to teach when the students are responsive. Today we were studying about the present perfect tense, but all of the students kept their concentration like never before. It felt almost like I could let them study on their own and they would be fine. I was amazed. One thing I realised was that I should not be making excuses about my students not being responsive. I should do everything I can to create an atmosphere that allows them to respond energetically. Even if it doesn't work sometimes, I need to be doing my best.

Recently, I had been failing to give my best effort. If I don't give it everything I've got, there is no way that things are going to get better. I think my research regarding materials development is also lacking. I really haven't studied enough yet and need to do more (JE 9/11 Jan.).

The latter entry shows Ken's *reinterpretation* of the reflective theme, 'atmosphere'. He changed the perception of class 'atmosphere' from an external phenomenon, which exerted tremendous influence on his teaching and which he was unable to change, to what he, as a teacher in the classroom, had to change and to create. He gained a sense of control to change a negative 'atmosphere' to a positive 'atmosphere' and also to create a good 'atmosphere' conducive for learning. He showed *hansei* by stating the cause of the ineffective lesson: "I had been failing to give my best effort". He also assumed responsibility for creating a positive 'atmosphere' by stating, "I should do everything I can to create an atmosphere that allows them to respond energetically". The two contrasting entries, written and sent on the same day before and after one lesson, indicate Ken's instability and insecurity as a teacher and vulnerability influenced by the 'atmosphere' of a class. However, the entries also reveal Ken's exploration of his views about teaching in terms of what it means to be a teacher, or what a

teacher should do, from an insecure novice teacher to a teacher who assumes control to create a positive 'atmosphere'.

In addition, in the final phase of the study, Ken *became aware* that he was blaming unsuccessful lessons on students and class 'atmosphere' and that he was not attempting to improve the lesson.

A: Have you noticed anything about your own teaching? Such as a habit or a tendency?

K: Let me see. Well...one thing I notice is that, when I refer to the 'class atmosphere of the students', in reality I am blaming things on the students.

A: I see.

K: I think that is not good.

A: For example?

K: Well, for example, when I have a class that does not enjoy reading very much, I just say "They are just like that" and, I know it is not good, but I don't try to take the initiative to change the situation.

A: I see....how did you notice that tendency? How did you realise that?

K: I think I realised that by writing about it. By writing, yesterday? No not yesterday. It was when I was reading what I had written yesterday. When I was reading my own journal. I noticed that I had written that kind of thing at the very end. I must create by myself the atmosphere that is necessary.

A: I see. Very interesting.

K: Yes.

A: Right. I see.

K: Yes, that's what I assume *hansei* on. A lot (INT6).

(A: Atsuko, K: Ken)

He became aware of the meaning of regarding the class 'atmosphere' as an influential source of teaching; that is, he was not assuming the responsibility for the ineffective lessons and for making improvements. Instead, he was blaming the students, or placing responsibility on the students for the ineffective lessons. He explained that once he characterised a class with a certain attribute or 'atmosphere', he abandoned his attempt to change the 'atmosphere'. Through the discussion of the reflective theme, 'atmosphere', he first *reinterpreted* an 'atmosphere' to be what he needs to change, and then he *became aware* that

when teaching did not go well, he was placing the blame on the 'atmosphere' and the students. As he said that he assumes *hansei*, he took on the responsibility for taking the blame and improving the situation, showing that he gained a stronger sense of autonomy. The critical and objective statement of his role as a teacher denotes his change in the perception of what it means to be a teacher.

#### **6.2.4 Discomfort in speaking in front of a class**

The study also involved Ken in an objective examination of his disposition as a teacher, which is, his lack of confidence in talking in front of students. The examination of disposition, which may be acceptable as a student but not as a teacher, is another manifestation of his shaping of a professional identity. In the initial phase of the study, 'speaking in front of others' was mentioned as that which he was not skilled at. In the course of the study, he discussed the relationship between his lack of confidence in speaking and the 'atmosphere'. At the end of the study, 'speaking in front of others' was posed as that which needs to be dealt with.

Ken's constant references to his incompetence as a speaker shows that he was insecure as a teacher but also that he was on a development continuum from being a pre-service teacher to a teacher. In the course of the study, he associated his reluctance to tell the class to be quiet with his lack of confidence in speaking to the class. Ken did not want to tell the students to be quiet in class (INT3), because if they became quiet, he would be the only one speaking, which he found to be rather unbearable (INT4). At the same time, he did acknowledge that speaking in front of others was necessary for a teacher (INT4). Ken's lack of



confidence in speaking in front of others was attributed not only to his delivery skill but also to the delivered content: Ken did not want the class to be quiet because he was not sure if the lesson content was worth paying attention to (INT4). He was not confident in the content he delivered, that was, he felt uncomfortable and sorry for his students because he still lacked knowledge of the English subject (INT5). As opposed to the MEXT aim of brushing up speaking proficiency, what he felt the need of was the subject knowledge of English.

Participation in the study engaged Ken in exploring and questioning his capacity and relevance as a teacher. In the final interview, his lack of confidence in speaking in front of the students was examined objectively and regarded as that which needed to be dealt with:

K: Regarding teaching? Well, what I've thought about is not really about how to teach, but more about whether I am suited to be a teacher or not.

A: I see.

K: Yes. For example, as I wrote, my feelings such as how I am not good at speaking, or that I don't like to speak in front of other people tend to come out. Those kinds of thoughts come out, and I dwell on them, and it makes me think whether I can continue to be a teacher like I am now. I wonder if it would be ok (INT6).

(K: Ken, A: Atsuko)

"Whether I can continue to be a teacher" shows that Ken is looking at himself as a teacher and is also thinking of professional role required of a teacher. He is wondering if he can continue with the quality he lacks, that is, being good at speaking. This indicates his *reinterpretation* of what it means to be 'not being good at speaking in front of others': it is a quality which might be acceptable as a student but not as a teacher.

However, comparing the first and the second years of teaching, Ken acknowledged his own development in relation to 'speaking in front of others'. In the final interview, he said:

Now I do feel like I can, to some extent, consider things outside of teaching my classes, things like I have written there. In the past, for me, speaking in front of a class for one hour was really stressful. That was all I could handle. Teaching took all of my energy and I couldn't think about anything else. Recently, however, I can think about things such as "That student seems a little less energetic than usual. What happened?" It's like, now I can consider things such as whether that student may be tired, or what that student is feeling. (INT6)

The extract shows Ken's objective examination of his development as a teacher. As opposed to his first year, when it was difficult for him to speak in front of others, or to teach a lesson (INT6), he acknowledged that he came to be able to pay attention to individual students.

### **6.2.5 Being stricter with students**

Ken's identity formation can also be seen through his contradictory statements of class management, which indicates his insecurity but also his shift in views from a student to a teacher. In the second interview, Ken talked the new high school policy to take firmer action with students:

K: So, anyway, there developed this atmosphere or consensus that we should be strict. It wasn't like I wasn't telling students to behave, but I tended to be a little lenient. But all of the teachers agreed we should be stricter in general, so I decided to be stricter than before and have been doing that recently. And now I feel like I'm a fussy or bossy teacher, all strict and admonishing and telling them to be quiet. As it turns out, the class is quieter, but they really aren't very active. The atmosphere of the class is not very good. It may be just my perception, but it feels more difficult to teach than before.

A: So, when you say it feels difficult to teach, you mean that happened after the decision among the teachers to be stricter and tell students to behave more?

K: That's right. The students talk among themselves, after all. That problem occurred, and students were feeling unstable, and then if the teacher is like this, it just makes the situation worse.

- A: And...when that was happening, um, the reason you say you feel so is....well, what is your view about telling students to behave and being stricter?
- K: The students' reactions, you mean?
- A: Yes, that's right. You could describe the students' reactions, or your own views about strictly enforcing good behaviour among the students.
- K: Regarding strictly telling students how to behave, I guess...how can I say it...I have been teaching...and well, now that we have stricter discipline, I wanted to create an atmosphere of learning and saying things in a fun, casual way, but some students wanted me to be stricter and control the class more.
- A: I see. Do you mean in terms of asking students to follow school rules and discipline?
- K: Well, things like stopping kids from being loud or disruptive in class.
- A: Right.
- K: Yes, that kind of thing. Some students had actually come to me to tell me they wanted that. So, because of that kind of thing, I thought I should be telling students to behave more strictly. I don't know. (INT2)  
(K: Ken, A: Atsuko)

The extract shows Ken's shifting perspectives. First, Ken's position appears more like that of a student. He expressed slight dissatisfaction with the administrators of the high school, by saying, "But all of the teachers agreed we should be stricter in general, so I decided to be stricter than before and have been doing that recently". It sounds that it was not his will to be stricter. As a result, the atmosphere of his class was not pleasant. After showing dissatisfaction with the policy of the school, he then acknowledged the necessity of such a firm approach, since some students wanted him to be stricter with noisy students. However, he was still uncertain about his view, as he expressed in the statement, "I don't know".

The questions in the interviews elicited his contradictory views and uncertainty about if he should be strict or not. The questions in the interviews led him to probe his own view and to generate an alternative perspective. In addition, 'I

don't know' indicates that he could not articulate his views. The interviews seemed to have uncovered his contradiction and uncertainty.

Ken's contradictory statements in interviews about class management indicate his exploration of a teacher role. In one interview, he confessed that he did not know how to discipline the students, because he was never in the position of being firm with others. As he said in one interview: "Well, I have not really given reprimands to others up until now. So, I do not know how to do it. I received reprimands from my parents, so I do know what I should say, but..." (INT2). However, in the same interview, he said the opposite: "one of the teacher's roles is for students to be regarded as being strict, so I want to tell students what I think". In a later interview (INT4), Ken said he had changed to be more firm with the students. He asserted, "I would not allow any students to disturb motivating students through chatting" (INT4), which shows a strong view as a teacher. His affirmation was made after he had received a critical comment about his badminton club from a colleague, a P.E. teacher, who contended that club activities should be approached seriously and not be prioritised on grounds of enjoyment. This experience led Ken to think that 'being enjoyable', not only in the club activities but in a lesson, which he thought was important in learning (JE 1/11 Oct.), was not always appropriate. In the same interview, however, Ken said that chatting in class was not necessarily bad. His view was that since the reasons for students' chatting are not always clear, being firm about chatting would be questionable. The contradictory and shifting views towards class management expressed in the same interviews indicate his uncertainty, but also his process of exploration of the role and professional identity of a teacher.

Unlike an experienced teacher, Yoko (see section 7.2.2), Ken was not aware of his contradictions. In order for participants to become aware of contradictions, mentoring, interaction, or intervention would be important.

Being firm with students shows Ken's professional shift from a student to a teacher. The negotiation of teacher-student boundaries is crucial in an identity formation of the novice teachers. As we saw in Chapter 2, Cook (2012) points out that for the novice teachers, "the negotiation of teacher-student boundaries" is vital in developing professional identities (p. 284). Lasky (2005) expresses "the willingness to blur the boundaries between the personal and professional with their students was a core component of teacher identity" (p.908). Zembylas (2005) points out "the need to find personal and professional boundaries emerged as a central part of teacher identity" (p.9). Being firm with students shows Ken's changing perspective from that of student to that of a teacher, and finding the professional boundaries as a teacher, which is the central part of forming professional identity.

#### **6.2.6 Reshaping his idea of what it means to be a teacher**

Ken's case indicates that the identity formation of teachers involves contrasting himself to good teachers whom he knew as a student. Ken first wanted to be like the teachers he had had, but later he was attempting to establish what it means to be a teacher for himself, rather than duplicating the practice of his own teachers. His embarrassment with his lack of subject knowledge appears to pertain to the extent to which he sees subject knowledge as an essential quality of good teachers, which he associated with one of his professors in the U.S (see section 6.2.1). Ken compared himself to another teacher whom he had met in

the U.S., who had treated him like a friend, and this led to a *reinterpretation* of his view about the teacher role.

K: So...it was more like he was my friend rather than just my teacher. I was very happy to have that kind of relationship.

A: I see. He is a teacher at a college, so being like a friend to a college student must be a different thing. Do you feel that you have been influenced by that teacher in that way?

K: Yes, I think you could say that. Yeah. In the beginning, when I had just become a school teacher, I thought that I shouldn't make walls between myself and my students, and should be more like a friend to my students. I thought that would be OK.

A: Yes, I see what you mean.

K: Of course, recently, I wonder if it would be appropriate. (INT3).

(K: Ken, A: Atsuko)

Initially, Ken was trying to be like friends to the students, modelling the teacher at the university, which maybe manifested itself in his participation in the badminton club. However, through his interaction with the others, such as the P.E. teacher and the students, he *reinterpreted* his view: a good teacher did not necessarily mean being good friends with the students. Ken was still in the transition from a student to a teacher, but through participation in the study he has gradually started to regard himself as a teacher and also to form his identity as a teacher.

### **6.2.7 Dependent on others' views**

Ken's dependence on others' views is another theme that emerged from the data. This reveals his developmental phase as a teacher; he was insecure as a teacher but also was open to listen to and incorporate the ideas of others. The comments from his colleagues and his students, shaped his professional identity, and changed his practice. For example, Ken's becoming firm with the students was influenced by the high school policy, the students' comments (INT2), and the comment from the P.E. teacher (INT4). One of his reflective themes, 'overly concerned with lower proficient students', was generated through a comment

Ken received from a second-year student. This student, whom Ken described to have an above average proficiency of English at the school, told him that his lessons were too slow and easy (INT5). Ken's dependence on others is also observed in his desire to receive critical advice from the senior colleague (see section 6.2.1);

K: When I became a teacher I was worried. My colleague who was much older than me also used honorific Japanese. I wanted to be taught many things, or have them point out that something is not right, or get mad at me sometimes.

A: Get mad at you (laugh)

K: I thought many things were different when I first tried it. And I thought if someone would point out the problems or scold me, then I could feel more relieved. In one sense, it is very easy for me. However, because nobody points out problems, I'm always on my own, doing things by myself, and I cannot really feel confident. I'm like "Is this the right way to do it or not?" So...that's the situation right now. (FG 2)

(K: Ken, A: Atsuko)

This extract shows Ken's insecurity as a teacher wanting his senior colleague to scold and tell him what is right and is wrong, to show him direction. This indicates that in a process of shifting from being a student-teacher to a teacher, novice teachers seek advice and comments from others: it was also found with Kyoko and Sara. Teachers may need advice or guidance or intervention from others, especially more experienced colleagues, in addition to an opportunity to reflect.

### **6.2.8 Reflective interventions: Assignments**

Ken's participation in the reflective interventions shows his openness and vulnerability, and at the same time his dependence on me. Ken's insecurity and shifting of professional identity as a novice were also manifested in his participation in the reflective interventions.

The focus group discussion was not an intervention that was conducive to reflection for Ken. Participation in the focus group posed challenges because of the composition of the group. Ken said that he had experienced a feeling of insecurity in participating in the second focus group, the only session attended by all the participants in the rural prefecture: Ken, Kyoko, and Yoko. Being intimidated by the experiences that Yoko had, Ken became reticent. It seems that Ken experienced insecurity more than support from the focus group (see section 5.3.1).

Ken's journal writing was characterised by openness about his insecurities, but he might have regarded it more as an assignment. Ken quite openly expressed his views, including his insecurity in teaching. In terms of the journal becoming sporadic towards the end of the study, Ken said that he would need a due date for the journal (INT6). Even though he was expressive in journal writing, this may show his passive attitude towards keeping the reflective journal, almost as an assignment.

Ken's participation in the interviews is also characteristic of that of a novice. He seemed to have enjoyed expressing his views about teaching, and was open about expressing his insecurities and doubts. At the same time, there were often contradictory statements in the interviews, and sometimes he could not respond to questions. Openness to insecurities and reliance on me to give comments or advice was observed in Ken's interviews and also those of the other novice teachers. It shows their reliance on me almost as a mentor.



### **6.3 Kyoko**

Kyoko, another novice in the rural prefecture, explored and reshaped her tentative professional identity and her views about teaching, which were mostly based on her experiences as a student. The difficulty she experienced during her first year of teaching at the high school obliged Kyoko to explore what she should do as a teacher and led her eventually to reshape her tentative professional identity. Kyoko's case, like Ken's, addresses the benefits of a novice teacher engaging in reflective practice due to their exploration and transformation of professional identity. Also, her case poses the importance of the repetition of reflective interventions, which allowed her to discuss, redirect, confirm, and gain insight about her professional identity. In addition, Kyoko's case, in particular, highlights the importance of providing professional support and a forum of expression for novice teachers.

#### **6.3.1 Kyoko's profile**

For Kyoko, becoming a teacher of English was a natural course. Her parents were both teachers, and teaching was the most familiar profession for her. English was her favourite subject throughout her school days (INT1). She went to a high school with a strong emphasis on communicative English language teaching, which was still a novel attempt in public high schools at the time (FG1). Because she liked English, she held a dream to study abroad. She majored in English language and English language teaching at college (FG1), one of the most well-established universities in Japan for studying English language teaching. She had an opportunity to study abroad when she was in college, and after graduating she became a teacher at a lower-intermediate vocational high school in the rural prefecture. In her first year of teaching, Kyoko was excited

about the opportunity to teach, in particular to conduct lessons in all English and to try various methods she had learned at college. Her ambition and excitement, however, were greeted with challenges. Kyoko said that she could not establish a good relationship with her students and colleagues. There was a wide gap between Kyoko's idea of teaching English and what was expected of the teachers at the high school. Kyoko expressed the gap with the students in one of her early journal entries:

When I started teaching, I thought "my job is to teach English," so I was perplexed with having to engage in the guidance of club activities and of non-curricular matters. I had no idea that the students would not listen to me or regard English as what is not necessary in the future. I think there was a big gap between the students and me. I had an assumption that the students would like English because I really liked English as a student. (JE 2/12 Oct.)

As the entry shows, she could not empathise or build rapport with the students. She said, "I thought it would be best if I could do everything in English....but the distance between the students and me became farther and farther apart" (FG1). The difficulty Kyoko had with the students led her to regard building rapport as a prerequisite for teaching effective lessons. In addition to the difficulty in building relationships with the students, Kyoko said she could not notice the relationships between students; she could not notice bullying in a class (FG1), which seems to have left her with a strong impression of the importance of understanding the class dynamics.

It was also difficult for Kyoto to build constructive relationship with her colleagues, all of whom had much longer years of teaching experience. They did not empathise with the new approaches to the teaching of English that Kyoko tried. Feeling dispirited, Kyoko managed to complete her first year of teaching with

support from an initial teacher training group<sup>41</sup>. The difficult first year resulted in Kyoko feeling the importance of establishing a good relationship with both students and colleagues.

Kyoko learned about this study from one of the participants in my MEXT teacher training seminar (See section 3.4.2). When she was invited to take part, she was excited about the prospect. In the second year of teaching, she was still feeling rather insecure and isolated at the workplace (INT3). The initial teacher training, which was the source of the moral support, had come to an end (FG2). After the difficult first year, she had to find what she could do as a teacher, as teaching with the methods that she had learned at college was not effective. Her expectation of high school students, which was based on her own high school experience, did not help her to understand her students. In addition, she felt she could not express her views and receive support from her colleagues at the workplace. Kyoko saw participation in this study as a way of obtaining moral support.

Participation in this study was important for her not only as a source of moral support, but also as a way of obtaining further professional support. It helped to remind her of her original intention and confirm her aim in teaching, as well as to explore, discuss ideas, gain awareness and shape her professional identity and her views about teaching. At the beginning of the study, Kyoko firmly expressed that what she wanted to practise in her lessons was 'developing students through English studies', which was one of her reflective themes and what she

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<sup>41</sup> Initial year seminars are provided for novice teachers at the public schools in Japan.

learned in the MEXT summer seminar after the difficult initial year of teaching. However, her ideas and feelings were still uncertain. Repeated engagement in the reflective interventions helped her reconfirm and remind her what was important for her and what she wanted to try.

