Beliefs, practices, and interactions of teachers in a Japanese high school English department

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Abstract

This study reveals the school culture and the teachers' professional development activities in a Japanese high school learning environment. Furthermore, it documents the relationships among the context, teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions. Using multiple data sources including interviews, observations, and documents of teachers from an English department, this yearlong study revealed these English as a Foreign Language teachers lacked many teacher learning opportunities in their context. The study revealed that teacher collaboration only reinforced existing practices, eroding teachers' motivation to learn to teach in this specific context. The study provides evidence to teacher educators about inservice teachers and their learning environment and the significance of the relationships between the two entities.

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1. Introduction

This study documents the relationships among teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions in their workplace using multiple data sources, revealing how English teachers consider teaching in a Japanese high school English department.[1] As

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[1]The data for this article were originally collected for a Ph.D. dissertation (Sato, 2000). Since that time, the data have gone through many extended analyses and the manuscript has gone through numerous revisions (by both authors) to emphasize the issues of a school and department technical culture. We wish to emphasize that this manuscript was written with the intent of sharing it with the wider (not just second language) teacher education community. This is important to note, as Glensne and Peshkin (1992) reminded us that we need not only to consider the audience for whom we are writing, but also

Darling-Hammond, and McLaughlin (1995) contend, "Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting (just as students do); by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and sharing what they see" (p. 598). Although much literature suggests collaborative school cultures facilitate teacher development (e.g., Little, 1982, 1986; Rosenholtz, 1985, 1989; Kleinsasser, 1993; McLaughlin, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001), there is little documentation as to how teachers actually teach (and talk about teaching) within their own specific workplace. Interestingly, Lee and Yarger (1996) further highlight that few comprehensive investigations of relationships among teacher context, beliefs, and practices exist. They further claim that most teacher education research examines only segments of educational environments without consideration of a more complete context and call for an enhanced "comprehensive investigation of teacher education" (p. 34). This study offers such a comprehensive attempt to investigate a teacher population (English as a Foreign Language [EFL] teachers) that has rarely been studied, in a country that has few qualitative studies (see LeTendre, 1999).

2. Theoretical framework

A major theoretical tenet supports the study: school (technical) cultures. Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) suggested that studying the culture of schools is, in part, "trying to understand how teachers define their own work situations" (p. 505). They further explained that "Teaching cultures are embodied in the work-related beliefs and knowledge teachers share—beliefs about appropriate ways of acting on the job and

rewarding aspects of teaching, and knowledge that enables teachers to do their work" (p. 508). They acknowledged at the time that few studies investigated the cultures of teaching and that teachers' subjective worlds remained unclear. They cited works such as Lortie (1975) and Sarason (1982) that revealed that most teachers worked in isolation, were uncertain about teaching practices, and seldom interacted with other teachers to discuss their work. Moreover, it was suggested that teachers appeared to adapt to teaching cultures. Lortie (1975) alluded to the idea that "People in a similar line of work are likely to share at least some common thoughts and feelings about that work" (p. 162).

2.1. Technical culture

Although Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) proposed a future research issue to examine the existence of diversity in teaching cultures systematically, further studies identified typologies of common teaching cultures. Researchers have identified at least two types of school cultures: learning-enriched and learning-impoverished (e.g., Kleinsasser, 1989, 1993; Little, 1982; McLaughlin, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; and Rosenholtz, 1989). For instance, Rosenholtz examined 1213 teachers in 78 elementary schools and classified only 13 schools as learning-enriched. These were where teachers consistently collaborated with each other, set goals with principals, and "tended to hold a sustained view of their learning so as to better meet the challenge of students' diverse learning needs" (p. 103). In contrast, in learning-impoverished schools, teachers were uncertain about their instruction, were isolated from colleagues, and "tended to hold a terminal view of their learning, entailing mastery of routine practices and procedures" (p. 103).

Kleinsasser (1989, 1993) applied Rosenholtz's (1989) model to high school foreign language teachers in US contexts. Data were collected from 37 teachers in 11 schools through interviews, observations, and surveys. The results indicated two distinctive *technical cultures* (applying a term Lortie used in 1975). One was a routine/uncertain *technical culture* (i.e., learning-impoverished),

(*footnote continued*)

recognize that writing for a particular audience may create some limitations. Relying upon Van Maanen's (1988) work, they wrote, "how does the projected audience shape both the form and the substance of the researcher's product? The researcher may use tables and charts with one audience, but not with another. Or the researcher may use a disciplines-based language if writing for colleagues, but not for a more general group of people. Researchers tell different things in different ways to different people" (Glensne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 154).

where teachers were uncertain about their teaching and whether or not some of their students could learn, but were engaged in day-to-day routine instructional activities. These teachers further reported a lack of communication about teaching issues among their colleagues. The other was a nonroutine/certain *technical culture* (i.e., learning-enriched), where teachers were confident about their teaching, and their daily instructional practices were less predictable. In addition, these teachers incorporated more communicative activities in addition to traditional grammar focused exercises, whereas those in routine/uncertain technical cultures relied relatively exclusively on established traditional approaches (i.e., grammar-focused and skills based [speaking, reading, writing, and listening]). Kleinsasser's data revealed a strong relationship between school context and teacher performance at the department and high school level; lending strong empirical evidence to Rosenholtz' model and ideas.

Important factors in uncovering technical culture information is to examine teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions. As Thompson (1967) noted, the technical culture of education "rests on abstract systems of belief about relationships among teachers, teaching materials, and pupils; but learning theories assume the presence of these variables and proceed from that point" (p. 19). The three specific factors of beliefs, practices, and interactions will each be discussed in turn.

2.2. Beliefs

Pajares (1992) reviewed research on teacher beliefs and argued that "teachers' beliefs can and should become an important focus of educational inquiry" (p. 307). He then sketched numerous facets of beliefs and acknowledged that a variety of conceptions of educational beliefs appear in the literature, citing Nespor's (1987) influential work, he suggested that "beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior" (p. 311). Pajares promoted 16 "fundamental assumptions that may reasonably be made when initiating a study of teacher's education beliefs" (p. 324). These as-

sumptions include among others, the notions that (a) beliefs are formed early and tend to self-perpetuate, persevering even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience; (b) individuals develop a belief system that houses all the beliefs acquired through the process of cultural transmission; (c) beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks; (d) individuals' beliefs strongly affect their behavior; and (e) knowledge and beliefs are inextricably interwined (for complete discussion of all 16 assumptions, see Pajares, 1992, pp. 324–326). Importantly, Pajares claims that "beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do—fundamental prerequisites that educational researchers have seldom followed" (p. 314).

Studies on teacher beliefs have slowly gained prominence, especially with regard to teacher change issues. A flurry of research on teacher development focuses on teachers' beliefs in relation to their practices rather than more specifically investigating teachers' skills and dispositions as mandated by education scholars or policymakers (Carter, 1990; Richardson, 1994). The question of how teachers learn to teach is concerned more with what teachers actually *know* and how they develop their practices than necessarily with what teachers *need to know* and how they can be trained (Carter, 1990; Richardson, 1994, 1996; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999b).

2.3. Practices

Guskey (1986), for example, examined 52 teachers who participated in teacher development programs and concluded that change in teachers' beliefs "is likely to take place only after changes in student learning outcomes are evidenced" (p. 7). In contrast, Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd (1991) found that change in beliefs preceded change in practices. The current view is that relationships between beliefs and practices are interactive and ongoing (Fullan, 1991, 2001; Richardson, 1996). Richardson (1996) even claimed that "In most current conceptions, the

perceived relationship between beliefs and actions is interactive. Beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs'' (p. 104). Although the literature on beliefs and practices provide interesting insights into teacher change, the connection between beliefs and practices with (varying) school cultures remains largely untapped (see, for example, the discussion in Hamilton, 1993).

2.4. Interactions

Another influential area of research that offers insight into school (technical) cultures is not only interactions between beliefs and practice but also the interactions of the people within the learning community. Many researchers argue persuasively that collaborative school (technical) cultures promote continuous teacher learning (Kleinsasser, 1993; Little, 1982, 1986, 1993, 1999; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Rosenholtz, 1985, 1989). Rosenholtz (1985) contended that "teachers in effective schools interacted to a greater extent on the basis of professional concerns rather than social chatter, did so with greater frequency, and with a greater number of colleagues" (p. 365). However, Little (1990a, 1992) cautioned about the optimistic view of teachers' collaborations because collaborations "may lead teachers to pursue new courses of action and support one another in the attempt—or to join together to preserve and reinforce the status quo" (Little, 1990a, p. 527). In short, not all teacher collaborations lead to what Hargreaves (1992, 1994) labeled a collaborative culture, where teachers have on-going learning opportunities (Little, 1992). Hargreaves identified fragmented, individualism, balkanization, and contrived collegiality as varying consequences of collegiality in various circumstances. Therefore, the type of interactions teachers participate in and how teachers' interactions with their colleagues in their school (technical) cultures influence their beliefs and practices need to be more closely scrutinized. It cannot necessarily be assumed or assured that "collaborations" lead to improved (or positive) teacher development (Grossman, 1992; Little, 1990a, 1999).

Moreover, interactions with other teachers may not be limited to just the workplace. External interactions such as networking also may offer teachers opportunities for professional development (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1994; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1986, 1990, 1994; Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992; Little, 1990b, 1992, 1993). Lieberman and McLaughlin (1992) suggested that networks attract more teachers than conventional inservices mainly aiming at knowledge-transmission, because they focus on specific activities, establish a climate of trust and support, offer intellectual and emotional stimulation, and provide leadership opportunities. However, little is known about the effects of networks (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1994; Little, 1992), and the power of networking has possibly been underestimated, especially outside the particular learning community (Lieberman & Miller, 1994).

Quite a few of the studies cited above did not systematically examine the school (technical) culture specifically focusing on teacher beliefs, practices, and interactions. In fact, Lee and Yarger (1996) precisely pointed out that a large majority of teacher education research examined only segments of teacher education and rarely considered the workplace for a more complete study of school (technical) cultures and the relationships of various factors within them. More recently Lortie (1998), in revisiting issues in his seminal piece Schoolteacher, recommended that considerable "more research is needed on teachers and their work" (p. 161).

3. Problem statement and research questions

The Japanese government in 1994 introduced into high school English departments a new syllabus orientation to communicative language teaching (CLT). Such a syllabus stressed the significance of communication-oriented English in classes that traditionally were taught through grammar-translation methods (see also LoCastro, 1996). Little remains known, however, as to how inservice teachers perceive English language teaching, how they actually teach (or change their teaching), how they interact with colleagues, or

how they continue to learn to teach in a Japanese learning environment. This study examines beliefs, practices, and interactions through English teacher interviews and actions, in general, and investigates EFL inservice teachers within their workplace. The following questions provide focus to uncover features of these teachers' (technical) culture:

1. What are the beliefs, practices, and interactions of EFL teachers who work together in a high school English department in Japan?
2. What are the relationships among EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions?
3. How do these EFL teachers' (technical) culture—their beliefs, practices, and interactions—reciprocally influence individual EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions?

The methods section next overviews the various strategies used in the project to help begin answering the research questions and help articu-

late the school (technical) culture in which these Japanese English teachers find themselves.

4. Methods

Lee and Yarger (1996) suggested a comprehensive investigation of teacher education include multiple modes of inquiry or triangulation to capture complexities (see also Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996, 2001; Mathison, 1988; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999a). Therefore, this yearlong study employed multiple data sources using interviews, observations, and documents to examine inservice EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions in their school workplace. Data collection began during the Japanese school year's second term (September). (It is important to note that Japanese schools begin their school year in April and the year usually consists of three terms. After 40 days summer vacation, the second term begins in

Table 1
Participants in the study, including their participation in the data collection

Name (JET/NET, F/P)	Sex	Age	Years Teach.	Study degree(s)	Major/Minor	Section	Survey	Inter. (1)(2)(3)	Obser. (1)(2)(3)
Yasuda (JET, F)	M	32	3	BA	Psychology/English	Student affairs	X	X X X	X X X
Kondo (JET, F)	M	44	19	BA	Education/English	Students' management (Chief)	X	X X X	X X X
Sudo (JET, F)	M	53	27	BA	E-literature	Career guidance (Chief)	X	X X X	X X X
Higuchi (JET, F)	F	24	1	BA	Psychology/English	Student affairs	X	X X X	X X X
Goto (JET, F)	M	49	22	BA	Religion/English	School affairs	X	X X X	X X X
Terada (JET, F)	M	40	17	BA	Psychology/English	Teaching affairs	X	X X X	X X X
Hatano (JET, F)	M	48	25	BA	E-literature	School affairs	X	X X X	X X X
Inoue (JET, F)	M	53	25	BA	English	Career guidance	X	X X X	X X X
Toda (JET, F)	M	26	2	BA	English	Students' Management	X	X X X	X X X
Yoneda (JET, F)	M	55	32	BA	English	Vice-principal	X	X X X	
Sakamoto (JET, F)	F	33	11	BA	Education/English	School affairs	X	X X X	
Kobayashi (JET, F)	M	50	26	BA	Education/English	Teaching affairs	X	X X X	
Hori (JET, F)	M	26	1	BA	E-literature	Students' management	X	X X	X X
Koide (JET, P)	F	28	4	BA	Sociology/English		X	X X X	X X X
Noguchi (JET, P)	F	23	0	BA	Japanese LT/English		X	X X X	X X X
Brad (NET, F)	M	29	6	BA/MA	Engineering		X	X X	X X
Tony (NET, P)	M	33	4	BA	History/E-literature		X	X X	X X
Mick (NET, P)	M	25	2	HS			X	X X X	X X X
Tim (NET, F)	M	27	3	BA	Asian studies		X	X X X	X X X

Note: All teachers' names are pseudonyms.
(JET/NET, F/P) = Japanese English teacher/Native English teacher, Full-time/Part-time.
HS = High School.