### **6.3.2 Tentative professional identity**

Through participation in the study, Kyoko had an opportunity to explore her tentative professional identity. Her tentative professional identity was formed mostly by her experiences as a high school student: in the early stage of the study, Kyoko entered in a journal, “What I gained in English lessons in high school forms the core of myself” (JE 3/12 Oct.). At the end of the study, she discussed her tendency to rely on her own experience as a high school student in teaching students at the current high school: “Teaching the students at the high school, I try to practise how I learned in high school” (INT6). As discussed in Chapter 2, Borg (2003) suggests that, “prior learning experiences shape teachers’ cognitions and instructional decisions” (p. 88). In her second year of teaching, Kyoko’s professional identity was shifting slightly from that which she formed as a student; however, it was still tentative and uncertain. Again as discussed in Chapter 2, the literature on identity formation of teachers suggests that novice teachers are likely to have tentative identities that eventually need to be shifted (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Flores & Day, 2006). Novice teachers may construct tentative identities based on their assumptions as a student in terms of what they think teachers are like when they start teaching, but they often find that those tentative identities do not fit or work in their workplaces. In order for Kyoko to shift her tentative identity, it was necessary for her to examine and discuss her role as a teacher through the engagement in the reflective

interventions. Her tentative professional identity is discussed through her reflective themes of 'developing students through English study', 'expansion of students' perspectives', and 'teaching individuals vs. a group'.

### **6.3.3 'Developing students through English study'**

The engagement in the reflective interventions - focus group, journal writing, and interviews - helped Kyoko to discuss, redirect, and *reconfirm* her professional identity from 'just teaching English' to 'developing students through teaching English'. The shift shows that the uncertain view of the novice teacher is shaped to become more certain through engagement in the reflective interventions. At the MEXT teacher training programme, which was held a few months prior to the participation in this study, Kyoko learned the idea of 'developing students through teaching English'. From the outset of the study, she talked about her shift from her first to her second year of teaching, that is, from just focusing on the teaching of English, to 'developing students through teaching English' (FG1, JE 1/12 Oct., INT1). Even though she discussed her focus, she was still unsure of her views. Thus, revisiting and reviewing her own views were necessary for the consolidation of her views. Her first journal entry describes the shift from the first to the second year:

In the first focus group...I talked about how the main job I should be doing at my current school has changed from 'teaching English' to 'developing students through teaching English'. Looking back, in April, May and June last year, I was placing too much emphasis on 'teaching English', possibly because I had just studied about teaching English and English education methods in my college days and I wanted to put my studies to use. After I got a better understanding of the actual situation at my job and started to understand the reality of my students, I realised that I had been teaching English mainly for my own personal satisfaction, and 'teaching English in English' was one part of this. In the beginning, one of my colleagues pointed out to me that my teaching did not match the reality of the students. (JE 1/12 Oct.)

The journal entry shows that Kyoko noticed the change in her focus of teaching to accord with the reality of the students, and that the reason for 'teaching English using English' was for self-contentment. She ascribes the reason for the failure of 'teaching English using English' to her disregard of the proficiency level of the students at the high school. In the journal entry above, she seems to be firm about the idea of teaching students through 'developing students through teaching English'.

Even though Kyoko declared she wanted to focus on 'developing students through teaching English', she remained ambivalent and was wondering about what she can do as a teacher (INT3). In one journal entry, Kyoko wrote that she did not really have a firm idea of what she wanted to teach. Also she said that she did not have a prospect of how she wanted the students to grow in their three years of education at the high school (JE 7/12 Dec.). At times, she was discouraged and abandoned her attempt to teach some students, like the third year students who were about to graduate from the high school, and did not care about studying. She was even considering a career change, expressing a slight regret that she had become a teacher (INT2).

However, a change was brought about as she *reconfirmed* (JE 9/12 Jan) her aims in teaching and became *aware* (JE 9/12 Jan) of the connection between her aims and her practice, through writing the self-evaluation sheet for the high school. The change is seen in one journal entry:

I had completely forgotten my aims or that I established those aims. Looking back, I was able to see that I tried to teach in accordance with those aims. I was able to find what I wanted to focus on. Writing my self-evaluation report, I have realised that my main recent issues and the

things I learned in this year's teacher training programme are linked.... I also feel a lot of importance in the ideas of 'developing the person of the students and English education'. When I teach my classes, I still tend to get caught up with just teaching English. (JE 9/12 Jan.)

Writing the self-evaluation report prompted Kyoko to *reconfirm* her aims, one of which was 'to teach a lesson in accordance with the students' profile and raise their sense of achievement.' She then became *aware* of the connection among what she wanted to do and what she practised; that is, 'what she learned in the MEXT seminar', which is 'developing students through English', and 'what she had been trying'. In a previous journal entry (JE 8/12 Nov.), she wrote about returning comments to each student's work through giving care and attention to each student, which corresponds with her description of 'developing students through English study'. Writing comments to each student, she thought she could reach, communicate and educate them through English. After becoming *aware* of the connection and *reconfirming* her aims, she incorporated activities that would be 'developing students through English studies' into one of her lessons, which she wrote about in the subsequent journal (JE 10/12 Feb.). It was a lesson using a text about Japanese high school students' fund-raising to build a school in Laos. Kyoko introduced the text and the literacy rate in Laos in order to lead the students to find out what was happening in the world (JE 11/12 Feb). This suggests her autonomy in selecting and teaching the lesson material. Kyoko's case suggests an importance of repetition in the engagement of reflective intervention for an idea to be re-examined, make connections, and facilitate an ability to reflect (see 4.3).

#### **6.3.4 'Expansion of students' perspectives'**

'Expansion of students' perspectives', another of Kyoko's themes, indicates her

*reconfirmation* (JE 9/12 Jan; INT5) that this was an important role of a teacher. Her discussion of this theme also shows her confusion about her role as a teacher, which was still based on her student perspective; thus, it is an example of shaping tentative professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Flores & Day, 2006). Through thinking about the theme ‘expansion of students’ perspectives’, she was shifting her view about what she could do as a teacher. This theme also suggests the importance of reviewing and revisiting of one’s views and roles.

In an early journal entry, she wrote: “I should be the window to the world that the students don’t know. What I gained in high school forms the core of myself. Whether the students like it or not, it is my role to introduce a different world to them” (JE 3/12 Oct.). It shows that her idea of a role of a teacher is to provide opportunities to broaden students’ views through English. It also shows that her idea was based on her own experience as a high school student.

In an entry made about a month later, the description of Kyoko’s role was rather passive in terms of ‘expansion of students’ perspectives’:

Most of my current students aim to get a local job, marry locally, and have a happy family, so I think my job as a teacher is to support them in this. I know this is true in my head, but I have to admit that I feel powerless as an English teacher. It is frustrating. (JE 6/12 Nov.).

Her description of the teacher role has a discouraging tone. She expressed that she felt powerless and frustrated as her students would spend their lives in the local area after graduation, thus they might not require having ‘their perspectives expanded’. Kyoko might have felt frustrated as she was comparing her students with herself when she was in high school, and had been curious to know what



was going in the world and wanted to study abroad.

In the interview conducted about a week later, her view of what she could do as a teacher is not clear. First, she described her role, which did not sound very enthusiastic:

In terms of supporting students, I've basically stopped trying to force them to study English. Instead, I'm trying to support them by meeting their needs. That's what I meant when I wrote it. So, my main job is to make them study, but in reality, if I am asked how necessary or meaningful that is, it is actually not all that necessary for them to study, so I just try to match what I do to what they want. (INT2).

The extract shows Kyoko's rather defeated feeling in her attempt to teach English and to expand students' perspectives. It seems that she has abandoned teaching in the way she wanted to, in order to go along with what might be useful and practical for the students: "I just try to match what I do to what they want." However, she was still looking at a teacher's role based on what she had formed when she was in high school. In the same interview, she continued her discussion on what she could do for the students by comparing the students to herself when she was in high school:

Well, I don't know what they are going to catch or gain. In my case, it was something out of the ordinary that a teacher said. If I show them many different things, they may catch something and go into a career related to it. Also, I have many different kinds of students and not all are hoping to get local jobs. Some want to go to college and some want to study abroad, so I want to be helpful in some way and let those students know from time to time that there are various options available to them. (INT2)

The extract above indicates that Kyoko was able to notice more variety in the needs of her students, and she hoped to provide various options, "so I want to be helpful in some way and let those students know from time to time that there are various options available to them". However, she was still confused about

her role as a teacher, as her discussion of the role differed in the same interview (INT2). The different degree of teacher involvement described by Kyoko in interviews indicates her confusion about the role of a teacher. The descriptions started with the enthusiastic description of the teacher role in an early journal entry, and then changed to be passive but also hopeful in the second interview.

The fourth interview shows some positive outlook after reading her past interview scripts:

Reading these past interview scripts, I thought that my thoughts are different, like, sort of depending on my feelings at various times. For example, around this particular time I was frustrated with the reality that the students here would mostly just get local jobs and not many of them wanted to study English very much. But now, I feel that some of the students here have an interest in English and so I should do my best to provide many things to those students. (INT4)

Kyoko stated that some of the views she had expressed in the previous interviews and journals were governed by temporary emotions, such as frustration and doubts, which she was experiencing at a particular time, and thus did not necessarily hold true. Then, the interview shows a more positive attitude toward helping the students: "I should do my best to provide many things to these students".

Her subsequent journal entry, after the fourth interview, showed that she *reconfirmed* her view of 'expansion of students' perspectives':

Through the interview the other day (INT4) and reading my interview scripts, I was a little embarrassed but I felt what I have been concerned with and what I have posed as tasks became clear. Students have a lot of channels in learning English. The purpose is for the students to realise that English is the pipe which connects them with the world. (JE 9/12 Jan.)

Her statement that “English is the pipe which connects them to the world” reveals Kyoko’s view about ‘expanding students’ perspectives’. As Kyoko entered in a journal (JE 9/12 Jan.), the reading of the interview scripts engaged her to look back at her views which allowed her to examine and *reconfirm* her view of a teacher role.

In the fifth interview, after the journal entry above (JE 9/12 Jan.), she was more convinced and determined, and *reconfirmed* (INT5) her view about the role as a teacher to ‘expand the students’ perspectives’:

I would be happy if they realise that there are lots of people who have completely different senses of values from those in their world, and this is not the only place that exists. I want them to have a broader perspective. Yes, for example, one thing I strongly feel is that they believe in one thing too firmly. When the students graduate from high school, they will get jobs or go on to higher education, or get married. In my case, when I tell them that I am 25 right now, they all ask me like “Wow, why don’t you get married?”(INT5)

She further elaborates on ‘expanding students’ perspectives’ in the last interview:

English and the world, well, the world means foreign countries, or what they do not know. It might be their future. The world means what they do not know, outside of their present world or their present values. It is to know that they live within the frame of Japan and the Japanese language, but English allows them to look beyond (INT6).

The descriptions of the ‘expanding students’ perspectives’ in interviews 5 and 6 suggest that Kyoko was no longer confused about the role of a teacher, but *reconfirmed* her view that she wants to ‘expand students’ perspectives’ through teaching English. Her theme of ‘expanding students’ perspectives’ shows the confusion of a novice teacher in their professional role, which might be still rather idealistic based on her own view as a student. The theme also suggests the

importance of reviewing one's view; her view was reconfirmed through returning to what she stated earlier through reflective interventions, such as by reading the past interview scripts and journal entries, and through a process of expressing her view through journal entries and interviews.

#### **6.3.4 'Teaching individuals vs. a group'**

In the participation in the study, Kyoko reinterpreted her ideas about what teaching entails, from those based on her view as a student to ideas based on her view as a novice teacher. This is also seen in her *reinterpretation* of her reflective theme, 'teaching individuals vs. a group'. Kyoko used to try to imitate English lessons she observed and liked as a high school student, and often relied on her own experience as a high school student to inform her teaching.

Kyoko *reinterpreted* what instruction entails during her participation in the study (14). Her model of instruction was based on that of private instruction at *juku*, as she had a long history of going to *juku*, from 5<sup>th</sup> grade in elementary school to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in high school (INT4). Kyoko received considerable influence from *juku* teachers, especially the benefit of individualised instruction. Two teachers whom Kyoko named as her role models were both teachers at *juku* (INT2). Like the *juku* style, Kyoko attempted to provide individualised instruction both in and outside of the classroom. Attending to individual students in a classroom, however, proved to be difficult. She found herself teaching to a group of students and not to different individuals. In teaching a class of 40 students one day, she said that she asked herself, "Who am I teaching?" She commented that talking to a group of 40 students was almost like a public speech, and walking around the classroom trying to attend to each student was more like a façade (INT4). Kyoko

realised that giving individualised instruction in a classroom would be difficult, since *juku* and school were different and if she tried to give individualised instruction in a classroom it became a façade.

Outside of class time, Kyoko attempted to provide individualised lessons just as her *juku* teacher had done for her (INT2). Every morning before classes, she was giving individualised instruction to a student who was planning to take college entrance examinations (INT2). Kyoko, however, came to find meeting the student every morning to be rather challenging. These observations note Kyoko's understanding of the difference between *juku* and classroom instructions, and indicate *reinterpretation* of what teaching entails, from the perspective of a student to that of a teacher. The theme illustrates the change in Kyoko's understanding of what it means to teach in a classroom.

### **6.3.5 Reflective interventions as a forum of expression**

Kyoko's participation in the reflective interventions is characteristic of a novice who was in the context where she could not express her views among her colleagues. Kyoko was deeply involved in, thus considerably gained from, the reflective interventions as forums for reflection and also for expression. The reflective tasks that allowed her to review her own views were beneficial as avenues for expression and also for reflection, which led Kyoko to remind and *reconfirm* what was important for her, i.e. getting her on the right track.

All the three interventions in the study were beneficial for Kyoko as arenas for expression as well as for reflection. Kyoko gained *awareness* through writing journals. The reflective journal was described as a forum to monitor her teaching,

which caused her to look back at what was taking place objectively. She described the benefit of journal writing:

Last year, I had the first year training programme, and that was a good chance to tell the teacher trainer about my practice at regular intervals. I really appreciated that. However, this year I don't have that so I hadn't had any chance to look back on whether my practice was good or bad. Since this summer (through the participation in this study), journal writing has been very good for me to regularly look at what I do. (FG 3)

The journal writing was also described as an opportunity for the novice to be heard:

from the perspective of a novice, there really are no situations like department meetings to talk about things such as teaching methodologies. Of course, the older teachers, four of them, all in their 50s, are as you can imagine. So we don't talk about things like that, and nobody really teaches you very much, so I wasn't sure which way to go. It would have been nice just to have something which allows me to be heard (FG 2).

Kyoko's evaluation of the focus group was positive in the way as she evaluated the interviews and the journal writing: i.e., she had an avenue through which to express her views. Acknowledgement and agreement from more experienced teachers were probably comforting, assuring, and helped Kyoko to confirm her view, which functioned as social validation (see section 5.3). Participation in the study was thus extremely important for Kyoko as a place to be heard as well as to reflect.

Kyoko's case shows a novice teacher's reshaping of what teaching entails and of her professional role, through having ample opportunity for expressing, thinking, and reading one's view in the reflective interventions. It also shows the confusion of novice teachers in a tentative professional identity. The case addresses the importance of repetition of reflective interventions, not only in developing reflection but also for expressing her views.

## **6.4 Sara**

Through her engagement in reflective practice, Sara became *aware* of her teaching style and expanded her repertoire of teaching. As with Kyoko, Sara was obliged to reshape her professional identity and her ideas about teaching practice as they were not applicable in the context of teaching in which she was situated. Sara's changes are discussed with her reflective themes, 'good environment is desirable for me to improve teaching', 'bring the world into the classroom', and 'different types of knowledge demanded in different schools'.

### **6.4.1 Sara's profile**

Sara became a high school teacher of English because of her positive experience during her own high school days. She enrolled in one of the top high schools in her home prefecture, where most of the students pursued higher education, and she reminisced about the time when she fully enjoyed studying and engaging in club activities. During high school, she studied in the United States for one year as an exchange student, which, she said, expanded her opportunities. At the university, Sara met a teacher of English who taught her 'the importance of using the English language in English lessons' and of 'bringing the world into the classroom', which meant not sticking to textbooks alone but using authentic materials. Sara still held them as her teaching maxims and selected the latter as one of her reflective themes.

After a few years of working experience at a company, Sara became an English teacher at a public high school in her home prefecture and taught at a competitive, university-bound high school, which was similar to her own high school. Teaching at the competitive high school caused her to notice her lack of

subject knowledge and English proficiency. She was also questioning the relevance of teaching grammar translation method, even though it was acceptable and desirable for preparing students to take college entrance examinations at the high school. After four years of teaching experience at the high school, she went to a graduate school and obtained an MA in TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages). Then, she moved to the urban prefecture, where she started teaching at River High School (pseudonym). Teaching at a new type of high school in the urban prefecture was a completely different experience for her. She joined this study during her second year of teaching at the River High School through finding out about it via email.

#### **6.4.2 Unconnected with the students**

At the time Sara joined the study, she seemed to be unconnected with the students and having difficulty teaching at River High School. Through her engagement in the reflective interventions, she eventually changed her view of the students and shaped her professional role. Sara's challenge of teaching at River High School derived from a curriculum change and new types of students for Sara. In the second year of her appointment, the high school launched a curriculum change in an attempt to boost its achievement levels. Sara seemed to be anxious under the new curriculum reform; the first year students were learning under the new curriculum, whereas the second and the third year students were under the old curriculum. She was teaching the first and the third year students. Sara's feeling can be explained by Beijaard *et al.* (2004), who state "when programs and curricula change, teachers lose a sense of themselves" (2004: 122). However, a greater difficulty derived from the fundamental differences that Sara found with the students. She could not



understand them, describing them as “people with different values that I cannot empathise with” (INT6). The students at the high school disliked studying, not to mention studying English. Many of them found it painful to sit quietly in the classroom to attend to a lesson, and most did not see a clear purpose of studying English because they did not think they would use it in the future (FG1). The first year students were described as having learning difficulties and lacking the motivation to study. Sara described them in the journal: “I don’t know what to do with students who forget everything after the class is over... How can I motivate them to learn English when they think they don’t want to or need to study?” (JE 6/26 Nov.). The third year students were described as being uncontrollable and “horrible”, in that they did whatever they pleased in class and did not listen to the teachers:

In my current school, among the third year students, the reality is that some students are putting on their makeup during class, or talking on their cell phones or eating or drinking. So I have to keep telling them to stop, and reprimand them, and my class often gets interrupted by things like that.

So when people come to this school, they are surprised because students don’t listen to the teachers at all and ignore us. Even if we tell them to stop, they are putting on their makeup and say “later” or something like that and in some cases just keep on doing it for the whole period. From your perspective, I think you’ll find the situation quite unbelievable. (INT1).

In the early phases of the study, Sara seemed to have grown demotivated and detached from the students, due to her fatigue from managing a class of unmotivated and disruptive students: “I wonder that the students’ low motivation would demotivate teachers’, or vice versa... Maybe it works both ways, with some differences in the ratio...” (JE 11/26 Dec.). The weariness led Sara to abandon incorporating new ideas and activities because they may have posed a risk of making the students more uncontrollable. Her discouragement led her to

stop teaching the lessons using English - one of her main maxims inspired by her teacher at the university: "Maybe I should try to use English in class more, but so far, I was discouraged to plan anything better" (JE 2/26 Oct.). Her demotivation and difficulties led her to be more conservative in her approach to teaching. Her demotivation also demoralised her engagement in the preparation for lessons: Sara was critical of her proclivity to rely on grammar-translation method; however, it was easy for her to fall back on the method because it did not require much preparation (JE 6/26 Nov.). Even though Sara expressed that she "could try something different for them; otherwise, they just get bored, and eventually, fail" (JE 4/26 Nov.), the behavioural management made her too exhausted to plan and implement new ideas into lessons. Sara also pointed out the importance of "good, stimulating texts" for students to improve reading skills. However, she was unmotivated either to search a book or to prepare a lesson. Sara said: "we often don't have the books at hand nor have time to prepare for using them, unless we do it on weekends...Maybe that's what enthusiastic teachers do to make their lessons exciting and inspiring for their students" (JE 7/26 Nov.). The entry shows that Sara differentiated between and distanced herself from "enthusiastic teachers" who devoted their weekend to looking for effective materials for students.