September.) First a survey was conducted to identify each teacher's background. Interviews, classroom observations, and documentation collection were repeated in the third term and the first term of the following school year.

Table 1 details some background information of the 19 teachers (15 native Japanese speakers, four native English speakers) who participated in the study. All were members of the English department in a private Japanese high school. (Please note that pseudonyms are used throughout the data presentation.)

Most of the EFL teachers participated in three qualitative interviews (one interview each for the three terms) (Spradley, 1979). Interviews were conducted in Japanese, tape-recorded, transcribed, and translated for analysis (except for the four English native speakers). Field notes documented the setting, participants, events, acts, and gestures of the community members (Glensne & Peshkin, 1992). Audiotapes of classroom practices supplemented field notes and daily teacher interactions in the staff room, halls, departmental meetings, and workshops as well as informal conversations of teachers were further noted. Documents of teaching materials, examination papers, curricula, department goals, and school handbooks were also found to be useful (Glensne & Peshkin, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Inductive approaches were used to analyze the qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documents (e.g., Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Silverman, 1993). Ideally it is suggested that when multiple data are systematically analyzed and interpreted, more trustworthy conclusions result (see Eisner, 1991; Glensne & Peshkin, 1992). Mathison (1988) proposed that researchers avoid a singular proposition and construct "plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied" (p.17). Thus, all three data sources were analyzed and integrated to create evidence of the (technical) culture.

5. Results

Repeated analysis measures of multiple data sources from these Japanese High School teachers of English revealed and documented the school's (technical) culture. Teachers' beliefs about how they learned to teach along with their practices in English language teaching and interactions within and without the workplace helped develop an understanding of their school and department's norms and values. The presentation of research findings below considers these themes, with illustrations from the supporting data that bring together beliefs, practices, and interactions.

5.1. How teachers reported they learned to teach

To examine what influenced teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning these EFL teachers were asked where their ideas came from or how they leaned about English language teaching. In general, teachers seemed to rely on their own L2 (second language) learning and teaching experiences. The interview data revealed that their L2 learning and *initial* teaching experiences along with their socialization in their current school remained influential in their approaches to English language teaching. Although they mentioned various sources about how they learned to teach, they seemed to prioritize the same kind of beliefs based on their L2 learning and teaching experiences. Interestingly, their beliefs remained constant regardless of age or number of years teaching experiences. (It should be noted that the numbers (1), (2), or (3) following quotations indicate the first, second, or third interview, respectively.)

5.1.1. L2 learning and initial teaching experiences

Personal experience in learning English and identifying previous English language teachers supported many of these English teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning. For instance, Sakamoto, the department head, referred to her source of learning English was "how I studied English by myself."

> Sakamoto: After all, the way I teach is based on how I learned English in classes. Another source may be how I studied by myself. Therefore, I have been teaching according to my vague conception of how we can understand

English. I think it is very personal. I don't remember having learned any teaching methods. So I may have preconceptions about the way of teaching. (1)

Kobayashi was influenced by his junior high school teacher. He revealed that his teaching approaches were not so different from those he developed when he started teaching. "I remember my teacher at a junior high school. He was a wonderful teacher. So I imitated his teaching style at first. Then, I developed my teaching skills little by little. Those experiences became the basis of my teaching style. Basically my teaching approaches are not so different from those days" (1).

Yasuda mentioned his previous high school classes, "The classes focused on grammar, but we had oral communication classes… . [The teacher] used many different activities such as listening to songs and drawing comic strips. I still remember what he did and use his ideas" (1). While Sudo immediately responded, "First of all, I can think of my high school teachers" (1). Not only did Inoue also confess that how he taught was based on how he learned, he also offered that he further learned about English language teaching during his university practicum experience in a junior high school. Moreover, Inoue, Kobayashi, Yasuda, and Sudo, among others, further mentioned that they relied to some extent on watching the teachers in their current school. As Sudo stated after talking about his learning experiences in high school, "Then, by watching other teachers in my department and comparing their teaching with mine for a long time, I have formed my teaching style" (1).

Teachers brought their beliefs about teaching from various sources before they started teaching in this workplace. As they started to teach in this school (technical) culture, they also revealed that watching other teachers was an additional source of learning how to teach. Yet, how did they identify themselves within the school (technical) culture they eventually found themselves? If teachers continued to teach the same way they were taught, how did teachers react to their current workplace? To what extent did teachers adapt themselves to the patterns of teaching in their current school (technical) culture? Did these

teachers have any opportunities to learn new ideas inside the school and discuss them? Section 5.1.2 begins to unravel these issues.

5.1.2. Trial and error socialization: internal interactions

Most teachers stated that they actually learned from watching other teachers. Traditionally, this English department provided several opportunities during the school year for peer-observation and discussed each observed class during departmental meetings.[2] Additionally, novice teachers in their beginning year typically observed experienced teachers. Higuchi reported, "I watched several teachers in the first term"(1). It was not surprising then to hear that other novice teachers adapted to the pattern of the teachers they observed. Hori tried imitating other teachers' techniques. He stated "I was impressed with Mr. Terada's reading class. He used different approaches, using comprehension questions about the passages and not translating all the sentences" (1).

Even if newer teachers said they tried different activities in their classrooms, they struggled with the teaching approach based on the *yakudoku* (grammar-translation) method. Toda reported that learning from watching other teachers meant to teach the same way as others did. As a result, he did not try new ideas, "But, to be honest, the way of teaching is somehow limited because we have to do the same lesson by using the same textbook. It is like a pattern… Because I have been following the pattern of what other teachers are doing so far, I would say that I have learned how to teach by watching other teachers" (1).