Her demotivation brought Sara to describe herself 'a cold teacher,' as seen in the second interview:

S: What I really want to do is to teach English in English. However, in this school, I spend a lot of my energy disciplining the students, so I am often wondering what in the world I am doing here. The other day I told you that I am considering changing my job. If I go to a different school, I think I can take a different approach. In my mind, the teacher's job should be mainly to teach English rather than discipline

the students. For students, a teacher like Mari (pseudonym) who care about the students is precious. I think I am cold in that aspect.

A: Is that so?

S: I don't see myself as being that passionate and pushing the students no matter what just like Mr. Kimpachi<sup>42</sup>. I can't go that far, and I draw a line at a certain point between my students and my private life, between what I do here and when I go home after work.(INT2).

(S: Sara, A: Atsuko)

The interview extract indicates her professional identity as a teacher who just wants to teach English to students as a subject. Sara also differentiated herself from other “enthusiastic teachers” like Mari, Sara’s friend who was a high school teacher, and *Mr. Kimpachi*, a TV drama character who is an icon of an enthusiastic teacher in Japan. Both of them were described as devoting their private time to the students, and helping them not only with the subjects they taught but with their life problems. Through the identification of and thinking of the reflective themes and aspect of her teaching, however, Sara *reinterpreted* her view toward the students and teaching, which is discussed in her reflective themes of ‘good environment conducive for effective teaching’, ‘different knowledge necessary teaching at different schools’, and ‘bring the world into the classroom’.

#### **6.4.3 Good environment<sup>43</sup> conducive for effective teaching**

Sara became *aware* that “a good environment” was desirable for her to teach effective lessons (JE 25/26 Mar.). She developed awareness through reading her journal entries. A good environment for Sara meant not having students with disciplinary problems. It evolved after the completion of the third year students’

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<sup>42</sup> Mr. Kimpachi is a junior high school teacher of a very popular TV drama, “Mr. Kimpachi.” He is an extremely passionate teacher who devotes his time and effort in helping students. The show focuses mostly on Mr. Kimpachi’s guidance with his students with extra-curricular matters such as preventing students from committing acts of juvenile delinquency, and helping a student who became pregnant.

<sup>43</sup> Just as in Ken’s case good environment here refers to good classroom environment.

lessons,<sup>44</sup> and the increased engagement from the first year students towards the end of the academic year, as they wanted to avoid receiving failing grades. This gave Sara tranquillity, which led her to have a different view about the students and to try new practices. In her discussion about the third year students, Sara confessed, “It was difficult...the second semester<sup>45</sup> as well as the first semester...I did not realise that there are such different values that I cannot empathise with. At the time, I used to wonder, ‘what am I doing here?’” (INT6). Sara concluded that having peace of mind was important in teaching: as she stated, “When one cannot afford time and energy, one may resort to just repeating the same thing and not trying anything new” (INT6).

A good environment led her to pay attention to different types of students other than problematic students. It also led her to try new ideas in lessons. Sara described the importance of a good environment in a journal entry: “I notice that if I have a good environment, I am more relaxed in class and concerned on improving my lessons, but when I have hard times controlling students, I am less concerned about my ways of teaching (JE 25/26 Mar.)”. Sara noticed her disregard for good students when she had a problem in class management. She expressed in an interview that being more relaxed she could finally notice and think about students who had been doing well, and she tried to facilitate improvement for such students. She confessed that, earlier in the study, she was absorbed mostly with making troublesome students quiet (INT5).

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<sup>44</sup> Since the academic year in Japan starts from April and ends in March, graduation ceremonies are scheduled in March. Lessons for graduating students often are completed in January of the graduating year.

<sup>45</sup> Elementary, junior high school, and high school have tri-semester; the first semester, from April to July, the second, from September to December, and the third, from January to March.

Sara's changes caused by 'the good environment' were significant in that they were seen not only in her views but also in her practices. In one journal she described the effectiveness of an incorporation of authentic materials in a French class in which she was enrolled as a student. This encouraged her to incorporate authentic materials in her lesson: "If I gave authentic texts to my students at school, some of them will surely be daunted and discouraged to study, but better students may want to do this" (JE 18/26 Feb.). The entry shows that she was concerned with both the students who might get discouraged, but also those students who might gain from the material. She continued in the same journal:

Now that students are a little more concentrated in class, I feel like looking for more materials other than textbooks and do experimental lessons. The only problem is that our school is on a tight budget, so I have to buy them if I were to obtain something new! (JE 18/26 Feb.)

The constraint to look for material was no longer attributed to her lack of enthusiasm caused by the students, but to the lack of budget at the school. In a subsequent journal, entered about a week afterwards, Sara wrote: "I found a book which help (sic.) student to read fast and a lot, and I used it in my OC<sup>46</sup> 1 class and it worked quite well" (JE 20/26 Feb.). This is in contrast to the statement made about three months previously that looking for materials was what enthusiastic teachers did and not what she was willing to do (see section 6.4.2). Sara's journal entries are totally different. She regained the energy and willingness to expend her own time looking for materials, purchasing the book, and using it in a lesson.

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<sup>46</sup> OC stands for Oral Communication, which is one component of English Curriculum in Public High School in Japan.

In the final interview, she said she assumed *hansei* in that the fatigue from disciplining students caused her to lose the energy for thinking about new ideas to motivate students to learn, which might have made the lesson become monotonous (INT6). This shows that she assumes responsibility for not trying to improve the lesson but also that her teaching depends on ‘a good environment’.

#### **6.4.4 ‘Different knowledge necessary teaching at different schools’**

Sara became *aware* that “different knowledge is necessary teaching at different schools” (INT6) through reading her journals, which shows the expansion of her repertoire of teaching. Teaching at River High School required that Sara have different types of knowledge from that which she had learned or used in the previous high school or at graduate school. Sara expressed that in spite of her four-year experiences of teaching at the previous high school, teaching at River High School was like “learning again from the beginning” (INT2). In the early phase of the study Sara was not particularly happy with what she had to do to teach; she had to plan ways to keep the students from chatting, make them interested, and engage them in learning even just for a short while, which was different from what she wanted to practise. Sara incorporated new trials, such as using drawings as an alternative mode from using letters, trying “games which is almost like English for kids”, (INT6) and showing videos, which she used to think was ‘just for fun’ and not really effective as a learning material. However, in the latter phase of the study, Sara became aware of the necessity for teachers to be equipped with a variety of teaching practices in various teaching contexts, which shows the expansion of her repertoire. She stated in the final interview, “maybe it was good that I came to this school, since I can use what I learned here in other schools” (INT6). The reflective theme, ‘different knowledge is necessary at

different schools', shows the expansion in her repertoire of teaching, which is the development of teacher knowledge.

#### **6.4. 5 'Bring the world into the classroom'**

Sara wrote about her reflective theme, 'bring the world into the classroom,' in one of the final journal entries (JE 25/26 Mar.), which indicated her *awareness* of, *reinterpreted* of the teaching maxim (see 4.2.5), and expanded her repertoire of teaching. It also shows her shaping of professional identity. 'Bring the world into the classroom' was described as her "big theme in teaching", in the first journal entry, which was informed by her teacher at college, who said: "There are a lot of things going on in the world or around our lives. Why not talk about it in class?" (JE 1/26 Oct.). She elaborated on the theme in a subsequent journal entry:

I think "bring the world into the classroom" means that we can bring any topics to the classrooms; I mean my teacher was trying say that we don't have to stick to the textbooks. He encouraged us to use materials such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, songs, visual aids, or anything at all. We can talk or write about anything related to our daily lives. My topics are not broad enough yet, but I hope gradually, I can stretch a little further as we move on (JE 2/26 Oct.).

For Sara, 'the world' meant the news and foreign countries (INT6). However, in the final phase of the study, she developed *awareness* with and *reinterpreted* the reflective theme 'bring the world into the classroom'. Sara became *aware* that what the world meant for each person was different. She then *reinterpreted* the type of 'the world' to be introduced to the students; it should be based on what 'the world' is for the students, and not what it means for Sara. The entry in the final journal shows such a view:

Bring the world into the classroom" is still my big theme of teaching English. Maybe using the Internet in class, *The Student Times*, songs or

DVDs, would bring the world much closer to the classroom. Once I talked about the Primaries in a lesson and students did not seem to be interested who would be the next President of the United States at all. I guess “the world” is different for each person and my students’ world is more limited to their own town or neighbours. (JE 25/26 Mar.).

Sara elaborated on her *awareness* of the difference of the students’ world in the final interview:

S: So, my teacher used to often talk about bringing the world into the classroom, and I used to believe that referred to foreign countries and people around the world outside of Japan. That was ‘the world’ to me. However, at this school, my impression is that ‘the world’ of these students is very limited. For example, their transportation usually consists of walking or riding a bicycle. And when we went downtown to the monument for an experiential learning excursion, one of the students asked me “What prefecture is this?”

A: What?

S: The monument is located in the urban prefecture. So I guess some of them had never had a chance to get on a train and go somewhere. The reality is that their world consists of River High School, and the area around River High School is the extent of their world. For example, one time, the US presidential primary elections were being discussed on TV a lot, so I talked about that to them a little, but got blank looks. It seemed like they didn’t know who the current US president was. So, I felt that my view of ‘the world’ may have been too broad for them, and that I should start from topics they can relate to, things in their lives, and then gradually expand to things in Japan outside of their region. I need to take it step by step before I jump to talking about things in foreign countries. Those things are too far away for them. Of course, I need to introduce international things, but I felt that I shouldn’t jump into such big things too suddenly. (INT6)

(S: Sara, A: Atsuko)

After becoming aware of the differences of the students’ world and her world, Sara *reinterpreted* the meaning of the student’s question, “What prefecture is this?” Sara was not critical of the students’ lack of knowledge any longer; instead she attributed the lack of knowledge to the environment in which the student was situated. This theme shows Sara’s *reinterpretation* of ‘the world’ to be introduced in the classroom, which should depend on the students: “I need to take it step by step before I jump to talking about things in foreign countries” (INT6). Sara had



expanded her repertoire of teaching in that she felt it was necessary to modify teaching according to her students. As the previous theme, 'different knowledge necessary teaching at different schools', showed, she came to find that different types of students have to be taught in different ways.

'Bring the world into the classroom' also shows that Sara shaped her professional identity from just teaching English to expanding the students' world. In the early phase of the study she said she drew a line between what she would do as a teacher:

I have drawn a line at a certain point between my students and my private life, between what I do here and when I go home after work...I have decided my role as a teacher to be 'this much' and I do not put weight on doing more than that (INT2).

However, as pointed out in the earlier section, she came to expend time and effort in finding a book for students to use (see section 6.4.3), and in the latter phase of the study, she wished to expand students' world: "If I could stretch their boundaries a bit further by teaching English and make them interested in what's going on in the world around us, it would be my great pleasure" (JE 25/26 Mar.). This indicates that her professional identity was more than just teaching English to the students, but also expanding their world through teaching of English.

#### **6.4.6 Reflective interventions: Need for critical input**

Sara's participation in the reflective interventions is characterised by her need for critical input from a mentor and her regular journal writing. Sara expressed throughout the study that even though she understood it was not the purpose of the study, she had hoped to receive more critical comments about her teaching from me (INT2, FG2, INT6, JE 26/26 Aug.). Instead of giving Sara critical

comments, I asked her questions, hoping to engage her in thinking. Yet Sara repeatedly said that my critical comments might be helpful for her to become aware of teaching English. Her continued reference to receiving critical comments from me, from the initial phase of the study to the post-participation phase, indicates her strong need for a mentor, more precisely, interventions from the mentor, and her eagerness for professional development. She was in need of a mentor as she was facing difficult students. She was not receiving advice even from her trusted colleague (JE 23/26 Mar.). Thus, she seemed to have hoped that I, who observed her lesson, would give her critical comments which would help her class management and benefit her professional development. In the initial phase of the study, the need for critical comments might have been emphasised due to her uncertainty about what reflection entails. Sara expressed eagerness to receive critical comments from me since she felt she had not noticed anything from participation in the study, and the comments from me would be helpful for her to notice some change (3FG). Her insistent remarks to receive critical comments indicate her eagerness to gain new findings about her teaching and promote reflection, and also her need of a mentor in the development.

Sara was one of the avid writers of the reflective journal. She was quite expressive in the reflective journal and gained through writing and rereading. Her last journal entry addresses an insight about reflective journal writing: "I think keeping weekly journals for six months made me conscious and aware of my teaching, I wonder how I would be different or the same if I stop writing them now" (JE 25/26 Mar.). The entry indicates that a discontinuation of writing may lead to

a different outcome, possibly that she may not think of aspects that were raised in the reflective journal writing. It is as if journal writing obliges one to an expression of one's views and possibly reflection. Sara's evaluation of the journal writing was also manifested in the discussion in the focus group: "This journal keeping, I think, those who want to develop or who want to improve would find this beneficial. But those who do not think that they can change through writing, the journal writing is just a duty (FG3)." Her description of the journal keeping shows her eagerness to develop as a teacher and the importance she places on journal writing in professional development. Her reliance on me and on the journal writing shows that she was in need of some prompt or intervention for development.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

In contrast to the view that reflective practice is more beneficial to the experienced teachers than the novice (McIntyre 1993; Roberts 1998), the study found that the novice teachers gained considerably more from their engagement in reflective practice. The benefit was manifested especially in re-examination of teacher knowledge, which was based on their student perspective and shaping and re-shaping of professional identity.

The study found that reflective practice is beneficial for the novice in their examination of underdeveloped teacher knowledge. In Chapter 2, I raised a question of whether teacher knowledge is dynamic for all teachers and whether there would be possible differences among the participants, such as between the novices and the experienced teachers, in their exploration of teacher

knowledge through reflective practice. The analysis of the data indicated that teacher knowledge seemed more dynamic for the novice teachers. Chapter 2 introduced McIntyre's (1993) view that reflective practice is less beneficial for novice teachers, as they lack the experience to draw from classroom experiences and they have not formed systematic beliefs about teaching as teachers. However, this study found that reflective practice was beneficial for the novice teachers, as it allowed them to explore their teacher knowledge that was based on what they observed as students: what is called by Lortie (1975) an "apprenticeship of observation". The data showed that when the novice teachers started teaching, they relied on what they observed and learned as students. However, as seen in all of the three cases, what they learned as students was not necessarily appropriate or suitable in their own teaching contexts. Ken changed his perspective in terms of being strict with students from that of a student to a teacher. Kyoko's view of teaching a class was changed from what she held as a student of learning at *juku*. Sara changed her interpretation of one of her teaching maxims, 'bring the world to the classroom', from what her teacher told her to fit into her teaching context. Such changes are explained by Laboskey (1993) in Chapter 2: "After many years in classrooms, they have ideas about what teachers do. But these ideas were derived from a student perspective, not a teacher perspective, and thus are very likely to be inaccurate, inappropriate, or incomplete" (p. 24). All of the novice teachers examined and modified views about teaching from those that they held as students in the participation in the study. Reflective practice, thus, proved beneficial for the novice teachers in reshaping their idea of teaching from that which is based on their students' experiences and whose knowledge about teaching is possibly less internalised

than their experienced counterparts.

This study claims that reflective practice is beneficial for the novice as it gave them ample opportunities to discuss their views in shaping their professional identities. As was raised in Chapter 2, a range of the literature claims one of the salient features of reflective practice to be its engagement of teachers in their shaping of professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009; Beijaard *et al.*, 2004; Flores & Day 2006). The thesis agrees with the view that the exploration of professional identity is deemed important, especially for the novice (Flores & Day, 2006). As Beauchamp & Thomas (2009) described, in this study the novice teachers went through “negotiating within shifting conceptions of what teaching is or should be, relating to the identities of others, becoming agents of their own identity development” (p. 185). The engagement in the reflective interventions prompted Ken’s identity shift from that of a student-teacher to a teacher. The study encouraged Kyoko to review her tentative professional identity and Sara to reshape her professional identity from a teacher who just teaches English to one who introduces ‘the world’ to her students. Just as they relied on what they learned as students in conducting lessons, their views of teachers’ roles were also based on what they observed as students. The process of shaping professional identity was not straightforward; it required that the participants review and examine their roles. As pointed out by Beijaard *et al.* (2004), professional identity formation is rather challenging, because, as contended by Flores and Day (2006), “prior experiences as pupils seemed to play a strong mediating role in the identities which new teachers brought into their first school teaching experience” (p. 223). In the participants’ particular contexts, they could

not rely on the professional identities of what they formed as students, which led them to shape their professional identities. The novice teachers had to examine their expectations and roles. This is pointed out by Beijaard *et al.* (2004) who argue: “professional identity formation is often presented as a struggle because (student) teachers have to make sense of varying and sometimes competing perspectives, expectations, and roles that they have to confront and adapt to” (p. 115). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) state “the paths that teacher identity development can take are not necessarily smooth but often fraught with periods of self-doubt and questioning” (p. 767). In this study, the participants went back and forth thinking about what they can and should do as teachers, with their new roles and identities. This study suggests the need for the participants to repeatedly engage in reflective interventions so as to facilitate their professional identity shift.

The three cases all showed that the novice teachers need a mentor that was lacking in their teaching contexts. Ken and Kyoko, in their second year, were often at a loss in terms of what direction to take in their teaching. Sara was having difficulty teaching challenging students; however, she did not seem to have received advice even from a trusted colleague. Thus, they all regarded me, who has a longer experience in teaching, as a mentor, which was one of the unexpected findings from the study. This point will be elaborated in Chapter 8, the concluding chapter.

The cases of the novice teachers showed that the challenges they were facing was not particularly their English proficiency, as the MEXT teacher training

seminars aimed to rectify, but their professional identity formation and their limited repertoire of teaching practices, as well as the absence of a mentor to whom they could talk, and who would guide them.

The present study found that reflective practice was beneficial for the novice as it gave them opportunities to examine teacher knowledge and to shape or reshape professional identity. Chapter 7 discusses the engagement of reflective practice of the experienced teachers, which shows differences in their development of reflection and in their need for a mentor.

## **Chapter 7: Analysis of the experienced participant teachers**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the professional development of the three experienced participants, Yoko, Naomi, and Miki, in their engagement in reflective practice. As with Chapter 6, this chapter is divided into three subsections to elaborate on the findings from each case. The study found that compared to the novices, reflection of the experienced teachers developed differently in variety and in timing. The study also notes that reflective practice is more likely to leave the experienced teachers within their 'comfort zones' in their examination of teacher knowledge, in contrast to the novice teachers, who confronted challenges in their teaching. By 'comfort zones', I mean what the teachers felt comfortable and non-threatening in their exploration of teacher knowledge. In addition, the experienced teachers were observed to be less likely to be dependent on me in the engagement in the reflective interventions, which was manifested especially in their autonomy in, and less reliance on, the interviews.