Subsequent data documented that other novice teachers socialized themselves to the school (technical) culture of this high school workplace. For example, Koide, who started to teach during the first term, reported that she observed other teachers' classes and developed her teaching style. She said, "Well, I referred to the lesson plans of

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[2]Although teachers reported this observation, it is interesting to note that during the year-long study (terms two, three, and term one of the following year), observations like those discussed in the interviews were only documented four times.

experienced teachers when I began to teach in the first term. I observed several teachers' classes'' (3). The following was the lesson plan she gave the researcher:

Teaching Manual

1. Warm-up
2. Model reading by teacher + Question "What did you catch?"
3. Vocabulary check "Let's check the vocabulary"
4. Repeat after teacher "Let's read together"
5. Individual reading "I will give you two minutes. Please read aloud individually"
6. Aloud reading, point out one or two students and ask them to read in font of the class
7. Explanation of new expressions
8. Sentence translation, ask each student to read one sentence and translate, model translation or correction by the teacher
9. Questions
10. Ask them about how they feel and think about the contents of the story.

Although Koide expressed a desire that "Students learn English by actually using it" (3), she followed a pattern of teaching based on the *yakudoku* method. In two different classes, she introduced her previous experience in America (she was a university exchange student) and talked about the importance of studying English to help motivate her students. In one class, this talk was done at the beginning of the lesson and in the other class at the end. Yet, the moment she started to use the textbook in either of the classes, she followed the pattern of the lesson plan. In fact, vocabulary, translation, and grammar were the focal issues of most of the teachers in this department.

Furthermore, many of the teachers with five or fewer years experience became aware teachers within this workplace were reluctant to critique other (especially experienced) teachers' practices and teaching behaviors. As Higuchi revealed, "We observed Mr. Terada's and Mr. Goto's classes in the first term. In the following department meetings, we talked about their practices. But, we just made small talk about safe topics. When I had my

class observed last year, I received many critiques. After all, I thought teachers would avoid critiquing experienced teachers' practices'' (3). It seemed all right for experienced teachers to critique younger ones, but critiquing of experienced teachers was less prevalent.

Yoneda's experiences as a vice-principal and teacher for 30 years, as he reported, gave some further insight to this school's socialization qualities. He stated in his interviews that he learned to teach in his senior year at university and on his first job at a junior high school (where he was seven years). "Then, I came to this high school… I have been teaching that way for 30 years without thinking so much about what is a good way of teaching" (1). Although he previously watched other English teachers' classes he said he "didn't dare change my teaching with those ideas" (2). He found his practices became like a pattern or routine. He stated, "I think I became stubborn as I grew older. I might try new ideas in my classes. But, I am sure I would go back to my familiar way of teaching, if they don't work" (2). He did not think he could use those new ideas, because they were not compatible with his teaching approaches. Interestingly, Yoneda confessed in his third interview that current students don't laugh at his jokes as they did in his earlier years of teaching and that his teaching brought little satisfaction. In his own words: "Well, no successful classes. I think it is bad to say this. Sounds like I am escaping from teaching. But, I have to admit that I don't receive any positive responses from my students"(3). Sakamoto was another experienced teacher who also acknowledged that little satisfaction in her teaching lessons may be a problem. "I think I didn't spend much time preparing for the lesson so that I could be satisfied with my classes. I think it is my problem. I need to study about teaching approaches" (2).

In short, teachers did interact with teaching English in this workplace. They spoke about how they learned to teach with each other through their trial and error teaching experiences; however, in too many cases their individual struggles were little discussed. Moreover, in their isolation and by their own admission, many of them subsequently

returned to their typical grammar-translation focused activities (*yakudoku* method). Consequently, even trial and error seemed to lead to socialization within this particular workplace. Action all too easily seemed to eventually revert back to complacency. Then, how did such perceptions and actions determine what these teachers thought about English language teaching? In the next section, we attempt to provide and extend the evidence to this question.

5.2. Perceptions and actions of English language teaching

In this section, we examine these English teachers' practices of English language teaching. Three norms or values were uncovered: examination-oriented English, keeping pace, and managing school tasks and students.

5.2.1. Examination-oriented English

EFL teachers were asked to describe or define their understandings of English language teaching and how students learned English. Most teachers were puzzled by the focus of such questions and regarded them as difficult. In fact, most could not delineate or further explain their views, and related that they were unsure and confused about how to teach English. For instance, Sakamoto stated that students would learn English by actually communicating with native speakers rather than learning from the textbook. "So, I think they learn English by actually using it. When it comes to examination-oriented English, students learn it if they want to get into universities" (1). Terada confessed that he had not yet discovered how to teach English. "I have no clear answers for this question. I am still looking for the answer" (1). In subsequent interviews, teachers reiterated such difficulties, several confessing that they were not sure how to teach. For example, Higuchi found the question "tough," and wished that "students could learn English by themselves, consulting the dictionary. But, some students still say 'I don't know the meaning of this word,' without looking it up in the dictionary. I hate this attitude. How to teach English is difficult, isn't it? I am not sure of it" (3).

Many of the English teachers in this school were unsure of teaching their chosen discipline. Yet they also reported that they could not ignore the influence of examination-oriented English which was heavily centered on grammar. Hatano described how such an examination focus takes away from classroom teaching and students' language learning possibilities. He stated, "But, we cannot ignore university entrance examinations. That's another problem. If entrance exams were removed, it would be time that we started to think about alternatives" (1). There was a persistent dissonance throughout the interviews where these EFL teachers, on the one hand, expressed individual wishes toward teaching English as a means of communication, yet on the other hand, they acknowledged that they could not ignore examination-oriented English. In fact, most of these teachers reported in their interviews that school norms and values supported a (hidden) goal of examination-oriented English, while they became less talkative about their individual wishes in subsequent interviews.

In observing classrooms, such as Toda's, Koide's, and Yoneda's (teachers discussed in the above Trial and Error Socialization section), it was not surprising to see how examination-oriented English was supported by the use of textbook, handout, and grammar activities. For instance, an early observation of Toda's classroom revealed that he began his lesson with chorus reading while the students repeated what he said. He asked two individual students to read the text and then told the students to use the handout and asked questions about grammatical points. Students had difficulty answering Toda's questions; many times he ended explaining them himself. It took longer than Toda expected, saying to the class, "It takes time, doesn't it?" After spending about 20 min to cover five grammatical points, he went back to the first sentence of the text and asked individual students to translate each sentence into Japanese.

It is interesting to note that even when teachers tried to complete activities different than grammar-translation ones, there was still reliance on such traditional aspects of language teaching. For example, Sudo's individual ideas about

communication-oriented English were manifested to a more limited extent in special classes.[3] In such special classes teachers did not have to teach for common examinations and thus many had more freedom to try new ideas and materials. The classroom observation data documented Sudo's oral communication class for Level 3 commercial studies students. Sudo was teaching this new class for the first time. Although in his first two interviews he expressed his anxiety about how to teach, he collaborated with Brad (a native English speaker) and tried various things in his special classes. In an observed class, Sudo first tried pair work using material Brad developed. After explaining the activity in Japanese and waking up a student, students were engaged in the activity, using both English and Japanese. Sudo spent about 10 min finishing this activity, and asked one student to collect papers and then moved on to the next activity. Surprisingly, in the second half he reverted to using a vocabulary list and gave students a quiz, which appeared to be familiar to both him and his students. He told the class in Japanese to pay attention to their pronunciation and accent that were usually different from equivalent Japanese words. He asked three individual students to pronounce the words and corrected their pronunciation. Another student was then asked to read, the rest of the class repeated what was read, and then Sudo told the class to repeat after him. After that, a quiz was announced and he chose 16 words and gave the class eight minutes to translate them from Japanese to English. Sudo then collected papers, and gave an announcement about the assignment and the class adjourned.

The latter half of his class was completely different from the first half. Sudo returned to routine practices that highlighted teacher control. Accordingly, his use of English decreased dramatically, he reverted to speaking Japanese, and completed the activities in a timely manner. After class, he was asked why he used such a handout. "When students get into an activity, they can enjoy

it. But, their abilities are limited and it is not easy for them to communicate in English for the whole hour. So, I have to incorporate materials students can work on easily" (1). It seemed difficult for Sudo to keep learners' attention for a whole hour. His practices reflected what he said in his interview where he reported that on occasions he had no choice but to go back to routine practices with which learners were familiar. Whether in regular or special classes (ones that did not even necessarily have an examination), examination-oriented English pervaded the teachers' perceptions and actions.

5.2.2. Keeping pace

Departmental goals were also possibly hidden, or at least unavailable. Such goals were neither present in many of the school's documents nor was there a need to discuss them even though *Mombusho* [Japan's Ministry of Education] introduced new guidelines for communication-oriented English in 1994 and required a mandatory new subject (oral communication). Toda revealed: "Goals? I'm not sure about them. We have not discussed well what we should teach for. For example, we have not talked about what we want to do in oral communication classes… So I don't know our goals" (1).

There was confusion concerning the goals or objectives themselves, not to mention how to teach for them. Inoue termed the situation chaotic. "One thing is the direct influence of the introduction of mandatory oral communication classes three years ago… However, we are at a loss to explain the goals and objectives, and to know how much we should incorporate communication into high school English teaching… On the other hand, we cannot ignore entrance examinations. The situation seems chaotic right now" (1).

There were no clear goals nor had they seemingly ever been discussion about them. Instead, these teachers took it for granted that they should follow examination-oriented English. Moreover, other English language teachers used the focus of examination-oriented English to make students complete more drills as homework every day. For example, Yasuda, a level 1 teacher, revealed the reason they were giving a morning

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[3]Special classes include both regular and oral communication classes in non-general commercial, music, and nursing studies, where teachers had more freedom to teach and select materials.

English quiz to the students was to form the habit of studying every day. "Well, I am not sure of goals for this year, in particular. As for the level 1 cohort, we decided to prepare students for STEP (the Standard Test of English Proficiency). We have given them a quiz every morning since early June… because everyone has to sit for the test in October" (3).

Sakamoto elaborated her reason why she had not changed her teaching approaches at the end of the school year. She said that developing practices "take time, energy, and will power" (2). Using the same materials and keeping pace for the common test seemed to be easier for these teachers. Sakamoto explained "we took it for granted that we had to keep pace with others for the common test… We had been busy covering the same pages, and could not afford to make full use of our individualities. In fact, I didn't have to, because I could get through with the classes without using my individuality" (2).

There was agreement among the busy EFL teachers in this school to keep pace with others and get things done. Toda thought balancing the four skills was important but reported he could not afford to incorporate interactive activities. "I have been thinking well-balanced way of teaching is good, but I had difficulty trying it in my classes. I have to keep pace with others according to the textbook. I cannot afford to incorporate other classroom activities or interactive activities in my classes" (3).

EFL teachers discussed the progression of teaching according to the textbook with each other and shared handouts; however, they did not seem to have enough time to talk about instructional issues, per se. While some wanted to talk more about teaching issues (e.g., Toda), for example, Sudo wished they could share teaching ideas. "Well, we did have opportunities to talk about the progression, but should have talked more frequently. We should exchange information about lessons including teaching ideas and students' responses with each other more often. […] I think we lack it. We mainly talk about administrative things" (3).

Collaboration seemed to consist of talking about the progression of classes and some sharing of materials. In other words, these EFL teachers did not collaborate in solving instructional challenges/problems or developing the curriculum. Keeping pace with others as a group seemed to be a priority in this workplace. The majority of teachers followed a pattern of teaching unquestioningly according to the textbook, even though they were not satisfied with and did not query their own practices. Inoue, an experienced teacher, confessed that he could not think of any successful classes, nor did he experiment with any new ideas.

> Inoue: Well, we used the textbook of basic grammar in the first term. Each lesson had five key sentences, and to have learners memorize them I gave a quiz at the beginning of the next class. After that, I briefly explained grammar points in the next lesson and had students translate key sentences and try the exercises. If necessary, I added other exercises or had them make simple sentences. I had this kind of pattern. I don't think it is good, but other teachers followed it, too, because we talked about how to go about our lessons. (1)

In fact, in his observed class, he simply went immediately to his routine practice when the class started. As did many other teachers, he made a handout for his classes. Here again, one can see the interplay between beliefs, practices, and interactions from the data sources of interviews and observations. After class, Inoue told the researcher, "Every Level 1 teacher prepares a similar handout. But, each makes it by himself, because each has his own way of teaching." Surprisingly, although other grade level teachers used different textbooks and materials, they conformed to this similar preparation for and pattern of teaching, keeping pace with the material that prepared students for exams.

5.2.3. Managing school tasks and students

Another value and norm within this school was the managing of school tasks and students. For example, Sakamoto, a department head, made it clear that the school had an atmosphere where good teachers emphasized homeroom management. She said "for example, collecting signatures for a petition, selling tickets for a festival to

parents, writing many homeroom newsletters, and so forth, are highly valued… In the English department, as far as the class is concerned, the most important thing is order and classroom management'' (1). Brad, with three years teaching experience in this school, noticed that those who were involved in extra curricular activities and attended lots of meetings were considered good teachers. ''And to an extent, I think people just have to turn up for class and keep the students under control'' (1). Those who were busy working hard for homerooms, school events, extra curricular activities, and union affairs appeared to be the more highly regarded teachers. Evaluations centered on teacher capacity for managing students, keeping order, and getting things done, as opposed to (actual) teaching. In fact, Yoneda (a vice-principal) commented on such an ethos in his third interview. ''It is true that teaching is important but there are other tasks that teachers have to do. Well, after all, managing students is important, even though a teacher is good at teaching English'' (3).