### **7.2 Yoko**

Yoko, an experienced teacher in the rural prefecture, gained an opportunity to examine and express her views about teaching rather than modify them from the participation in the study. However, she became aware of contradictions and avoidance in her teaching. Also, after the end of the study, Yoko slightly reshaped her professional identity. She was one of the participants who did not particularly see any new findings through a reflective task, which was reading the past interview scripts in the fourth interview. This seems to show that, at the time, she thought that she had a firm grasp of her ideas and views about teaching. In the latter phase of the study, Yoko became aware of contradictions



in her views about teaching, which she thought were well-established; her engagement in reflective practice thus gave her an opportunity to express and examine her views about teaching, which she thought was firmly established.

Yoko explored her views about teaching especially through journal writing. To my questions in the journal, she would ponder and respond with detailed analysis, giving various reasons, interpretations, and perspectives (see section 5.4.1). In the final reflective task, of selecting reflective themes after reading the journal entries, Yoko chose reflective themes which showed that she developed *awareness*. Among the themes that she selected, 'finding contradictions among my themes', 'avoidances of what I do not want to be involved', and 'the journal being a forum to express what I could not express at the work place', will be discussed in this section. The first two will be discussed under a reflective theme that I identified, 'comfort zones', and the other reflective theme will be discussed under another reflective theme that I identified: 'gradual reshaping of professional identity'. Both explore the insight she gained from the study and address the implications of the study.

### **7.2.1 Yoko's profile**

Yoko's views about teaching and her professional identity were strongly influenced by her initial place of employment, a company in which she started working immediately after her graduation from university. Yoko was a very competent and talented teacher; however she did not regard teaching as her lifelong calling. She had had 15 years of working experience, three years at the Business Corporation and 12 years as an English teacher at two high schools. At the time of participation in the study, Yoko was teaching at Rural Technical High

School (pseudonym) in a small town in the rural prefecture. The level of the school is one of the lowest in the prefecture, and most of the students are not university bound.

Yoko had liked teachers until she met teachers in junior high school. Their lessons were, she suggested, monotonous, as they were unconcerned with teaching but were preoccupied with showing authority and control over students in order not to be intimidated by them (JE 6/26 Nov.; INT2). Yoko's disappointment with the teachers led her to feel what she calls 'antipathy for adults'. In spite of her disappointment with the teachers, at the university Yoko obtained a teachers' certificate, as teaching was one of the few professions which gave equal opportunities to women<sup>47</sup> (INT2). This may suggest that regardless of her negative experience at the junior high school, she thought she could benefit her students by being a teacher.

Yoko's initial place of employment, Star Company (pseudonym), exerted a considerable influence on her professional knowledge and her professional identity. After graduating from university, she did not pursue teaching but was employed at Star Company. Yoko said that her pre-service practicum experience led her to feel that she needed to gain work experience in a corporation before taking on teaching as a profession (INT2). Star Company, which specialises in consulting and personnel placement, was one of the fastest growing and competitive companies to enter at the time in Japan. The company

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<sup>47</sup> The Equal Employment Opportunity Law for Men and Women was revised in 1985 and became effective in 1986.

was known to be progressive, with a disregard for the seniority system<sup>48</sup>, promotion of meritocracy, gender equality, and disregard of lifetime employment, all of which became a fundamental part of Yoko's professional knowledge. Yoko enjoyed working at the company, which led her to change her antipathy towards adults from being boring and monotonous to "being an adult is fun" (INT2). Her experience at the company changed her attitude about working and led her to form an adult and a professional identity. She was a competent worker who won various prizes such as the first prize in a sales talk competition. She said she left the company due to health reasons and her reluctance in profit-making (INT2). Yoko's work experience at Star Company was only for three years, which is much shorter than her teaching experience; however, it had a substantial influence on the basis of her professional knowledge.

After leaving the business field, Yoko started teaching at an affluent private high school, Athletic High School (pseudonym), which is well known for its athletic achievements. Yoko wanted to send the message, that "being an adult is not that bad" to the students. Unlike the teachers whom she had had in junior and senior high schools, she might have thought she could be a positive influence and make a difference to the students. After teaching at the high school for some years, she felt she had succeeded in sending out this message, and had become an excellent teacher where everything in the classroom went well. However, this made her wary that she might be manipulating the students. The lack of challenge also made her uneasy that her own lessons might have become monotonous. Her marriage prompted her to leave the school after

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<sup>48</sup> The seniority system is a system that gives preference to employees based on years of service.

teaching there for nine years. Through her husband, Yoko became interested in environmental issues, which became a new message she wanted to convey to students. Gaining this new social mission, she resumed teaching in the rural prefecture in 2005. She participated in my MEXT teacher training seminar in 2007 and decided to participate in this study.

### 7.2.2 'Comfort zone'

The reflective themes of which Yoko gained awareness, 'finding contradiction among my themes' and 'avoidances of what I do not want to be involved', may address a potential drawback of reflective practice, which is a tendency for teachers to stay within their 'comfort zones'. Yoko became aware of a contradiction among her reflective themes. This contradiction responds to a question that I raised in Chapter 2 whether some teacher knowledge are incongruent or in conflict. In Yoko's case, there were contradictions in her teacher knowledge. Yoko explained one of the reflective themes, 'finding contradictions in my themes' in the last journal entry:

If I take a few different themes such as '*tatema* versus *honne*' or 'monotonous lessons', ultimately I discover convenient contradictions within myself. But if I pursue those, I feel like I will immobilize myself, so I will accept that there are contradictions and work on them in a humble, modest way. (JE 24/26 Mar.)

She elaborated on 'the contradiction' in the last interview:

Well, for example, I don't like to teach monotonous lessons, but on the other hand...if I think about it in more depth, it's like, um, I can't really express it well. I can't really express it well, but if I really think about it, I feel something different from what I said before. Thinking about the logic of what I said at different times, I think it is difficult to reconcile that. I just vaguely feel that what I said are different from before, and don't think about it any further, so in the end, the contradictions are not very clear. Yeah, I just think about it within myself, how to do my various classes, or how to respond to students...I have my own rules for that, and I think those are clear to myself, but the rules for those, and what I am expressing as my logic or reasoning are actually different. Well, not

exactly different, but depending on the situation, I think I have tended to match them up in a convenient way and rationalise them. Case by case, I've been doing that (INT6).

Yoko became aware of a contradiction in the rationales across her recurrent themes. There were several themes, such as '*honne* and *tatema*' and 'teaching a lesson that is not monotonous', which Yoko often discussed in the interviews and the journals. She would articulate the rationales, explaining why they were important for her. At the end of the study, she noticed that the rationales she gave for her important themes were contradicting each other; however, she said that she could not articulate what the contradiction was because she stopped the exploration. Even though she became aware of the contradiction, due to her retreat from the inquiry, the contradiction remained unexplored.

The other reflective theme, 'avoidance of what I do not want to be involved in', also denotes *awareness*, as she gained a new finding, an identification of commonality in what was avoided in the journal. In the last journal entry, Yoko wrote:

As I wrote in my journal, I think I have consciously and unconsciously avoided work things that I did not want to get involved in. Sometimes I feel like I want you to point out those areas. However, even if you pointed them out, if they are low priority within myself, I may still evade them somehow. If so, I think reflection, which is to think deeply about issues that I am concerned with and sufficiently aware enough of to express to others, is a type of training designed to build on the positive points within oneself. (JE 24/26 Mar.)

The selection of 'avoidance' is unique in a sense that it involves an identification of what is intangible or what was not written in the journal. She identifies what was not entered in the journal and finds the commonality among what was not entered. The identification, thus, first involves noticing what was not entered in

the journal, such as 'club activities'. Then, she identifies commonality among what was not entered; they were what Yoko did not want to discuss.

Yoko's reflective themes of 'finding contradictions in my themes' and 'avoidances of what I do not want to be involved in' are significant because they address potential drawbacks of reflective practice. They denote an avoidance of critical self-inquiry, which may lead teachers to settle on what one is comfortable with, i.e. reflecting within one's comfort zone. Yoko pointed out that a characteristic of reflective practice is focusing mostly on one's positive part of teaching. In the final interview, she further elaborated the theme of 'avoidance':

Y: Regarding the supervision of club activities, I am actually pretty lazy right now, so I avoid the topic. It is not related to English instruction but... It is probably like, if I don't really like to teach the oral classes, probably I don't write comments about them very much. I only teach it in a fairly mediocre way, but I think I don't write about it in most cases. Currently I like all of my English courses and keep trying new things. But in some cases, in some courses for example, when I really dislike a class and am really fed up with it, I would only be able to write something like "I hate it", so I would not write about it at all.

A: Is that so?

Y: Yes. If there is a slight hope, I can write about it in the journal, but I would not write an entry such as "I just dislike this class and I teach it praying that the time passes quickly". (INT6)

(Y: Yoko, A: Atsuko)

The extract shows that Yoko discussed what she wanted to and what went well, but not what she did not like or what did not go well. As introduced in Chapter 2, Janssen *et al.* (2008) state that reflection on positive experiences is beneficial for teacher development as it offers balance between innovation and routine:

reflection methods based on positive experiences will help (student) teachers to embark on the route of optimal development because they produce more innovative resolutions which they are highly motivated to apply. This means that reflection on positive experiences might put them on the route to optimal development because they strike a balance between innovation and routines. (2008, p. 126)

This study found that reflection on positive aspects may lead teachers to focus mostly on routines and to *reconfirm* their views of teaching. It also found that what is reflected upon could be skewed to what is comfortable enough for the teachers to confront. The teachers, intentionally or unintentionally, as Yoko stated, may avoid focusing on what they do not want to review, examine, or confront. As illustrated in Chapter 2, Day (1999) suggests “confrontation resulting from engagement in reflective practices is not always ‘comfortable’” (p.40). Thus, aspects of teaching which may be helpful for one to examine may possibly remain unquestioned. In such a case, reflection may not effectively lead the teachers to change or to develop, since the reflection is restricted. This does not correspond with the purpose of reflection, which is a “precursor to substantive change” (Burns, 2005, p. 68) as introduced in Chapter 2. Yoko’s case provided the insight that even if one became aware of one’s teaching, the teaching practice may remain unchanged if one avoids exploration beyond the comfort zone.

### **7.2.3 Gradual reshaping of professional identity**

Participation in the study eventually led Yoko to reshape her professional identity which had been formed in Star Company. Sara and Kyoko’s reshaping of professional identity was more urgent as they had to seek out what they could do as a teacher in order to teach at their challenging high schools. On the other hand, Yoko did not seem to have felt the immediate need to reshape her professional identity; thus, the change was subtle and gradual. Just as with teacher knowledge, the reshaping of experienced teachers’ professional identity seemed more challenging, as they often do not see the need for it.

One of her reflective themes, 'the journal as a forum to express what I could not express at work place', suggests that it was necessary for Yoko to have a place for expression as she felt different and isolated at the workplace. Yoko explained, "I am relieving tension through writing on the journal. I write what I have been feeling but have not been able to tell others in the new workplace. I rediscover that I want to express my views but I cannot" (JE 24/26 Mar.), and explained that what she could not express was her dissatisfaction toward her workplace, such as her colleagues' detachment from the high school (INT6). The analysis of the data shows that there was another aspect of what she could not express, which was an objective, critical view of teachers which derived from her experience at Star Company. The study gave her ample opportunities to express her views, and it eventually led her to reshape her professional identity slightly.

Yoko's slight dissatisfaction with her current high school, Rural Technical High School derived from the differences she perceived from her previous places of employment, Star Company and Athletic High School. Yoko said that she could not really express her views about teaching with the colleagues at the current high school, as they did not engage in discussion about teaching. Yoko pointed out that, unlike teachers at private high schools, teachers at public high schools like Rural Technical High School did not give much effort to teaching, and might avoid unnecessary confrontation with colleagues as they would be transferred to different schools after five to ten years of appointment. Yoko contrasted her current working environment with her previous places of employment, and said that colleagues at the previous work places were more dedicated regardless of their terms of work. In addition, at her current workplace, working virtually with



only one another colleague made it difficult for Yoko to express her views. When their views were different, Yoko said, the different view might be taken as a personal criticism toward the other teacher (JE 13/26 Jan., JE 14/26 Jan., FG2). Yoko contrasted her current working environment again with her previous working environments. Athletic High School, having a larger number of teachers, was conducive to a more open discussion. The colleagues at Star Company were much more effective to coordinate with, even having an open discussion (JE 16/26 Feb).

Yoko's view of teachers and the teaching profession, which was influenced by Star Company, seems to be the main aspect of what she could not share with her colleagues. Yoko seems to have associated herself more closely with Star Company than with the teaching profession, and the influence of working in Star Company is seen in her teaching practice, evaluation of effective teaching, a key to effective teaching, and her view of teachers.

For example, Yoko gave students a reflection sheet from Star Company which she revised for the students (JE 18/26 Jan). She said that her career guidance was influenced by her experience at the company, in that she saw career choice and change to be flexible and did not necessarily recommend life-long employment (JE 23/26 Mar.). Her discipline of the students was influenced by her experience in being an interviewee in personnel at the company, and she emphasised the importance of appropriate attire for the right occasions (INT3).

The professional knowledge she formed through Star Company was the basis of her belief in an evaluation of effective teaching, an objective examination of the quality of work. She was, thus, critical of how good work was evaluated at schools:

When everyone is given the same evaluation across the board, that everyone is “doing a good job” (even though I don’t completely agree that this is true), I think this is based on a certain standard that consists of things like “We are working hard every day dealing with many difficult students”, “We are working overtime until late day after day” and “We are working on Saturday and Sunday helping students with club activities”. In other words, the standard is based on how many hours they are working and how much difficulty they are facing. In Japan, the most difficult thing for teachers is the fact that there is an immense amount of work, and the greatest challenge is how to be efficient in dealing with that. It is rare that questions about quality of teaching are asked, such as about whether effective instruction was given when working with the students, or whether that overtime work could have been done more efficiently between classes or other times within the working day. Sometimes I almost feel like it is some kind of taboo.

I have come to understand the value of just “being there” and spending time with the students. However, punching my time card, I still cannot leave behind the discipline of “only report the actual net hours you were working” that was instilled in me when I was working in the corporate world as a salaried person. (For example, even if I was writing a project proposal for three hours, I would have to accept that my work was inefficient and wasting time for correcting careless mistakes, so it is actually only one hour of net working time. Or my boss would point out that in reality my work included two hours worth of tea breaks. Or on the other hand, I was working and eating at the same time during lunch because I got some good ideas for brainstorming, so it was actually equal to one hour of attending a work meeting, and so on.)

It is hard to say whether the teachers are saying “You are doing a good job” to each other because they are taking it easy on each other or because they are genuinely trying to evaluate their skills and passion. When teachers praise each other like that, it is good that they can feel some degree of motivation in their heart by thinking “I am doing my best.” However, at the same time, I think we should not forget to coolly and objectively look at each other’s quality of work. (JE 19/26 Feb)

In the extract, Yoko was critical of the tendency among teachers to evaluate effective teaching through the amount of time they spent with students and teacher's good intention without an objective examination of the end results. The extract indicates her frustration with such a tendency and evaluation of the teachers, and also that she was unable to express her belief.

Yoko's view of effective teaching involves retaining an 'objective' perspective as a teacher. She was critical of some teachers who seemed to have lacked an objective perspective. She emphasised that the key for being a fair and sound teacher lay in not asking for recognition (JE 7/26 Nov.), and explained that if students made great achievements, it should be attributed more to their hard work than to teachers' effective instruction (JE 9/26 Nov.). If teachers started to ask for recognition, they may teach not to improve the students, but for teachers themselves to receive recognition (JE 7/26 Nov.). Yoko admitted that she was grateful to receive positive comments from her students, but expressed the danger of being self-satisfied (INT3).

Yoko's strong determination to hold an "objective" perspective and not to be self-satisfied was based on what she had witnessed in Athletic High School. She expressed that she saw some confusion and tragedy caused by teachers who were so earnest that they lacked objectivity (JE 9/26 Nov.). She said that, unlike the promotional ladder in business, there were not many posts available for promotion in high schools. Thus, such devotion was often not fully recognised. Yoko said that teachers seek recognition in a different way, through receiving gifts from students or their caretakers:

as teachers they have no special positions of leadership within the organization. So, what do they do to pursue satisfaction? They can tend to start falling into a hole. When I was doing work relating to hiring at Star Company, I saw many male workers like that over the years and I can really understand what they feel. But it is dangerous in a sense. So, when he gets a necktie from the PTA, he was actually pushing for that, but he wants to show it off one time every three years<sup>49</sup>. He's like "I am supported by the mothers." He's really trying to express something. Of course, he is a good teacher, and very passionate in what he does, but it is really something how he makes a big deal about getting a present like that and showing it to everyone. (INT3).

Compared with the workers at Star Company, Yoko was critical of teachers' apparent lack of ability to evaluate others (FG2), to become leaders among adults (FG2), and to cooperate with their peers (FG2). She was also critical of high schools teachers' proclivity to regard teaching as their lifetime vocation.

Yoko described in the journal:

Probably, since the time I was working as a salaried professional at Star Company, I have a habit of endlessly searching for the "right timing to quit". This is part of the company culture there. They feel that finding a good career or workplace is a type of destiny and this belief is instilled in the workers. We feel that we want to leave the company in a nice way, with good timing, without staying for a long time at the wrong job in a meaningless inertia. The reason for leaving can be a promising new career or just based on the realisation that the job was not one's destiny. (JE 21/26 Feb.)

As the extract indicates, Yoko did not see teaching as her life-time calling but as one of the jobs she engages in. This view was very different from many of her colleagues. In discussion of teachers' career change, her view is critical regarding teachers as those who may not be able to engage in business (INT5, JE 23/26 Mar.):

Compared to working in a regular company, the position of a teacher is really different. For example, it is possible to move from a company to a school and become a teacher. That is because company workers are able to use their professional skills or management ability or experience in society in schools. However, on the other hand, if a person who was a

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<sup>49</sup> High schools are completed in three years in Japan.

high school teacher wants to become a company worker, most people would say that it is really difficult. So when I came to this side, and became a teacher, I really felt that and understood it would be very difficult. Not impossible if somebody really wanted to do so, but difficult. I knew that most people in society had that perception, and so I knew that if I moved to a high school for my job, I would basically face the problem that I would never be able to go back into the corporate world. That was why when I moved to Star Company, no I mean Athletic High School, I was thinking that I probably would not work at the school until retirement. I was thinking that I wanted to open my own coffee shop, and had a vague sense that I wanted to run my own business (INT5).

The extract shows that Yoko clearly divides teaching and working at a company in her mind. She expressed her views, not only about the critical comments toward her current school, but more significantly toward high school teachers, from whom Yoko distanced herself. Her professional identity seems to be different from other teachers, as she does not consider teaching to be her lifetime calling: this may explain the reason for Yoko's devotion in responding to my questions in the interviews and in the journal, which might have prompted her to write about her critical views of teachers and schools.

Her professional identity was slightly differently expressed in her response to the email sent five months after the study. To a question, "In five months that have passed after the study, what do you think you have gained through participation in the study?," she responded:

Teachers can be too lenient to one another, even when they could not achieve what they should have done. If such teachers have mutual trust, complaints and commiseration can lead to a positive outcome, but also there is dependence. From my friends from Star Company, I can get the message, "what needs to be done needs to be done!" However, their working environment is totally different from my current environment, it is difficult for them to understand what I am facing. It was fortunate for me to communicate with you in the study, who understand the teaching context but have a different outlook. (JE 26/26 Aug.)

She still associated herself with her ex-colleagues from Star Company, but seemed to have felt that their working environment was different from hers and they would not understand her difficulties. This shows Yoko's change in identifying herself more closely with teachers. It seems to show that she now sees herself more as a teacher than as a worker at Star Company. Then, she mentioned that she appreciated the opportunity to talk to me, as a teacher who taught in a different context from hers. Yoko was a participant who did not see the need for interviews during her engagement in the study (FG2, FG3, INT6); however, she appreciated the opportunity to communicate with me. This shows the importance of a peer, even for a teacher who seems as confident as Yoko. The study gave her an opportunity to fully explore her professional knowledge and professional identity, which led her to reshape her professional identity slightly.