Classroom observations further revealed these teachers' actions. Novice teachers, especially, committed more attention to classroom order in their second and third classroom observations. For example, Toda reported that he was unsure of teaching and went back to routine practices to keep classroom order. The second classroom observation data documented that his routine practices were intensified by checking preparation and dictionaries and by giving a quiz at the beginning of the lesson in the third term. Toda told the researcher that he made it a rule to give a quiz (memorization of four key sentences from the grammatical points in the handout) and have the class use the dictionary in his classes in the third term. He said that he sometimes checked students' dictionaries and preparation to remind them of the importance. Nonetheless, his class was dominated by explaining grammatical points and translation. His new rule to give a quiz and to use a dictionary resulted in reinforcing his routine practices. In his second interview he confessed that he was depressed and wished he could teach English as a means of communication, rather than translating every sentence into Japanese. ''However, I have no idea about how to deal with the textbook… Eventually, I ended up with the *yakudoku* (grammar-translation) method. I just couldn't help it. I am depressed with self-hate. I still don't know how to teach English'' (2).

Even in his elective writing class[4] for the level 2 students, where he wished he could have them correspond with students in an Australian high school, all Toda focused on was how to keep classroom order. Toda reflected on his class.

> Toda: I have not done anything new. […] Many students were sleeping during the lesson, and I had to wake them up. So, I was busy maintaining the classroom order, and couldn't afford to try different activities in this classroom atmosphere. I mainly taught according to the writing textbook. It focuses on how to translate Japanese sentences into English ones. (3)

Toda found motivating students very difficult. Although many teachers reiterated lack of students' motivation as one of the sources that might influence the way they taught, they avoided challenging such conflict and relied on familiar practices.

The ESL teachers' data revealed three influential (hidden) teacher/department/institutional goals that included examination-oriented English, keeping pace with each other, and managing various school tasks and students. These teachers found that examination-oriented English was an aim to force students to form a habit to memorize and study English. Thus, the majority of the teachers continued to teach according to the lessons in the textbook, putting emphasis on grammar and translation, while avoiding communication-oriented activities. Classroom observation data helped further describe and illuminate these EFL teachers' practices. The majority of teachers in regular classes (and even in special and elective classes) conformed to an established pattern of teaching with heavy emphasis on grammar

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[4] There are some elective English classes for levels 2 and 3 students, including grammar, reading, and conversation classes. Some choose English, and others choose different subjects. The class size is smaller than the regular class with about 15 students.

explanation and Japanese–English translations. These teachers committed more attention to classroom order, adhered to their routine practices of grammar-translation activities, and checked who prepared for class and who brought their own dictionaries, etc. In contrast, it must be duly noted that in a very few special classes, a small minority of teachers tried out new ideas and developed activities to suit learner interests and needs. Nonetheless, such activity remained quite marginal with little impact on instruction in the majority of the regular English classes.

5.2.4. Summary

Throughout the year-long study, teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions within this school (technical) culture remained consistent. The complexity of this school's (technical) culture, however, was highlighted through interview, observation, and document data. Managing students and having students participate in routine activities were the staple means of what teaching meant in this school (technical) culture. There was a lack of communication regarding instructional issues, per se that kept teachers from discussing in depth any substantive teaching issues or collaborating with each other on various curriculum issues. As a result, these teachers did not provide evidence that they created or involved either themselves or their students in innovative instructional activities. In fact, as Yasuda previously confessed, examination-oriented English was effective to manage students and make students form the habit of studying. Even in special classes where teachers had more freedom to teach, they still had difficulty keeping from (traditional) grammar-translation focused activities. Although a very small minority of teachers tried new teaching ideas and assessments, many of these same teachers, as seen in their observations and heard in their interviews, related that there were challenges. Even if such activities were tried, teachers reported that their few innovative teaching experiences were little shared with other teachers. Such action or possible collaboration remained marginal in this workplace. Consequently, English teacher beliefs, practices, and actions interacted with each other within this English language teaching community

and helped to uncover the school's (technical) culture.

5.3. Teacher learning opportunities: external interactions

As explained in the theoretical framework, we must further scrutinize how teachers' external interactions lead to teacher development and how perhaps teacher interactions outside the workplace influence their beliefs and practices. This section examines how teachers reported such available learning opportunities and to further clarify the complex issues of how these teachers view English teaching.

5.3.1. Informal workshops

In their initial interviews, 13 of the 15 teachers readily admitted they had not recently attended any workshops. There were no government inservice programs provided during the bulk of the school year (three school terms) when this study was conducted. Instead, only two teachers reported attending informal workshops at the beginning of the study.

Terada, a former representative of *Kenkyukai*—an informal network organized by private high school teachers—continuously attended workshops of *Kenkyukai*, though he warned he had been busy with extra jobs such as union meetings and school affairs. "Recently, I joined the workshop from which I learned a top–down approach to reading. We invited an instructor from a language school. She demonstrated the approach by using different materials according to students' levels. I learned how to help students activate their schema on the topic, and tried to use this approach in my classes" (1). Higuchi, a novice teacher, attended *Kenkyukai* twice (she was asked by Terada to attend). She reported that one workshop dealt with a demonstration of how to translate English sentences into Japanese according to English word order. She thought she was the only one who spent time on translation in classes but was surprised to find that almost all the teachers at the workshop completed translation exercises. "Then, I used the method in my classes. I asked each student to translate an English sentence into

Japanese according to sense groups from the beginning. I sometimes gave them hints. They could manage to translate the sentence'' (3). The second workshop concerning how to use newspapers and write an essay she found too difficult for her students. Although Higuchi actually used an idea from the workshop in her class, she did not report sharing her teaching experience with other teachers.

Most English teachers in this workplace reported that they were either too busy to go or were not offered enough informal workshop opportunities. Interestingly, some suggested reasons for abandoning workshops. For example, Toda encountered many interesting ideas at workshops but found most of them not helpful to his classroom teaching. "If I could change the class pattern of my own will, I could try out many things. However, I have to follow the textbook as other teachers do. After all, I have a limited choice… This may be the reason I am getting away from workshops, because I wonder if the ideas presented there are actually useful" (1).

5.3.2. Inservice workshops and ma programs

Koide attended the workshop organized by a language school where she learned hands-on activities. One of the topics was how to create a classroom where students would learn to ask questions in English. She learned from the instructor "that it is difficult for the students to express their opinions in English unless they are used to expressing theirs in Japanese in daily lessons" (3). She also learned that students needed to practice speaking their minds not only in English, but in Japanese in other subject classes as well. Koide thought that English teachers "usually forgot such an important point" (3). After the workshop, Koide tried to report on it in a subsequent department meeting and although she distributed a handout to every teacher she unfortunately could not report on it due to other agenda items and a lack of time.