#### **7.2.4 Reflective interventions as a forum for expression**

Yoko's participation in the reflective interventions was marked by her autonomy and with the need for a forum for expression. Yoko showed an enthusiastic engagement in the study through her regular and elaborated journal entries, articulate interviews, and active participation in the focus group discussions. Yoko's involvement in the reflective interventions indicates a participant teacher's autonomy in the enhancement of reflection. Yoko, a teacher who is confident and established, did not rely on the reflective tasks or expect a researcher's active involvement in helping her promote awareness. Reading the first three interview transcripts, Yoko expressed she did not especially have any new findings from the reading: she stated, "Well, finding something...but what I spoke was what I think about in many instances. I did not find anything unusual

or what I do not remember saying. I expressed what I usually think about” (INT4), which seems to indicate that she considered herself to have a firm grasp of her views about teaching. Yoko’s journal writing was characterised by the way she approached my questions. She interpreted the questions asked by me in journals as questions she asked herself, which shows her autonomous engagement in the journal writing (See section 5.4.1). Since Yoko was fulfilled by expressing her ideas in journals, the interview was not regarded as particularly necessary. Yoko stated that she did not clearly see the purpose and role expected of her in the interviews, and the differences from the journal writing (FG2, FG3, INT6). However, post-study email indicates her appreciation of having interviews, or the opportunity to talk to me, a teacher outside of her teaching sphere. This shows the importance of an opportunity to talk to a peer who understands the context but who is outside of one’s teaching context.

### **7.3 Naomi**

Naomi’s engagement in reflective practice may indicate characteristics of experienced teachers. First, as with the cases of Yoko and Miki, Naomi’s case showed that through reflective practice, Naomi, an experienced teacher with established views about teaching, mostly recaptured and *reconfirmed* her interest rather than making a new discovery. Naomi *reconfirmed* her interest in the concept of ‘learner belief’, and developed a new interest, which was ‘teacher belief’. Secondly, her case suggested that experienced teachers may engage in an exploration of professional mission which is more holistic and social than that of professional identity commonly seen among novice teachers. Thirdly, Naomi’s case suggested that experienced teachers may be more capable of incorporating theory into practice, and also critical evaluation of a theory. Also, it

is claimed that experienced teachers can carry on their teaching while staying within their comfort zones. Finally, Naomi's engagement in the reflective interventions showed the autonomy of an experienced teacher who tailored reflective interventions to her style.

Following the profile, Naomi's section will discuss Technical High School (pseudonym) which left an enormous impact on her teacher belief. Then, it will discuss her development with the reflective themes that she selected: 'Ms. Ono' at Medial high school (pseudonym), 'belief', and 'whole person education'.

### **7.3.1 Naomi's Profile**

Naomi was one of the most experienced participants, with approximately 20 years of experience in teaching English. Her experience as a high school exchange student to the United States was described as a prominent event in her youth, which changed her into an extrovert. After graduating from a university in Japan, she worked at a foreign-affiliated company based in Japan. She found the job to be different from what she wanted to pursue, and left the company after one year. Returning to school and obtaining a teacher's certificate, she started her teaching career at a private high school in the urban prefecture, and left the school after teaching there for about 10 years. She said she wanted to have opportunities for participating in seminars, which was not encouraged at the school. She started to teach at a public high school, Technical High School in the urban prefecture; concurrently, she enrolled in an MA programme in TESOL as a part-time student. After five years of teaching at Technical High School, she was transferred to her current high school, Medial High School. Through finding



about it in the mailing list, Naomi participated in this study during her fifth year at Medial High School.

### **7.3.2 Technical High School**

Technical High School was significant in Naomi's teaching career, leading her to expand her views about teaching and laying the foundation of her professional mission. The high school was a completely new environment for Naomi. The rank of the t-score of the school lay very low in the prefecture, which resembles River High School, where Sara was teaching (see section 6.4.2). Naomi was the only female teacher who was assigned a homeroom<sup>50</sup>. The class was a first year class which comprised 40 male students. Initially the students resisted Naomi, a female teacher, wanting a male teacher whom they could respect, and who was physically stronger than them (INT1). Naomi faced difficulties every day: the students would get into fights, break windows, and commit theft in the classroom. She expended time and effort in preparing lesson plans. The students would, however, disrupt the lesson by throwing things and getting into fights (INT2). The challenge was not restricted only to the premises of the classroom or the school: when the students got in trouble outside of school, Naomi had to go to a police station, or visit detention facilities to fetch them. In such a situation, she had to gain the students' trust in different ways than her male colleagues (INT2). She started to give individualised care and attention to the students, in ways such as giving each one a birthday present, and engaged in a diary exchange with each

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<sup>50</sup> As stated earlier, homeroom teachers are responsible for giving discipline and providing career guidance. This responsibility, when the level of the school is quite low, often overweighs subject instruction in terms of energy and time. However, there are some who become teachers with the strong desire to guide and foster the youth as a homeroom teacher rather than teaching certain subjects.

of the students (INT2). Eventually, Naomi succeeded in gaining trust and loyalty from the students, and she remained their homeroom teacher for three years, until their graduation.

### **7.3.3 'Ms. Ono' at Medial high school**

Medial High School was a school with approximately an average t-score in the urban prefecture. Since the level of the school was more advanced than that of Technical High School, Naomi had thought teaching there would be easier. However, she was confronted with a different type of challenge, a difficult colleague. 'Ms. Ono', whom Naomi identified as one of her reflective themes, was a colleague who preoccupied Naomi due to their fundamental disagreements and contrasting views about teaching. Naomi's discussion in the interviews, journals, and focus groups abounded with critical descriptions of 'Ms. Ono'. Naomi expressed a strong disapproval of 'Ms. Ono's' teaching, such as her selection and use of exceedingly advanced textbooks which were used at the most competitive high schools (FG2). Since 'Ms. Ono' was in charge of the textbook for English classes, Naomi was obliged to teach a lesson using it. Naomi also criticised 'Ms. Ono's' teaching practice: her assignment of asking the students to copy the content of textbooks into a notebook, and the difficulty of her tests, where the average scores were often around 30 out of 100. Moreover, 'Ms. Ono' was described as a person who disregarded the views of the other teachers and adhered to her views and ways of teaching (FG1, INT2). The depiction of 'Ms. Ono' often ended with an abandonment of mutual understanding because 'Ms. Ono' would not listen to others, and Naomi could not become firm or confront her (INT6).

### 7.3.4 'Belief': Application of a theory

The participation in the study recaptured Naomi's interest in the theory of learner belief, and *reconfirmed* her view about teacher roles in changing 'learner belief'.

The reflective theme of 'learner belief' also showed that Naomi applied the theory into her practice and developed her own interpretation. What Naomi meant by 'learner belief' was students' perception of self-confidence and self-esteem (FG1, INT1). From the outset of the study, Naomi argued that 'learner belief' can be changed with the enthusiasm of teachers (INT1). Informed by the findings of her research for the MA thesis and her own experiences both as a teacher and as a student, Naomi contested the idea of Horowitz<sup>51</sup> that learner belief was fixed and resistant to change. She said, "many researchers argue that belief about language learning is resistant to change once it was formed, but I thought it can be changed after my observation of the students at Technical High School" (JE 10/19 Jan.). Since 'learner belief' can be changed by teachers (INT1), Naomi contended that it was extremely important for teachers to know students' 'learner beliefs', and, in case the beliefs were negative, to try to change them. Changing 'learner beliefs', Naomi argued, takes precedence over the teaching of English (FG1). Like her view of 'learner belief', Naomi's professional knowledge is underlined with the findings that she gained through application of theory to her practice.

Naomi applied another reflective theme, 'teacher belief', into practice. Through reading her interview transcripts, Naomi became *aware* that one of her recurring interests was 'teacher belief' (JE 12/19 Feb, INT5). Naomi applied the theory to

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<sup>51</sup> She was referring to Horowitz' idea in 'The beliefs about language learning of beginning university foreign language students' (Horowitz, 1988).

her practice; she conducted interviews with some of her colleagues and argued that 'teacher belief' was possible to alter. What Naomi learned during graduate school was that 'teacher belief' was formed when one is a learner influenced by the instruction received, and that once belief was formed, it was resistant to change. Thus, teachers are prone to teach in the way they have learned about. In contrast to what she learned at the graduate school, Naomi argued that teacher belief, just like learner belief, can be altered with interaction with others. She noticed that her instruction and interaction with the students were different from those she received as a student: she was interested in 'whole person education' and was devoted to educating the students. She observed similar styles of instruction with some of her colleagues, and became interested in whether they had received the same type of supportive instruction when they were students, so she started to interview some colleagues. She found that her colleagues had not received much support from their teachers when they were students, but they gave more care to their own students because of the changes in the students' profile and the context from the time they were at high school students. She concluded that teachers' belief and practice were not influenced merely by their experience as a student, but shaped by interaction with the students as teachers. Her findings resonate with what Kyoko and Sara experienced in the study: that they could not hold on to the teacher professional identity which they had formed as students. The key factors for the changes, as Naomi asserted, are teachers' observation and understanding of the students and of their contexts, and the acknowledgement of the need and willingness to change (JE 11/19 Jan.). This reflective theme, 'teacher belief', shows Naomi's

confidence and autonomy as a teacher, to the extent that she would conduct research, and provides an argument against an existing theory.

The interest in the concept of 'teacher belief' led Naomi to *reinterpret* her view towards the difficult colleague, 'Ms. Ono'. This shows that an application of a theory to one's experience can lead to an objective, alternative perspective. As Naomi became interested in 'teacher belief', she started to explore beliefs behind Ms. Ono's approach to teaching, which changed her description of 'Ms. Ono' from critical to objective. Naomi pointed out the reason behind 'Ms. Ono's' forcing the students to copy the textbook content on to notebooks might derive from her own practice as a high school student, when she had a reputation as a gifted student (FG2). Thus, 'Ms. Ono' thought the practice was effective. Naomi said: "I want to ask her, when a person says something what is behind them. I want to find out how one's belief is based on one's experience" (INT5). She continued:

It just seemed interesting. I apologise for saying it this way, but I thought it would be interesting. I want to know what kind of educational background the person has. Also, I think it is very interesting how a certain person ends up having certain beliefs or thoughts... There is some reason for it. And I think it is probably the beliefs that were formed during the person's education. I think so because, um, that person's (Ms. Ono) previous school was a night school, so the teacher probably had small class sizes and used a certain type of methodology. There would be just a few students, and the teaching would be up to her because it is a night school. I've heard there was never a chance to collaborate with other teachers and do something together. That is why her teaching style was so dogmatic. (INT5)

Naomi's interest in 'teacher belief' gave her an objective perspective toward 'Ms. Ono' and her teaching style. Naomi was no longer critical of 'Ms. Ono' but was exploring reasons behind her teaching style. She referred to 'Ms. Ono's'

experience as a student and her previous workplace. This suggests that an application of theory to one's experiences and practices may allow one to gain an objective perspective of the experiences and the practices. In spite of her keen interest in Ms. Ono's teacher belief, however, Naomi had never talked about it with 'Ms. Ono', saying that she did not know how to approach her (INT6). It is possible to say that Naomi was staying within her 'comfort zone' in her interaction with 'Ms. Ono'.

### **7.3.5 'Whole person education'**

Reading the past interview transcripts, Naomi became *aware* of her mission, 'whole person education,' (INT4, JE 12/19 Feb.), which was what she was interested in and what she wanted to practice. 'Whole person education' denotes her professional mission, in which she bears a strong sense of responsibility for the students and for the society. 'Whole person education' meant different types of education in different schools to accord with the types of students, but had the same goal, which was to change the students' learner belief, to facilitate their learning and to encourage them to be good citizens (INT2, JE 13/19 Feb.).

'Whole person education' at Technical High School meant Naomi's social responsibility to keep the students in school to protect and to prevent them from committing crimes, and also to terminate "a vicious cycle" that they are trapped in. She learned that many of the students came from uncaring families; some of their fathers were in penitentiaries, some of their mothers had deserted them, and some were commuting to school from orphanages (INT1). Many of their parents did not seem to care very much about their children, not to mention their education. Naomi expressed that her substantial task as a contribution to society

was to take care of these students and to keep them in school. She observed: “since their parents are disinterested in their sons, I wonder what would happen to them if I deserted them. I felt social responsibility that if I don’t, the society will be full of *freeters*<sup>52</sup>” (INT2). She described her mission thus:

In our school as well as others, if we fail a student like that, it might be OK if he or she has somewhere to go, but if there is no place to go, that becomes a source of strong resentment and bitterness. We can only hope that it does not lead to criminal activity. In order to prevent things like that from happening, I think we need to keep supporting students like that. I think that is one of our missions. (INT2)

Naomi contended the need to change the vicious cycle that the students are trapped in by their socioeconomic background.

I cannot let their sons repeat the same thing and think the same way. I have to lead them to graduate from high school and let them know that school is not what is against them, but rather what supports them. I thought this might be my mission at the time. My biggest task was this. In a big picture, I thought I contributed to the society through this. I may create criminals by letting them drop out. If they dropped out, they would join gangs. (INT2)

Keeping the students in school can prevent the students from committing crimes and alter their negative views towards school, which may lead to terminating the vicious cycle of attitude caused by their societal background. Faced with the students at Technical High School, Naomi ascribed the problems not to the students themselves but to the environment in which they were brought up (INT1). In saying, “In a big picture, I thought I contributed to the society”, Naomi was giving meaning in her existence as a teacher in a society, a larger whole.

‘Whole person education’ at Naomi’s current school, Medial High School, means to provide discipline (INT3). Naomi is concerned with the students’ lives after

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<sup>52</sup> *Freeters* is a Japanese word which means those who never obtain full-time jobs and make a living through uncommitted part-time jobs throughout their lives.

their graduation from high school and about more distant future of the students, working at a company or going abroad (INT3). In order to foster decent adults, she attempts to provide discipline, even though it is not always pleasant.

In the past, I focused mainly on English education and didn't emphasise discipline or guidance for students so much. But recently I feel the latter is more important, even more than English. In particular, I want the students who are going to go abroad to have very good discipline... I don't want Japanese students to be rude overseas and be seen as representing Japan (INT3).

Her belief in 'whole person education' at the current school, giving discipline, indicates that she noticed the change in her 'teacher belief' in the course of her career. Naomi was not interested in giving discipline earlier in her career but she came to think that it was important and also that it was her mission and responsibility to foster students to be decent adults.

Naomi's interest in her mission shows a concern of experienced teachers, a strong sense of responsibility. Some argue that the target of reflection of novice and experienced teachers is different: novice teachers are often said to be preoccupied with more immediate concerns such as classroom discipline and motivating students (Veenman, 1984, Williams & Grundhoff, 2011), while the experienced teachers are more able to see things and responsibilities outside of the classroom (Williams & Grundhoff, 2011). This study found that the focus of reflection of the novice teachers' professional development was seen in their shaping of professional identity. As discussed in Chapter 2, Korthagen (2004) put forward "mission" to be the deepest core of reflection, and describes it as follows: "it is about becoming aware of the meaning of one's own existence within a larger whole, and the role we see for ourselves in relation to our fellow



man” (p. 85). Naomi has a strong sense of responsibility towards her students. She attempts to build self-worth in the students; she tries to understand students’ belief and, if they are negative, she feels it is her responsibility to change them. Naomi’s concern shows social responsibility, and it goes beyond chronological and physical borders of classrooms and schools. Her concern is targeted not only at her students but also at society, and not only at the current life of students but to their future.

### **7.3.6 Reciprocal reflective interventions**

Naomi’s case addresses the possibility of an alternative style, or more reciprocal and active involvement of a participant in the reflective interventions. Her participation in the reflective interventions showed the autonomy of an experienced teacher who tailored reflective interventions to her style. She did not always follow, but spontaneously adopted, the procedures of the reflective interventions in ways that were comfortable for her to facilitate reflection.

Naomi’s engagement was marked by her preference for dialogical communication and emphatic understanding, such as focus group discussions and interviews, over those with a solitary mode of communication, like the journal writing. The relevance of the reflective interventions for Naomi seemed to be in their liability to generate discourse and empathy, rather than a solo review of one’s professional knowledge. The focus group was an effective intervention for her to enhance reflection, and her interviews became dialogical with her question-posing to me. Journal writing was not a vehicle for Naomi to enhance reflection. In contrast with talking with colleagues, as was pointed out in Chapter 5, Naomi said that journal keeping lacked empathy, thus it did not help her

release her tension but rather posed a potential risk of increasing tension (see section 5.3.1). Her journal writing did not seem like an entry that she sent after mulling it over. When I sent her questions about her entry, she would return the questions immediately in short entries: the communication style was similar to that of a chat, and in fact, she expressed a preference for chat over journal writing. Naomi stated, “chatting, through a sharing of different ideas, may enhance one’s reflection, even though the members are not deliberately trying to do so” (INT6). Her case suggests a limitation of solitary mode of journal writing as a reflective intervention, and the importance of incorporating interaction with a dialogical mode of communication. It also shows a unique development of reflective interventions according to individual needs.

#### **7.4 Miki**

Miki’s case indicates that reflection by experienced teachers with well-established views of teaching may involve further scrutiny of their views and assumptions, which means an examination of their ‘comfort zone’. Miki, a teacher with a strong sense of agency and firmly established professional knowledge, was a participant like Yoko, who did not select many reflective themes in the earlier phase of the study. Everything that she stated and wrote seemed to have been clear to her. She was able to articulate her professional role with descriptive examples (INT6). In the last interview, however, she selected ‘the use of worksheet’ as the reflective theme and became *aware* of its use, possibly as a compensation of her weakness in teaching. Thus, she was starting to explore her ‘comfort zone’.

Following the profile, Miki’s section discusses ‘established philosophy of

teaching' and 'a strong sense of agency', reflective themes which I identified from the data. Then, it will discuss 'the use of worksheet', a reflective theme that Miki selected.

#### **7.4.1 Miki's Profile**

Miki is a confident, competent, experienced teacher who was well-versed in the theory of English language teaching. She had more than 20 years of experience in teaching, the longest among the participants in this study. She had received a B.A. and the teacher certificate from one of the most well-established universities in the country, which is known for its strong emphasis on English language education. After graduating from the university, she became a high school teacher of English in the urban prefecture and since then had taught at four public high schools. In spite of her long years of experience as a teacher, she still strove to develop. In order to improve teaching and English language proficiency, she had entered a graduate school and obtained an M.A. in TESOL. She had familiarised herself with the literature of English language teaching and attended seminars and lectures. She had passed an examination administered by the Board of Education to teach at Elite High School (pseudonym), a designated high school with a special curriculum to prepare students to pass competitive university entrance examinations. In September 2007, she joined this study receiving information through one of the mailing lists for the M.A. in TESOL.

Miki indicated that she had gained her current favourable context of teaching by choosing to come to Elite High School (INT2). The high school is considered to be one of the most well established high schools in the urban prefecture, and its

curriculum is focused on the guidance and instruction of the students to pass entrance examinations of the top level universities in Japan. In the previous high schools, she said, she had grown weary of working with colleagues who did not give a full effort and energy to teaching. They were not offering extra lessons, and in the worst cases, they would tell the students to go to cram schools to study for college entrance examinations. Miki said that such teachers gave minimum effort to teaching and drew a firm, clear line between what they would do and wouldn't do for the students (INT3). In contrast, she often described teaching to be "trying whatever I can do". She expressed in the first interview, "What a teacher can try is to think about what one can do in such a context, this is what I would like to try" (INT1), which showed a strong sense of responsibility and commitment as a teacher.

#### **7.4.2 Established philosophy of teaching**

Miki was a teacher who seemed to have established her philosophy of teaching prior to participation in the study. In an early journal entry, she referred to the teacher's 'philosophy' and 'the core' that influences teaching:

One thing I learned in graduate school was that my personal beliefs or philosophy regarding the questions of "what is language and how is it acquired?" would form one's basic principle and lead to how I would teach. In teacher training, isn't learning that kind of thing the most important? (JE 4/18 Oct.).

Asked about her philosophy of teaching, she explained her view of teaching and mission:

Tom (graduate school professor, pseudonym) told me that, and I agree it is true. In other words, Tom taught me that how we teach changes depending on how we think. In addition, of course, we have to consider student needs. Considering the students' needs should really lead to deciding what we will do in our classes. I thought this was really true, even if there is something

in particular that I want to try to do. Another key point is the various conditions such as student needs and the environment of the school. Those are constraints we have to face. For example, we have to consider how much time is available, or whether we have to unify what we teach with other teachers. He told me that we have to consider what we can do within those constraints. I really believe that this is true, so I do my best in that. So, frankly, passing college exams is what is prioritized here at our school because it is an advanced college preparation high school. However, it is not enough for the students to just get into good schools by passing entrance exams; it is also important to teach English that students can use in the future. If they have a good ability in English, they will do fine in passing the college entrance exams, and they will find their English is very useful when they get to college as well. The key point here is that they develop fundamental skills including the ability to read in English and also to write their own ideas clearly. I think that helping my students get those abilities is my main mission for being at this school. (INT1)

From the outset of the study, Miki was able to explain her teaching philosophy of teaching and her professional role. The extract shows that Miki's teaching practice and role are modified with different students in different contexts. Her teaching practice is informed by various aspects: her principles, students' needs, and school contexts. She said that one's principle is formed through one's own view of what a language is and how a language is acquired. Students' needs and school contexts, such as constraints, time, and other teachers, are also important factors to be taken into account in teaching practice. Miki's statement, "my task at this high school," indicates that the task of teachers appears in different practice in different contexts. Miki's extract responds to a question that I raised about teacher knowledge in Chapter 2: whether some teacher knowledge take priority over others. In her case, some areas of teacher knowledge, such as context knowledge, takes a priority over other knowledge, such as what one wants to try in teaching.

### **7.4.3 A strong sense of agency**

Miki was a teacher with a strong sense of agency and assumed a strong

responsibility to improve students' learning. She made constant references to herself as a source of change and a provider of solutions, and often responsible for a cause of difficulty. Miki placed value in trying to do what she could in helping students. Her strong sense of responsibility as a provider of solutions and as a cause of difficulties is seen in her journal entries and interviews. The pattern of Miki's journal entry indicates her strong sense of responsibility for students' learning. The entries often unfolded with a description of a difficulty, such as students' critical comments followed by *hansei*, analysis of the difficulty and a solution (see section 4.2.3). The following interview extract demonstrates Miki's sense of responsibility:

A: When you think the students are not engaged, do you think some possible reason might be... for example, do you think you, a teacher, could change if you do something differently? Do you always ascribe the source of difficulty to yourself?

M: (nods)

A: Really?

M: I am not confident.

A: Really? You do not think that because the students are so and so...?

M: Well, I think that way to console myself, but then, I think, 'what did I do wrong?'

A: I see.

M: Such as I am not good at talking in the classroom.(INT4)

(A: Atsuko, M:Miki)

The extract indicates that Miki ascribed herself some responsibility for the challenging situation. Other participants, especially in the early phase of the study, often ascribed the difficulty in teaching to external causes, such as the atmosphere (Ken), the uncooperative colleague (Naomi), and unmotivated students (Sara). Perception of oneself as a source of the difficulty and for change may be a crucial factor in the engagement of reflection for professional development, as it shows one's willingness and confidence to face and take responsibility for the situation. It also shows one's strong sense of autonomy in

that one is responsible for students' learning and should be in control of teaching.

#### **7.4.4 The use of the worksheet**

Miki became aware of the dual roles of worksheet, her compensation for teaching as well as an effective teaching tool. Towards the end of the study, Miki started to question what had been regarded as her panacea for teaching, 'the use of the worksheet', which was also her 'comfort zone' or routine in teaching. What was meant by worksheet by Miki was a handmade teaching material which comprised a reading text of the textbook and content questions that she constructed. The worksheet was initially incorporated into a lesson as a way to engage students in learning when she was teaching at a challenging school, described by Miki as one of the "bottom" levels. 'The use of the worksheet' with the textbook content was successful with the students who came to school without their textbooks (INT5). The success with engaging students in learning led Miki to continue 'the use of the worksheet' in a variety of purposes, in accordance with the needs of different types of students. Miki often referred to 'the use of the worksheet' as a solution to problems. In order to achieve the mission at Elite High School, to help students to gain proficiency in reading and writing, she resumed 'the use of the worksheet' (INT1):

I assume *hansei* that I was too focused on the grammar-translation approach in order to finish the assigned part of the textbook. I started to make worksheet again...Then, most students were concentrated in doing the reading. I was relieved. (JE 4/18 Oct)

The extract indicates that Miki assumed *hansei*, in that she acknowledged the need for change from grammar-translation lessons. It also shows that she relied on 'the use of the worksheet' for an improvement to a lesson, and attributed the

success in the lesson to 'the use of the worksheet'. The reliance on the worksheet as a solution is also observed in the following extract:

When I go into explaining things, I still feel like the students are tuning out...I think I should do something, and I am trying to improve my worksheets to make sure the questions are not too monotonous, but...(JE 15/18 Feb).

When she felt she has to do something, she resorted to 'the use of the worksheet'. Miki, however, at times, expressed a slight doubt about 'the use of the worksheet':

If I use worksheets, it seems like almost all of the students try their best to answer the questions. However, one thing I am worried about is whether or not the worksheets are really helping the comprehension of the students, even though I am creating them with the intent to assist students in grasping the content of the passage. I really felt this concern in my class with group E today. That was because some students seemed to not understand what they were doing or what they were being asked to do. (JE 6/18 Nov.)

Towards the end of the study, Miki started to discuss the limitations of 'the use of the worksheet', in that it engaged the students in answering questions but it may not necessarily mean their engagement in learning. However, at the same time, Miki expressed that the approach that she is accustomed to is difficult to change.

- A: So, it really seems like you are changing your style of teaching case by case depending on the students you are teaching.
- M: Yes, but even if I make efforts to try to change how I teach my classes, somewhere in mind I think it is difficult to change the way I am. Do you see what I mean? Somehow, even if I think I should do some new things, to some extent I go back to my own old style of doing things
- A: For example, more specifically, what would you say your style of doing things is?
- M: I guess basically I end up creating worksheets and assigning them. Then I give students some time and let them think about it before asking them what they think.
- A: So you give them some time to think?
- M: Yes.
- A: And, so, do you feel that you need to change one more step beyond that?
- M: Well when some students fall asleep, I have to reconsider whether this way of teaching is really good or not. (INT 5).



(A: Atsuko, M: Miki)

The engagement in this study led her to examine the use of the worksheet, including its limitations. However, since it is a style of teaching that Miki relies on and is accustomed to, she referred to the use of the worksheet as that which she could not change. Thus, it seems that she is staying within her 'comfort zone'. In the final interview, however, Miki pointed out its use as possibly a compensation for her lack of confidence in attracting students through talking.

A: Did you notice anything about your style of teaching?

M: Well, I guess in the end I go to worksheet. If I want my class to do something, I can't really get their attention with charismatic speaking, so I tend to depend on designing some kind of task... Yes, that teacher tells very interesting stories, and the students really feel that the teacher's stories are very interesting. Some teachers are just really good at speaking and getting the attention of the students. But I won't be able to become like that...In contrast, I prefer to make the students do some kind of task. I think that may be because I want to feel a sense of comfort by seeing that the students are doing something. (INT6)

(A: Atsuko, M: Miki)

The extract shows Miki's critical examination toward the use of the worksheet, that it was a way to make up for her weakness in teaching which allowed Miki to gain some comfort in teaching. Miki said motivating and engaging students through talking was not what she was good at, and when the lessons did not go well, she said she would ascribe it to her practice, such as her weakness in talking (INT6). Participation in the study led Miki to become aware of the dual purposes of the use of the worksheet as a panacea of teaching and also her 'comfort zone' of teaching. Like Yoko's case, Miki's case also throws a light on teachers' 'comfort zones', which provide comfortable relief as well as successful outcomes. It is often difficult to become aware of the 'comfort zones' and as in the cases of Yoko and Miki, it is even more difficult to examine and change them.

#### **7.4.5 Reflective interventions: Autonomous engagement**

Miki's participation in the reflective interventions was distinctive in her independence from me and in her varied participation in the different interventions. From the outset of the study, Miki, as opposed to participants such as Ken, Sara and Naomi, located herself as the driving force for change in students' learning, showing a strong sense of agency. She regarded the reflective interventions mostly as a forum to review her professional knowledge and did not expect me to give solutions or to empathise with her views. Among the three reflective interventions, Miki was consistent with the views she expressed, but differed in the degree of participation she exhibited. Her varied participation can be a manifestation of her understanding of the roles she was assigned in different interventions. In the focus group, she showed active participation: she was virtually the leader in the group. Her journal entries were expressive in terms of sharing views, and her participation in the interviews was rather reticent and passive, as she might not have felt the need to rely on me. Reflection that she developed during an interview (see section 5.5) suggests a need for more active intervention by a researcher in enhancing reflection, especially for experienced teachers whose teacher knowledge might be more internalised.

#### **7.5 Conclusion**

In contrast to the existing literature that states reflective practice to be more effective for experienced teachers, the study found that reflective practice was more effective for the novice teachers. The study found that the experienced teachers did not experience as much change as the novice teachers, perhaps because they were reflecting within the boundaries of their 'comfort zones'. The

participation of the experienced teachers gave the study numerous insights into Japanese teachers' participation in reflective practice, such as a tendency of the experienced teachers to have social responsibility and a sense of mission towards the students. However, overall, in the current study, reflective practice seemed to have left the experienced teachers undergoing less change than the novice teachers.

The literature presented in Chapter 2 argued that reflective practice is more meaningful for the experienced teacher than the novice, as their teacher knowledge seems to be more tacit and internalised through long years of teaching experiences, thus their teacher knowledge might be more difficult to drawn out and be examined (McIntyre, 1993; Loizou, 2012; Lortie, 1975). From my study, it seemed to be more difficult for the experienced teachers to undergo changes. This also responds to the question I raised in Chapter 2, as to whether teacher knowledge is dynamic for all teachers. The analysis of the data showed the experienced teachers' teacher knowledge to be less dynamic. It could be argued that the experienced teachers could teach within their 'comfort zones' and with their repertoires: the experienced teachers, Yoko, Naomi, and Miki, are good, confident teachers, who had a strong sense of responsibility for students' learning. They were quite autonomous and felt that they can and should change the learning and lives of students. However, they might not have seen the immediate need to change their practices. Even if they had difficulties or weaknesses in teaching, it was not their immediate need to solve them. They could rely on their repertoire of teaching.

Allowing teachers to stay within their 'comfort zones' in their engagement reveals a drawback of reflective practice. Chapter 2 introduced Webb's (2005) finding, which states that staying within 'comfort zones' entails teachers' examination of personal concerns such as 'how' to teach what but avoiding 'why' they engage in some practice. Going out of one's 'comfort zone' could be confrontational and if teachers can teach without doing so, one may stay within one's comfort zone. Chapter 1 discussed a tendency among colleagues to stay in conforming collegiality in lesson study. As introduced in Chapter 2, Moore (2004) describes the avoidance of an examination of troubling issues:

an avoidance of potentially troubling issues whose confrontation might entail a fairly radical reappraisal of practice, involving either downscaling or recasting such issues into more acceptable representations, or focusing on other issues altogether on the basis that there are (as one student teacher on the *Autobiographies Project* had put it) 'some things you can't do anything about'. (2004, p.109)

Unlike the novice teachers, the experienced teachers might have developed ways of teaching with their weaknesses as well as with their strengths. Thus, they could stay within their comfort zones. Yoko became aware that there were some contradictions in what she discussed at different times, but she chose not to explore this because if she did so, she said she would feel that she had immobilised herself. Without exploring the contradictions, Yoko could teach lessons. Even though Naomi became interested in 'Ms. Ono's' teacher belief and *reinterpreted* her view toward 'Ms. Ono' from a difficult colleague to a teacher with a different teacher belief, Naomi chose to avoid discussion with 'Ms. Ono'. Without confronting 'Ms. Ono', Naomi could carry on teaching. Miki's use of the worksheet was effective as a compensation of her weakness in teaching, which is giving oral explanations. Even though she became *aware* that it was her

compensation for what she was not good at, since the worksheet was effective as a compensation, Miki continued to use it.

Unlike the novice teachers, the experienced teachers did not show a need for a mentor. They regarded me as an outsider from their teaching spheres rather than as a mentor. Yoko and Naomi fully enjoyed the opportunity to express their views to me, an outsider, about what they could not express to their colleagues. However, it did not seem necessary for them to rely on me for their professional development.

The findings from the study address the need for further interaction and intervention from others in order for the experienced teachers to be brought out of their 'comfort zones'. In the concluding chapter, I will draw together the findings from the analysis.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

### 8.1 Introduction

This empirical study started out as a reaction to the MEXT's competency-based teacher training programme, which focused on brushing up teachers' proficiency of the English language. As an alternative to the MEXT training programme, this study incorporated reflective practice, which was still a novel notion and practice in Japan, to examine how it worked as a professional development tool for in-service high school teachers of English in Japan. As stated in Chapter 1, the incorporation of reflective practice was regarded as a form of methodology borrowing, and sensitivity to specific cultural practices was considered, so as not to influence *honne* of the participants and not to engage them in *hansei*. At the start of the study, reflective practice was regarded as an incorporation; however, as the study developed, the specific cultural concepts, such as, *tatemae/honne*, *hansei*, and *kotodama*, were found to be essential to an understanding of reflective practice in a Japanese cultural setting. Thus, it was considered an adaptation.

As reflective practice is a relatively new endeavour in Japan, the review of the literature examined and critiqued the principles of reflective practice and informed the construction of the empirical study to investigate how principles of reflective practice might be developed in the cultural context of Japan. This concluding chapter first restates the research questions, then examines reflective practice in terms of what reflection, development, and reflective interventions mean in the Japanese context through the prism of what is culturally specific and universal. By universal, I mean that which transcends

one's culture and has common interpretation. The chapter then argues that for reflective practice to be effective, there is a need for teachers to seek changes in their practice in the teaching context. The implications of the study are then indicated. This final chapter concludes that individual reflection in reflective practice by itself is not sufficient, and for further development, suggests the need that is enhanced with intervention and interaction with others. The study's limitations are reviewed, and implications for further research suggested.

## **8.2 The research questions**

The main research question posed in the study was, 'How does reflective practice work as a professional development tool for in-service high school teachers of English in Japan? The following subset of research questions were also addressed in the study:

- What does it mean for the Japanese high school teachers of English to reflect?
- How would the reflective interventions be effective in helping Japanese high school teachers of English to reflect?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in reflection?
- What would be the individual differences and similarities among the teachers in engaging in the reflective interventions?

## **8.3 The types of reflection: What is universal and what is culturally specific**

The types of reflection identified in the study have both universal and culturally-specific aspects. Reflection was found to be universal in its types and in its process. On the other hand, 'precursors to reflection' seem to be culturally

specific. I defined reflection as an act of 'looking back at one's practice and ideas in order to gain new perspectives, such as *reinterpretation* and *awareness*'. In addition to reflection, I identified 'precursors to reflection', which comprises *description*, *reconfirmation*, and *hansei*. As I stated earlier, the difference between reflection and 'precursors to reflection' is that reflection is accompanied with changes, and 'precursors to reflection' are not.

*Reinterpretation* and *awareness*, are often referred to in the literature (Shulman 1987; Morin 2005), and thus might be suggested to be more universal. The process of reflection that I term the *reflective continuum* also seems universal. This is a non-linear process, where teachers arbitrarily develop different types of reflection: it does not entail a process with certain rigid stages. This echoes the views of Jay and Johnson (2002), Ward and McCotter (2004) and Zeichner and Liston (1996) introduced in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.2). As I argued in Chapter 4, reflection is developed through an ample *description* and discussion and is like a loop, as participants often *described* and discussed the same thing more than once. Thus, reflection is not developed in a step-by-step manner, nor is it developed like an abrupt revelation with a clear beginning and an ending. It is more holistic, and the participants prepare for development of reflection going through 'the precursors to reflection'. In addition, reflection does not constitute a goal in itself but it can be developed further. Reflection is one point in a developmental reflective continuum (see section 4.3).

The 'precursors to reflection', *description*, *reconfirmation*, and *hansei*, are likely to be culture-specific. As discussed in Chapter 4, *description* refers to a spontaneous written or spoken depiction of experiences or feelings, without the



gain of new perspectives or changes. *Description* is often mentioned as a type of reflection in the literature, but has a unique meaning in the Japanese context (see section 4.2.1). As discussed in Chapter 5, with the influence of *kotodama*, what one describes is significant in the Japanese context. It means what one decides to make public. What one makes public means what one is going to achieve, or what is important enough for one to make public. *Description*, thus, is an announcement of what one is going to achieve or what is important (see section 5.4.2). *Reconfirmation* is a re-affirmation of one's view or interpretation through a restatement. This was a unique finding of the study, as it has not been seen in the literature of reflective practice. *Reconfirmation* is re-acknowledgement of one's view or interpretation through a restatement of what one already *described* or verbalised. As reconfirmation involves repeating what one already *described* or verbalised, it means what is important for oneself, or a reminder of what is important for oneself. Through *reconfirmation*, what one *described* or verbalised becomes even more significant. *Reconfirmation* also functions as self-monitoring: one is making oneself reconfirm what is important through a restatement (see section 4.2.2).

*Hansei* is also culturally specific, as it is a concept deeply ingrained in Japanese culture. As mentioned above, in contrast to the 'precursors to reflection', reflection, that is, *reinterpretation* and gaining *awareness*, are often mentioned as types of reflection in the field of reflective practice. What was identified as a 'precursor to reflection' often developed into reflection: thus the study has identified that reflective practice was a vehicle for transcending that which is culturally specific to that which is universal.

#### **8.4 Cultural concept of reflection**

The study found that the concept of *hansei* underpins the participants' interpretation of the concept of reflection. A common criticism of the concept of reflection in the literature was lack of clarity due to a great diversity of interpretation (see section 2.4.1). This study found that lack of clarity about the concept of reflection in the Japanese context derives from its confusion with the concept of *hansei*. The literature on reflective practice states that the focus on a problematic situation in reflective practice is not an uncommon phenomenon (see section 2.4.4): this tendency seems to be even more pronounced in Japan, where the concept of *hansei* prevails. The confusion between *hansei* and reflection was persistent among the participants, despite my effort to differentiate the two in an attempt to be sensitive to specific cultural practices: I avoided the use of the word *hansei* and clarified the difference between *hansei* and reflection in the second focus group (see section 3.6.4). *Hansei* and reflection both involve looking back at one's ideas or practices but are different in that reflection is likely to be accompanied by a new perspective, whereas *hansei* is not. As the participants regarded reflection as synonymous to *hansei*, this study, therefore, suggests that for reflective practice to be conducted in Japan, the concept of *hansei* and that of reflection needs to be clarified and differentiated.