Brad acknowledged that he benefited most from his M.A. study, when he was asked where his new teaching ideas came from this year. He talked about developing tasks (e.g., shape drawing and calculations) that the students really enjoyed

"because they were doing something with the language" (2). Brad also shared that other ideas "came from friends, other textbooks, but not too many came from school during this year, really" (2).

Brad emphasized the role of the teacher as a facilitator. He was asked to describe his understanding of English language teaching and said, "As for me, information-gap is everything in the classroom. Then you got a negotiation. If you got a negotiation, you can overcome the gap. I think the job of the language teacher is to basically set up the information-gap, to provide the raw materials, and be ready to act as a facilitator" (2).

The few teachers discussed above thought they learned how to teach by actually using ideas from external interactions. However, few teaching experiences were reported to or shared with their teaching colleagues, thus many innovative ideas remained unnoticed in this workplace as a whole.

Toward the end of the year-long study (i.e., end of the first term of the following school year) 12 of the 16 teachers during their third interviews explicitly stated that they did not or could not attend any workshops during the first term of the following school year. The majority continued to avoid workshops. In particular, experienced teachers tended to stay away from any kind of workshops even though they expressed desire to attend in repeated interviews. For example, Kondo reiterated that he hoped to attend a workshop to study about teaching, "I am thinking of going to [name] next year and studying one more time. Workshops held by [name] are good, in particular, for young teachers. I still have a feeling that I want to study and refresh myself again, though" (3).

Teachers may have alluded to some enthusiasm in speaking about attending workshops; however few actually either attended any or were making plans to attend. Most had no recent experiences with workshops, mainly because they reported they did not have enough time or did not feel a practical need to attend. In fact, Toda lost interest in workshops. Interestingly, the few teachers that did attend informal workshops neither reported on the content nor shared new ideas with other teachers informally in this workplace. Lack of

participation in learning opportunities seemed to make it even more difficult for teachers to learn, develop, or possibly change their beliefs, practices, and interactions in this school (technical) culture.

6. Discussion

Wolcott (1990) admonishes qualitative researchers about conclusions, ''My advice is to work toward a conservative closing statement that reviews succinctly what has been attempted, what has been learned, and what new questions have been raised'' (p. 56). With this in mind, we return to the three research questions to guide the discussion.

6.1. What are the beliefs, practices and interactions of EFL teachers who work together in a high school English department in Japan?

Teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions were inferred from what they said and did (see Pajares, 1992). The analysis and presentation of data revealed a school's (technical) culture—its norms and values—that included, but were not limited to, managing students and various task assignments took precedence over teaching, and communication and collaboration consisted of keeping pace with other teachers and getting through the day. Such norms guided not only what they taught, but how they taught. Thus, these teachers developed and shared the beliefs that it was particularly important to teach the same way for the common test and to maintain classroom management. Repeated measures including interviews and classroom observations uncovered that the teachers in this workplace, regardless of age or teaching experience, conformed to a particular pattern of teaching, with heavy emphasis on grammar explanation and translation. The practices focused extensively on a (hidden) goal toward examination-oriented English, in lieu of explicit or community developed goals, content within classrooms that relied abundantly on grammar and translation, and a pattern of teaching by what is termed the *yakudoku* method. Even though the teachers had opportunities to use materials other than textbooks, they maintained surprisingly similar patterns of teaching. In oral communication classes, too, it was found that a main concern was keeping order and keeping pace with other teachers.

Concerning teachers' interactions with colleagues, there was collaboration that seemed to sustain the norms and values of this particular workplace. Teachers did talk to each other about where they were with the subject matter in their classrooms and they were concerned about central examinations; yet they rarely probed, to any great extent, the issues dealing with instructional practices either to each other or at department meetings.[5] Concerning teachers' external interactions, many teachers did not participate in external workshops or meetings. Those few that did rarely, if ever, had the opportunity to share their information, ideas, or innovations with their colleagues or in department meetings in this school (technical) culture. Many regarded teaching as a private undertaking. Pajares (1992) maintained that "All teachers hold beliefs, however defined and labeled, about their work, their students, their subject matter, and their roles and responsibilities" (p. 319). The research here identified not only how such beliefs were defined or labeled but further described what teachers thought about their work, their subject matter, their roles and responsibilities, and, at times, their students.

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[5]We are aware of the literature that discusses successful professional development in Japanese elementary schools concerning the use of research lessons (see Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997, 1998) and/or lesson study (see Fernandez, 2002; Fernandez, Cannon, & Chokshi, 2003; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Much of this literature provides empirical evidence from elementary school level teachers that research lessons/lesson studies improve classroom practice, spread new content and approaches, connect classroom practice to broader goals, and explore conflicting ideas. Such activity; however, appears to be more prevalent in elementary schools than high schools. As Fernandez (2002) highlights in a footnote: ''The fact that lesson study is not common in Japanese high school has more to do with the nature of Japanese high school life and its teachers than with any inherent feature of lesson study that would make it inappropriate for teachers of older students'' (p. 405). The data presented in this paper provide evidence that at least in this particular private high school (at the time of this particular study), professional development is not practiced that includes research lessons/lesson studies.

Through multiple data sources, the presentation revealed that these teachers shared beliefs, practices, and interactions in this workplace. Yet additional questions need to further probe how such findings would be understood or used by the very teachers who provided information for the data set (and others). For instance, would teachers recognize their school's (technical) culture as described in this presentation? If so, how would they react to it? To what extent do teachers within this workplace (and without) recognize the value of their beliefs, practices, and interactions? Moreover, if a technical culture as Thompson (1967) contends "rests on abstract systems of belief about relationships among teachers, teaching materials, and pupils" (p. 19), how do teachers recognize and use such abstractions to benefit their English language teaching and their students' English language acquisition and learning? How do teachers become aware of the context of situation and what it allows them or not allows them to do? Many such questions rest upon the simple fact that a technical culture has been documented and can only be asked once such evidence is provided (as done in this presentation). The complexity of beliefs, practices, and interactions—a (technical) culture—intensifies as research widens and deepens our understandings of second language learning environments.

6.2. What are the relationships among EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions?

A succinct response to this question is that beliefs, practices, and interactions create a web of relationships within this school's workplace. In the main, this web creates the (technical) culture that provides for the types of interactions that occur, the manner in which most of the teachers practice, and the beliefs that are held by the teachers both collectively and individually. Internal interactions centered on talking about the progression to keep pace with other teachers rather than discuss instructional issues. These teachers did collaborate to maintain classroom management, to find out where their colleagues were in using textbooks and various other materials, and to help students prepare for university examinations. External

interactions that included workshops were avoided by many teachers (especially experienced ones), and even the more novice teachers moved away from attending workshops. Teachers stated that they did not feel any practical need or advantage to attend workshops because such ideas gained from attending them were not useful in their classrooms; new or innovative ideas seemed not to be a necessity. Such beliefs, practices, and interactions developed a (technical) culture that not only defined beliefs practices, and interaction but influenced them as well.