#### **8.5 Cultural concept of development**

One universal aspect that we might draw from the study is the concept of autonomy in development. As discussed in Chapter 2, being autonomous entails one taking responsibility and being an agent for oneself and also for others (see section 2.3.3). Being autonomous also means that teachers are in control of the purpose of their action and their decision making. In sum, autonomous

professional development for teachers involves gaining a sense of responsibility for students' learning and a sense of control over their professional practice. That is, teachers feel that they *can* make changes in students' learning and also that they *should* be the ones to bring about changes. Professional development, thus, situates the teacher as an agent for change. As discussed in the literature, responsibility and control in autonomy were found to be universal aspects.

The concept of *hansei* is a key aspect of teacher development that is culturally specific. *Hansei* exerts influences on the sense of responsibility for teachers' professional development. With *hansei*, responsibility means accepting criticism not only in the effect, such as an outcome of students' learning, but also in the cause of an event, such as students' motivation for learning. *Hansei*, then, underpins the concept of development to be an acknowledgement of one's responsibility for the cause as well as for the improvement of an event. Even though the concept of *hansei* in development may sound self-critical, as discussed in Chapter 1, *hansei* is considered to be a sign of maturity in Japan; self-critique, identifying and acknowledging one's short-comings, and accepting criticisms are all regarded signs of maturity and also development (see section 1.6). This study therefore suggests that the sense of responsibility in development is distinctive in the Japanese context, as it is influenced by the concept of *hansei*.

### **8.6 The roles of the reflective interventions in the Japanese context**

The study found that the role of the reflective intervention can be culturally specific as discussed in Chapter 5; it functions to bring the participants to share their *honne* as well as to promote reflection (see section 5.6). The study found

that there are two types of *honne*. The first type is ‘private *honne*’, which that one does not intend to share with others, and the other type of *honne* is ‘public *honne*’, which one decides to share. *Honne* often becomes public as a result of the participants’ repeated engagement in thinking about it through different interventions in the reflective continuum (see Figure 9). To explain the difference between private and public *honne* with *kotodama*: individuals share with others what they think they can accomplish or actualise, and do not share what they do not think they can accomplish or actualise. Individuals choose what to verbalise or to *describe*, as *description* generates responsibility for them to accomplish or actualise what was verbalised. The repeated engagement in the reflective interventions in the Japanese context facilitates sharing of one’s private *honne* to be made public as well as to promote reflection; thus the study suggests giving participants ample opportunities to be engaged in the reflective interventions.



Figure 9: Reflective continuum

### 8.7 The effectiveness of reflective practice: One’s need for change

This study found that reflective practice was effective for the participants who sought changes, but may not be as effective for those who do not. This shows a potential drawback of reflective practice, in that it allows those who may not see the need for change to just focus on an aspect of what one would like to and feel comfortable with, and stay within ‘comfort zones’ in their examination of teaching (see section 7.1). In this study, the novice teachers were in need of change and

the experienced teachers did not seem to be. Thus, contrary to the argument put forward by the literature discussed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.6), this study found that reflective practice was more effective for the novice teachers than the experienced teachers. The novice teachers reshaped their professional identity and professional knowledge from what they observed and formed as students to a perspective of novice teachers. The novice teachers, with a limited repertoire of strategies, when faced with difficulties in the classroom, were obliged to evolve their professional identity and professional knowledge. They had to find a way to deal with the problems they were facing. On the other hand, the experienced teachers did not seem to see the need for change, as they could rely on their repertoires or their routines. The three experienced teachers varied in their development through reflective practice, but it could be said that reflective practice allowed them to stay within their 'comfort zones' for exploration of their teaching practices and ideas. That is, they reflected within what was comfortable and non-threatening for them. The experienced teachers did not have to examine outside their comfort zones, because they did not necessarily have to change their practice or their views in their given contexts, even when faced with difficulties, that is, they were able to respond to the challenging situations with their repertoire of expertise. This might have led them to stay within their 'comfort zones' in their exploration through and in their engagement in reflective practice. 'Comfort zones', in other words, can be understood as their routines. The study suggests that it would be important to lead the participants to reflect outside their 'comfort zones' for further development: the key for which, intervention from others, is discussed in the next section, as one of the implications of the study.

## 8.8 Implications of the study

This study suggests that for professional development, reflective practice needs to be enhanced with intervention and interaction with others. In this study, in order to become sensitive to specific cultural practices, I was mindful of minimising my influence on the *honne* of the participants. The study, however, found interventions and interaction from me to be beneficial both for the novice and for the experienced teachers. Thus, reflective practice, which can be criticised for being too personalised, can be enhanced with intervention and interaction with others, in order to achieve more effective professional development. Even though all the participants developed in various ways through reflective practice, it was clear that intervention or interaction from others is beneficial and necessary. The study found that it is critical for 'others' to be familiar, to some extent, with the teaching contexts of the participants. Thus, others should be teachers who teach in other schools of the same type of institutions, like the other participants in this study; teachers who teach in other types of institutions; or teacher trainers, like my positioning in this study. As Figure 10 summarises, reflective interventions such as focus group discussion, journal writing, and interviews, and also interventions and interactions from others, are all important components in professional development. These components facilitate participants in expressing their private *honne* as public *honne*. Once *honne* is made public, both reflective interventions and interventions/interactions from others can lead the participants further to develop an ability and orientation toward reflection, such as *reinterpretation* and becoming *aware*.

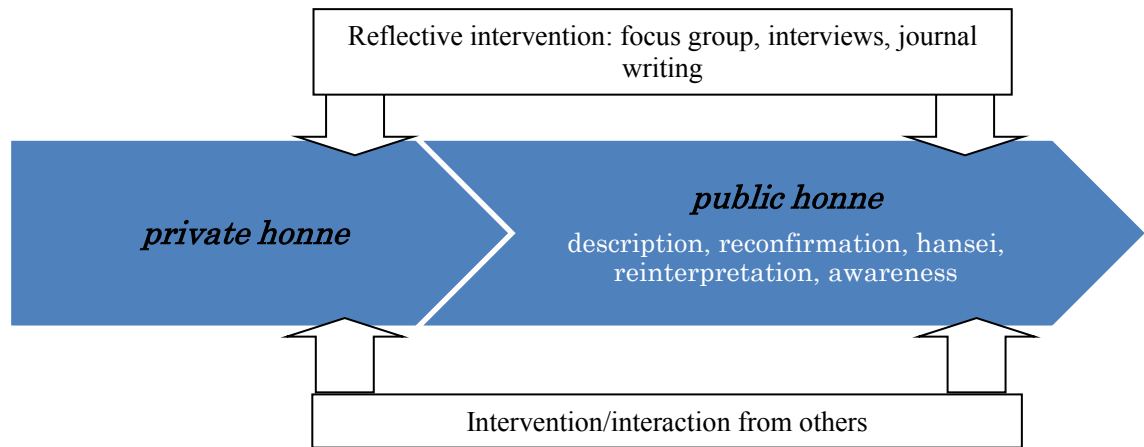


Figure 10: Reflective practice and development

The focus of the MEXT seminar was brushing up English proficiency for all of the participant teachers. Even though this study suggests that the novice teachers and the experienced teachers benefit from interaction and intervention, they benefit from different foci in the intervention for their professional development. The evidence of this study suggests that the novice teachers would benefit from interventions that would help shape their professional identity, and the experienced teachers would benefit from help to explore further their teacher knowledge.

It was found that the professional identity of the novice teachers was often based on what they formed through their perspectives as students. Through their participation in this study, the novice teachers have shaped their professional identity. In shaping their professional identity, it is suggested that intervention from others, or systematic support, such as on-going formal mentoring, might be beneficial. Mentors should be those who are more experienced and who can discuss, guide, and sometimes challenge them, and who can give them social validation. As discussed in Chapter 2, shaping their professional identity involves

some time in thinking about and revisiting ideas about teaching. Thus, there is a need for the novice teachers to be given enough formal opportunities for exploration and discussion of their professional identities with a mentor. Even after the novice teachers underwent the reshaping of professional identity, they remained relatively inexperienced teachers, which suggests the importance and the need for continued on-going mentoring.

The findings from the study suggest that experienced teachers would benefit from engagement in opportunities for exploring beyond their 'comfort zones': that is, for discussion and exploration of teacher knowledge, such as their beliefs, values, and assumptions, their pedagogical knowledge, their subject knowledge, and their context knowledge. Chapter 2 introduced McIntyre's (1993) argument, that reflective practice is more beneficial for the experienced teachers as their teacher knowledge is more internalised (see section 2.4.6). This study found that reflective practice was more beneficial for the novice teachers; however, it concurs with the point that the experienced teachers' teacher knowledge is more internalised. In this study, the experienced teachers stayed within their 'comfort zones' in their engagement in reflective practice. In order for the experienced teachers to be aware of their internalised assumptions and beliefs, this study suggests the opportunity for experienced teachers to be fully involved in an exploration and discussion of teacher knowledge. The study concludes that such exploration can be carried out through their engagement in the reflective interventions, and also with intervention from others.

The study suggests that the experienced teachers need intervention from others,



such as a teacher trainer or a peer from a different school, who can facilitate exploration outside their 'comfort zones', and of exploration of assumptions and beliefs. As their teacher knowledge is more internalised, experienced teachers may need more intervention from others than the novice teachers. The intervention can be made through asking provocative or prompting questions, proving, challenging, or pointing out their inconsistency, or contradictions. In order for further development, the experienced teachers require interventions from others which engage them to review, examine, and probe their teaching practice.

In addition to intervention from others, the study also suggests the need for both the novice and the experienced teachers to interact, in order to express their *honne*. They need others who would listen, ask questions, and possibly give them social or professional validation. In the study, the novice teachers appreciated the opportunity to interact with me, with whom they could express their views and their *honne*, which they could not do at their workplaces. The experienced teachers did not rely on or seek advice from me; yet, having me was beneficial for them to express *honne*, which they also could not do at their workplaces. In order to express their *honne*, it might be crucial that the others need to be those who understand their teaching contexts but are not their colleagues. Thus, one of the conclusions to this study is that it would be beneficial for teachers to form some type of peer groups comprising teachers from different schools.

The findings from the case studies suggest that reflective practice, with reflective

interventions and intervention/interaction from a third party, can be used in extensive settings, such as both pre-service and in-service teacher training at school, or an organisational situation such as in-service MEXT teacher training.

### **8.9 Limitations to the study**

The study identified two broad types of reflection and five sub-types of reflections: 'precursors to reflection', i.e. *description*, *confirmation*, and *hansei*, and reflection, *reinterpretation*, and *awareness*. The types of reflection identified in the study are not exhaustive. With different sample populations, there may be other types of reflection that can be identified.

Due to the similarity in the participants' profiles, the findings from this study may not always be generalisable to different profiles of teachers. All the participant teachers in the present study were public high school English teachers. The findings may not all be applicable to teachers at other types of institution, such as private high school, or other levels of institutions, such as junior high school or elementary school. However, some of the unique insights that examine culturally specific aspects and implications of the development of reflective practice in Japan make a contribution to the knowledge in this field.

### **8.10 Further implications of the study**

One of the implications from the study was that journal writing could be shared among the teachers in a more public forum. As discussed in Chapter 3 (see section 3.6.6), journal writing, which has a long history in the country, was adopted effortlessly and received as an effective reflective intervention for expressing views by some participants. As was raised by some participants,

interaction/intervention through journal writing, not only between the participant and me, but among the participants, as through an online interaction, would increase communication and may help participants to gain further insights about their teaching practices. Such informal platforms can be set up, given that the teachers in general cannot meet up often.

Interaction and intervention among the participants in focus groups is also an area that can be explored. Except for the video viewing in the first focus group, the focus group in the current study simply engaged the participants in discussion. An artefact, such as their lesson plans, may be used to enhance interaction or intervention among participants, which may help the participants to think and talk about their teaching and lead them to develop reflection about their lessons and teaching.

Analysis of the reflection through sociological perspectives, i.e. focusing on the topics that the participants discuss, might give some cultural insights. Even though the present study categorised the types of reflection through psychological perspectives, i.e. layers of awareness, the study found similarities among the participants' reflective themes, such as aiming for the social development of the students: revealed by Sara's desire to 'bring the world into classroom', Kyoko's 'educating students through English', and Naomi's 'whole person education'. It would be interesting to examine the similarities and differences of the topics that the participants generate, and examine the interplay between the topics and one's development in teaching. Also, it would be interesting to see if there would be any topics that are culturally specific and

to explain how teachers share these themes.

In this study, reflective practice was culturally appropriated into the Japanese context. Chapter 1 introduced reflective practice as a form of methodology borrowing. Canagarajah (1999) warns that methodology borrowing tends to “undermine the alternative styles of thinking, learning, and interacting preferred by local communities” (p. 104). The study found that reflective practice did not undermine the participants’ styles, but was appropriated into the Japanese context drawing from the dominant cultural conventions of *tatemae/honne*, *kotodama*, and *hansei*.

The study found that cultural understanding is essential for a successful adaptation of reflective practice into a specific context. It could be said that the participants were culturally bound, as seen in the ‘precursors to reflection’ and in their concept of development. However, when successfully adopted, reflective practice can move the participants beyond a cultural boundary, as was seen in their public expression of *honne*, and in their development of reflection.

This exploration of reflective practice identified the influence of important social conventions that need to be made explicit and understood in any attempt to further develop this tool for professional development in Japan. This exploration of reflective practice raised my consciousness of cultural conventions. I developed awareness through the study that I *too* am culturally bound in my understanding of reflection and professional development. This made me even more aware of the importance of sensitivity to specific cultural practices in the adaptation of reflective practice. In any given culture, we might be under the influence of cultural conventions but reflective practice can make us aware of

them and possibly move us beyond. Reflective practice, then, can help individuals to transcend cultural conventions and limitations, as well as to develop them professionally.

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## Appendix 1

### Information sheet of the study

Thank you for attending the session on reflective practice during the seminar.

I, Atsuko Watanabe, have been interested in incorporating reflective practice into teacher development programmes in Japan. In order to pursue my research interest, I have enrolled in MPhil/PhD at Institute of Education, University of London in 2005. My research topic is “the incorporation of reflective practice as a development tool for in-service EFL senior high school teachers in the Japanese environment.”

Reflective practice has been one of the underlying philosophies in teacher development programmes in the U.K. since 1990s. It has been recently paid attention to especially in education spheres in Japan. In a 2006 report by the Japan Association of Universities of Education, reflective practice is considered important as to form the basic concept of teacher development in Japan. However, being still a novice notion, only a few longitudinal studies exist on the topic of reflective practice in Japan.

I would like to pursue a longitudinal study to examine how reflective practice can effectively be incorporated into teacher development in Japan. I would like to explain the study in detail in this information sheet. If you are interested in participating in the study, I would really appreciate it very much if you could contact me. Your help would lead to the enhancement of professional development of teachers of English in Japan.

#### **Aims of the Research:**

The research aims at exploring effective incorporation of reflective practice into teacher development in Japan.

The findings of the study will be written in the dissertation and will be submitted to my supervisors at the Institute of Education, the University of London. The findings may also be presented at conferences or published in journals. On such occasions, information regarding the participants of the study will be confidential. The results will only be used for the research purposes. The research is conducted by Atsuko Watanabe and is not affiliated with the education centre of the prefecture.

#### **Participation in the Research**

The volunteers to the study will be asked to engage in reflective tasks for seven months.

The reflective tasks involve the following:

- **Group discussion**  
During the course of the study, you will meet with other participants three times for group discussion. The scheduling and the venue will be negotiated with the participants.
- **Reflective diaries**  
The volunteers will be asked to keep a diary where they enter their reaction to the group discussion or their experience of reflective practice. I hope that the participants would make entries more than once a week, but the number of entries will be left to each participant. The participants will be asked to send the diary entry via email to me once a week. I will read the logs and pose clarifying questions in order to enhance reflection but will not evaluate the

content of the diary. The diary can be kept either in Japanese or in English.

- Interviews

I will visit each participant for an individual interview about once in every four weeks. The venue and the schedule for the interview will be negotiated with each participant. The interview will focus on the content of teaching logs and the participants' experience in reflective practice. The interview will be about 45 minutes long and, with the agreement of the participant, will be recorded. The participants will be given a choice to use either Japanese or English in the interview.

- Class observation

I will observe the participants' lesson once in the study. The purpose of the observation is for me to learn the context where each teacher teaches and to enhance understanding of the reflective diary. I will only sit in the classroom and will not participate in the lesson.

After the observation, I would like to discuss the lesson with the participant. I would like to ask clarifying questions and explanations regarding the lesson, but will not evaluate teaching. The discussion will be about 10 minute long and, with the consent of the participant, will be recorded.

### 3. The Schedule

The study will be conducted for seven months. As described above, in the first week, there will be an explanation of the study and the group discussion. Each participant will start writing the diary in the first week. Class observation will be conducted around the fourth week. Interviews will be conducted once every four-week. The scheduling will be discussed and negotiated with each participant.

| Week | Plan  |
|------|---|
| 1    | Explanation of the study. Group discussion.<br>Starting the reflective diary and sending it to the researcher once a week |
| 2    |   |
| 3    |   |
| 4    | Class observation   |
| 5    | Interview   |
| 6    |   |
| 7    |   |
| 8    |   |
| 9    | Interview   |
| 10   |   |

### Ethics in Educational Research

#### The advantages in participating in the study

- Through reflective practice, the participants may find one's beliefs, values, and assumption about teaching and raise self-awareness and develop as teachers.
- The participants will be able to experience reflective practice which is a novice notion in teacher development in Japan.
- A book coupon of worth £ 60 will be given to each participant as a gift.

### **The disadvantages in participating in the study**

- The participation requires volunteers to commit some time for the study.

### **Confidentiality**

When the results of the research is reported in a written or an oral form, names of the participants, schools where they teach, and prefectures where they live will all be confidential. Any information or description that may identify the participants will be deleted from the written report.

### **Data storage**

The data will be kept on a computer of Atsuko Watanabe and will not be shared with others.

### **Withdrawal from the study**

The participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage with any reason. On such an occasion, all the data collected from the participant will be discarded. However, after the completion of the study, the data will belong to Atsuko Watanabe and withdrawal from the study will not be acknowledged.

If you have any questions, or are interested in participating in the study, please contact Atsuko Watanabe.

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## Appendix 2

### Information sheet and consent form of the study

#### The purpose of the study

I would like to conduct the study for MPhil/PhD degree that I am pursuing at the Institute of Education, the University of London. My research topic is “incorporation of reflective practice as a development tool for in-service EFL senior high school teachers in Japan.” The findings of the study will be written in the dissertation and will be submitted to the Institute of Education, the University of London. The findings may also be presented at conferences or published in journals.

#### Participation in the Research

The research will be conducted for seven months, during which time, the voluntary participants will be asked to engage in the reflective tasks; group discussion, reflective diaries, and interviews. The participants will meet three times for group discussion. The participants will be asked to keep a diary and send it to me via email once a week. I will visit each participant for a 45-minute individual interview about once every four weeks. With the permission of the participant, the interviews will be audio recorded. The participants will be given a choice to use either Japanese or English in the three tasks.

In the early stage of the study, I would like to observe the participants' lesson once. 10 minute discussion between the participant and I will follow the observation. With the consent of the participant, the discussion will be audio recorded.

#### Incentive

A book coupon of worth £ 60 will be given to each participant as a gift.

#### Confidentiality

When the results of the research are reported in a written or an oral form, names of the participants, and the names and the locations of the schools will be confidential. Any information or description that may identify the participants will be deleted.

#### Data storage

The data will be kept on a computer of Atsuko Watanabe and will not be shared with others.

#### Withdrawal from the study

The participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage with any reason. On such an occasion, all the data collected from the participant will be discarded. However, after the completion of the study, the data will belong to Atsuko Watanabe and withdrawal from the study will not be acknowledged.

**Contact:** Atsuko Watanabe Tel 042-553-3544 Fax 042-530-2175 Cell 080-1354-2997  
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#### Consent form

Please sign your name and enter the date if you agree with the statement below.

I have been informed of and understand the purpose of the study and the research ethics.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Appendix 3 List of the types of reflection

#### Description (recalls)

- Spontaneous writing/ speech by recalling what happened

#### Recalls (Being reminded) – elicited by others

- Recalling what happened (Kyoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview )
- Stating what was good (JHS Ss) (Sara -28<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> focus group) – recalling?
- Look back her difficulty (Oct./Nov) (Sara-21<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview) どこ?
- what was said 確かに言ったな (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)
- what was said (なんかこんなこと一転職—を話してたんだな) (Sara-21<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)

#### Reconfirms (after they read or not necessarily)

- what's important (bring the world into classroom) (Sara 21<sup>st</sup> March last journal)
- what one has always been thinking (Yoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview)

#### Acknowledges (the same as reconfirms? No. acknowledges is after they read. – this is not necessary? )

- Did not change so much from what I always held (Yoko 9<sup>th</sup> March 3<sup>rd</sup> focus group)

#### Confirms? (same as reconfirms) (confirm is both when they write and after they read)

- an example of no reflection? (Miki – the last journal entry 20<sup>th</sup> March)- followed by hypothetical situation, if not, (Miki – the last journal entry 20<sup>th</sup> March)- expressing a view -writing a journal is important (Miki – the last journal entry 20<sup>th</sup> March)
- Recalling what was important through writing self-evaluation (Kyoko 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 5<sup>th</sup> interview)-confirming?
- States she is still like a student (Kyoko 15<sup>th</sup> Oct journal)-acknowledges? – description? Notices?
- States still may not be settled in teaching (Kyoko 15<sup>th</sup> Oct journal) (how it was done was not like noticing) description? Notices?
- Stating one's possible role (Kyoko 2<sup>nd</sup> interview 21<sup>st</sup> Nov interview)
- Stating what she wants to do to Ss (empowerment?) (Kyoko 3<sup>rd</sup> interview) – may be confirming
- Stating one's awareness (Kyoko 18<sup>th</sup> Feb Journal) ??

#### Reinterpretation (after looking at something – could be done both in writing / speaking, looking back at one's clas/looking back at one's writing) – similar to awareness? But not necessarily accompanying reasons? Often awareness so reinterpretation

- teaching at Support high school (ほかにも生かせる)(Sara last interview)
- of video as a material (Sara last interview)
- Reinterpretation – not because of the univ. she went to (Kyoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview )

- Gains reinterpretation looking at last year (Kyoko 15<sup>th</sup> Oct journal)
- Reinterpretation –Ss who are not used to answer difficult to join (Kyoko 3<sup>rd</sup> interview) Future prospective – instruction from the first year (Kyoko 3<sup>rd</sup> interview)
- States(declares) the changes in instruction (楽しければいい一厳しくなった)-prompted by a colleague (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview) (これはちょっと違う?) -Firm statement (conviction) 許さない (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview) -Apply his idea of 部活 to a lesson (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)
- Stating responsibility as a teacher (日本をしょって立つ若者) (Naomi 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. journal)

Notice (pay attention to/pick up) – they may see it the first time?

- changes about Ss performance (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)
- changes in class (good class bad, bad class good) (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)
- Impression which topic he is happy with (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)
- a topic(雰囲気づくり) (Ken-17<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- a topic (環境) (Ken-17<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- a topic (生徒をいかに参加させるか) (Ken-17<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- a change about oneself (以前は授業で精一杯でそこまで考える余裕なかった。成長した自分) (Ken-17<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- a recurrent reference (Ms. Honda) (Sara-21<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)
- her state (temporary events which keep happening once in a while) (Sara 21<sup>st</sup> March last journal)
- what is missing (haven't got what I can all my theory of teaching) (Sara last journal)
- teaching style (strict teacher with grades) (Sara last interview)
- one's theme (belief) (Naomi 5<sup>th</sup> interview)
- one's theme (changing the Ss belief to enhance learning) (Naomi last interview)
- one's theme (concerned with unmotivated ss) (Naomi last interview)
- changes (students/teacher) (Yoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview)
- one's lack of conviction as a teacher (Kyoko 3<sup>rd</sup> interview)
- Notices the connection among the themes つながってましたね (Kyoko 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 5<sup>th</sup> interview)
- Rediscovered oneself (not expressing oneself) (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal) ?
- Stating what is important(学校内の雰囲気重要、教科指導前に学級・学校単位指導) (Ken-17<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- Stating the change (音読に力-being able to explain) (Ken-17<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- Stating her gain in the new interest-gained awareness (teacher belief) (Naomi 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. journal – reading the first 3 interviews)
- States her 課題(future prospective-英語を押し付けるのではなく、私や周りの人間とのコミュニケーションを通して生徒の英語学習のモチベーションを高め、人間形成の助けをしてゆくために努力していくこと) (Kyoko 31<sup>st</sup> Jan journal)

Aware (notice sth which they did not see it before / broader category?)

(Yoko about her theme in the last journal? What they notice is not a topic itself? – not like a theme / often followed by a solution, perspectives, etc.)

- about her knowledge base of teaching – contradiction about what she referred to a lot – prompted by my question (Miki- the last interview 23<sup>rd</sup> March)
- about a problem – prompted by a student (Ken – 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. Journal) Conviction about teaching – (Ken – 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. Journal)
- about (一生懸命欠けていた) (Ken – 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. Journal) - Stating what is missing (勉強) (Ken – 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. Journal)
- about one's tendency (クラスによってやり方変える) (Ken-19<sup>th</sup> Feb. journal)
- of one's tendency (できる子を気にしていないみたい) prompted by a student (Ken –21<sup>st</sup> Feb interview) - Repent (得意分野をもっと早く気付けばよかった) (Ken –21<sup>st</sup> Feb interview)
- about one's own practice (good env. Necessary/ bad env. not good) (Sara last journal) - Regret (I should have...but did not have energy) (Sara last interview)
- of the Ss' world (world is different for each/my ss word is more limited to their own town or neighbours) (Sara 21<sup>st</sup> March last journal) - State the prospective (if I could stretch) (Sara 21<sup>st</sup> March last journal)- Realising the difficulty (jumping from neighbours to the world) (Sara last interview)- Thinking of the solution (what is necessary for them if their world is small) (Sara last interview)
- of necessary knowledge base (at the current school teaching tech. necessary not the knowledge of English) (Sara last journal)
- how different schools are (Sara last interview)
- of what journal lacks (empathy) (Naomi 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> focus group)
- of two types of reflection, one private, the other public (Naomi 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> focus group)
- of her pattern-interested in education-apologises-talks about education (Naomi 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. journal – reading the first 3 interviews)
- of what she thinks is important (holistic education) (Naomi 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. journal – reading the first 3 interviews)
- of contradiction (Yoko 9<sup>th</sup> March 3<sup>rd</sup> focus group)
- of one's fixed idea (Yoko 9<sup>th</sup> March 3<sup>rd</sup> focus group)
- of one's concern G class (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal) -Future perspective (lesson targeted for G) (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- of one's contradictions (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal) -Become objective of what she found (謙虚に働きかけよう) (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- Become aware of RP(Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- of one's omission (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal) -Comment about the researcher's role (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- become aware of RP (Yoko 11<sup>th</sup> March last journal)
- Awareness about oneself – from a single episode to a broader –そのままにしたくない (Kyoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview )
- Awareness-broad category (個人 and 集団) (Kyoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview )
- Awareness one got used to the place (Kyoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview )

- Awareness about looking at her own high school days 集団個人・what she can do to Ss (Kyoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview )
- Awareness what she says depends on a mood –broad category (Kyoko 4<sup>th</sup> interview )
- aware of what Ss can achieve (comparing to herself as HS S) (Kyoko 3<sup>rd</sup> interview)
- Awareness of her 課題 and what she learned in 研修 (Kyoko 31<sup>st</sup> Janjournal)

#### Reflecting on reflection

- Reflecting on reflection (雰囲気とか言って生徒のせいにしてている-gives examples) (Ken-18<sup>th</sup> March last interview)
- Reflecting on reflection (Kyoko last interview)

Asks me a question about teaching (memorisation) (Ken – 31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> interview)  
 Practiced one of her themes(ポジティブリスニング)(Kyoko journal in Jan.)

## Appendix 4: Analysis diagram (Ken's themes)

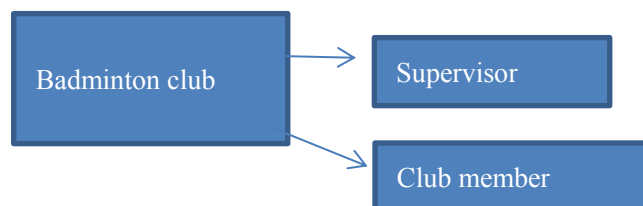
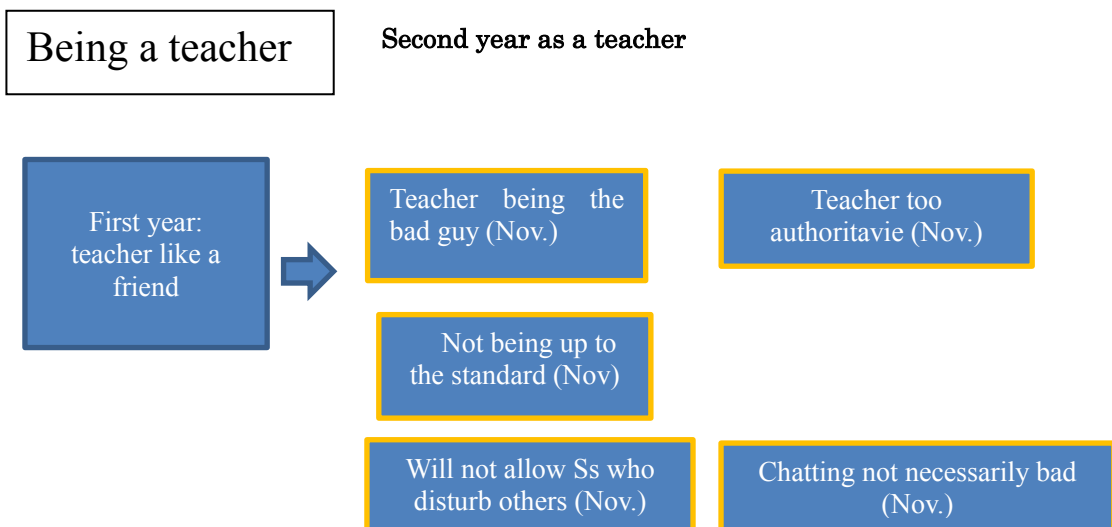
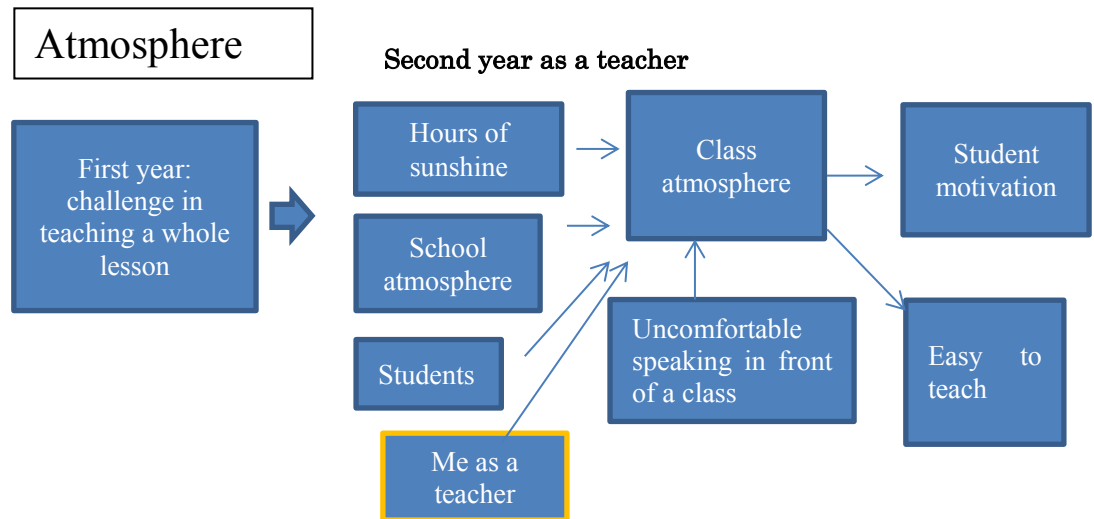
Transitional process from being a student to being a teacher.

The study offered Ken an opportunity to explore.

Being a student – being a teacher in the first year – being a teacher in the second year.

Changes can be seen in his examination of atmosphere.

Exploration of being a teacher scold? (warned?) by a teacher (still in the process of wondering).



## Appendix 5: Data sources of the participants

FG: Focus Group, INT: Interview, CO: Class Observation, JE: Journal Entries, PJE: Post study Journal

### Ken's data source

|      |             |      |        |      |        |
|------|-------------|------|--------|------|--------|
| FG1  | 30 Sep 2007 | JE1  | 9 Oct  | JE11 | 17 Mar |
| FG2  | 16 Dec 2007 | JE2  | 17 Oct | PJE  | -----  |
| FG3  | -----       | JE3  | 25 Oct |      |        |
| INT1 | 18 Oct 2007 | JE4  | 12 Nov |      |        |
| INT2 | 20 Nov 2007 | JE5  | 19 Nov |      |        |
| INT3 | 16 Dec 2007 | JE6  | 10 Dec |      |        |
| INT4 | 30 Jan 2008 | JE7  | 26 Dec |      |        |
| INT5 | 21 Feb 2008 | JE8  | 30 Jan |      |        |
| INT6 | 18 Mar 2008 | JE9  | 30 Jan |      |        |
| CO   | 18 Oct 2007 | JE10 | 19 Feb |      |        |

### Kyoko's data source

|      |              |      |        |       |        |
|------|--------------|------|--------|-------|--------|
| FG1  | 30 Sept 2007 | JE1  | 9 Oct  | JE11  | 21 Mar |
| FG2  | 16 Dec 2007  | JE2  | 15 Oct | JE 12 | 21 Mar |
| FG3  | 9 March 2008 | JE3  | 22 Oct | PJE   | -----  |
| INT1 | 11 Oct 2007  | JE4  | 29 Oct |       |        |
| INT2 | 21 Nov 2007  | JE5  | 11 Nov |       |        |
| INT3 | 20 Dec 2007  | JE6  | 15 Nov |       |        |
| INT4 | 24 Jan 2008  | JE7  | 10 Dec |       |        |
| INT5 | 14 Feb 2008  | JE8  | 15 Jan |       |        |
| INT6 | 20 Mar 2008  | JE9  | 31 Jan |       |        |
| CO   | 11 Oct 2007  | JE10 | 18 Feb |       |        |

### Sara's data source

|      |              |      |        |      |        |      |        |
|------|--------------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|
| FG1  | 30 Sept 2007 | JE1  | 10 Oct | JE11 | 14 Dec | JE21 | 17 Feb |
| FG2  | 28 Dec 2007  | JE2  | 14 Oct | JE12 | 16 Dec | JE22 | 29 Feb |
| FG3  | 22 Mar 2008  | JE3  | 21 Oct | JE13 | 23 Dec | JE23 | 9 Mar  |
| INT1 | 30 Oct 2007  | JE4  | 1 Nov  | JE14 | 14 Jan | JE24 | 16 Mar |
| INT2 | 21 Nov 2007  | JE5  | 10 Nov | JE15 | 18 Jan | JE25 | 21 Mar |
| INT3 | 25 Dec 2007  | JE6  | 17 Nov | JE16 | 20 Jan | PJE  | 31 Aug |
| INT4 | 21 Jan 2008  | JE7  | 22 Nov | JE17 | 26 Jan |      |        |
| INT5 | 18 Feb 2008  | JE8  | 1 Dec  | JE18 | 2 Feb  |      |        |
| INT6 | 25 Mar 2008  | JE9  | 2 Dec  | JE19 | 3 Feb  |      |        |
| CO   | 8 Nov 2007   | JE10 | 7 Dec  | JE20 | 11 Feb |      |        |

Yoko's data source

|      |             |      |           |      |               |      |        |
|------|-------------|------|-----------|------|---------------|------|--------|
| FG1  | -----       | JE1  | 1-6 Oct   | JE11 | 3-7 Dec       | JE21 | 24 Feb |
| FG2  | 16Dec 2007  | JE2  | 9-12 Oct  | JE12 | 10-21Dec      | JE22 | 1 Mar  |
| FG3  | 9 Mar 2008  | JE3  | 14-19 Oct | JE13 | 8-11 Jan      | JE23 | 11 Mar |
| INT1 | 25 Oct 2007 | JE4  | 24-25 Oct | JE14 | 15-25Jan      | JE24 | 14 Mar |
| INT2 | 21 Nov 2007 | JE5  | 29-2 Nov  | JE15 | 26 Jan        | PJE  | 17 Aug |
| INT3 | 13 Dec 2007 | JE6  | 5-9 Nov   | JE16 | 2 Feb         | JE26 |        |
| INT4 | 24 Jan 2008 | JE7  | 9 Nov     | JE17 | 3 Feb         | JE27 |        |
| INT5 | 14 Feb 2008 | JE8  | 5-16 Nov  | JE18 | 28 Jan- 8 Feb | JE28 |        |
| INT6 | 17 Mar 2008 | JE9  | 17 Nov    | JE19 | 15 Feb        | JE29 |        |
| CO   | 25 Oct 2007 | JE10 | 19-30 Nov | JE20 | 12-22Feb      | JE30 |        |

Naomi's data source

|      |              |      |        |      |        |
|------|--------------|------|--------|------|--------|
| FG1  | 30 Sept 2007 | JE1  | 7 Oct  | JE11 | 24 Jan |
| FG2  | 28 Dec 2007  | JE2  | 4 Nov  | JE12 | 2 Feb  |
| FG3  | 22 Mar 2008  | JE3  | 9 Nov  | JE13 | 3 Feb  |
| INT1 | 19 Oct 2007  | JE4  | 15 Dec | JE14 | 10 Feb |
| INT2 | 13 Nov 2007  | JE5  | 15 Dec | JE15 | 2 Mar  |
| INT3 | 28 Dec 2007  | JE6  | 9 Jan  | JE16 | 16 Mar |
| INT4 | 1 Feb 2008   | JE7  | 10 Jan | JE17 | 23 Mar |
| INT5 | 15 Feb 2008  | JE8  | 15 Jan | PJE  | 30 Aug |
| INT6 | 24 Mar 2008  | JE9  | 17 Jan |      |        |
| CO   | 31 Oct 2007  | JE10 | 20 Jan |      |        |

Miki's data source

|      |              |      |        |      |        |
|------|--------------|------|--------|------|--------|
| FG1  | 30 Sept 2007 | JE1  | 1 Oct  | JE11 | 14 Dec |
| FG2  | 28 Dec 2007  | JE2  | 3 Oct  | JE12 | 24 Jan |
| FG3  | 22 Mar 2008  | JE3  | 10 Oct | JE13 | 26 Jan |
| INT1 | 31 Oct 2007  | JE4  | 17 Oct | JE14 | 29 Jan |
| INT2 | 29 Nov 2007  | JE5  | 24 Oct | JE15 | 11 Feb |
| INT3 | 25 Dec 2007  | JE6  | 7 Nov  | JE16 | 12 Feb |
| INT4 | 30 Jan 2008  | JE7  | 8 Nov  | JE17 | 30 Mar |
| INT5 | 13 Feb 2008  | JE8  | 21 Nov | PJE  | 23 Sep |
| INT6 | 22 Mar 2008  | JE9  | 30 Nov |      |        |
| CO   | 7 Nov 2008   | JE10 | 2 Dec  |      |        |