The English language teachers in this department held tightly to grammar, translation, and the *yakudoku* method. Both "normal" English and the "new" communication classes were surprisingly very similar in how teachers practiced English language teaching and learning. The teachers' beliefs were revealed through their discussing what they thought language teaching was and further, seemed to help describe what was seen in the observations. These and other insights provided strong evidence to support Little's (1990a) claim that collaboration may lead teachers to reinforce existing practices. By examining collaboration through qualitative data, the study revealed that these teachers collaborated, but collaboration here meant keeping things moving according to the existing norms and values of the workplace. In using Hargreaves' (1992, 1994) types of collaboration, it would appear that his ideas of individualism and balkanization are prevalent within this school's (technical) culture. It would be interesting to ask how teachers would perceive their relationships among their beliefs, practices, and interactions within this workplace.

Other possible queries and inquiries include: How would teachers describe (and document) their beliefs, practices, and interactions (i.e., their [technical] culture)? How would teachers find and/or judge the documented relationships of this presentation? How could teachers further clarify the relationships between beliefs, practices, interactions and their workplace? If teachers felt a need to change any part of their workplace, beliefs, practices, and interactions, how would the data collected, analyzed, and presented here help them to begin such a project? The added perspectives

and understandings of such inquiry would help illuminate how relationships interact with educational purposes and practical educational accommodations. In promoting further research in teacher education Floden (1997) suggested: "We need, however, to build on these insights, pushing beyond merely saying that our work is hard. We need to investigate particular promising approaches, and to pursue analyses that show why things are hard, in the hopes of gradual but significant improvement" (p. 282). There is ample work yet available to further clarify, explain, and understand workplace relationships between beliefs, practices, and interactions; and what all this means to both practitioners and researchers in various educational settings (and their varying [technical] cultures).

6.3. How do EFL teachers' (technical) culture—their beliefs, practices, and interactions—reciprocally influence individual EFL teachers' beliefs, practices, and interactions?

We hope that the manner in which the data were presented in the results section of the manuscript helps answer this question. We documented how these teachers reported they learned how to teach, then how teachers talked about learning to teach in this particular school. We further analyzed the beliefs of these teachers' ideas about English language teaching, along with reporting on some observations of them in their classrooms. External interactions were then examined and the final section dealt with the school's norms and values or its (technical) culture. We see how teachers relied on their early language learning experiences and their initial language teaching experiences as they began teaching in general and, at times, in this particular school. From their interview and observation data, we also began to see how their previous experiences either engendered agreement or disagreement within the school (technical) culture many found themselves. If previous experiences coincided with the school's norms and values, the teachers were content; if previous experiences challenged the school's norms and values, subtle changes occurred with how the teachers talked about language teaching and

taught the English language in their classrooms in their current environment. Clearly, the community understanding of teaching English in this school and department can be found in the data presentation and the answers to the first two research questions. We can see how the individual teacher beliefs, practices, and interactions not only helped develop the school (technical) culture, but can also see that some teachers may hold personal beliefs, practices, and interactions, while they developed the school community's beliefs, practices, and interactions. Yet, these personal beliefs, practices, and interactions are rarely part of daily interactions within the teachers' workplace and with teachers (and students, for that matter), in general. Individual (personal) beliefs, practices, and interactions take a backseat to the community's (technical) culture. One teacher may think that teaching language for communication is important, but that teaching language for communication within this environment is too difficult so the individual belief appears to be placated by the community belief. Another teacher attended a workshop and wanted to share the information at a faculty meeting; however there was not enough time for such an agenda item. Again, community action preceded an individual's intentions. Still other teachers spoke about the need to speak more English in the classrooms, yet they found (as did many of their colleagues) that there was not enough time (and perhaps the effort just was not worth it when central examinations loomed ever on the horizon). Pajares (1992) explained this context-specific nature of beliefs as follows:

> All individuals, at some point in their lives, suffer attacks of cognitive (belief?) dissonance, where incompatible beliefs are suddenly thrust on them and they must behave in a manner consistent with only one of these beliefs. It is at this point that connections are discovered or created and the centrality of a belief comes to prominence. (p. 319)

This context-specific nature of beliefs could also explain the shifting conceptions of teachers as they socialized themselves to the school's (technical) culture. As these teachers became accustomed to their routine practices, they seemed to be

comfortable with their beliefs, and their beliefs were reinforced or became more central in their belief systems. Although several teachers expressed their dissatisfaction, at times, they continued to teach the same way. We see that the school's (technical) culture influences to a greater extent an individual's beliefs, practices, and interactions than an individual's beliefs, practices, and interactions influence a school's (technical) culture. In this school, it appears these English language teachers accommodate the school's (technical) culture to a much greater extent than the school's (technical) culture accommodates the individual's personal beliefs, practices, and interactions.

Although many scholars assume that teachers learn to teach in authentic contexts by reflecting and interpreting their practices, and by reconstructing their knowledge of teaching, they provide little to no evidence about a *real* school that demonstrates and explains the variables they highlight and present. One also clearly sees in this presentation that these teachers in this *real* school did reflect, interpret, and socially construct English language teaching, just not in the way some scholars want them to do or think they should. The data in this presentation reveal the manner in which these teachers in this *real* school talk about and socially construct English language teaching; that is, how they practice English language teaching, how they interact with English language teachers and students in the school, and how they rarely interact with the English language teaching profession outside the school, if at all. Even though a small minority of teachers tried new ideas, these individual teachers' experiences were little shared and innovations became marginalized in this *real* school. The data support Hawley and Valli's (1999) claim that "Without collaborative problem solving, individual change may be possible, but school change is not" (p. 141). In other words, teacher development entails both classroom and school improvement (Fullan, 2001; Lieberman & Miller, 1990). This idea encourages examination of some additional questions. How would these teachers communicate and collaborate with others if they were given more free time? What would induce them to attend workshops outside the school? How could they be encouraged

to discuss new ideas presented at workshops or inservices in their school (technical) culture? How could small communities of inquiry spread and reculture the entire school?

As the teacher education profession continues to document and define the complexity of teaching and teacher education, it is important that the various disciplines (foreign languages, mathematics, science, social studies, English, etc.) offer evidence through multiple data sources from *real* classrooms and learning environments. We concur wholeheartedly with Lortie (1998) who when he revisited some issues in his seminal work *Schoolteacher* aptly wrote "that considerably more research is needed on teachers and their work" (p. 161). The study herein described adds to such a research collection.

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